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# Visualising 'The Waste Land': Discovering a Praxis of Adaptation

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University of Plymouth

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**STORE**

Visualising 'The Waste Land':  
Discovering a Praxis of Adaptation

S. Waterman

Ph.D 2010

**Visualising *The Waste Land*:**

**Discovering a Praxis of Adaptation**

by

**Sally Waterman**

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth  
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

**Doctor Of Philosophy**

School of Media and Photography  
Faculty of Arts

March 2010

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**Sally Waterman**

'Visualising *The Waste Land*: Discovering a Praxis of Adaptation'

**Abstract**

This research examines the issues and visual processes that arise in the production of self-representations derived from literary texts. The construction of a series of photographic and video installations drawing upon T. S Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922) allowed for the exploration and analysis of how literature functions as a device to represent autobiographical experience within my media arts practice. The study considered the relevance and usage of the literary source in relation to specific adaptation procedures, in terms of what complexities were encountered and how these were understood.

Whilst orthodox film adaptation provided a theoretical framework for initial experimentation, it is argued that my practice is positioned outside this domain, employing alternative methods of visual translation within a fine art context. Having investigated the purpose of my literary interpretations, I conclude that I respond subjectively to the source materials, forming autobiographical associations with particular lines, images, characters, themes or concepts within the text. It was discovered that this fragmentary method of extraction into isolated elements, corresponded with ambiguous visual representation of the self. Placed within the critical context of relevant female practitioners, I was able to detect a number of recurrent, elusive strategies within my own practice that signified a shifting subjectivity.

However, it was the identification with Eliot's subversion of his impersonality theory in later life, which enabled the realisation that literature is used in my work as a means of projection for visualising past trauma and operates as a form of displacement for a confessional practice. The thesis that emerges from my research is that by allowing oneself to respond emotionally and selectively to an existing text through transformative processes of re-enactment, literary adaptation can act as catharsis for the recollection and re-imagining of previously repressed memories.

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For practical assistance I would like to thank Keith Spear, Craig Whyte and Mike Endacott for their help with the PhD exhibition, along with Kayla Parker, Deborah Langdon-Smith and Sarah Grant for their contribution to the project.

I am indebted to my mother, brother and partner, for their tremendous support during this five-year study period, especially since it dealt with such emotive issues. In particular I'd like to thank my partner Nick Turner for his patience and encouragement throughout my study and for his willingness to collaborate in the production of work for *Waste Land*.

This thesis is dedicated to Sarah Jacobs, a close family friend who suddenly passed away in February 2009.

March 2010

## Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

This study was financed with the aid of a fee remission scholarship from the Faculty of Arts, University of Plymouth.

Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended and art exhibitions and film screenings were visited for the purposes of both research and an awareness of contemporary developments. Several papers were prepared for public presentation and artworks were regularly exhibited throughout doctoral study.

### Waste Land Exhibitions

#### Solo

December 2007: *Still-Moving*, Viewfinder Photography Gallery, London  
(*In the Cage* shown with *The Turn of the Screw*)

April 2008: *The Waste Land: PhD Work-in-Progress: Game*, Viewpoint Gallery, Plymouth College of Art (*In the Cage*, *Hushing the Room Enclosed*, *Quartet* *Manoeuvres* shown)

January 2010: *Waste Land*, Scott Building, University of Plymouth

#### Group

January 2006: *Put Away Those Childish Things*, Viewpoint Gallery, Plymouth College of Art (*PastPresent* shown)

May 2006: *Uncurated: Creekside Artists group exhibition*, Made in Deptford Festival, London, Faircharm Trading Estate, London (*PastPresent* shown)

May 2007: *Regard*, Viewpoint Gallery, Plymouth College of Art (*Fortune-telling/ Re-telling* shown)

June 2008: *Immersion*, Locate Research Group, Scott Building, University of Plymouth (*Rural Shadow Walks* shown)

October 2008: *The Art of Research: Research Narratives*, Banqueting Hall, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London (*Hushing the Room Enclosed* shown)

February 2009: *Deptford Dark Nights*, Mobile outdoor public screenings, Art Services Un-incorporated, Deptford, London (*Urban Shadow Walks* shown)

April 2009: *Framing Time and Place: Repeats and Returns in Photography*, Scott Building, University of Plymouth (*PastPresent* shown)

### Papers Presented

1<sup>st</sup> December 2004: 'An Introduction to doctoral research project', Media and Photography research seminar, University of Plymouth

15<sup>th</sup> February 2006: 'Interpreting T. S Eliot's *The Wasteland*', Media and Photography research seminar, University of Plymouth

9<sup>th</sup> October 2006: 'A Research Journey', Applied Research Techniques module, BA Photomedia, Plymouth College of Art

7<sup>th</sup> March 2007: 'PhD Work in Progress: *PastPresent* and *Fortune-telling/Re-telling*', Media and Photography research seminar, University of Plymouth

2<sup>nd</sup> May 2007: '*Shadow Walks: The "Unreal City" Experience*', English research seminar, University of Plymouth

14<sup>th</sup> May 2007: 'Memento Mori: *PastPresent* and *Fortune-telling/Re-telling*', Research seminar, Plymouth College of Art

18<sup>th</sup> December 2007: Artist talk, London Independent Photographers group, Viewfinder Photography Gallery, London

16<sup>th</sup> April 2008: '*Manoeuvrability and A Game of Chess*', Media and Photography seminar, University of Plymouth

30<sup>th</sup> April 2008: Artist talk, Plymouth College of Art (in association with '*The Waste Land: PhD Work-in-Progress*' exhibition, Viewpoint Gallery)

5<sup>th</sup> July 2008: 'Exploring concepts of literary interpretation and self-representation within arts practice', *Face-to-Face: the Photographic (Self) Portrait*, Institute of Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London

29<sup>th</sup> April 2009: '*Picturing the Self in Metaphorical Waste-Land-Scapes*', LAND/WATER Research seminar, University of Plymouth

5<sup>th</sup> March 2010: Participated in panel discussion after film screening of *Turn of the Screw* at *Nightmare*, University College London English Graduate Conference 2010, Institute of English Studies, University of London

### Training Events

November 2004 - March 2007: Research Training Workshops, Faculty of Arts, University of Plymouth

October 2006- June 2008: Postgraduate Skills Development, University of Plymouth

November 2004- April 2009, Research seminars, School of Media and Photography, University of Plymouth

May-June 2009: Research Training Programme, Institute for Germanic & Romance Studies, University of London

### Conferences Attended

29<sup>th</sup> January 2005: *Wyndham Lewis: One Man Avant Garde*, The Courtauld Institute, London

21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> April 2005: *(Inter)facing: Theory and Practice*, Exeter University

23<sup>rd</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> June 2005: *Picturing Change: Landscape & Time*, Land/Water Symposium at University of Plymouth

23<sup>rd</sup> November 2005: *Telling Tales: Contemporary Narrative Photography*,  
Winchester School of Art  
26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> November 2005: *National Postgraduate AHRC conference*, University of  
Portsmouth  
22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2006: *Landscape Fictions*, Land/Water Symposium at University of  
Plymouth  
15<sup>th</sup> July 2006: *Modernism*, V&A, London  
28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> June 2007: *Landscape and Relic*, LAND/WATER Symposium, University  
of Plymouth  
4<sup>th</sup> July 2007: *AVPhD Symposium*, University of Sussex  
7<sup>th</sup> July 2007: *Iconicity: Visual Language and Photographic Narratives*, Institute of  
Germanic & Romance Studies, UCL  
21<sup>st</sup> & 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007: *Art Summer University*, Tate Modern, London  
29<sup>th</sup> September 2007: *The Printed Path: Landscape, Walking and Recollection*, Tate  
Britain, London  
10<sup>th</sup> November 2007: *Literature & Photography*, University of Leeds  
15<sup>th</sup> February 2008: *Theorie Cum Praxi*, AVPhD, Slade School of Fine Art, UCL,  
London  
26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> June 2008: *Landscape and Beauty*, LAND/WATER Research Centre  
symposium, University of Plymouth  
5<sup>th</sup> July 2008: *Face-to-Face: the Photographic (Self) Portrait*, Institute of Germanic  
& Romance Studies, University of London  
4<sup>th</sup> October 2008: *Hidden Cities*, University of Plymouth  
28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October 2008: *The Art of Research: Research Narratives*, Chelsea College  
of Art and Design  
19<sup>th</sup> February 2009: *The F-Word: A Feminist Research Symposium*, University of  
Plymouth  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2009: *Photography, Archive and Memory*, Roehampton University  
13<sup>th</sup> July 2009: *Journal of Media Practice 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Symposium*, Sussex  
University

#### Visit

June 2008: Visit to Zurich to see *Chris Marker: A Farewell to Movies*, Museum für  
Gestaltung. Travel expenses partially funded by Faculty of Arts, University of  
Plymouth.

#### Published

Waterman. S. (2008) 'Art of Research: Research Narratives: Sally Waterman'  
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<http://www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk/researchnarratives/48105.htm> [20th May 2009]

Word count of main body of thesis: 63,428

Signed

*Sally Waterman*

Date

*26/01/11*

## **List of Works: Waste Land (2005-2009)**

### **'Prelude'**

*PastPresent* (2005)

Six resin coated black and white photographs (12x16"), Archival tape

### **Room One: 'Burial'**

1. *Rural Shadow Walks (Sea/Rock/Grave/Beach)* (2006)

Digital video projection (6')

2. *Urban Shadow Walks (Station a.m./City/Station p.m./Market)* (2006)

Digital video projection (6')

3. *I Knew Nothing* (2006)

Digital video on wall-mounted monitor (1'40)

4. *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007)

Digital video on monitor facing upwards (9')

Tarot card reading: Kayla Parker

### **Room Two: 'Game'**

1. *In The Cage* (2007)

'Still movie' projection, silent, looped (3.33')

Assisted by Nick Turner

2. *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008)

Four channel photographic installation with sound-scape, looped (5')

Voiceover: Sally Waterman, Veronica Waterman and Deborah Langdon-Smith

### **Room Three: 'Sermon'**

Black and white inkjet photographs on fine art etch paper with text (60x50cm image on 84x59.4cm paper)

*Vol. I Encounter* (2008)

Assisted by Nick Turner

i) *Perceived the scene and foretold the rest*

ii) *Her brain allows one half formed thought to pass*

*Vol. II Contemplation* (2008)

Assisted by Sarah Grant

i) *I can connect nothing with nothing*

ii) *Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long*

*Vol. III Disintegration* (2008)

i) *Testimony of summer nights*

ii) *Unreal City*

*Vol. IV Reverberation* (2009)

i) *But at my back from time to time I hear*

Assisted by Nick Turner

ii) *He promised "a new start" I made no comment*

*Vol. V Retribution* (2009)

Assisted by Nick Turner

i) *Burning burning burning burning*

**Room Four: 'Water'**

*The Deep Sea Swell* (2009)

Two-channel digital video floor projection, dimensions variable, 1'30'

**Room Five: 'Thunder'**

1. *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009)

Two-channel digital video projection, dimensions variable, 5'

Performers: Sally Waterman, Phillip Waterman, Nick Turner

Assisted by Nick Turner

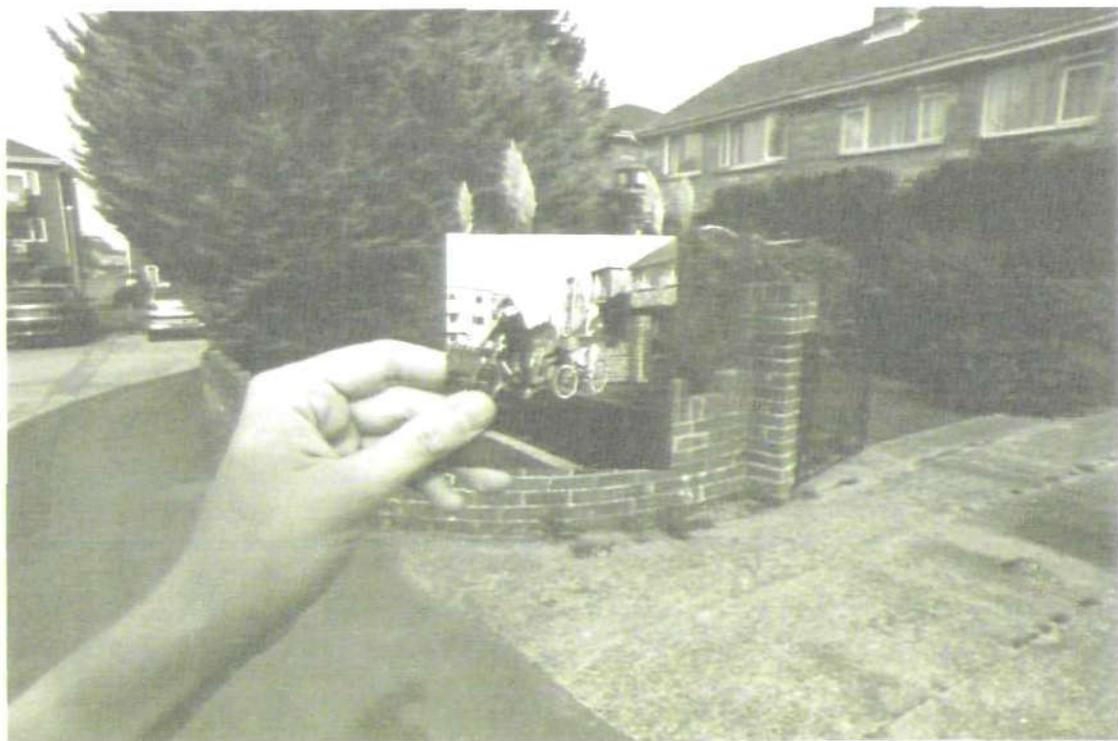
2. *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009)

Two-channel digital video projection, dimensions variable, 5'

Assisted by Nick Turner and Phillip Waterman

*Waste Land Illustrations*

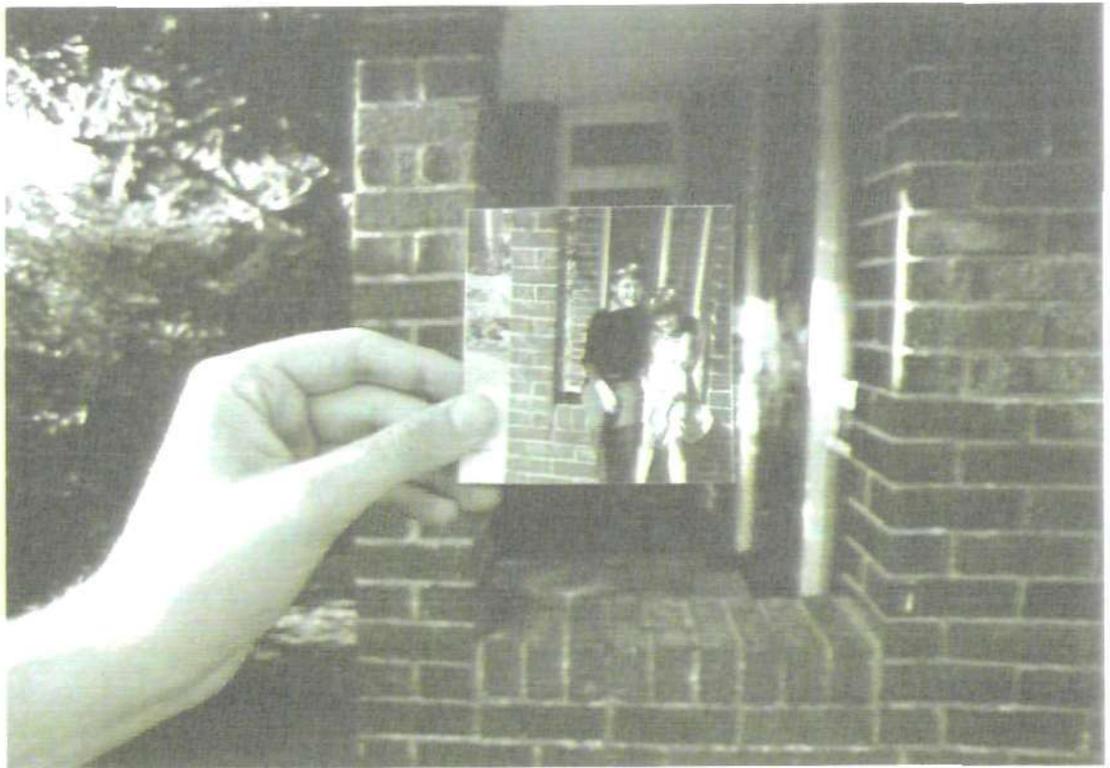
'Prelude'



Waterman, S. (2005) *PastPresent* No.1, black and white resin coated photograph, 12x16", Archival tape.



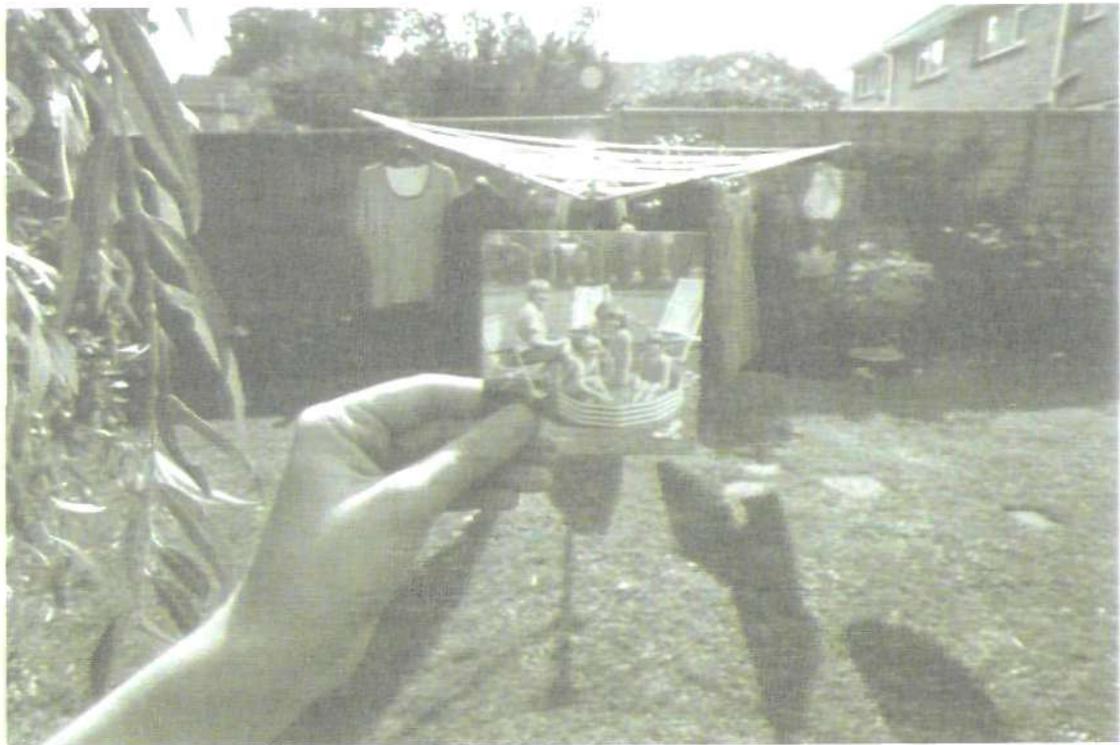
Waterman, S. (2005) *PastPresent* No.2, black and white resin coated photograph, 12x16", Archival tape.



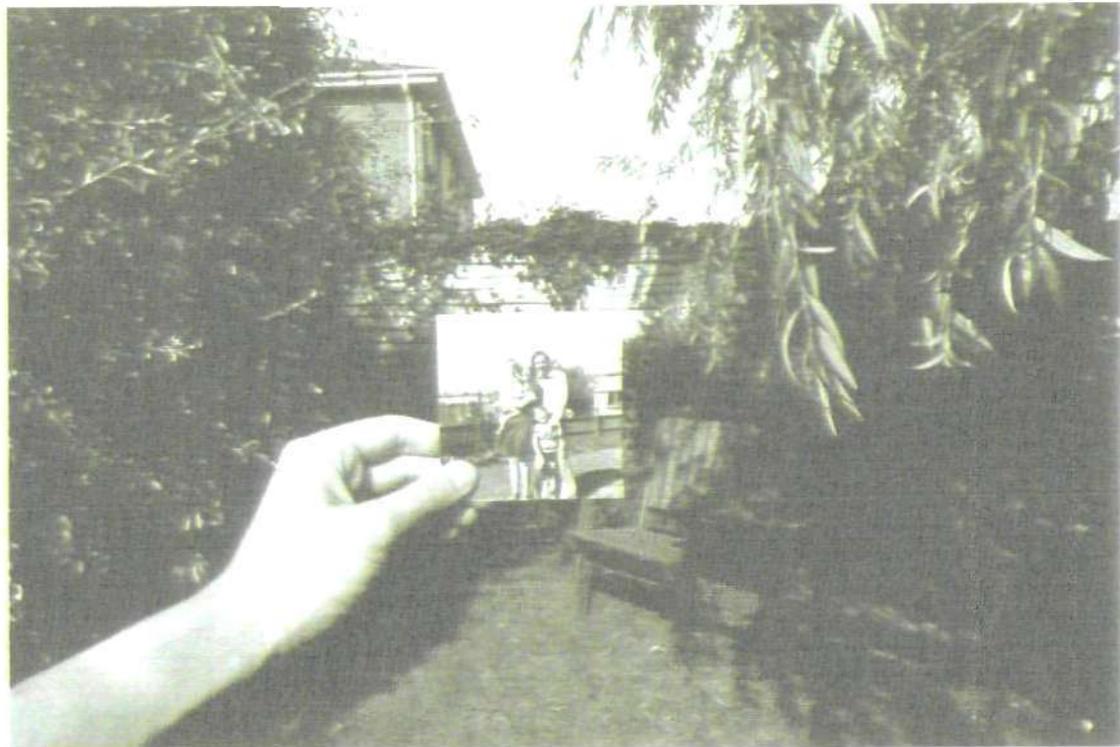
Waterman, S. (2005) *PastPresent* No.3, black and white resin coated photograph, 12x16", Archival tape.



Waterman, S. (2005) *PastPresent* No.4, black and white resin coated photograph, 12x16", Archival tape.



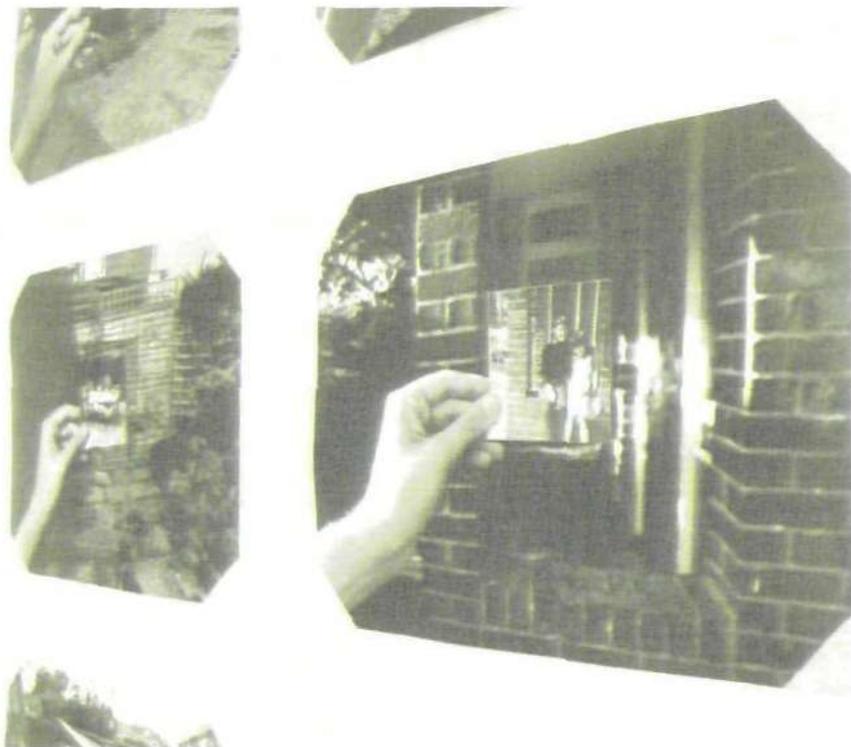
Waterman, S. (2005) *PastPresent* No.5, black and white resin coated photograph, 12x16", Archival tape.



Waterman, S. (2005) *PastPresent* No.6, black and white resin coated photograph, 12x16", Archival tape.



Waterman, S. (2005) *PastPresent*, *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.



Waterman, S. (2005) *PastPresent* installation, 'Uncurated': Creekside Artists Group exhibition, Faircharm Trading Estate, London, May 2006.

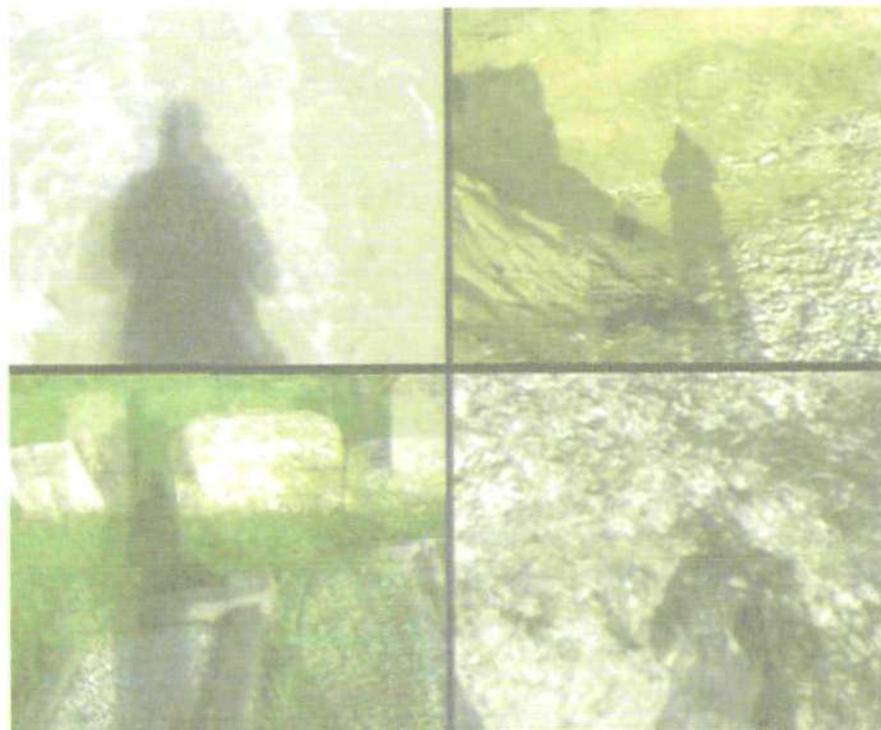
Room 1 'Burial'



Waterman, S. (2005) Room 1 'Burial', *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.



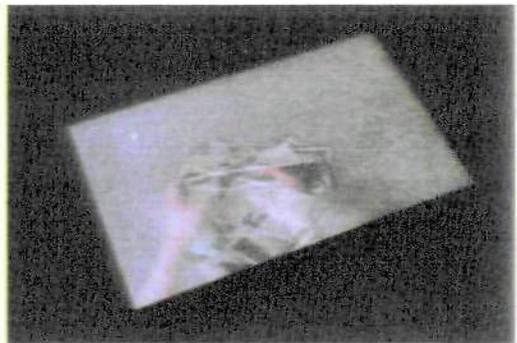
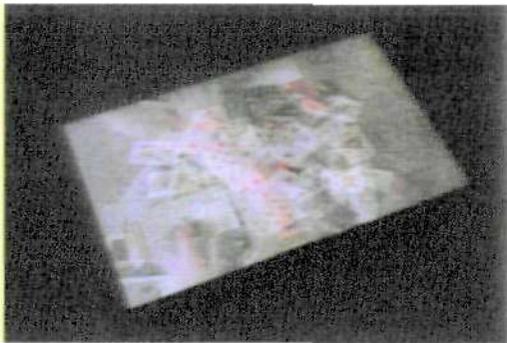
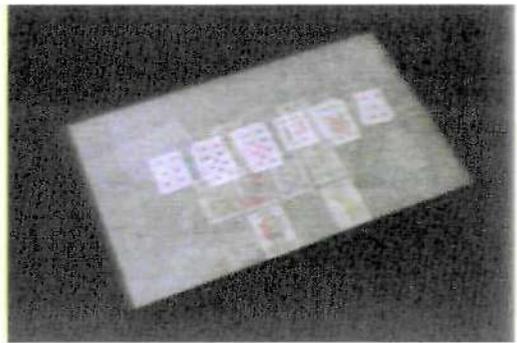
Waterman, S. (2006) *Urban Shadow Walks (Station a.m./City/Station p.m./Market)*.  
Digital video projection (6').



Waterman, S. (2006) *Rural Shadow Walks (Sea/Rock/Grave/Beach)*.  
Digital video projection (6').



Waterman, S. (2006) *I Knew Nothing*, Digital video on wall-mounted monitor (1'40), *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.

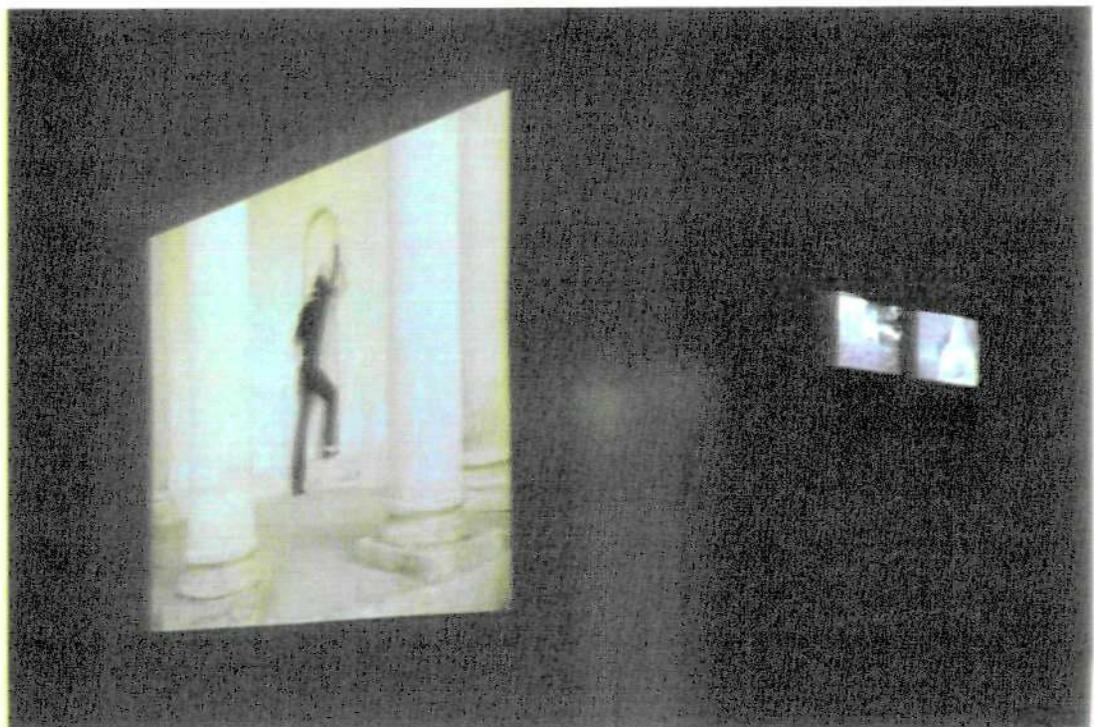


Waterman, S. (2007) *Fortune-telling/Re-telling*, Digital video on monitor facing upwards (9')  
*Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.

Room 2 'Game'



Waterman, S. (2008) *Hushing the Room Enclosed*, Four channel still photographic installation on monitors with sound-scape, looped (5'), *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010..



Waterman, S. (2007) *In the Cage*, 'Still movie' projection, silent, looped (3.33'), *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.



Waterman, S. (2007) Stills from *In the Cage*, 'Still movie' projection, silent, looped (3.33').

Room 3 'Sermon'



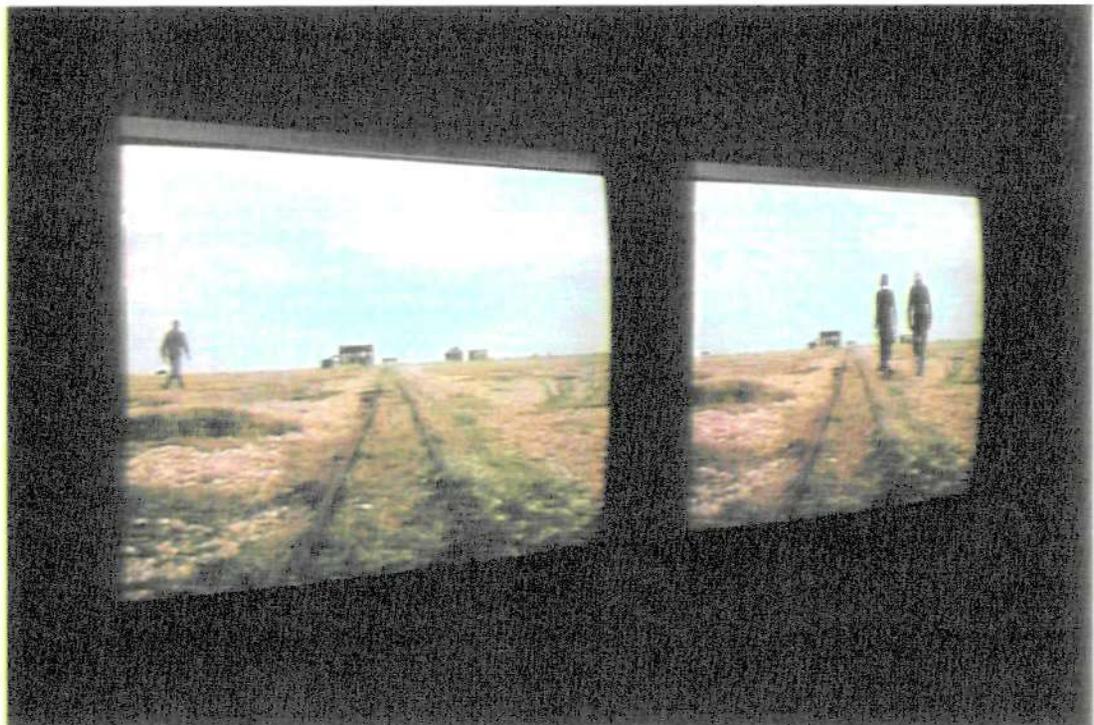
Waterman, S. (2008-9) 'Sermon', *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.



Waterman, S. (2008) 'Sermon', Vol.I *Encounter No.1 Perceived the scene and foretold the rest*, Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).



Waterman, S. (2008) 'Sermon', Vol.I *Encounter No.2 Her brain allows one half formed thought to pass*. Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).



Waterman, S. (2009) *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?*, Two-channel digital video projection, 5', *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.



Waterman, S. (2008) 'Sermon', Vol.II *Contemplation No.1 I can connect nothing with nothing.* Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).



Waterman, S. (2008) 'Sermon', Vol.II *Contemplation No.2 Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.* Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).



Waterman, S. (2008) 'Sermon', Vol.III *Disintegration* No.1 *Unreal City*.  
Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).



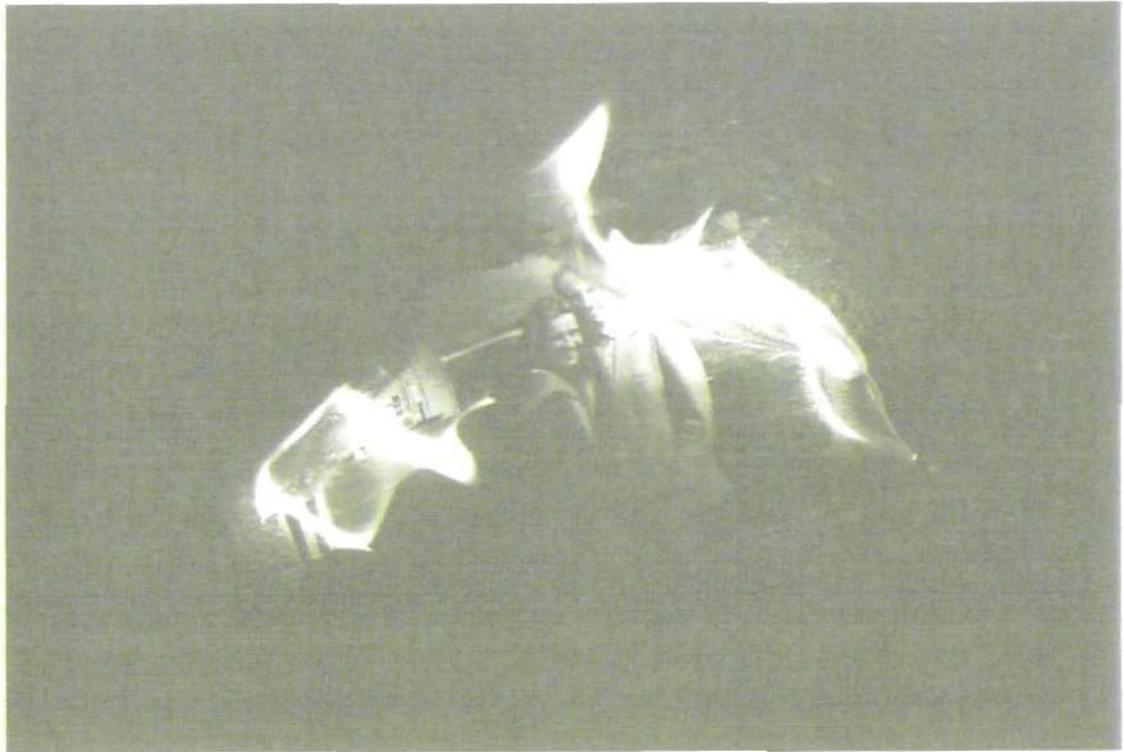
Waterman, S. (2008) 'Sermon', Vol.III *Disintegration* No.2 *Testimony of summer nights*.  
Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).



Waterman, S. (2009) 'Sermon', Vol.IV Reverberation No.1 *But at my back from time to time I hear.* Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).



Waterman, S. (2009) 'Sermon', Vol.IV Reverberation No.2. *He promised "a new start" I made no comment.* Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).

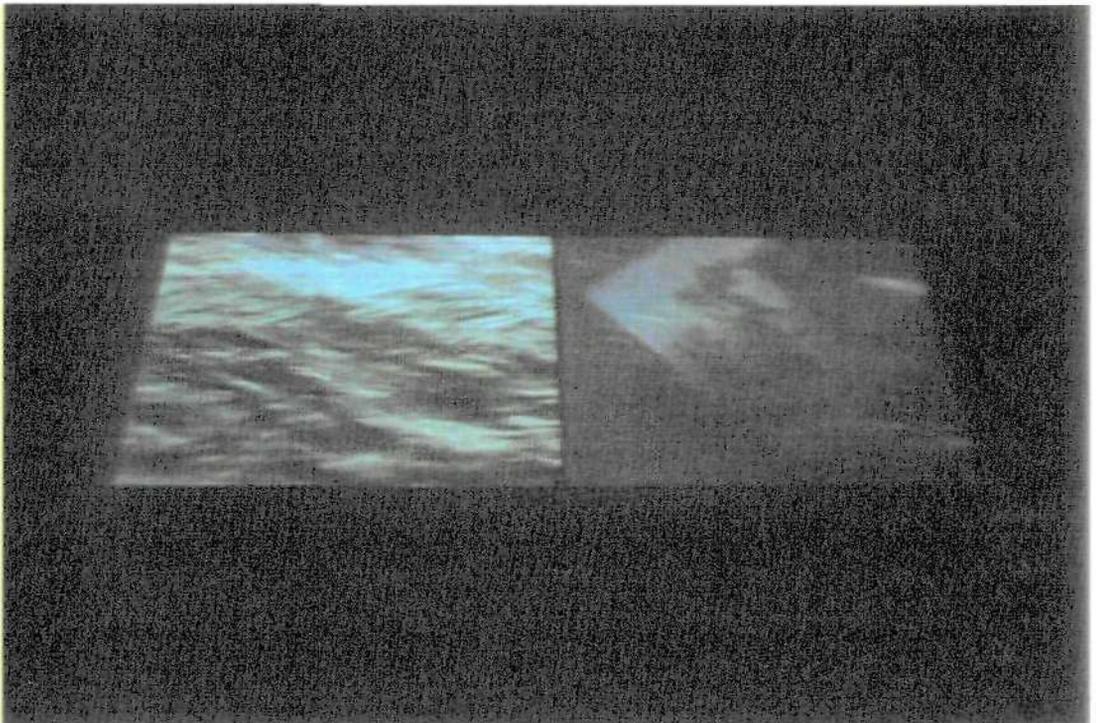
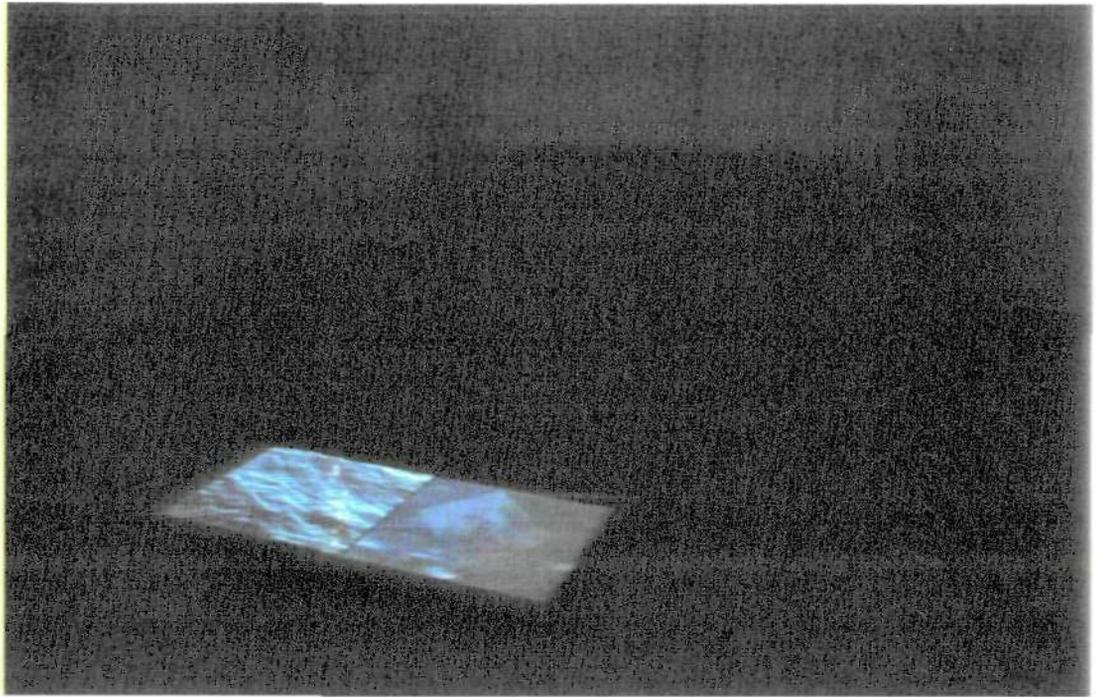


Waterman, S. (2009) 'Sermon', Vol.V *Retribution* No.1 *Burning burning burning burning*. Black and white inkjet photograph on fine art etch paper with text (84.1x59.4cm).



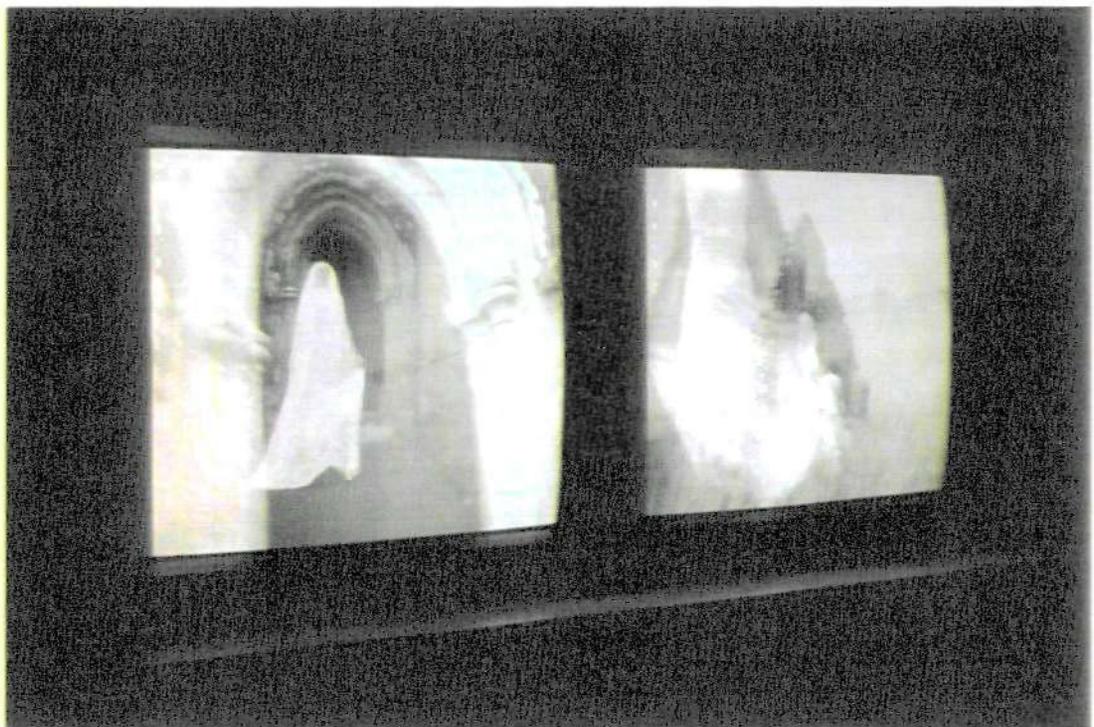
Waterman, S. (2008-9) *Sermon*, *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.

Room 4 'Water'



Waterman, S. (2009) *The Deep Sea Swell*, Two-channel digital video floor projection, 1'30', *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.

Room 5 'Thunder'

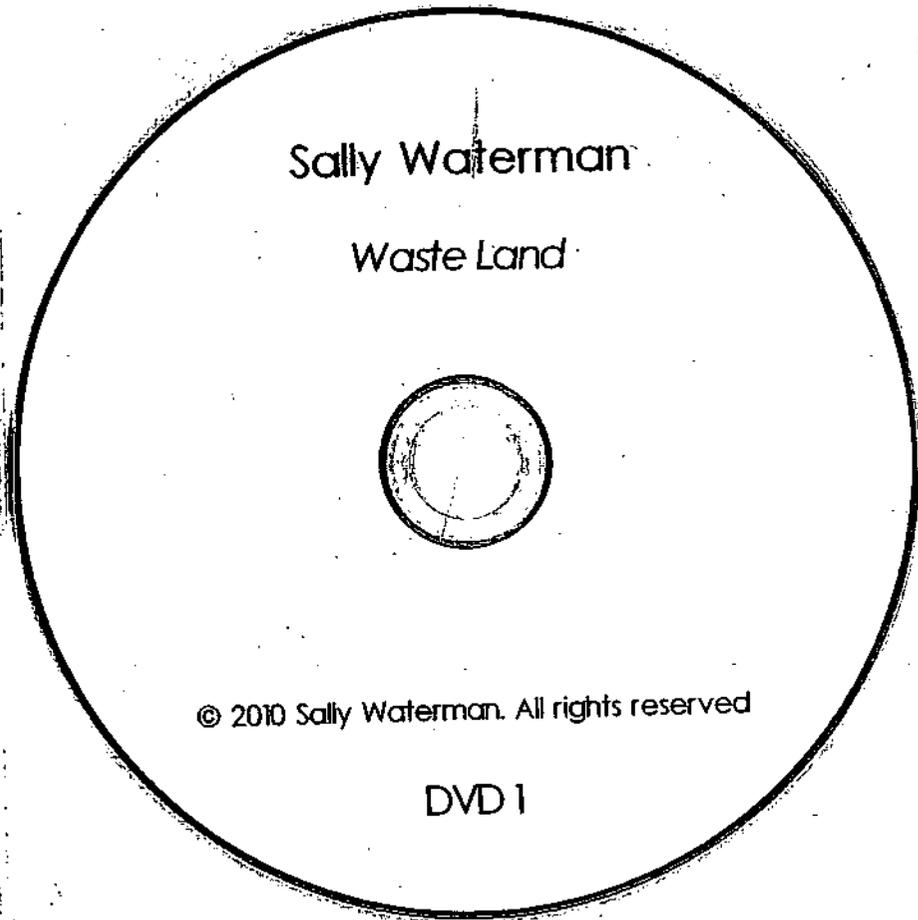


Waterman, S. (2009) *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender*, Two-channel digital video projection, 5', *Waste Land* exhibition installation, Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010.

**DVD 1: *Waste Land* (2004-2009)**

**Prelude, Room 1 'Burial' and Room 2 'Game'**

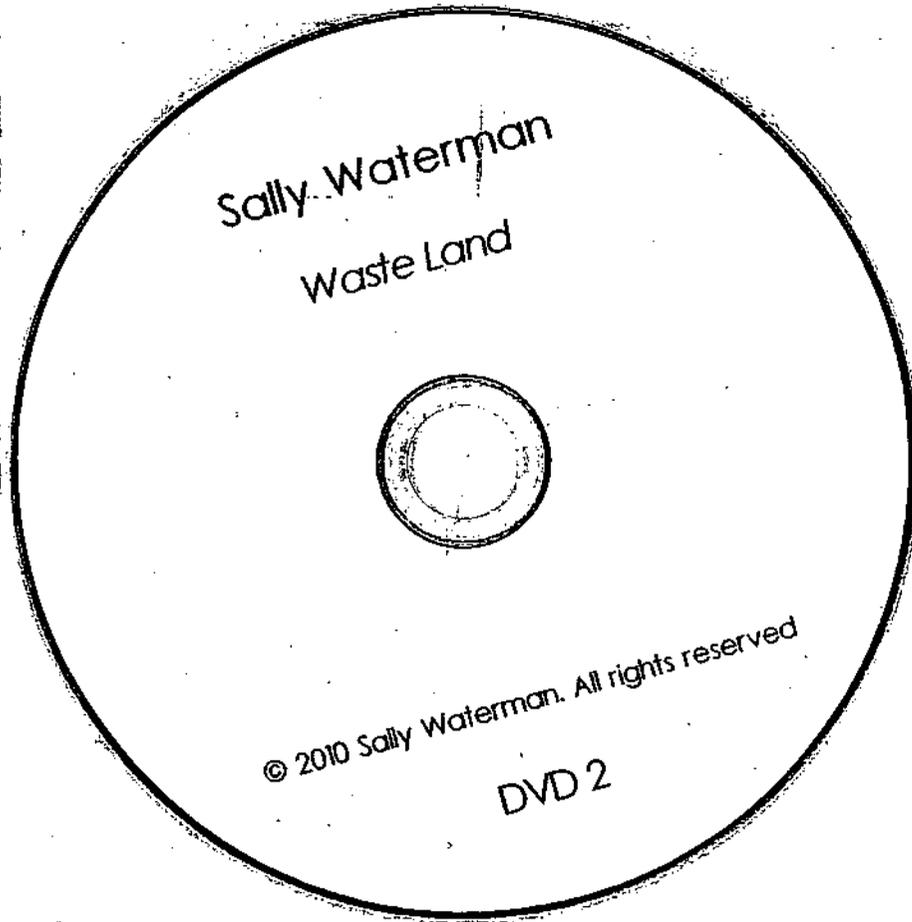
Running time: 30 minutes approx



**DVD 2: Waste Land (2004-2009)**

**Room 3 'Sermon', Room 4 'Water', Room 5 'Thunder'  
and Waste Land Exhibition Installation**

Running time: 20 minutes approx



## **INTRODUCTION: 'BACKGROUND CONTEXT AND METHOD'**

### **1. Introduction to Previous Practice and Research**

Having established a media arts practice over the last fourteen years that centred on the adaptation of literary texts into photographic or video narratives, my research initially sought to investigate my understanding of the visual translation process itself and whether I had adopted a particular methodology in the creation of past work. By seeking an understanding of my interpretative methods through the critical evaluation of my artistic process, in the light of a relevant theoretical and contextual framework, I hoped to gain an insight and 'make sense of' how these decisions were made. Indeed, by examining the actual mechanisms involved in 'reading' and questioning the difference between verbal and visual literacy I would then be able to determine what visualisation methods were necessary for the translation of one form into another, which could then be applied to future adaptations. Whilst I was aware that this strategy appeared formulaic, the research was primarily concerned with a desire to understand my own practice.

For this research study, T.S Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922)<sup>1</sup> was chosen as an explorative text to re-evaluate the interpretative methods employed within my own arts practice. However, as the research progressed and discoveries were made, a shift towards the autobiographical significance of my practice and its relationship to self-portraiture was recognised (See Chapter Two). This reframing of my research allowed me to focus more specifically on the question: what types of issues and visual processes arise in the production of self-representations derived from literary texts? Consequently, the aims of this research became primarily to re-position my practice through the research and analysis of visual, interpretative processes and

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<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the copy of the poem in Appendix A. *The Waste Land* was first published in the quarterly journal *The Criterion*, (which Eliot had founded) in October 1922, before appearing in the American magazine *The Dial* in November 1922 (Abrams 1993: 2137).

self-representational strategies through the creation of a new body of work derived from Eliot's poem (see Chapter Four).<sup>2</sup>

This written account examines how literature functions as a resource to represent the self and autobiographical experience within my practice, investigating the intention and implications of my elusive self-portraits, from a gendered, subjective position. It takes into account ways in which the text informs the creative process as well as the end product, examining the choice, relevance and function of the literary text in the creation of staged self-portraiture. By reflecting upon the work's relationship to both traditional film adaptation and experimental visual arts practice, I am able to situate my practice within a theoretical and contextual framework as well as illuminate the central issues that materialize from a self-representational practice based upon literary interpretation.

I already had prior knowledge of the way in which photographers had been influenced by literature and painting and recognised the fact that the genre of constructed, narrative photography was firmly established, heralded by artists such as Gregory Crewdson, Philip-Lorca di Corcia, Tracey Moffatt, Cindy Sherman, Hannah Starkey and Jeff Wall (Cotton 2004, Bright 2005 and Brunet 2009).<sup>3</sup> Within this tradition of staged photography, there are a number of photographers whose works are derived from painting, including Elina Brotherus,<sup>4</sup> Tom Hunter,<sup>5</sup> and Jeff

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<sup>2</sup> I would recommend that the reader consult the accompanying DVD's and project illustrations prior to reading the thesis. *Waste Land* (2005-2009) includes: Prelude: *PastPresent* (2005); Room one, 'Burial': *Rural Shadow Walks* (2006), *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006), *I Knew Nothing* (2006) and *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007); Room two, 'Game': *In The Cage* (2007) and *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008); Room three, 'Sermon': Vol. I *Encounter* (2008), Vol. II *Contemplation* (2008), Vol. III *Disintegration* (2008), Vol. IV *Reverberation* (2009) and Vol. V *Retribution* (2009); Room four, 'Water': *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) and Room five, 'Thunder': *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009) and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009). The work was installed on the first floor of the Scott Building, University of Plymouth from the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

<sup>3</sup> See Charlotte Cotton 'Once upon a time' in Cotton, C. (2004) *The Photograph as Contemporary Art*, London: Thames & Hudson, pp.49-79; Susan Bright 'Narrative' in Bright, S. (2005) *Art Photography Now*. London: Thames & Hudson, pp.77-105 and Francois Brunet 'The Literature of Photography' in Brunet, F. (2009) *Photography and Literature*. London: Reaktion Books, pp.88-111.

<sup>4</sup> Elina Brotherus, *The New Painting* series (2003) which appropriates David Caspar Friedrich's *The Wanderer Above the Sea of Fog* (1818) (Bright 2005: 50-51).

<sup>5</sup> Tom Hunter: *Living in Hell and other Stories* (2005) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by Tracey Chevalier, London: National Gallery to accompany the exhibition 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005-12<sup>th</sup> March 2006. This exhibition featured a series of disturbing psychological photographic tableaux that re-staged works from masters like Manet, Millais, Gauguin, and Vermeer within contemporary settings.

Wall,<sup>6</sup> or inspired by literature, (in particular poetry) such as Julia Margaret Cameron's illustrative photographs based on Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Idylls of the King* poems (1874),<sup>7</sup> and Fay Goodwin's landscape photographs made in collaboration with Ted Hughes for *Remains of Elmet* (1979), or lastly, fairytales, usually associated with literal visual interpretations, but reclaimed and revised by female artists such as Sarah Moon's *Little Red Riding Hood* (1983) (see Chapter One) or Jo Spence's *Cinderella* (1986)(see Chapter Three).<sup>8</sup> Some artists draw upon both literary and fine art sources, for instance Yinka Shonibare's illustrative photographic sequence *Dorian Gray* (2001) derived from Oscar Wilde's 1890 novel or his earlier *Diary of a Victorian Dandy* (1998) which references Hogarth's *The Rake's Progress* (1732-33).<sup>9</sup>

My past photographic works<sup>10</sup> had been either centred upon a specific literary text such as *The Turn of the Screw* (2001) based upon Henry James' novel, or had been inspired by a combination of literary sources that related to a central theme, such as *The Other Side of a Mirror* (1999), based upon literary extracts exploring gender identity, including authors Charlotte Bronte, Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath and Angela Carter, or *Making our Mark* (2004), derived from a selection of Romantic poetry including Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth and Thomas Hood that

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<sup>6</sup> For example his *Picture for Women* (1979) which was based upon Edouard Manet's *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère* (1882) or *A Sudden Gust of Wind (After Hokusai)* (1993) derived from Hokusai's *A High Wind in Yejiri* (1831-3) Burnett, C. (2005) *Jeff Wall*. London: Tate Publishing.

<sup>7</sup> Cameron was also influenced by artists such as Rembrandt, Raphael and Titian, together with her Pre-Raphaelite peers. See Howard, J. (1990) 'Painting, Poetry and Photography: The Inspiration of Julia Margaret Cameron' in *Whisper of the Muse: The World of Julia Margaret Cameron* (1990) Exhibition catalogue by Jeremy Howard, London: P & D Colnaghi & Co.

<sup>8</sup> See also Anna Gaskell's photographic series *Untitled (Hide)*, (1998) based upon the Brothers Grimm story *The Magic Donkey and Wonder* (1996-97) and *Override* (1997) based upon *The Wizard of Oz*.

<sup>9</sup> This also includes the work of Sam Taylor-Wood and Jeff Wall. However, the work of video artist Bill Viola is also relevant here and has had a profound influence on my practice, especially *The Passions* (2000-2003) that was based upon devotional Renaissance paintings. The work was exhibited at J. Paul Getty Museum, 24<sup>th</sup> January-27<sup>th</sup> April 2003, The National Gallery, London 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003-4<sup>th</sup> January 2004 and the Pinakothek of the Bayerische Staatsgemälde-sammlungen, Munich Spring 2004. *Bill Viola: The Passions* (2003) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by John Walsh, Los Angeles: Getty Publications. I was also inspired by Viola's *Love/Death: The Tristan Project*, which conceptually interprets Richard Wagner's opera, *Tristan und Isolde* (one of Eliot's more significant allusions in *The Waste Land*) creating ten slow motion metaphorical video installations. The project was a collaboration between Viola and theatre director Peter Sellars, Esa-Pekka Salonen, conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the opera was first presented in concert form in Los Angeles in December 2004, and received its fully staged premier in Paris at the National Opera Bastille in April 2005. The work was subsequently shown as a gallery installation at the Haunch of Venison and St. Olaves College, London (21<sup>st</sup> June - 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2006). See [http://www.haunchofvenison.com/en/#page=london.exhibitions.2006.bill\\_viola](http://www.haunchofvenison.com/en/#page=london.exhibitions.2006.bill_viola)

<sup>10</sup> See [www.sallywaterman.com](http://www.sallywaterman.com) for project details and visuals of these past projects.

considered my relationship to the Isle of Wight, where I am from. Notably, projects such as *Forest Fears* (2000), which drew upon my illness and recovery from a kidney operation, had alluded to the tradition of fairytales to represent autobiographical experiences. However, this autobiographical relationship to the text had not been entirely acknowledged prior to my research. Instead, emphasis had been placed upon my personal 'connection' to the chosen literary text, whether in terms of narrative, concept, style or context.

My interpretive literary arts practice became established during master's level study,<sup>11</sup> where I produced a series of photographs derived from Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves* (1931). *The Waves* had been an influential text, which I had encountered as an undergraduate and my motivations for adaptation were in retrospect autobiographic; a direct response to moving to London and identifying with Woolf's vivid descriptions of the chaotic city experience, together with a sense of nostalgia for the sea and the Isle of Wight, depicted by the poetic 'Interludes' of the novel which traced the rising and setting of the sun in accordance with the tidal flow of the waves.

The re-visitation of *The Waves* project was used as a basis for my doctoral research, since it had signified the beginning of my investigation into issues of visual translation and consultation with film adaptation theory. As a modernist text, it also shares the same poetic language and experimental, cinematic montage techniques evident in *The Waste Land*, so comparisons can be made between them to determine whether the actual stylistic conventions of the chosen literary text has any bearing upon my interpretative methods (see Chapter One).

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<sup>11</sup> MA Image & Communication, Goldsmiths College (1995-96)

## 2. Background Context of *The Waste Land*

T.S. Eliot's renowned poem was written in 1922, and was in part, a response to the First World War.<sup>12</sup> It is a pessimistic vision of the beginning of the twentieth century relayed through five individual sections that appropriate and reinvent a rich tapestry of both historical and contemporary references sourced from literature, mythology and popular culture. Robert Richardson describes the breadth of Eliot's allusions "from western and eastern literature of all genres and ages" (Richardson 1969: 110),<sup>13</sup> listing examples such as Ecclesiastes, Ovid, Dante, Shakespeare, Baudelaire and Buddha amongst others.

The poem deals with universal themes such as the loss of faith and alienation and is delivered by a multitude of mysterious and unidentified voices that seem to suggest that history inevitably repeats itself through a continual juxtaposition between past and present. Indeed, Richardson believes that *The Waste Land* represents a "twentieth century version[s] of Ecclesiastes, visions of the hollowness of contemporary life" (Richardson 1969: 108), which Eliot effectively communicates throughout the poem in lines such as "...for you know only / A heap of broken images" (l. 21-22), the collapse of empires in "Falling towers" (l.373) and the sinister reminder of "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (l.430), to imply fragmentation and the demise of social and religious order. A useful summary of the poem's central concerns is provided within *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*:

This is a poem about spiritual dryness, about the kind of existence in which no regenerating belief gives significance and value to people's daily activities, sex brings no fruitfulness, and death heralds no resurrection (Adams 1993: 2146).

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<sup>12</sup> Beginning this project in the aftermath of 9/11 and, later on during the first year of my doctoral study, London's 7/7, it was somehow apt to consider the relevance of Eliot's poem in a twenty first century context with regard to the war on terror and the current social and cultural climate. The reinvention of this theme was particularly relevant to the final section of the poem with its reference to the collapse of empires, in that perhaps some kind of universal political statement could be made by my contemporary version of the text. However, this documentary approach was later dismissed when a more personalised, autobiographical stance was taken.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Richardson (1969) 'Waste Lands: The Breakdown of Order' in Richardson, R. (1969) *Literature and Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 104-118.

Lyndall Gordon advocates the autobiographical nature of *The Waste Land* in her biography, in particular the translation of the painful experience of his unsuccessful marriage to Vivienne Haigh-Wood into the poem's narrative. She claims that Eliot created a contemporary vision of London, with the city commuters walking over London Bridge compared to the damned souls of Dante's *Inferno*, echoing his own experience of working in the city at Lloyds Bank (see Chapter Two).<sup>14</sup>

Consultation with a range of literary criticism to familiarise myself with the poem's central issues and reception, as well as an inspection of Eliot's own critical writing, letters and biographies allowed an insight into his creative process and influences as well as his observations on contemporary culture, which informed both the practical and theoretical aspects of my research. However, at this stage it was important to realise the boundaries of my study, in that I was not attempting to add to the existing debates about cultural history of either the poem or of Eliot himself; nor was I trying seek a full analysis of the text or provide a survey of its shifting literary criticism.<sup>15</sup> Whilst some of my initial research became redundant as my research question became increasingly focused upon self-representation and interpretive methods, it proved to be invaluable in two ways. First, prior knowledge of some of the poem's literary criticism assisted in the early stages of my creative process since it supplied a foundation from which to begin my own interpretations, through an appreciation of his employment of allusions, the overall structure of the poem and the symbolic meaning of his poetic metaphors.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Other city poems of the period include Guillaume Apollinaire's *Zone* (Paris, 1912), Georg Trakl's *Abendland* (Berlin, 1914) and Federico Garcia Lorca's *Poeta en Nueva York* (New York, 1929).

<sup>15</sup> Sanford Schwartz notes how Eliot's own critical essays anticipated the New Criticism (1930's-1950's), which turned the attention away from the subjective life of the author to the actual design and content of the text itself (Schwartz 1985: 172).

<sup>16</sup> The complexity of the various critical responses to Eliot's text was in one respect overwhelming, yet also proved to be enlightening. For example, consultation with Anthony L. Johnson's text *Sign and Structure in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot* (Pisa, Editrice Tecnico Scientifica, 1976) allowed a close reading of 'The Burial of the Dead' based upon a hypothesis of two oppositions that exist in the poem between a plane of carnality (bones and flesh) versus a plane of moisture (drought and water) which serve as emblems such as spirituality. This led to an examination of the text both thematically in terms of opposing states, as well as adopting a similar listing strategy, when initially identifying key concerns in the pre-production stage.

Second, whilst gaining an understanding of the modernist context of the poem, I found that critics such as Jacob Korg (1960), Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley (1992) provided perceptive readings of the text, in terms of locating its cultural positioning in relation to his implementation of Cubist strategies such as multiple perspectives (see Chapter Four). The poem embraces the experimental nature of avant-garde film, art and literature, by imaginatively montaging together what Robert Richardson defines as a cinematic "continuous succession of scenes and images which build up impressions which are neither complete or fully comprehensible until the end" (Richardson 1969: 108). Eliot's manipulation of time and space through a collage of separate filmic 'episodes' sourced from both high and low art are "superimposed to create a simultaneous effect" (Harvey 1990: 21) which demonstrates his awareness and appreciation of contemporary modern art.

However, Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley (1992) in *Reading the Wasteland: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation* are sceptical about Eliot's relationship to modernist art stating:

Eliot did not write much about modern art, and it is possible that he paid little attention to it... Certainly, it would be a mistake simply to group him with the Cubists, Futurists, or even with the Vorticists. At the same time, it is important to note that he shared the dispensational mentality of these artists, and even more than they, he realised that traditional notions of reality were no longer valid and that traditional models of knowing were inadequate (Brooker and Bentley 1990: 28).

Indeed, Eliot had high regard for the avant-garde style of his contemporaries, in particular, James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* that similarly employed the 'mythical method', by reinventing past myths to enlighten contemporary themes.<sup>17</sup> Eliot was also struck by the originality of Stravinsky's music for *Le Sacre du Printemps* (1913) which seemed to impersonate the modernist city experience and "...transform the rhythm of the steppes into the scream of the motor-horn, the

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<sup>17</sup> James Joyce's *Ulysses* was published the same year as *The Waste Land* in 1922. Eliot remarked in a letter to Mrs Jack Gardner on the 7th November 1918 "I admire *Ulysses* immensely." (Eliot 1988: 250) Indeed, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1921, Eliot wrote to the American writer Robert McAlmon, stating that "Joyce I admire as a person who seems to be independent of outside stimulus, and who therefore is likely to go on producing first-rate work until he dies" (Eliot 1988: 449).

rattle of machinery, the grind of wheels, the beating of iron and steel, the roar of the underground railway, and the other barbaric noises of modern life" (Gordon 2000: 176).<sup>18</sup>

The late publication of *The Letters of T.S. Eliot, Vol.I*, edited by Valerie Eliot in 1988 reveals that he admired the sculptor Edward Wadsworth; "a man whose work I like exceedingly" (Eliot 1988: 93), together with that of his colleagues Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis<sup>19</sup> and was aware of the major European artists of the time such as Pablo Picasso, Amedeo Modigliani, Henri Matisse, Augustus John and Walter Sickert. Peter Brooker in *Bohemia in London: The Social Scenes of Early Modernism* notes how "London agreed with him and he felt part of the Vorticist or as he termed it the 'cubist crowd'" (Brooker 2004: 146). The fact that Eliot was immersed in and supported by an extensive circle of artists and writers, which included Bloomsbury group figureheads such as Virginia and Leonard Woolf, and Lady Ottoline Morrell, meant that it seemed appropriate that my interpretation of Eliot's poem paid homage to its modernist art context and adopted particular stylistic techniques and thematic concerns (see Chapter's One and Four).

### **3. Why *The Waste Land*?**

The research led to an exploration and reassessment of my relationship to *The Waste Land* itself, in order to discover its initial fascination and how it had instigated the relationship between my own artistic practice and literature. I needed to ascertain what the poem meant to me and why I had in fact chosen this modernist text as a basis for my research. My first encounter with Eliot's poem was during English Literature Advanced level study, where I was immediately captivated not only by its incantatory, rhythmic language and startling surrealist imagery, but also by the collage effect of its appropriation of mythical, literary and cultural

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<sup>18</sup> Quoted by Lyndall Gordon who refers to Eliot's 'London Letters' in July and October to the *Dial*, lxxi (July-Dec.1921), 214, 452-3, and 'A Commentary', *Criterion*, iii (Oct. 1924), 5.

<sup>19</sup> In a letter to Mrs Jack Gardner on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 1918 he states: "I think that my friends Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis are the ablest literary men in London" (Eliot 1988: 250)

references which inspired me to produce a series of photographs.<sup>20</sup> The isolation of key phrases for study purposes led to an identification with particular lines or images that seemed to haunt me in a way I had not experienced before; "He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying" (l.328-9). In this sense I can identify with James Miller's direct reaction to the text in *T. S Eliot's Personal Waste Land: Exorcism of Dreams* (1977):

All my life-or so it seemed- I had been learning to live with *The Waste Land*. I must confess that I resisted it at first, but it was not long before I realized that the poem infected the way I looked at the world. Lines popped into my mind at the oddest moments, in the unlikeliest of places: "April is the cruellest month, breeding/Lilacs out of the dead land..."; "hurry up please it's time";..."These fragments I have shored against my ruins." *These* and other fragments lodged themselves deep in my psyche, and no doubt shaped my vision of experience, of the world (Miller 1977: 7).

The directness of my first encounter with *The Waste Land* alerted me of the fact that I establish a certain affinity with the literature that I choose, either metaphorically or emotionally, irrespective of its meaning. The theatre director, Katie Mitchell reveals that she also selects texts to adapt for the stage by their language and emotional effect (see Chapter One):<sup>21</sup>

The first thing that makes you interested in a piece of work is the quality of the words and at a very subjective level, they interest you or speak to you or articulate ideas that you are interested in (Campbell, 2007).<sup>22</sup>

In the radio four programme, 'The Waste Land and Modernity' (2009), Professor Lawrence Rainey, discussed the way in which critics were "keen to join up the dots", and explain the meaning of Eliot's poem. However, he highlighted the significance of the poem's auralty, concluding that perhaps it was not necessary

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<sup>20</sup> The poetic quality of the poem initiated an interaction between my art practice and interest in literature and I created a series of photographs of a woman on a deserted beach based on Eliot's poem for my 'A' level Art (1992). This emotional, thematic response to the poem was accompanied with a few handwritten quotations such as the lingering "And I will show you fear in a handful of dust" which reflected my own fears and anxieties experienced at a young age. My continued fascination with *The Waste Land* resulted in the production of another photographic sequence during my undergraduate study (1995), which focused on the metaphorical contrast between urban and rural 'waste lands' with the same isolated figure located within the setting of rural Dartmoor and then set against the backdrop of an urban dockyard.

<sup>21</sup> A comparison between Katie Mitchell's (2006) *Waves* production at the National Theatre, London and *The Waves* series of photographs (1996) will be debated in Chapter One, 'Models of Interpretation'.

<sup>22</sup> Talk on 'Waves' with Chris Campbell, Cottesloe Theatre, National Theatre, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Downloaded podcast, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2008. Available from <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/waves>.

that the poem was understood, but rather that it was the response of the individual reader that was most important as certain lines resonate and "stay with you".<sup>23</sup>

Melvyn Bragg commented later in his 'In Our Time' email newsletter how:

One of the things that I encountered for the rest of the morning was the relief that people felt at the admission, or even the claim, by Lawrence Rainey that there was no need to look for coherence in *The Waste Land*. If only they had been told that before! (Bragg 2009).

Maud Ellman reinforces this fact, suggesting that the poem, which "has been so thoroughly *explained*, is rarely *read* at all" (Ellman 1987: 91). This pertinent issue seems to dominate the reception of *The Waste Land* and was something to be considered during the production and critique of my interpretation of the poem. The freedom with which I had initially responded on a personal level was in danger of being overwhelmed by criticism, yet the importance of the suggestive nature of its imagery that was open to interpretation had to be acknowledged from the onset. The actress Fiona Shaw, who appeared in Deborah Warner's theatrical and film adaptations of Eliot's poem (see Chapter Three), admitted that she "didn't read any scholarship on *The Waste Land* before performing it" (Stein, 1997). In an interview with Jean Stein for Grand Street magazine she observes how:

He does a fugue-like poem on these two notions of water and rock, which people can interpret as they will... Eliot doesn't tell you what the water is. It's whatever people want the water to be. "The hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees / Drip drop drip drop." That changes in my mind often, I think about the city, the noise, the dryness of the city here, and the aridity of low expectation, people shopping in sales, going through racks of clothing to get another good deal to put on their bodies, wasting time between life and death (Stein, 1997).<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, Eliot's poem on the one hand represents something that I am extremely familiar with, yet on the other hand remains an enigma that provides endless fascination. My past history and connection with the text, together with its modernist context and stylistic features meant that it was an obvious choice to use

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<sup>23</sup> 'The Waste Land and Modernity', hosted by Melvyn Bragg, broadcasted on Radio 4, 26<sup>th</sup> February 2009.

<sup>24</sup> 'Illusions and Delusions' Fiona Shaw interview with Jean Stein for Grand Street Magazine, Issue 60 Paranoia, 1997. Available at <http://www.grandstreet.com/gsisues/g60/g60a.html> (27th April 2007)

as an exploratory source for understanding the self-representational and interpretive strategies within my arts practice.

#### **4. Heuristic Processes: The Interrelationship of Practice and Theory**

There is a certain difficulty in identifying and articulating the creative process in a rational and linear fashion. Indeed, I have found that there is a continual circularity and intertextuality both in the interdisciplinary nature of my research, and also in the relationship between theory and practice. As a female artist I am also conscious of the influence of my gender upon my way of working and the belittling attitude I have towards it. In one sense I thrive on a sense of order and have to structure my thinking to a certain extent so that I can comprehend what I am doing, although the actual creative process and critical research is somewhat unpredictable and perpetually ongoing. My working method is significantly intuitive, learning through testing out possibilities, which are either developed or abandoned. Theoretical references are pored over and digested, the fragments extracted like the literary quotations themselves and pooled into an overflowing 'library' of information and mulled over (see Chapter's One and Three). The research oscillates between periods of lull and periods of intensity,<sup>25</sup> between nervous uncertainty and bursts of perceptive insight.

In her attempt to reveal the hidden aspects of artistic production based upon interviews with female artists, curator and academic, Professor Liz Wells remarks how:

Research can feel messy, rather than methodological. 'Method in her madness' is a phase, which might have been coined to express something of the serendipity, and freedom of the associative, implicated. / All artists emphasised intuition and fluidity within project development (Wells 2000: 132).<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> I can identify with the analogy Virginia Woolf makes between life's intensities and periods of lull with the sea and its instability; "Now is life very solid, or very shifting?" (Diary, III, 4<sup>th</sup> January 1929), quoted by Kate Flint in her introduction to 'The Waves' (Woolf, 1992, xiii) London: Penguin.

<sup>26</sup> I was interviewed by Liz Wells about *The Waves* project on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1999 for *Shifting Horizons: Women's Landscape Photography Now* (2000) Exhibition tour: Midland Arts Centre, Birmingham, School of Art, Burslem, Stoke on Trent and Derby Museum & Art Gallery (2000-01).

Whilst this research set out to discover whether there was in fact a 'Method in my madness', attempts to adopt formulaic modes of discovery in my early experiments felt forced and the results proved disappointing, until a more open-ended approach through a 'making sense' of the work was adopted. Whilst Wells contemplates whether these qualities are particularly gender specific, she does, however, make alliances between gender and heuristic processes:

The fluidity of female experience is marked...Gendered experience is articulated with exploratory attitudes in which the intuitive and the emotional are acknowledged as central to visual experimentation (Wells 2000: 139).

It could be argued that the fluidity that Wells has identified could be assigned to the French feminist theorist's concept of *écriture féminine*, which embodies the openness of female sexuality and breaks away from conventions of syntax to become an overflowing stream of consciousness, that writes the body.<sup>27</sup> According to Hélène Cixous (1975) in her essay *The Laugh of the Medusa*; "Woman must put herself into her text...Her libido is cosmic, just as her unconscious is worldwide. Her writing can only keep going" (1975, cited in Jones, 1988: 85). Having initially struggled to put my creative thinking into words read aloud, of being "painfully out of breath" and "throw[ing] my trembling body into the air" (Easthorpe and McGowan, 1992: 152) to quote Cixous, the writing process itself could in some way respond to the fluid, open-ended nature of my creativity.

The interdisciplinary and interwoven nature of the research meant that the structure of this thesis was difficult to formulate, since there were so many crossovers between practice and theory. However, now that I have addressed the background context and motivations of my research, it seemed logical to begin in Chapter One, 'Models of Interpretation', with the obvious debates concerning the

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<sup>27</sup> See Luce Irigaray (1993) 'Women's Discourse and Men's Discourse' and 'Writing as a Woman' in *Je, Tu, Nous: Toward a Culture of Difference* (London: Routledge), Hélène Cixous (1986) 'Sorties' in *A Critical and Cultural Theory Reader*, (1992) edited by Anthony Easthorpe and Kate McGowan (Buckingham: Open University Press) and Ann Rosalind Jones (1988) 'Inscribing Femininity: French Theories of the Feminine' in Gayle Greene and Coppélia Khan (eds) *Making a Difference: Feminist Literary Criticism* (London: Methuen). I am also interested in Virginia Woolf's quest for an androgynous mode of writing, which she argues for in *A Room of One's Own* (1928).

adaptation from literature to film and its limitations when applied to arts practice. Questioning how faithful I should be to the original text by assessing the different latitudes of interpretation, led to an understanding that whilst these orthodox methods of adaptation provided an informative theoretical framework, they were not fully compatible with my own practice. This latitude is investigated through the analysis of my past photographic interpretation, *The Waves* (1996), in comparison with Katie Mitchell's multi-media theatre adaptation (2006). By interrogating my incentives for creating work derived from literature and evaluating my early experiments for *The Waste Land*, alternative fine art modes of working were discovered that were more sympathetic to Eliot's modernist text.

Chapter Two, 'Autobiography and Self-Representation', foregrounds the re-positioning of my research, notably the identification with the subversion of Eliot's impersonality theory, which led to the recognition of the work's autobiographical purpose. I suggest that literature is therefore used as a means of displacement that permits the recollection and visualisation of past traumatic experiences, framed by Jo Spence and Rosy Martin's re-enactment phototherapy (1986) and a Freudian psychoanalytical reading of the work. Having identified how literature is chosen to represent autobiographical experience, examination into how I chose to visualise the self within the work, within the context of female self-portraiture led to a discovery of multiple, evasive visual strategies within my arts practice (Joyce Tenneson-Cohen, 1979), enhanced by the employment of feminine metaphors (Gilbert and Gubar, 1979 and Horner and Zlosnik, 1990).

Chapter Three, 'The Waste Land', positions the research within the context of other fine art adaptations of Eliot's poetry, including films by Deborah Warner (1995) and John Smith (1999), Chris Marker's *Owls at Noon Prelude: The Hollow Men* (2005) multi-screen video work and Juan Muñoz's installation (1987). These variant examples of translation allow for the critical evaluation of my own interpretative

methods in terms of the difficulties I encountered, together with an analysis of the function of my contextual influences, in relation to Eliot's allusions.

Chapter Four, 'Analysis: Research Through Practice', evaluates each of the photographic and video works derived from *The Waste Land*, under three distinctive areas; 'A Modernist Framework', 'Inhabiting Place' and 'Transformations'. By cross-referencing the findings of this research, rather than analysing them chronologically, I propose that there are correlations between the interpretative methods and self-representational strategies that I employ. Emphasis of this research is, therefore, placed upon an active investigation and assessment of the creative process, and its engagement with relevant theoretical and contextual discourses, in order to understand the central issues arising from my practice.

## CHAPTER ONE: 'MODELS OF INTERPRETATION'

### 1. Film Adaptation: A Question of Fidelity, Latitude and Literacy

It is useful to recount the fundamental questions concerning the translation of literature, in particular, the novel into film, that drove my research at the very beginning, in order to chart the shift from prior concerns regarding the mechanisms and reception of film adaptation towards an understanding of the autobiographical and self-representational strategies employed in my practice (see Chapter Two). In the light of debates surrounding fidelity criticism, how faithful did I have to be to the original text? What are the differences between verbal and visual literacy, between reading literature, compared to film? Lastly, how much latitude is there in translation? What different modes of adaptation are available to the adaptor?

We need to firstly acknowledge the omnipresence of film adaptations within our culture as well as their benefits. Fifty years ago, George Bluestone recognised the dominance of the filmed novel in Hollywood, noting that about 40% of screenplays in production were adapted from novels, according to Variety's 1947 survey (Bluestone 1957:3), and more recently, Linda Hutcheon, drawing upon 1992 statistics, states that 85% of all Oscar winning 'Best Pictures' are adaptations (Hutcheon 2006:4). John Orr and Colin Nicholson refer to the literary adaptation as the 'picture book', which is either a faithful rendering of text or improves upon the original. At best, the 'picture book' "transforms the important narrative text into an enduring cinematic image" (Orr and Nicholson, 1992:4) and motivates the audience to read the original themselves. Ken Gelder emphasizes the way in which film adaptations "can have a much broader circulation than the literary source" (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999:170),<sup>1</sup> which could suggest that a significant number of viewers will be unaware of the extent of its fidelity to text. Film adaptation can make particularly dense or complex novels accessible through the process of

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<sup>1</sup> Gelder, K. (1999) 'Jane Campion and the Limits of Literary Cinema' in Cartmell, D. and Whelehan, I. (eds.) (1999) *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. London: Routledge, pp.157-171.

visualisation, as identified by André Bazin in his essay, 'Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest' (1948):

Although *The Idiot*, for example is very frustrating on the screen, it is undeniable that many potential readers of Dostoyevsky have found in the film's oversimplified psychology and action a kind of preliminary trimming that has given them easier access to an otherwise difficult novel (Naremore 2000: 22).<sup>2</sup>

John Naremore proposes that film adaptation criticism is closely linked to English Literature studies, which means that most theory is concerned with fidelity to the source text, or described in poststructuralist binary oppositions, such as, literature versus cinema or high culture versus mass culture (Naremore 2000: 2). Therefore, 'fidelity criticism' has been acknowledged as "the critical orthodoxy in adaptation studies" (Hutcheon 2006:7), whose dominance has been challenged from various perspectives (McFarlane 1996:194; Cartmell 2002:19). Robert B. Ray in his essay 'The Field of 'Literature and Film' (2000) makes a case for the futility of fidelity criticism, since it repeatedly poses the same question of: "how does the film compare with book? Getting the same unproductive answer (The book is better)" (Naremore 2000:44).<sup>3</sup> However, it is worth considering Hutcheon's claim that the informed audience undergoes a process of recognition whilst watching the film due to the fact that "adaptation...is an ongoing dialogical process...in which we compare the work we already know with the one we are experiencing" (Hutcheon 2006: 21).<sup>4</sup>

Deciding upon the latitude of translation is the main challenge faced by the adaptor. Ken Gelder recognises how the film adaptation should be "faithful and independent, monogamous and promiscuous, restricted or compromised by the

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<sup>2</sup> André Bazin 'Adaptation, or the Cinema as Digest' (1948) in Naremore, J. (2000) *Film Adaptation*. London: Athlone Press, pp.19-27. This essay was first published in French in *Esprit* 16:146 (July 1948), pp.32-40.

<sup>3</sup> Robert B. Ray 'The Field of "Literature and Film"' in Naremore, J. (2000) *Film Adaptation*. London: Athlone Press, pp.38-53.

<sup>4</sup> Hutcheon later draws an analogy between the changing or mutating nature of film adaptations that respond to previous incarnations with Darwin's theory of evolution (Hutcheon 2006: 31), which serves as a reminder that the audience will bring their own knowledge and preconceived ideas to my interpretation of *The Waste Land*, just as my own response will in turn be influenced by other practitioners attempts of visual translation.

source novel, and yet 'separate' or autonomous from it, all at the same time" (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999:170). Liz Hoggard (1998) asks: "Which works better – the literal translation or the bold reworking?" in her critique of two film adaptations,<sup>5</sup> but goes further to question; "How do you create successful visual equivalents for a world we already have inside our heads?...Won't the magic be lost in translation?" (Hoggard 1998: 34).

The limitations of cinema, compared to literature, is a much contested area in film adaptation criticism (Bluestone 1957, Wagner 1975, Cohen 1979, Orr and Nicholson 1992) and will be discussed later, although the inability of film to translate this internal 'magic' was firstly detected by Virginia Woolf in her influential essay 'The Cinema' (1926).<sup>6</sup> Linda Hutcheon draws attention to how Woolf refused to recognise the character of *Anna Karenina*, because "she insisted that, as a reader of the novel, she knew Anna 'almost entirely by the inside of her mind – her charm, her passion, her despair.'" (1926: 309). Without that inside information, we would miss the essence of the character" (Hutcheon 2006: 58).

Indeed, Hutcheon's recent survey, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006) concludes how most scholarship has been focused on "cinematic transpositions of literature" (Hutcheon 2006: xii).<sup>7</sup> She regards 'fidelity criticism' as redundant and takes a wider perspective of how adaptations respond to previous adapted versions (Naremore 2000),<sup>8</sup> as well as across other media and genres, for instance, operas, comic books, video gaming and theme parks to focus upon the three ways in which we engage with stories: 'telling', 'showing' and 'interacting with', viewed in the

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<sup>5</sup> Reviewing Alfonso Cuarón's *Great Expectations* (1998) and Gillian Armstrong's *Oscar and Lucinda* (1998) in 'Words into Pictures', *Blueprint*, April 1998, p.34-35.

<sup>6</sup> However, Eliot had a more derogatory viewpoint of early cinema. In his 1922 essay, 'Marie Lloyd' he criticises the psychological and social effects of cinema going:

He will now go to the cinema, where his mind is lulled by continuous action too rapid for the brain to act upon, and will receive, without giving, in that same listless apathy with which the middle and upper classes regard any entertainment of the nature of art. He will also have lost some of his interest in life (Kermonde 1975: 174).

<sup>7</sup> Robert B. Ray also notes a lack of scholarship on the relationship between film and poetry (Naremore 2000: 39), although this will be considered later in the light of my early *Waste Land* video experiments and comments made by Richardson (1969), Potter 1990) and Shklovsky (1994).

<sup>8</sup> James Naremore talks of how these films "weave together multiple prior texts" (Naremore 2000:12).

context of postmodernist debates surrounding intertextuality (Hutcheon 2006: xiv).<sup>9</sup> Hutcheon's comprehensive study also brings to light the proliferation of critical studies of specific adaptations from novel to film (evident in earlier studies by Cartmell and Whelehan, 1999 and Naremore 2000), suggesting that this is partly due to the impact of George Bluestone's seminal work *Novels into Film* (1957), which provided detailed analysis of six Hollywood films from 1935-1949.<sup>10</sup> Hutcheon believes the problem is that case study analysis privileges the source text over the adaptation (Hutcheon 2006: xiii) and that in academic criticism, contemporary popular adaptations are most often put down as derivative or secondary (Hutcheon 2006: 2).

However, Bluestone perceptively realised that the two mediums were distinctly different, stating that it is:

Insufficiently recognised that the end products of novel and film represent different aesthetic genera, as different from each other as ballet is from architecture. The film becomes a different *thing* in the same sense that a historical painting becomes a different thing from the historical event, which it illustrates (Bluestone 1957/2003: 5).

Therefore, it is unproductive to consider which is better, the original source text or the film adaptation, since it becomes autonomous once it is transformed into another medium. However, Naremore asserts that the difficulty in Bluestone's argument arises in the fact that it "is not so much that it leads to the wrong conclusions, but that it takes place on the grounds of high modernist aestheticism" (Naremore 2000: 6). Hutcheon raises the pertinent issue of whether popular narratives differ from high art ones:

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<sup>9</sup> Hutcheon (2006) points out that appropriation is not a new phenomena: "The Victorians had a habit of adapting just about everything – and in every possible direction; the stories of poems, novels, plays, operas, paintings, songs, dances, and *tableaux vivants* were constantly being adapted from one medium to another and then back again" (Hutcheon 2006:xi).

<sup>10</sup> These choices were dictated by access to the shooting script and were *The Informer*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Ox-Bow Incident*, *Madame Bovary*. James Naremore recognises Bluestone's *Novels into Film* (1957) as the first academic analysis of film adaptation in America (Naremore 2000:6).

It does seem more or less acceptable to adapt *Romeo and Juliet* into a respected high art form, like a ballet or opera, but not to make it into a movie...If an adaptation is perceived as "lowering" a story...response is likely to be negative (Hutcheon 2006: 3).

Various efforts have been made to summarise the main issues surrounding film adaptation into different categories of criticism or adaptation method. James Naremore argues that academic writing on adaptation focuses on two approaches; firstly, the 'Bluestone approach', which is a "metaphor of translation" concerned with the comparison of literary versus cinematic form and fidelity to the source. Secondly, he identifies an 'Auteurist approach' which takes the form of a "metaphor of performance", questioning fidelity but emphasizing the differences between the two mediums (Naremore 2000: 7-8).

These two critical approaches are by no means definitive and other theorists, such as, Karen Kline (1996) and Linda Hutcheon (2006), have created further types of classification. Kline in her essay, 'The Accidental Tourist on Page and on Screen: Interrogating Normative Theories about Film Adaptation' (1996), detects 'Four Critical Paradigms of Film Adaptation' in her analysis of different forms of film criticism: that of '*translation*' (in terms of fidelity to the text), '*pluralist*' (retaining traces of the novel, whilst becoming independent), '*transformation*' (treating text as source material to create new work) and '*materialist*' (the impact of cultural and commercial forces on adaptation).<sup>11</sup> In comparison, Hutcheon (2006)<sup>12</sup> distinguishes three critical perspectives, the first two: '*formal entity or product*' and '*process of creation*' overlap with Kline's paradigms, but the last definition: the '*process of reception*' is concerned with the audience's existing knowledge of previous adaptations.

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<sup>11</sup> Kline, K. (1996) 'The Accidental Tourist on Page and on Screen: Interrogating Normative Theories about Film Adaptation.' *Literature/Film Quarterly*. Vol.24 (No.1), pp.70-83. Kline illustrates each approach with examples of film criticism, together with an analysis of Lawrence Kasdan's adaptation (1988) of Anne Tyler's novel *The Accidental Tourist* (1985), which she claims evidences elements of all four critical paradigms.

<sup>12</sup> Linda Hutcheon (2006) 'Beginning to Theorize Adaptation: What? Who? Why? How? Where? When?' in Hutcheon, L. (2006) *A Theory of Adaptation*. Abingdon & New York: Routledge, pp.1-32.

Although these categories outlined by Naremore, Kline and Hutcheon relate to the critique of film adaptations, their theories could be equally applied to the actual translation process itself. By comparison, Geoffrey Wagner (1975) identified three modes of adaptation: '*transposition*', '*commentary*' and '*analogy*' (Wagner 1975:221).<sup>13</sup>

The first of these will be the *transposition*, in which a novel is directly given on the screen, with the minimum of apparent interference. This has been the dominant and most pervasive method used by Hollywood throughout its history (Wagner 1975: 222-3).

In comparison to his successors, this method is closely aligned with Kline's paradigm of '*translation*' and relates to the faithful renditions of literary classics where the film was "envisaged as a book illustration" (Wagner 1975: 223). Wagner observed that in traditional Hollywood transpositions, there was "an implicit guarantee that you would see something of Dickens or Thackeray intact, or else you would be distinctly disappointed when you left the cinema" (Wagner 1975: 227). According to Kline, the '*translation*' critic accepts that adaptations must condense the original, but expect the film to remain faithful to its central themes, characters and genre (Kline 1996: 70-71).

The second method of adaptation identified by Wagner's is '*commentary*', "where an original is taken and either purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect. It could also be called a re-emphasis or re-structure" (Wagner 1975: 223). Wagner referred to films such as Visconti's *Death in Venice* (1971), or Ken Russell's interpretation of DH Lawrence novels as examples, whereby the adaptor changes the character's motivations or role, alters the ending or introduces subtle shifts in time. This mode closely resembles Kline's '*pluralist*' concept, where changes and omissions are made, yet the film retains the "novel's mood, tone, and values" (Kline 1996:72). Comparisons can also be made with Linda Hutcheon's '*formal entity or product*', which can involve either "a shift of medium (a poem to a film) or

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<sup>13</sup> I initially encountered Wagner's theory during master's level study, which informed the production of *The Waves* (1996).

genre, or a change of frame and therefore context: telling the same story from a different point of view" (Hutcheon 2006: 7). This latitude of interpretation<sup>14</sup> is comparable with a BBC television costume drama, adapted by Andrew Davies, who:

reshapes or invents scenes where he feels the original novelist was restricted...he has described adaptation as interpretation akin to teaching from another angle, or having conversations with texts that still exist for others to interpret (Rolinson 2003/2008).

However, the third most radical mode coined by Wagner is the "*analogy* [which] must represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making *another* work of art" (Wagner 1975: 227), for example through dramatic shifts in time. The adaptor's intention is prevalent and the completed work cannot be "a violation of a literary source, since the director has not attempted...to reproduce the original" (Wagner 1975: 227).<sup>15</sup> However, Wagner warned that '*analogies*' which become so distorted that they are unrecognisable from their source text cannot be considered adaptations. This category is similar to Kline's '*transformation*' paradigm, where critics "consider the novel as raw material which the film alters significantly, so that the film becomes an artistic work in its own right" (Kline 1996:72), or Linda Hutcheon's '*process of creation*', whereby the "act of adaptation always involves both (re-) interpretation and then (re-) creation" (Hutcheon 2006: 8).<sup>16</sup>

## 2. Cinematic Language: Visual And Verbal Literacy

The fundamental difference between the novel and film is between the written word and the visual image itself (Bluestone 1957/2003: vi). However, one way of bridging this gap is "...by considering both word and image as signs aimed at communicating something...each part of a larger system of signification" (Cohen 1979:88). Although most film adaptation criticism focuses upon the differences

<sup>14</sup> Karen Kline's definition of '*Pluralist*', Hutcheon's '*Formal entity*' or Wagner's '*Commentary*'

<sup>15</sup> Responding to Wagner's definition, Giddings, Selby and Wensley suggest that *Apocalypse Now* (1979) is an analogy, since it is broadly dramatised from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1902) (Giddings, Selby and Wensley 1990:11).

<sup>16</sup> Both Hutcheon and Wagner contemplate the motivations behind the act of adaptation, suggesting that restoration, as well as homage are distinct possibilities. Geoffrey Wagner observes how film adaptations often perform "the task of restoration" improving upon "weak" or "second grade" fictions, such as Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* from American thriller writer Dashiell Hammett (Wagner 1975: 221).

between verbal and visual media, we are reminded that they also share distinctive characteristics, such as, a concern with interpretation (Richardson 1969:68, Orr and Nicholson, 1992:2). It is important to remember that "Seeing comes before words" (Berger 1972:7) and that language itself describes what has already been seen. As Herbert Read argued:

Reduce the art of writing to its fundamentals and you come to this single aim: to convey image by means of words. But to convey images. To make the mind see. To project onto that inner screen of the brain a moving picture of objects and events, events and objects moving towards a balance and reconciliation of a more than usual state of emotion with more than visual order. That is a definition of good literature...It is also a definition of the ideal film (cited in Richardson 1969:13; Wagner 1975: 11).<sup>17</sup>

However, whilst it is true that literature and film share the same communicative aims, they are still, as Bluestone detected, different entities and many distinctions have been made between the identification processes involved in viewing a film compared to reading a novel. Geoffrey Wagner defined film as "external seeing", whereas the novel is "internal" (Wagner 1975:114). George Bluestone explained the differences between visual and verbal interpretation in terms of a semiotic reading:

whether the words in a novel come to me as non-verbal images or as verbal meanings, I can still detect the discrete units of subject and predicate. If I say, "The top spins on the table," my mind assembles first the top, then the spinning, then the table...But on the screen, I simply perceive a shot of a top spinning on a table, in which subject and predicate appear to me as *fused* (Bluestone 1957:59).

Keith Cohen supported Bluestone's claim, explaining how in the novel, the reader constructs a mental picture of a character or a scene (the signified), which is evoked by a verbal sign (the signifier), whereas in film the "signifier and signified are identical (the sign for the table is a table)" (Cohen 1979: 76), leaving the viewer to reflect upon its significance. Therefore, a reverse process of signification and interpretation occurs between a visual and verbal 'reading', which is supported

<sup>17</sup> Read, H. (1945) *A Coat of Many Colours*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp.230-231. This notion of literature's reliance on visual communication is reinforced by Joseph Conrad, who is habitually quoted saying that it is "...by the power of the written word to make you hear, to make you feel - it is above all to make you see" in Conrad, J. (1942) *A Conrad Argosy*. New York: Doubleday Doran. p.83 (Cited in Bluestone 1957: 1; Cohen 1979: 34; Giddings, Selby and Wensley 1990:1).

by Giddings, Selby and Wensley's observation that film uses iconic signs, whereas the novel is symbolic (Giddings, Selby and Wensley 1990:1). Linda Hutcheon stresses the need to consider the differences between 'showing' and 'telling' since she believes that each has their own modes and specificity (Hutcheon 2006: 23).

This essential difference is applied to more specialist examples by Bluestone, who argued that "...what is peculiarly filmic and what is peculiarly novelistic cannot be converted without destroying an integral part of each" (Bluestone 1957:63), referring to what he believed to be an absurdity of attempting to translate Joyce to film, or Chaplin to literature. Film adaptation criticism is inundated with debates surrounding the limitations of film, although Hutcheon discredits these popular clichés. One of the most contested views she identifies is that interiority is the terrain of the 'telling' mode, whilst exteriority is delivered best by the 'showing' and 'interactive' mode (Bluestone 1957: 47; Wagner 1975:183; Giddings, Selby and Wensley 1990: 19; Orr and Nicholson, 1992: 2). Bluestone claimed that film was unable to depict interior mental states since:

The film having only arrangements of space to work with, cannot render thought, for the moment thought is externalised it is no longer thought. The film, by arranging external signs for our visual perception, or by presenting us with dialogue can lead us to *infer* thought. But it cannot show us thought directly. It can show us characters thinking, feeling, and speaking, but it cannot show us their thoughts and feelings. A film is not thought; it is perceived (Bluestone 1957: 47).<sup>18</sup>

Hutcheon refers to the common consensus that only 'telling' can do justice to irony, symbols and metaphors, which are untranslatable in other 'showing' or 'interacting' modes (Bluestone 1957:60-1; Giddings, Selby and Wensley 1990:17; Garratt Winston, 1973: 58). Virginia Woolf was one of the earliest critics to comment on the film adaptation process in her 1926 essay 'The Cinema', where she noted how filmmakers were "dissatisfied with...the passage of time and the suggestiveness of reality" (Woolf 1926/1993: 55) and were keen to borrow from literary classics:

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<sup>18</sup> This is the reason Bluestone argued why dream sequences on film are disappointing, since spatial devices like the appearance of a separate image within the frame or the employment of superimposition are too rooted in filmic conventions (Bluestone 1957/2003: 48).

"What could be easier and simpler? The cinema fell upon its prey with immense rapacity and to this moment largely subsists upon the body of its unfortunate victim" (Woolf 1926/1993: 55).

Woolf recognised that due to cinema's infancy, it was restricted by the literalness of translation, hampered by their "impoverished representation in the form of indicial signs...A kiss is love. A smashed chair is jealousy. A grin is happiness. Death is a hearse" (Woolf 1926/1993:56). She believed that the complexity of verbal language meant that its metaphors could not be sufficiently visualised by the cinema:

Even the simplest image: "my love's like a red, red rose, that's newly sprung in June," presents us with impressions of moisture and warmth and the flow of crimson and the softness of the petals inextricably mixed and strung upon the lift of a rhythm which is itself the voice of passion and the hesitation of the love. All this, which is accessible to words, and to words alone, the cinema must avoid. (Woolf 1926/1993: 57)

Bluestone, Giddings, Selby and Wensley all agree with the untranslatable differences between film and literature identified by Woolf. However, Sharon Ouditt interprets Woolf's essay as "not a case for prosecution, but an impressionistic account of the development and potential of the cinema" (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999:146).<sup>19</sup> Both Ouditt and Hutcheon (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999: 147; Hutcheon 2006: 3) accept that whilst Woolf criticised the simplicity of early literary film adaptations, she also recognised that film had the potential to develop its own form: "the cinema has within its grasp innumerable symbols for emotions that have so far failed to find expression" (Woolf 1926/1993:56). This is demonstrated by Woolf's recollection of her experience of viewing the German Expressionist film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919), directed by Robert Wiene, where she remarks how a shadow "shaped like a tadpole" that menacingly appears behind him could represent a visual metaphor, therefore, disputing the dominant discourses regarding the limitations of the cinematic language: "For a moment it seemed as if

<sup>19</sup> Sharon Ouditt, 'Orlando: Coming Across the Divide' in Cartmell, D. and Whelehan, I. (eds.) (1999) *Adaptations: From Text to Screen, Screen to Text*. London: Routledge. pp.146-156.

thought could be conveyed by shape more effectively than by words" (Woolf 1926/1993:56).

Ouditt acknowledges Woolf's role in the critical understanding of early cinema, claiming that she was consciously exploring the "emotive and formal capacities of the moving image and, very probably, considering them for her own work" (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999:147).<sup>20</sup> Ouditt convincingly describes how Woolf adopted many cinematic devices within the novel, including the use of flashbacks, dissolves, close-ups or changes in focus, which demonstrates both her critical appreciation of, and experimentation with, film language, to create a new literary form. Maggie Humm in *Modernist Women and Visual Cultures* (2002) shares this opinion, emphasizing how Woolf "vividly adopts a more cinematic vocabulary of close-ups – 'the very quiver of his lips' – and she understands how the filming of everyday objects, for example, 'pebbles on the beach' can function as a visual metonymy of character emotions" (Humm 2002: 188).<sup>21</sup> Humm goes further to suggest that Woolf's technique of "juxtaposing emotions through montage" (Humm 2002: 189) actually foresaw Sergei Eisenstein's 'overtonal montage' film theory (1929),<sup>22</sup> which is echoed by Robert Fairthorne who recognises that Eisenstein's carefully integrated film montages share "a verbal parallel in the methods of James Joyce" (O'Pray 1996: 41).<sup>23</sup>

Many critics assert that the cinematic quality of experimental modernist literature, by authors like Dos Passos, Faulkner, Joyce and Woolf, which dispensed with the

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<sup>20</sup> Ouditt refers to a specific scene from *Orlando* (1928) that describes the impossible vista from an oak tree comprised of nineteen counties, which she believes to be a clear example of a cinematic panning shot with changes in focus (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999:150).

<sup>21</sup> For an account of the differing versions of Woolf's key essay and the extent of her contextual awareness see Maggie Humm 'Modernist Women and Cinema' in Humm, M. (2002) *Modernist Women and Visual Culture*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p.185-191.

<sup>22</sup> See Eisenstein's essays 'A Dialectic Approach to Film Form' (1929) for a definition of montage in terms of spatial and temporal conflicts, 'The Filmic Fourth Dimension' (1929) for a the emergence of overtone montage and lastly, 'Methods of Montage' (1929) for a clear outline of the differences between metric, rhythmic, tonal, overtone and intellectual montage film techniques in Eisenstein, S. (1951) *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*. London: Denis Dobson. Contextual research for the early work in *Room One*, 'Burial', particularly *I Knew Nothing* (2006) and *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006) was in part influenced by Eisenstein's films *Strike* (1924) and *October* (1928) and his concept of metric montage and the employment of superimposition. See Chapter Four, 'Analysis: Research Through Practice'.

<sup>23</sup> Robert Fairthorne (1933) 'The Principles of Film' in O'Pray, M. (1996) *The British Avant-garde Film 1926-1995: An Anthology of Writings*. Luton: John Libbey Media, University of Luton, pp.37-47.

limitations of realist fiction, coincided with the advent of early film (Bluestone, 1957:13, 61; Cohen 1979:6,120,126; Orr and Nicholson, 1992:4), with Harris Ross questioning: "didn't the novel shift from realism to impressionism, at least partly in response to film?" (Ross 1987: 2). Keith Cohen in *Film and Fiction: The Dynamics of Exchange* (1979) noted how modernist literature exploited cinematic techniques, such as, discontinuity and fragmented perspectives by referring to Woolf's attempts to expand the present through "...the rekindling of an image, experience, or feeling buried deep in the vaults of memory" (Cohen 1979:126) in *To the Lighthouse* (1927), or in the cinematic quality of Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).

Neil Sinyard in *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation* (1986) argues that the excitement of modern fiction's response to film was due to:

a feeling that the film could free them from what they saw as some of the more tedious responsibilities of the novelist (storytelling, the precise observation of everyday trivialities, entertainment) and allow them to develop the novel in much more interesting, esoteric areas - linguistic experimentation, mythological accretion, psychological complexity (Sinyard 1986: vii).

However, the extent to which film influenced modernist literature is brought into question by Geoffrey Wagner, who pointed out that other experimental novelists like Proust, James, Conrad and Kafka had previously depicted cinematic modes, particularly streams of consciousness within their texts (Wagner 1975: 11).

Despite this contentious argument regarding the origin of experimental fiction, in her analysis of Sally Potter's film adaptation of Woolf's novel *Orlando* (1992), Ouditt acknowledges the fact that due to its modernist style, the process of translation was consequently easier for Potter:

Although she wasn't, in a literal sense, a screenwriter, Woolf's consciousness of the interplay between word and image, her openness to the capacities of form to convey meaning, her visual imagination and interest in multiple perspectives, make this modernist text quite a gift for Potter (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999:156).

In terms of fidelity to Woolf's novel, Ouditt remarks how Potter develops her own interest in gender duality, transposing Woolf's thematic interests directly to screen. Potter adopts the same mocking tone as Woolf, depicted by Orlando's (the actress, Tilda Swinton's) interjections delivered straight to camera with the gender restrictions imposed upon her suggested by Orlando's costume and her/his surrounding architecture. According to Kline's definitions, you could argue that *Orlando* adopts a 'Pluralist' approach, signified by, for example, Potter's revision of the novel's ending, where Orlando is pictured with a daughter, rather than a son, thus sacrificing her lineage. According to Ouditt, the standard length of the film, compared to Woolf's dense biography, has meant "omissions, condensations and inventions" have been made, which echoes Wagner's earlier definition of his second adaptation mode, 'commentary' where the original is altered in some way (Wagner 1975: 227):

We have seen some aspects of the way in which Potter takes up some of Woolf's points, and either transposes them directly, translates them into a different kind of semiotic unit, or adds to them by dint of cinematic practices that rely on knowledge of the careers of the actors involved (Cartmell and Whelehan, 1999:155).

### **3. Adaptation Methods Case Study: Sally Waterman *The Waves* (1996) and Katie Mitchell *Waves* (2006)**

Ouditt's analysis of Potter's film, *Orlando* prompted me to investigate the implications of adapting a modernist text further by comparing my past photographic interpretation of Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves* (1996),<sup>24</sup> with Katie Mitchell's multimedia theatrical production of *Waves* (2006).<sup>25</sup>

As a modernist text, *The Waves* (1931) dispenses with the traditional forms of the realist novel. Instead, the six characters establish themselves by their own thought patterns, and it is through their fragmented streams of consciousness that we trace

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<sup>24</sup> See [www.sallywaterman.com](http://www.sallywaterman.com) for images and project information for *The Waves* (1996)

<sup>25</sup> *Waves*, directed by Katie Mitchell seen at the Cottesloe Theatre, National Theatre, London on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2007 and 27<sup>th</sup> August 2008. The production toured to Leeds, Salford, Bath, Dublin, The Hague, Luxembourg and New York 2007-2008.

their development from childhood to middle age. The novel's poetic, visual language reflects the pervading sense of English melancholy with the "roaring waters upon which we build our crazy platforms" forming the underlying rhythm of the sea in the novel drawing an analogy between life's intensities and periods of lull and the rise and fall of the waves.

In retrospect, I have realised the extent to which my interpretation of *The Waves* is an autobiographical response to the novel, based upon my personal experience of moving to London after my parents divorce and feeling alienated, yet lured by the energy of the city, whilst at the same time feeling nostalgic for my past rural life on the Isle of Wight. The theatre director, Katie Mitchell, shares my emotional connection to the source material (Campbell, 2007),<sup>26</sup> stating how she was similarly drawn to the quality of the language or particular imagery: "which burned themselves onto my imagination" (Kernode, 2008) (see Introduction). In contrast to Ouditt's assertion that modernist text's allow for a smoother transition from the verbal to visual, due to its filmic qualities, Mitchell contemplates the novel's impenetrability by recounting how she remembered *The Waves* being difficult to understand as an undergraduate student, due to the lack of a cohesive story, together with its indefinable characters, which made it in her opinion "impossible to stage because there is not a single thing to hold onto" (Campbell, 2007).

The main challenge that Mitchell admits she faced when adapting Woolf's novel for her own theatrical production, was the interiority of *The Waves*:

All the text is thoughts inside characters heads. We knew we weren't going to be able to speak any of the text live like you normally do. We had a hunch that we would use film and video as a way of articulating that (Campbell, 2007).

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<sup>26</sup> Talk on 'Waves' with Chris Campbell, Cottesloe Theatre, National Theatre, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2007. Downloaded podcast, 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2008. Available from <http://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/waves>. See 'Introduction'.

Mitchell's visual solution was to structure the production upon the construction of a series of sets on stage that were filmed using digital video and outputted live to a projection screen above, using innovative, yet simple lighting and props. The filmed footage depicted the character's thought processes through action, but were externalised by the voiceover of another actor, separating each character's visual and verbal representation.<sup>27</sup> The overall illusion created by the "deconstruction of the novel and the theatrical method [which] made process and product visible simultaneously" (Mitchell, 2008), placed the audience as editors in control of creating their own version of events by observing either the close-up composite projection above, the chaotic mechanics of the shoot below, or anticipating the next scene which was being constructed simultaneously.<sup>28</sup>

Whilst Mitchell devised this multimedia method,<sup>29</sup> as way to "race through and capture the fragmented essence" of Woolf's interior monologues (Rebellato, 2008),<sup>30</sup> I likewise formulated my own technique to communicate these streams of consciousness within my own photographic sequence, through the posing of my 'characters', and by combining image and text. Although I was dealing with the still rather than moving image, in a response to George Bluestone's earlier assertion that film "cannot render thought" (Bluestone 1957: 47), I tried to emphasise the importance of the 'thinking subject' in the work to replicate the individuality of

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<sup>27</sup> The suggestion of time passing was created by pre-recorded video footage of a beach scene from dawn to dusk to symbolize the novel's interludes together with writing key phases such as 'Two years Later', onto a blackboard, like silent movie inter-titles. This was enhanced by the employment of foley sound effects, such as the sound of footsteps on gravel or doors slamming, which resulted in a heightened experience and was reminiscent of a radio play, providing an interdisciplinary dimension.

<sup>28</sup> There is a similarity between Mitchell's and my own visual interpretation in terms of poetic, modernist aesthetics, especially that of composing close-up abstract images that only show parts of the body and face.

<sup>29</sup> Mitchell acknowledges the theatrical training she received from two Stavinskian teachers, which established "a very concrete methodology" (Campbell, 2007). Mitchell's process is similar to film production, working collaboratively with the actors and her production designer and videographer, whilst I work alone in all creative capacities.

<sup>30</sup> In response to Chris Campbell's question of whether her approach could be applied to other texts, Mitchell emphasized how she devised this multimedia technique in order to "solve" *The Waves* (Campbell, 2007). However, her use of live video feed was further developed for her later production of *Some Trace of Her*, 'inspired by' Dostoevsky's *The Idiot*, performed at the Cottlesloe Theatre August-October 2008. Seen 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008.

Woolf's monologues, photographing each character alone in either a real or imaginary landscape.<sup>31</sup>

The inclusion of edited handwritten quotations from the novel written directly underneath each image functioned in a similar way to Duane Michals photographic image/text sequences and either described the action taking place, or revealed the character's inner thoughts.<sup>32</sup> These quotations allowed for the illumination of Woolf's metaphorical language whilst also emphasizing a personal response, which was highlighted in an interview with Liz Wells, curator of 'Shifting Horizons: Women's Landscape Photography Now' exhibition (2000):

Poetics may also resonate through graphic style. For instance, in incorporating quotes, partly to keep the reference to *The Waves* live, Sally decided to use her own handwriting to express personal involvement. She comments that the editing process, including allying quotes with images, is just as important as the original intention: overall she wanted to express a sense of 'English sadness', a restrained melancholy (Wells 2000: 137).<sup>33</sup>

My interpretation of *The Waves* followed a systematic method (which I adopted for subsequent projects), beginning with a re-familiarisation with text and forming identification with specific imagery, lines or scenes, informed by literary criticism and contextual influences (see Chapter Three).<sup>34</sup> Having decided upon the

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<sup>31</sup> I found Sarah Moon's allegorical photographic interpretation of Charles Perrault's fairytale *Little Red Riding Hood* (1983) a useful reference during the development of *The Waves*, since whilst she had replicated key moments in this familiar tale, she had still managed to produce a seductive open-ended narrative through the creation of her dense 'film stills' that replaced the forest with foreboding city streets. Moon, S. (1983/2002) *Little Red Riding Hood*. Mankato, Minnesota: Creative Editions. See Max Kozloff 'Through the Narrative Portal' in Kozloff, M. (1987) *The Privileged Eye: Essays on Photography*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press for a discussion of Moon's ambiguous interpretation and the potential of the photographic 'film still', alongside the work of Cindy Sherman and Mac Adams.

<sup>32</sup> For example, the quotation beneath the photograph of Rhoda walking along the tube station platform, which reads; "I like the passing of face and face and face, deformed, indifferent." Other quotations used suggested a more omnipresent narrator's voice, evident in the image of one character, Bernard, walking towards an ancient folly ruin in the phrase: "Life is tolerable; pain is absorbed in growth. We are swept on by the torrent of things grown so familiar that they cast no shadow", where the 'shadow' referred to in the text is reiterated by the character's shadow, cast by the bright sunlight in the photograph.

<sup>33</sup> Taken from an interview with Liz Wells about *The Waves* project on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 1999 for the 'Shifting Horizons: Women's Landscape Photography Now' publication (2000) and touring exhibition; Midland Arts Centre, Birmingham, School of Art, Burslem, Stoke on Trent and Derby Museum & Art Gallery (2000-01)

<sup>34</sup> For *The Waves* project, artists such as Julia Margaret Cameron, Duane Michals, Cindy Sherman and Sarah Moon were influential. Despite Dostoevsky being the main influence for Katie Mitchell's production of *Some Trace of Her*, she has also acknowledged the importance of Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Mirror* (1975) since "he edits shots in a non-linear way, close to how we experience memory." (Rebellato, 2008) as well as the mid-nineteenth century photographs by Lady (Clementina) Hawarden, Julia Margaret Cameron (Kermode, 2008). This contextual framework was expanded for the *Waste Land* project, responding to Eliot's excessive use of allusions in the poem. See Chapter Three, part six 'Re-contextualisation: The Role of Allusions'.

adaptation method, (for example, by concept, character or by scene) and selected the final quotations, I was then able to storyboard and shoot the required material, carefully considering the final images in relation to the text using a pin-board technique. The editing stage of the project marked a crucial point of resolving issues surrounding the work's fidelity to the source and anticipating the audience's interpretation. Liz Wells accurately summarized my concerns regarding the process of translation at this time:

This led her to examine a number of critical issues, for instance, what processes are central to the translation from one form, the novel to another, the image? What is reading about and how does 'reading' a photograph differ from reading a novel? How best to approach a text for adaptation purposes, in terms of narrative, or character? (Wells 2000: 134).

Apart from an appreciation of the novel's modernist style, form and imagery, I sympathized with the philosophical concerns raised in Bernard's final monologue, such as, the analogy made between life and the rhythms of the sea and the concept of multiple identities. I firstly formed an identification with three (out of six) characters, which in hindsight, I now believe represented different facets of myself: Bernard, the observational storyteller, with a melancholic outlook on life, Jinny, who is preoccupied with self-image and ageing, but keen to immerse herself in city life and specifically, Rhoda, whose shyness and self-effacement was something I related to. Previously this was not fully recognised as a means of self-representation, but seen in terms of empathy with the text:

Sally articulates the personal elliptically: *The Waves* was made when she had just arrived in London and felt 'lost in a sea of people', in other words, she identified with the characters in terms of obsessions, emotions, personal feelings (Wells 2000: 139).

My interpretation of Woolf's novel concentrated not only upon these characters, but also the recurring childhood allegorical 'motifs' which were associated with each of them, (such as Rhoda's reflections that showed that she had "no face")<sup>35</sup> which in

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<sup>35</sup> Mitchell's adaptation also retains the repetition of motifs associated with each character, with key images being recognisable in both interpretations (such as the image of Rhoda's puddle).

retrospect became representative of particular memories or anxieties that I connected with. The final series of visual 'motifs' was presented in a fragmented, nonlinear sequence of twenty eight photographic images and text, comprised of visual metaphors that depicted either everyday city experience (for example, commuters on London underground) or imaginary, symbolic spaces (a washed-up photograph on beach).

By comparison, Mitchell's theatrical adaptation of *The Waves* was more faithful to Woolf's novel since it featured all of the characters from the novel.<sup>36</sup> However, Mitchell version contains major omissions,<sup>37</sup> such as Rhoda's suicide and Bernard's final death,<sup>38</sup> which reminds us of Robert Stam's assertion in 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation' (2000) that the source text contains a "series of verbal cues that the adapting text can then take up, amplify, ignore, subvert, or transform" (Naremore 2000: 68).<sup>39</sup> Mitchell also made significant alterations, such as, making Woolf a character that delivers the voiceover for each interlude to imply an autobiographical dimension and radically changing to the novel's structure by re-ordering and amalgamating chapters and monologues, redistributing phrases to other characters and isolating and combining fragments of text. Notably, chapters six and nine and the last interlude are omitted from Mitchell's interpretation altogether, which means that the production ends rather abruptly, with no

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<sup>36</sup> Katie Mitchell reveals how Nicholas Hytner, director of the National Theatre came to see one of those workshops and said that he thought "it was really interesting but it was a pity that the characters and the narrative were a bit unclear" and he felt that should be drawn out a bit (Campbell, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> For instance, the novel's distinctive London imagery, which could be due to the restrictions of the video set-ups, which unlike the interludes, did not feature pre-recorded video footage.

<sup>38</sup> Whilst my own photographic interpretation dispenses with both biographical information and the main events from the novel, most of these are represented in Mitchell's production, such as the different stages of education, the characters' meetings in a restaurant and at Hampton Court, Percival's death and Rhoda and Louis' affair. The sense of time passing was also prevalent in Mitchell's work, structured by the blackboard titles framing key moments from childhood to middle age (e.g. 'Nursery', 'London', '15 years Later') and reinforced by the projected seascape interludes that were in dispersed between the live action that depicted the rising and setting of the sun. In comparison the passage of time is not portrayed within my photographic sequence, which focuses upon early adulthood to represent a particular moment in my life as twenty-one year old student at Goldsmiths College.

<sup>39</sup> Robert Stam 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation' in Naremore, J. (2000) *Film Adaptation*. London: Athlone Press, pp.54-76.

summary of each of the characters or events or even any of the philosophical insights provided by Bernard.<sup>40</sup>

In an interview with the film critic, Mark Kermode,<sup>41</sup> Mitchell responds to questions of fidelity by emphasizing the difference between the two artefacts, suggesting that each reader creates their own film in their head, reinforcing earlier debates raised by Bluestone that the adaptation will become a separate entity by the very process of translation. Mitchell is defensive of her precise technique and recognises the varying latitudes of adaptation available:

Actually I'm studying it really, really carefully. So for me it's very delicate to make a very old play from a much earlier time live very clearly and brilliantly now...In a way every director makes a huge range of interpretational decisions; the costuming, the casting, the translation of the text, the design of it...and its just different degrees of intensity of interpretation, so I suppose in mine its just a little extremely interpreted, but its almost as if there's me, extremely interpreting it and everyone else doing very discrete, beautiful, true to the text thing. But that's not the case, they're all interpreting it, but they're interpreting it in a different direction (Kermode, 2008).

I would, therefore, classify Mitchell's *Waves*, as 'pluralist' (Kline, 1996), since it makes certain innovative alterations, yet still retains notable similarities to Woolf's novel. The shift of medium from novel to multimedia theatrical production could suggest that it is a 'formal entity or product' (Hutcheon, 2006) and its purposeful "re-emphasis or re-structure" defines it as a 'commentary' on the text (Wagner, 1975). In terms of Wagner's three modes of adaptation, I previously considered my photographic version to be a 'commentary', since it had formed a personal engagement with an original source material. However, in hindsight, having carried out a close comparison with Mitchell's theatre production, my interpretation of *The Waves* could occupy a space between 'commentary' and 'analogy' due to the fact that it omits principal parts of the novel, yet preserves much of its recognisable

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<sup>40</sup> There is also an overemphasis, invention or expansion of certain details to create new modes of communication within Mitchell's production, such as Neville's lust for Percival depicted by a suggestive banana eating episode, or the tap-dancing interlude by the whole cast ensemble.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Katie Mitchell by Mark Kermode on 'Some Trace of Her', BBC 2 The Culture Show, Series 5, Episode 9 Screened on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008. Available from [http://www.bbc.co.uk/cultureshow/videos/2008/07/s5\\_e9\\_mitchell/index.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/cultureshow/videos/2008/07/s5_e9_mitchell/index.shtml)

motif imagery and metaphorical landscapes to become "another work of art" (Wagner, 1975: 227).

When questioned by Chris Campbell about the implications of her chosen titling of the advertised production: "Waves. Suggested by Virginia Woolf's novel 'The Waves'. Devised by Katie Mitchell and the company", Mitchell's answer is more akin to Wagner's definition of 'analogy' in that the criticisms of fidelity she encountered were not legitimate since:

It was a piece of work that was inspired by *The Waves*, but it wasn't trying to do necessarily all of *The Waves* in a perfect way...We spent hours whether it should be inspired by or not, it was quite a lengthy process to find the right verb (Campbell 2007).

Like Mitchell, I have found it difficult to choose the correct terminology to describe the final adapted product, although I avoid the word 'adaptation' because of its conventional film associations and prefer instead the term 'interpretation' since it implies a freer form of translation. Interestingly, Linda Hutcheon reminds us that according to its dictionary definition, 'to adapt' means, "...to adjust, to alter, to make suitable...I take it as no accident that we use the same word – adaptation – to refer to the process and the product" (Hutcheon 2006: 7). Having now acquired a clearer understanding of the varying means of adapting a literary text within both conventional and experimental formats, it is necessary to apply these insights to the production processes of my own early video experiments derived from *The Waste Land*.

#### **4. *The Waste Land*: Early Experimental Works (November 2004-September 2005)**

Although my recent comparative analysis with Mitchell's theatrical production of *Waves* (2006) proved enlightening, it is important to note that this insight was not available at the time of my initial digital video experiments at the beginning of my

doctoral study.<sup>42</sup> This meant that I was reliant upon my past experience of interpreting *The Waves* (1996), alongside subsequent photographic projects that I had produced between 1997-2004 to use as the basis for my investigation.<sup>43</sup> By using this body of work as a starting point, referring to both process and product, I wanted to establish my relationship to the text and evaluate the procedures I went through. At this particular stage of the research, focus was placed upon understanding my interpretative method, since the work's relationship to self-representation had not been recognised (see Chapter Two).

Consequently, my interpretation of *The Waste Land* began by assessing the poem through the process of re-familiarisation and identifying the poem's main themes or purpose, underpinned by literary criticism. In the light of these findings, I was able to decide upon which section to start my initial video experiments, having gained an insight into the structure and development of the poem as a whole. Predictably, I decided to begin with part one, 'The Burial of the Dead',<sup>44</sup> since it embodied most of the poem's central themes, such as life cycles, fertility, emotional sterility and the contrasting urban and rural 'waste land' imagery. Therefore, it seemed logical to start at the beginning and work through the poem in a chronological fashion, aiming to establish an adaptation methodology through the process of experimentation that could then be applied to the rest of Eliot's work.

Once I had decided upon the order of the translation process, I was preoccupied by the question of fidelity to the original text, informed by critical debates surrounding adaptation from novel to film. Although I was already aware of *The Waste Land's* changing critical reception and had established a critical understanding from prior study, I was conscious of the possibility of becoming overwhelmed or distracted by the sheer volume of literary criticism and the audience's prior expectations,

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<sup>42</sup> I saw Mitchell's production of *Waves* at the Cottesloe Theatre for the first time on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2007, and then again during its repeat performance season on 27<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

<sup>43</sup> These projects were mentioned in the introduction, but include *Through the Banisters* (1997), *The Other Side of a Mirror* (1999), *Forest Fears* (2000), *The Turn of the Screw* (2001), *Journey Home* (2003) and *Making our Mark* (2004). See [www.sallywaterman.com](http://www.sallywaterman.com) for further details.

<sup>44</sup> Please refer to this section of *The Waste Land* poem in Appendix A.

reminding me of Katie Mitchell's admission that "the aficionados are terrifying" since what is imagined by the reader cannot match what is produced by the adaptor (Kermode, 2008). However, by acknowledging its presence and referencing certain critics who provided more of an art historical or metaphorical reading of the text,<sup>45</sup> I did not become intimidated by its critical history, which meant that my creative response to the poem was not restricted and I was able to approach the text in a more open-ended manner, reassured of Bluestone's belief of the "metamorphic process which transforms pieces of fiction into new artistic entities" (Bluestone 1957: 219).

Linda Hutcheon refers to the dilemma of fidelity to the text faced by the character/screenwriter Charlie Kaufmann in Spike Jones's film *Adaptation* (2002), concluding that:

What is involved in adapting can be a process of appropriation, of taking possession of another's story, and filtering it, in a sense, through one's own sensibility, interests, and talents. Therefore, adaptors are first interpreters and then creators (Hutcheon 2006: 18).

Although I did have prior concerns about consciously interrogating my interpretive process during production, I began by working with the assumption that the project sought some form of engagement with a textual stimulus, approaching the text initially from a variety of different angles and applying the same methods I had initially used when interpreting *The Waves*. Having scrutinised part one, 'The Burial of the Dead', I established ten different 'scenes' within it: the changing seasons, recollection of a summer meeting, a confused multi-cultural identity, Marie's memory of a sledge ride, a rural arid wasteland, the Irish girl in Wagner's 'Tristan und Isolde', the Hyacinth Girl and references to a failed relationship, Madame Sosostri's predictions, city commuters and Stetson's reference to fertility rites.

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<sup>45</sup> The main influences were; Schwartz, S. (1985) *The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot and Early Twentieth Century Thought*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press; Brooker, J. S. and Bentley, J. (1992) *Reading the Wasteland: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press; Johnson, A. L. (1976) *Sign and Structure in the Poetry of T.S. Eliot*. Pisa: Editrice Tecnico Scientifica; Korg, J. (1960) 'Modern Art Techniques in *The Wasteland*', in Martin, J. (ed.) (1968) *A Collection of Critical Essays on 'The Wasteland'*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall and Robert Richardson, 'Waste Lands: The Breakdown of Order' in Richardson, R. (1969) *Literature and Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, (Chapter 8: p.104-118).

However, rather than producing a literal adaptation that featured all of these fragments, I considered the idea of taking a thematic response to the poem in a similar way to previous adaptations, which could include references to rural and urban imagery, failed relationships, the role of memory, or superstition. This important deliberation of a thematic approach was later revisited and re-assessed, consequently forming the basis of my final works (see Chapter Three and Four).<sup>46</sup> However, the prevailing question that preoccupied me at this stage was whether it was more appropriate to visualise the overall mood of the text, select an individual scenario, or instead focus more explicitly on a particular sentence or image.

This issue was resolved after consultation with *The Wasteland: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts, including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*, edited by Valerie Eliot (1971) which provided an appreciation of the poem's development. I therefore, decided to dissect the text by selecting lines that suggested its key themes, simulating Ezra Pound's technique,<sup>47</sup> by re-editing and re-inventing the text, halving the material in the first section by editing the seventy six lines down to only thirty eight. This seemingly drastic method could be compared to the way in which I selected individual sentences from *The Waves* to use as quotations written underneath each photograph and could also be compared to Linda Hutcheon's definition of a 'process of creation' (Hutcheon 2006: 8). Even though I was re-enacting Pound's method, I did feel as though I was being disobedient to the source in some way, through interference with an established literary work. However, it was a liberating exercise that brought a critical understanding of both the meaning of the poem, as well as connecting to the main elements that I felt to be important.

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<sup>46</sup> The other option that I contemplated at this initial stage was to focus on one of the many characters that appear in this section, such as Marie, the Hyacinth girl or Madame Sosostriis, but I rejected such an approach, since I recognised its limitations.

<sup>47</sup> Harriet Davidson notes how Ezra Pound's radical editing of Eliot's poem ruthlessly cut three narrative sections of the poem, including the rawness of drunken scenes, whoring, urinating and bigotry (124). See Harriet Davidson: 'Improper Desire: Reading The Waste Land' in Moody, D.A. (1994/2004) *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.121-131. Pound and Eliot exchanged correspondence about the poem between 24<sup>th</sup> December 1921 and early January 1922 (Eliot 1971: 2-3) See Eliot, V. (ed.) (1971) *The Wasteland: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts, including the Annotations of Ezra Pound*. London: Faber & Faber for reproductions of the poem's evolution.

Having carried out this radical editing procedure influenced by Pound, I identified six 'scenes' within part one, 'The Burial of the Dead'; Spring imagery (l.1-4), Marie's sledge ride (l.14-17), waste land imagery (l.19-30), the Hyacinth girl sequence (l.37-42), Madame Sosostris' tarot card prediction (l.52-56) and the London commuters (l.60-66). These edited sections were then photocopied and placed on my studio wall where I was able to gain a familiarity with them over time. The resulting short video montages combined documentary footage with staged scenes, such as, closely framed snowdrops with commuters walking over London Bridge but I felt that I needed a more rigorous framework to assess these provisional works.

Therefore, having acquired a better understanding of the debates surrounding film adaptation theory, I decided to test out these early experiments for the *Waste Land* project more specifically against Geoffrey Wagner's three modes of adaptation identified in *The Novel and the Cinema* (1975),<sup>48</sup> in order to investigate whether film adaptation theory could be applied to experimental artists video. First, I began by creating a 'transposition' of 'The Burial of the Dead', that literally illustrated the text, faithfully replicating my accompanying voiceover. The resulting three-minute video sequence montaged together 'expected' images with each changing scene,<sup>49</sup> but I was disillusioned by this direct form of translation and considered it to be ineffective, since the voiceover dominated the work and it became too predictable to view.<sup>50</sup>

Although I was conscious that I was performing a formality by testing out each of Wagner's adaptation methods in this systematic way and becoming frustrated in the process, I did appreciate that it was an important method to follow, since it

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<sup>48</sup> I centred my next phrase of video experiments on Wagner at this particular time, since I had prior knowledge of his theories from Masters level study and was simultaneously carrying out further research into film adaptation theory.

<sup>49</sup> Such as shots of buds emerging through dry earth to depict "April is the cruellest month", still photographs of mountains and sledge rides to illustrate Marie's frightening experience and crowds of commuters over London Bridge who "had not thought death had undone so many".

<sup>50</sup> I was also concerned with whether to include the text explicitly within the work or to find more subtle ways to represent it and therefore experimented with various techniques, such as edited voice-over's, inter-titles, superimposed text over image and filming the actual printed page of the poem

would facilitate a comprehension of the visual translation process. Despite my dissatisfaction with this first 'transposition' experiment, I had begun to think more about the latitude of translation, questioning whether there was any need to both 'show' and 'tell' (Hutcheon 2006: 23, 4) and whether I did, in fact, need to include every line, either visually or aurally, since it would become a literal reading of the text and anchored the meaning too readily.

At this stage I was also drawing upon other alternative filmic interpretations of literary texts,<sup>51</sup> particularly Peter Greenaway and Tom Phillip's film *A TV Dante The Inferno Cantos I-VIII* (1989).<sup>52</sup> Although this adaptation of Dante's seminal poem was experimental in terms of the editing techniques they had used, (for instance, the creative use of filtration and collage), the actual visual imagery that was employed was quite literal and illustrated the text faithfully, so that the crowds of naked souls in Dante's hell were pictured exactly as they were described by the accompanying voiceover of Dante and his guide, Virgil. However, what I did find interesting about this version was the interjection of commentaries from various 'experts', such as, David Attenborough, talking directly to the camera and providing an explanation of a certain mythical beast or the meaning behind the nine layers of hell, superimposed on the continuum of the film's narrative.<sup>53</sup> Despite the literalness of *A TV Dante The Inferno*, which could classify it as a 'translation' (Kline, 1996) or a 'transposition' (Wagner, 1975), the production's re-structuring and over-layering of informative documentary means that it could be perceived as a 'commentary' (Wagner, 1975), 'pluralist' (Kline, 1996) or 'formal entity or product' (Hutcheon, 2006), although it is not so easily defined by these categories, since like Mitchell's production of *Waves* (2006), it sought out innovative strategies, whilst also retaining the source text's recognisable features.

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<sup>51</sup> Such as Richard Eyre's film *V* (1987), that visualised Tony Harrison's 1985 poem and Tina Keane's *Faded Wallpaper* (1988) based on Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899) and Alice Anderson's *Bluebeard* (2007) based upon Charles Perrault's fairytale.

<sup>52</sup> *A TV Dante: The Inferno Cantos I-VIII* (1989) Dir. Peter Greenaway. UK/Netherlands. KGP Productions/Channel Four/ Dante BV/ RM Associates. Colour. 35mm. 88 min.

<sup>53</sup> This was an innovative way of providing additional contextual information to an audience less familiar with the work and could be compared to Eliot's provision of the notes at the end of *The Waste Land*.

Having completed the '*transposition*' experiments I realised that this particular adaptation mode would not be appropriate for my own interpretation of Eliot's poem, since its fragmentary nature deemed it stylistically incomparable with conventional film adaptations. Therefore, I moved onto Wagner's second mode of '*commentary*', where the source text is "purposely or inadvertently altered in some respect" (Wagner 1975: 223). Inspired by the looser latitude of translation employed by Greenaway, I needed to adopt a more allusive, metaphorical response that was more suggestive of the multilayered referential quality of Eliot's poem. I tried removing the voiceover from this first sequence, having become disheartened by this 'doubling' effect and was encouraged by the result, since the viewer was able to grasp the overall meaning or thematic concerns. This procedure allowed me to consider alternative possibilities, and informed the creation of adaptation video sequences, having realised the impact of such subtle changes on the audience.

The reassessment of the existing video footage and the selection of specific sections or imagery that I had considered successful marked a return to Pound's radical editing method, together with my usual intuitive mode of working, by visualising elements which I had formed a connection with. It, therefore, became apparent that a '*commentary*' of the text would mean some form of anticipated personal response or homage to *The Waste Land*, in line with prior interpretations. Importantly, this marked a crucial stage in the development of the work since a significant amount of the material that adopted this method, later evolved into some of the work within room one, 'Burial' (see Chapter Three and Four).<sup>54</sup>

The last experiment using this adaptation method, 'No.6. Interpretation: 10 Mini Narratives' marked a return to the original breakdown of the first section of the poem, however, this time I isolated each of the separate episodes or scenes within 'The Burial of the Dead' by interspersing a few seconds of empty black screen

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<sup>54</sup> For example, the depiction of the Hyacinth Girl and the 'heart of light' later became *I Knew Nothing* and the commuters filmed over London Bridge initiated the 'City' video within the *Urban Shadow Walk* series.

between each of them. This separation prompted the final decision to create a series of individual video art works, rather than producing a montage film of the poem. By detaching myself from the literalness of translation I decided that I would develop a series of key images that struck a personal resonance to create a more experiential, fragmentary form resulting in a collection of individual video works that would interact with one another within a gallery installation. This insight reminded me of Cheryl Potter's realisation of the similarity between poetry and film:

Sequences of images in film...function like sequences of words in poetry – they arouse feeling and suggest meaning according to the way they are presented and ordered and according to the rhythm, flow and accumulation of associations. Repetition is as important as surprise. The audience needs time to absorb and reflect on what they are experiencing. Piecing together meanings, which arise from separate but connected images is a gradual process (Potter 1990: 22).

Having underpinned my research upon the debates arising from the adaptation of the filmed novel, it was important to realise that I was interpreting a poetic modernist text through the means of experimental artist video, which were in some respect stylistically harmonious. Robert Richardson claimed that "the modern novel and modern painting come closest to the forms and methods of the dramatic film" (Richardson 1969:16) reminding us that since Henry James, the novel had become more concerned with its visual qualities, (as previously discussed in relation to Virginia Woolf). In his overview of the European avant-garde, Michael O'Pray observes how:

This symbolist aesthetic, where the image expresses a feeling, flows from nineteenth century poetry (Verlaine, Rimbaud, Mallarme, Baudelaire et.al) into modernism through Ezra Pound's 'imagiste' poetry and T. S Eliot's early poems and...Maya Deren's films (O'Pray 2003: 11).<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Michael O'Pray (2003) 'The 1920's: The European Avant-gardes' in O'Pray, M. (2003) *Avant-garde Film: Form, Themes and Passions*. London: Wallflower Press. pp.8-25. The American experimental filmmaker Stan Brakhage, a contemporary of Deren's can also be included since he was inspired by modernist's such as Gertrude Stein and Ezra Pound. His film *Wedlock House, An Intercourse* (1959) features negative printing, rapid cuts and repetition, reminiscent of earlier work by Leger and Man Ray.

Indeed, Richardson believed that amongst modern literature, poetry was closer to film and compared Pound's imagist poem *In a Station of the Metro* (1913) written in the style of a Japanese haiku, with a montaged sequence by Sergei Eisenstein, highlighting film's ability like poetry to "present a stream of images which make a point or create an effect without logical connection or explanation" (Richardson 1969:52). Viktor Shklovsky in his essay 'Poetry and Prose in Cinema' (1994) supports Richardson's theory, stating that frequent correlations have been made between film and verse, (Hill and Church Gibson 2000: 63),<sup>56</sup> emphasizing the "recurrence of images", "rapid change of frames", "double exposure" or the "transformation of images into symbols" as "poetic devices" (Hill and Church Gibson 2000: 64). Apart from my initial research into conventional film adaptation, my early experiments were also influenced by the subversive, poetic language of European avant-garde films (see Chapter Four),<sup>57</sup> together with a critical understanding of the varying latitude of film poems, such as, the literal Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand's *Manhatta* (1920), that faithfully illustrated the cityscape in Walt Whitman's poem *Leaves of Grass* (1900) and Man Ray's surreal *L'Étoile de Mer* (1928), loosely inspired by a Robert Desnos poem, *La Place de L'Étoile*.<sup>58</sup>

Commenting on the inter-relationship between film and poetry, Richardson drew an interesting correlation between Eliot's poem and Federico Fellini's film; *La Dolce Vita* (1960) in his essay, 'Waste Lands: The Breakdown of Order' (1969):

If one thinks of *The Waste Land* as a poem written as a film-like sequence of images and of *La Dolce Vita* as a filmic poem, a film designed with the complexity, structure, and texture of a modern poem...Each is episodic. *The Waste Land* made up of five detached and individually titled sections...*La Dolce Vita* is also composed of semi-detached sequences, long scenes which

<sup>56</sup> Shklovsky, V. (1994) 'Poetry and Prose in Cinema' in Hill, J. and Church Gibson, P. (eds.) (2000) *Film Studies: Critical Approaches*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp.63-64.

<sup>57</sup> French avant-garde filmmakers, such as Bunuel, Clair, Cocteau, Dulac, Epstein, Gance, Leger and Man Ray, together with Soviet Union filmmakers, Eisenstein and Vertov, framed the development of my research. See Peter Wollen (1975) 'The Two Avant-gardes' in O'Pray, M. (1996) *The British Avant-garde Film 1926-1995: An Anthology of Writings*. Luton: John Libbey Media; University of Luton, pp.133-143.

<sup>58</sup> The evolution of film poem's from *Manhatta* (1920) to Maya Deren's *Mesher of the Afternoon* (1943) and Margaret Tait's *Aerial* (1974) amongst others is traced in Gareth Evans 'Only Connect: The Secret Art of Film Poems', *Filmwaves* No.9, pp28-30, in connection with the BFI touring programme *Film Poems* (October 1999), curated by Peter Todd.

are not always clearly related to one another...There is little strict continuity in either work (Richardson 1969:107-108).<sup>59</sup>

Indeed, Geoffrey Wagner observed how Richardson viewed them as contemporary 'analogies' of the biblical tale *Ecclesiastes* (Wagner 1975:227), since both works tell a modern story against an historic background: *La Dolce Vita* against the backdrop of Rome's ruins and monuments and *The Waste Land* against the wealth of classical and mythical reference (see Introduction), adopting montage in order to communicate concepts surrounding the loss of order:<sup>60</sup>

Through juxtapositions, Fellini dramatizes the disintegration of modern life against the massive and orderly scenery of Rome, and Eliot shows the triviality of modern life by setting the sordid scenes of the present against the beauty of a fabric woven of literary reference (Richardson 1969: 115).

The short film, *Faded Wallpaper* (1988)<sup>61</sup> by artist filmmaker Tina Keane, shares this approach, representing an 'analogy' of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899). The film successfully captures the heightened mental state of the novel's female character, who is controlled by her husband and entrapped within a room to rest after childbirth, through a textural collage effect, that combines animated stop-motion of a hand peeling away layers of patterned wallpaper, superimposed with found still imagery. Keane creates an effective metaphor that communicates her interest in madness, memory and the passing of time through the gradual unveiling of these layers of wallpaper and the face that appears within it, accompanied by a tormented sound-scape of repetitive wailing, operatic voices juxtaposed with a calmer voiceover. When asked about the relationship between her completed film and the novel,<sup>62</sup> she was adamant that she was not illustrating

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<sup>59</sup> Richardson notes the early twentieth century's absence of an ordering principle in poem's such as Yeat's *The Second Coming*, Eliot's *East Coker* and Pound's *The Cantos*, together with films like Robert Wiene's *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919) and Luis Bunuel and Salvador Dalí's *Un Chien Andalou* (1928) (Richardson 1969: 106).

<sup>60</sup> Richardson regards both Tiresias and Marcello, the reporter in Fellini's film as 'seers', in that the substance of the poem and film are viewed through their perspective, such as the sexual encounters, which are considered as "meaningless" or "wearisome."

<sup>61</sup> Tina Keane, *Faded Wallpaper* (1988) 18 minutes, colour 16mm. A short (but not very representative) extract is available to view at [http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/tina\\_keane/faded\\_wallpaper.html](http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/tina_keane/faded_wallpaper.html). The film evolved from a series of performances at Tate Britain (1984) and the Serpentine Gallery (1986).

<sup>62</sup> I attended a talk by Tina Keane at the Toynbee Studios in London on 5<sup>th</sup> January 2008, organised by Artsadmin where she screened *Faded Wallpaper*. In retrospect, this work influenced the sound-scape for

the text, but was rather using it as the initial starting point or concept and then going beyond the novel to create something that everyone could relate to, suggestive of Kline's mode of 'transformation' or Hutcheon's 'process of creation'. This sense of universality is emphasized by her focus upon the central issue of madness and identity, which is then supported by other sources, including texts by Marina Warner. This inter-textual interpretive method is the reason why she renamed the work *Faded Wallpaper* in order to imply a certain distancing from the source text, which is reminiscent of Katie Mitchell's considered titling of *Waves* (2006).<sup>63</sup>

Having realised the potential of this alternative thematic mode of adaptation, I embarked upon my third 'analogy' video sequences, which would attempt to "represent a fairly considerable departure for the sake of making *another* work of art" (Wagner 1975: 227). I, firstly, considered the idea of memory and recalled events, drawing upon the reference to Marie's sledge ride, together with the meeting of the hyacinth girl in the Hofgarten.<sup>64</sup> These 'analogy' sequences focused more specifically on the 'waste-land-scapes' in the poem,<sup>65</sup> and concentrated on assembling a library of video and photographic material that included my own experience of travelling through London, derelict buildings, the river Thames, desolate landscapes, and nature footage, to suggest the changing seasons.<sup>66</sup>

The application of this freer adaptation method resulted in the production of more successful work by establishing the use of stylistic methods, especially superimposition, to visualise Eliot's impressionistic episodes and capture the Cubist

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*Hushing the Room Enclosed*, which was exhibited at the Viewpoint Gallery, Plymouth College of Art in April 2008.

<sup>63</sup> Other examples of this titling technique that distances the adaptation from its source are Katie Mitchell's theatre production, *Some Trace of Her* (2008), based on Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot*; Bill Viola's video installations *Love/Death: The Tristan Project* (2006), based upon Wagner's opera *Tristan und Isolde* and Marker's film *Owls at Noon Prelude: The Hollow Men* (2005), based on T.S Eliot's poem. I also employed this method for the titling of the individual rooms in *Waste Land*. See Chapter Three.

<sup>64</sup> This concept of recalled memories later influenced the *PastPresent* (2005) photographic work.

<sup>65</sup> This concept of a 'waste-land-landscape' was developed by an animated sequence of stark black and white photographic still images of desolate Dartmoor landscapes and close-ups of barren trees that slowly dissolved to overlap with each other and served as a metaphor to illuminate the sense of foreboding in the poem.

<sup>66</sup> This work called *Eternal* which featured four 'tempographs'; moving yet static framed short video clips of snowdrops, cherry blossom, close-up of corn and Autumn leaves on a tree all blowing in the wind, instigated the grid formation seen in the later *Urban* and *Rural Shadow Walk* projections.

sense of 'multi-perspectivism' identified by Brooker and Bentley (Brooker and Bentley 1990: 11). This was demonstrated in the overlaid video sequence of the passing street from Trafalgar Square to Oxford Street shot from a bus that was made in response to research on the *flâneur* and the modernist city experience (see Chapter Four).<sup>67</sup> However, by focusing on a thematic 'analogy' of the poem, I had to be careful of creating work that was too distanced from the original source material, since there would be no need for the poem at all and the work would become another entity altogether.<sup>68</sup> This meant that work, such as, the superimposed 'Street Life' analogy sequence was further developed as a separate piece of work altogether and became *Passing Through* (2005), inspired by the city films of Vertov, Ruttmann and Sheeler and Strand rather than work produced for *Waste Land*.

However, my final 'analogy' experiment, *Speak, Think, Do* (August 2005-February 2006) was instrumental to my research, since it was the most open-ended piece of work that I had completed so far. It attempted to communicate the underlying modernist psyche that Eliot was trying to reveal in the poem, transporting the words of the paranoid female character from part two, 'A Game of Chess' into a twenty first century context. The short two-minute video sequence superimposed close-up footage of mussels clinging to the rock with graffiti written on a derelict building. By creating visual metaphors based on thematic concerns identified within the poem, the work allowed the audience to make new alliances through the inclusion of the repetitive, obsessive words of the voiceover,<sup>69</sup> which could be suggestive of emotional entrapment or disintegration, emphasized by the subjective

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<sup>67</sup> Modernist city influences will be discussed in chapter four in relation to the *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006), although it is important to note the essays Charles Baudelaire's 'The Painter of Modern Life' (1863) and Virginia Woolf's 'Street Haunting' (1930) and city films by Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) and Walther Ruttmann, *Berlin: The Symphony of a Great City* (1927) as being critical in the development of these thematic responses to Eliot's text.

<sup>68</sup> Concerns about whether the work was becoming a separate entity if it was loosely based upon source material and whether there was in fact a need for the text was raised by Jeff Collins, Lecturer in Art History, University of Plymouth, who observed that "the translations perform increasingly as new texts" in his RDC2 MPhil Transfer internal moderator's report (28/6/06).

<sup>69</sup> *Speak, Think, Do* was conceived as I was formulating the final works for part one, 'Burial of the Dead' and featured a fragmented, edited voiceover that included the following lines in a random, repetitive way. The seductive quality of the voiceover was influenced by artists Saska Olde-Wolbers, Patrick Keiller and Chris Marker. It was later re-invented as *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008) (lines.111-114/131/133-134).

roaming camera that followed the contours of the rock or traced the patterns of the graffiti. The piece was successful, due to the fact that it was an evocative, non-literal interpretation and did not reiterate exactly what is seen, in other words, there is no need to show *and* tell.

The emphasis of the research at this stage was practice-led, with questions and concepts emerging through the video experiments themselves, which were then re-interpreted in the light of film adaptation theory and contextual research on modernism. Having started my interpretation of Eliot's poem intuitively, informed by Pound's editing techniques before repositioning the process towards a more formulaic method led by Wagner's three modes of adaptation, it was interesting to detect a rejection of a literal visual translation and a consequent shift towards a non-literal, thematic interpretation of the text. Apart from initiating an interest in the re-structure of the poem, the final '*analogy*' experiments had marked the importance of adopting a personal connection to the text, which had been previously established with *The Waves* project. However, visualisations of experienced environments in both the city and on the Isle of Wight allowed for an autobiographical focus to emerge, which sought to represent a form of self-portraiture (see Chapter Two).

By adopting Wagner's theory as a methodological framework for my experiments, I was able to 'make some sense of' the creative process, and despite being frustrated by the limitations of these modes, I felt that the work would not have evolved in the way that it did, I had not chosen this systematic route. It became clear from the analysis of both my early *Waste Land* experiments and the two interpretations of Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves*, that only the looser modes of conventional film adaptation theories can be applied to experimental film or video works derived from literature, and that these distinctive categories are by no means definitive, with hybrid interpretations existing between these suggested modes. Wagner himself

admitted that whilst his theories were not fixed, he hoped that such definitions could provide a better understanding of film adaptation:

These three modes of phrasing fiction in film form may not be exhaustive; but they can help us clarify meaning in each, and appreciate the norms of both. We can become better viewers by knowing what is happening to us in this way (Wagner 1975: 230-1).

## CHAPTER TWO: 'AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND SELF-REPRESENTATION'

### 1. The Re-Positioning of Research: An Autobiographical Acknowledgement

Once my connection to *The Waste Land* was established and the evaluation of the visual translation process, informed by film adaptation theory, had resulted in a shift towards a non-literal, thematic interpretation of the text, it seemed appropriate to assess whether the work was a homage to the poem, or whether it was in fact an autobiographical reading of the source material. This judgement was instigated by the identification of shared biographical experiences with Eliot after consultation with Lyndall Gordon's biography, *T.S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* (2000),<sup>1</sup> such as, his troubled marriage (with my parents divorce), Vivienne's poor health, (compared to my mother's similar health problems) and Eliot's experience of being a city commuter and his frustration with his job at Lloyds bank (corresponding with my own frustration with full time employment infringing upon my creativity).<sup>2</sup> This made me realise that it was not only *The Waste Land* that I had formed alliances with, but that I also had an interest in Eliot himself. This insight led me to consider the question: do I identify with the authors I select? Is my selection process influenced by shared biographical facts, or am I solely concerned with the content and stylistic concerns of the chosen text?<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gordon's biography, together with James Miller's text *T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land* (1977) and Maud Ellman's *Poetics of Impersonality: T S Eliot and Ezra Pound* (1987) were instrumental studies that allowed the recognition of the autobiographical significance of my practice to emerge. Peter Brooker's study *Bohemia in London: The Social Scene of Early Modernism* (2004) also provided a useful survey of Eliot's life and his artistic circle and the couple's "shared anxieties...of sexual incompatibility, money worries, illness, and the as yet unachieved ambition for him to be a great poet" (Brooker 2004: 136). I read Gordon's biography in June 2005, having been made redundant. This experience initiated an autobiographical focus to the work and led to the production of my *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006); filming my daily walk to the train station, as well as the walk that Eliot would have made over London Bridge that he refers to in his poem. See Chapter Four 'Analysis: Research Through Practice'.

<sup>2</sup> I particularly associated with Eliot's nervous breakdown in September 1921, which led to him taking three months extended sick leave from Lloyds bank and recuperating at a Swiss Sanatorium, where he completed the last section of *The Waste Land*, since this reflected my own experience of psychotherapy in the aftermath of my parents divorce. Valerie Eliot references Eliot's letter to John Quinn on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 1923, which highlights his increasing exhaustion of working at Lloyds Bank; "I am worn out, I cannot go on" (Eliot 1971: xxvii). Eliot was recommended to see Dr. Roger Vittoz in Lausanne, Switzerland by Lady Ottoline Morrell (Eliot 1971: xxii).

<sup>3</sup> Whilst it is notable that I personally empathise with the authors who I am drawn towards, such as Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, I am more interested in their representations of the darker, melancholic side of life.

This acknowledgement of a biographical connection to Eliot consequently led to an investigation of his early "Impersonal theory of poetry" (Kermode 1975: 40),<sup>4</sup> in relation to my own re-examination of my arts practice. Eliot's theory of impersonality was introduced in his 1919 essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent',<sup>5</sup> where he stipulated that: "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not an expression of personality, but an escape from personality" (Kermode 1975: 43). Eliot viewed the poet's surrender to the existing literary tradition as the guiding force behind the work in order to elevate its status beyond mere personal expression into a form of objective 'science':

What is to be insisted upon is that the poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the past and that he should continue to develop this consciousness throughout his career...The progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality. There remains to define this process of depersonalization and its relation to the sense of tradition. It is in this depersonalization that art may be said to approach the condition of science (Kermode 1975: 40).

Eliot continued to emphasize the importance of impersonality in poetry, which permits the formation of the 'objective correlative' by finding objects or situations to represent certain emotions in order to create unique, undetermined combinations. This was supported by his 'mythical method', which he saw as a way of "...controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (Kermode 1975:177).<sup>6</sup> By employing these two methods, Eliot felt he was able to relinquish his personality in his work:<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> T. S. Eliot (1919) 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in Kermode, F. (ed.) (1975) *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*. London: Faber & Faber, pp.37-44.

<sup>5</sup> In his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' Eliot states how "...the poet cannot reach this impersonality without surrendering himself wholly to the work to be done" (Kermode 1975: 44). Ezra Pound's article on 'Vorticism' of 1914 also defines what he terms as 'impersonal' work: "I began this search for the real in a book called *Personae*, casting off, as it were, complete masks of the self in each poem. I continued in a long series of translations, which were but more elaborate masks...I have written "Heather," which represents a state of consciousness, or "implies," or "implicates" it...These...latter sorts of poems are impersonal." Ezra Pound, "Vorticism", *Fortnightly Review*, NS 96 (1914), 463-4; repr. Ezra Pound. *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*. New York: New Directions, 1970. p.85 (cited in Ellman 1987: 7/8).

<sup>6</sup> Eliot describes this 'mythical method' in his essay, 'Ulysses, Order, and Myth', which appeared in *The Dial* in 1923.

<sup>7</sup> The New Critics, led by Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn believed in the universality of Eliot's poetry, which they interpreted as an apocalyptic vision of the contemporary world, drawing upon the 'objective correlative' rather than any emotional response (Miller 1977: 8).

the poet has, not a 'personality' to express, but a particular medium, which is only a medium and not a personality, in which impressions and expressions combine in peculiar and unexpected ways. Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality (Kermode 1975: 42).

Nevertheless, various critics have discussed the apparent contradiction between Eliot's early criticism, his personal documents and his later interpretations of his own work, which admitted autobiographical connections. Maud Ellman in *Poetics of Impersonality: T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound* (1987) provides a comprehensive investigation into Eliot's theory of impersonality, observing how Eliot initially strived to write "poetry so transparent that we should not see the poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry...To get *beyond* poetry, as Beethoven in his later works, strives to get *beyond* music" (Ellman 1987: 42).<sup>8</sup> However, Ellman perceives how Eliot's doctrine of impersonality still perplexes critics today by its contradictory nature, and effectively traces the shift in Eliot's thinking from impersonality to a later acceptance of the autobiographic through an analysis of his own critical writing:

In *Tradition and the Individual Talent* (1919) Eliot urges poets to escape their personality; but in *Ben Jonson* (1919), he declares that the "...creation of a work of art...consists in the transfusion of the personality".<sup>9</sup> In 1933<sup>10</sup> he describes the literary work as a "secretion" of the author's personality, and this term epitomises his ambivalence: for it could either mean exposed, secreting, or hidden in reserve, in secret. It is as if the artist must be absent and present, Olympian and intimate at once (Ellman 1987: 41).<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, Eliot's first revisions to his impersonality theory were acknowledged in 'The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism' (1933), when he admitted that a change of perspective regarding his work could take place over time:

<sup>8</sup> From unpublished lecture on Yeats and Lawrence, delivered in New Haven, Conn.; cited by F. O. Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T.S. Eliot* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1935), p.90.

<sup>9</sup> The full quotation is as follows: "The creation of a work of art, we will say the creation of a character in a drama, consists in the process of transfusion of the personality, or, in a deeper sense, the life, of the author into the character." (Eliot 1932/1999: 157). T. S. Eliot (1919) 'Ben Jonson' in (1999) *Selected Essays*. London: Faber & Faber, pp.147-160.

<sup>10</sup> T.S. Eliot (1933) 'The Use of Poetry Use of Criticism' in Kermode, F. (ed.) (1975) *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*. London: Faber & Faber, pp.79-96.

<sup>11</sup> Maud Ellman (1987) 'The Loop in Time' in Ellman, M. (1987) *The Poetics of Impersonality: T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound*. Brighton: The Harvester Press, pp.23-61. Ellman draws attention to the fact that in a letter to E.M Forster, Eliot revealed that he "once told John Hayward that he had "personal reasons" for asserting his impersonality, and this probably means that he was able to confess more freely if he disavowed those confessions as his own" (Ellman 1987: 5) Letter to E. M Forster, 1930; in E. M Forester Collection, King's College, Cambridge.

What a poem means is as much what it means to others as what it means to the author; and indeed, in the course of time a poet may become merely a reader in respect to his own work, forgetting his original meaning - or without forgetting, merely changing (Kermode 1975: 88, cited in Miller 1977: 161 and Ellman 1987: 45).

Notably, it was the publication of *T.S. Eliot: The Wasteland: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts* in 1971 and *The Letters of T.S. Eliot: Volume 1 1898-1922* in 1988 that changed the public and critical perception of Eliot's poetry, since it exposed Eliot's motivations, together with his reactions to the various interpretations of his work. In response to the New Critics, Eliot denied its universality:

Various critics have done me the honour to interpret the poem in terms of criticism of the contemporary world, have considered it, indeed, as an important bit of social criticism. To me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling (Eliot 1971: 1).<sup>12</sup>

In *T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land: Exorcism of Dreams* (1977), James Miller goes to great lengths to discount Eliot's impersonality theory and convincingly proves that Eliot's autobiographical experience is deeply entrenched within his work, particularly that of mourning the loss of his friendship with Jean-Jules Verdenal after his death in World War One. Miller argues that whilst *The Waste Land* has been credited with symbolizing the mood of his generation, he believes that the poem portrays a hidden, personal mood "that may be detected beneath the surface of the poem, in labyrinths of consciousness or unconsciousness that are awaiting penetration" (Miller 1977: 5). Building upon John Peter's (1952) controversial claims that the character of Phlebus represented Eliot's relationship with Jules Verdenal, Miller continues this quest by assembling biographical 'facts' from Eliot's poetry.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Quoted by the late Professor Theodore Spencer during a lecture at Harvard University, and recorded by the late Henry Ware Eliot, Jr, the poet's brother (Eliot 1971: 1).

<sup>13</sup> Miller bases his argument on a footnote he saw in Robert Sencourt's biography *T.S. Eliot: A Memoir* (1971) to John Peter's 'A New Interpretation of The Waste Land' in *Essays in Criticism* (July 1952) which claims that Jules Verdenal was represented by the character Phlebus the Phoenician, arguing that the speaker has fallen in love with someone who met his death by drowning. (Miller 1977:12) Miller notes that Peter's article was originally published in *Essays in Criticism*, but not all copies contain the essay, since solicitors acting on behalf of Eliot confiscated it. (Miller 1977:13) The article was reprinted in *Essays in Criticism* in April 1969, seventeen years later (Eliot died 1965) with Peter adding additional evidence to suggest an autobiographical reading of the poem.

In his 1951 essay, 'Virgil and the Christian World' published in *On Poetry and Poets*, Eliot states how:

A poet may believe that he is expressing only his private experience; his lines may be for him only a means of talking about himself without giving himself away; yet for his readers what he has written may come to be the expression both of their own secret feelings and of the exultation or despair of a generation (Eliot 1957/1990: 122-123, cited in Miller 1977: 10).<sup>14</sup>

Miller interrogates Eliot's motivations for advocating his impersonality theory, suggesting that it provided a means of diverting attention away from the autobiographic:

Could it be that the 1919 essay *Tradition and the Individual Talent* with its elaborate and tortured "impersonality theory" of poetry, had been a...sophisticated defence for someone wanting to write poetry 'talking about himself without giving himself away' (Miller 1977: 10).

Maud Ellman reinforces this notion of active concealment, claiming that Eliot, together with his contemporary Ezra Pound both: "...efface themselves through masks, personae, and ventriloquy" (Ellman 1987: 3). She concludes that:

Eliot and Pound both show that it is impossible to overcome the self, but this does not mean that their work is merely a disguise for their biographies. Their poetry should be regarded neither as a mirror nor their hiding-place, but as the laboratory for the fabrication of themselves (Ellman 1987: 198).

Bernard Sharratt in his essay, 'Eliot: Modernism, Postmodernism and After' (1994), believes that Eliot formulated methods of concealing his personal life through the employment of allusions within his poetry: "To resort to other men's words, for a word within a word when one is unable to speak a word, may be the linguistic equivalent of reaching for a mask, a socially acceptable persona" (Moody 2004: 227).<sup>15</sup> Miller supports this deflective strategy, stating:

It is also possible that the young Eliot saw the notes as an opportunity to direct critics into harmless chasing after mythical and literary sources and to

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<sup>14</sup> T.S. Eliot (1933) 'Virgil and the Christian World' in Eliot, T.S. (1957/1990) *On Poetry and Poets*. London: Faber & Faber, pp.121-131.

<sup>15</sup> Bernard Sharratt (1994) 'Eliot: Modernism, Postmodernism and After' in Moody, D. (ed) *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.223-235.

deflect them from the poem's deepest sources, the poet's biography (Miller 1977: 62).

Therefore, it could be argued that Eliot's shift in opinion about his theories of impersonality and his later admission of the autobiographical element in his work parallels my own self-discovery of the true meaning of my practice through the unearthing of autobiographical interpretations, that were either consciously or subconsciously held back. Prior to my doctoral study, I would state that my work was primarily concerned with literary interpretation and that the choice of text paralleled my personal interests. Since any autobiographical acknowledgement was attributed ambiguously, it could be seen that I adopted a similar deflective technique to Eliot, using literature as an impersonal, masking device. Like *The Waste Land*, my previous work signified what Miller believes to be "a submerged biography, a combining of disparate experiences that somehow concealed the original experiences at the same time as it absorbed them" (Miller 1977: 37). In retrospect, whilst some of my past work was obviously rooted in autobiographical experience,<sup>16</sup> its importance should have been emphasized at the time of production.<sup>17</sup> Having established a correlation between my recognition and the shift in Eliot's impersonality theory, it was necessary to examine the autobiographical connections between his life and his poetry more closely in order to determine whether there are parallels regarding the *type* of experience that he drew upon.

Lyndall Gordon advocates the autobiographical quality of Eliot's poetry in her biography by obsessively identifying coded meaning sourced from an examination of Eliot's own critical writing and correspondence.<sup>18</sup> She draws attention to the fact that his friend from Harvard, Conrad Aiken "called it 'his Inferno', parallel to a stage

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<sup>16</sup> Such as the *Forest Fears* project (2000) which was derived from my kidney operation in October 1998.

<sup>17</sup> *The Waves* (1996) was clearly a response to my escapist move to London from the Isle of Wight to start my MA in the immediate aftermath of my parent's divorce, whilst the *Making our Mark* (2004) series communicated an uncertainty regarding my future direction, turning thirty years old and contemplating the start of my doctoral study.

<sup>18</sup> Gordon interprets clues from Eliot's 1932 essay 'John Ford' on the Jacobean playwright, noting how Eliot preferred autobiography to biography, since definitive experiences are private to the individual and claims that "To know the man, we must follow the poem" (Gordon 2000:147), which alone will provide "the personal emotion, the personal drama and struggle, which no biography, however full and intimate, could give us" (Eliot 1932/1999: 203). See T.S Eliot (1932) 'John Ford' in (1932/1999) *Selected Essays*. London: Faber & Faber. Pp.193-204.

of 'his own emotional development'" (Gordon 2000: 147)<sup>19</sup> and highlights minute autobiographical details, assigning them to different aspects of the poem (Gordon 2000: 169).<sup>20</sup> Gordon proposes that apart from referring to his nervous breakdown and troublesome marriage, Eliot also drew upon his circle of friends and colleagues, and well as his daily routines and the environment he occupied:

The first two parts put forward autobiographical material...Here are visible actions (recognisably Eliot's life to his mother and Mary Hutchinson): a worldly young man in Boston having a drink at the Opera Exchange; an inspiring moment of love for a 'hyacinth girl'; a tormenting marriage; the sage advice of Mme Sosostriis, a bogus clairvoyante (Eliot's friends would have recognised Bertrand Russell); the routines of a commuter to the City. Eliot transforms these actions as a set of instructive ordeals. In part I 'The Burial of the Dead', the demeaning routines of suburban corpses are aligned with Dante's abject neutrals on the outskirts of hell. Part II, 'A Game of Chess', is hell itself, the diabolical routines of marital power play (Gordon 2000: 179).

Peter Brooker in *Bohemia in London: The Social Scene of Early Modernism* (2004) similarly aligns biographical details from Eliot's life with his poetry, drawing upon Dr. Roger Vittoz's thesis, *The Treatment of Neurasthenia* (1911/1913) to make a connection between physical and psychological symptoms such as "excessive excitability" or insomnia with Eliot's own references to "What is that noise?" (l.117) and "My nerves are bad tonight...Stay with me" (l.111) within part two, 'A Game of Chess' from *The Waste Land* (Brooker 2004: 155-6). James Miller also claims that the deaths of Jean Verdenal in 1915 and his father in 1919 are firmly embedded within part four, 'Death by Water', as well as the poem's references to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, as Eliot struggled to openly deal with these difficult experiences (Miller 1977:95).

It seems undisputed that *The Waste Land* is primarily concerned with Eliot's first marriage to Vivienne Haigh Wood. Brooker emphasizes the fact that in a letter to

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<sup>19</sup> Letter from Conrad Aiken to Theodore Spencer ([1930]). Spencer Papers, Harvard Archives Pusey Library.

<sup>20</sup> Gordon sees relevance in instances such as his experience of watching people leave the pub next to his Crawford Mansion flat in Paddington at closing time, (which became 'HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME'), his disgusted opinion of the degenerate scenes of London, his recollection of his mental breakdown at Margate and recovery in Switzerland, together with his tempestuous relationship with Vivienne (Gordon 2000: 169).

his friend Conrad Aiken in 1916, Eliot discloses that since his marriage to Vivienne on 26th June 1915 he had "lived through enough material for a score of long poems" (Brooker 2004: 135, Miller 1977: 60). This statement is supported by Eliot himself in *The Letters of T.S Eliot Vol.I 1898-1922*, where he explains the reasons for his sudden marriage to Vivienne Haigh-Wood and its implications: "To her the marriage brought no happiness...to me, it brought the state of mind out of which came *The Waste Land*" (Eliot 1988: xvii).<sup>21</sup>

The film *Tom and Viv* (1994) directed by Brian Gilbert, dramatises the tempestuous relationship between Eliot and Vivienne from their courtship in 1915, the impact of Vivienne's gynaecological problems, and the creation of *The Waste Land*, to her commitment to a lunatic asylum. At the end of the film after their legal separation in 1932, Vivienne tries to stake some share of Eliot's success, since she claims that his poetry came out of their life together. The film explicitly suggests that he depended upon her opinion, with Eliot, played by actor Willem/Dafoe remarking the fact that: "You're in every line. I can't do it without you". In reality, Vivienne wrote a letter to Sydney Sutcliff in 1922 in response to his appreciation of the publication of *The Waste Land*, stating: "It means to me a great deal of what you have exactly described, and it has become a part of me (or I of it) this last year" (Eliot 1988: 584, cited in Gordon 2000: 169 and Brooker 2004: 135).<sup>22</sup>

This examination suggests that Eliot was not only translating autobiographical details into his work, but was in fact utilising literature as a means to communicate deeply personal, traumatic experiences. In her diary, Virginia Woolf recognised the poem as "Tom's autobiography - a melancholy one" (cited in Lee 1997:443 and Brooker 2004: 135).<sup>23</sup> James Miller references Eliot's own revelatory words from his

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<sup>21</sup> Valerie Eliot concludes her introduction with Eliot's own telling words that she quotes from "a private paper, written in the sixties".

<sup>22</sup> Letter from Vivienne Eliot to Sydney Sutcliff, 16 October 1922.

<sup>23</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1922. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf. Vol.II: 1920-1924*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell. London: The Hogarth Press, 1978, p.178.

later lecture, 'The Three Voices of Poetry' (1953) to emphasize his argument that writing was a form of cathartic release:

He does not know what he has to say until he has said it...He is oppressed by a burden which he must bring to birth in order to obtain relief...he is haunted by a demon, a demon against which he feels powerless...and the words, the poem that he makes, are a kind of exorcism of this demon...he is going to all that trouble, not in order to communicate with anyone, but to gain relief from acute discomfort; and when the words are finally arranged in the right way...he may experience a moment of exhaustion, of appeasement, of absolution, and of something very near annihilation, which is in itself indescribable (Eliot 1957/1990: 98, cited in Miller 1977: 43).<sup>24</sup>

Therefore, having proved that Eliot's life was indeed embedded in his work, does this fact detract from the actual poetry itself? In his conclusion, Miller asserts that he has "not used the work to reconstruct the life, but, rather used the life to illuminate the work" (Miller 1977: 163) in order to intensify interest in the poem's ambiguities. He goes on to reassure the reader that his intention was to protect "against the reduction of the poetry to biography, but attempting to see the ways the biography was transfigured and diffused in the poetry" (Miller 1977:164). However, to what extent does knowledge of Eliot's autobiographical details inform our understanding of the poem? James Olney in his essay, 'Where is the real T.S. Eliot? or, The Life of the Poet'<sup>25</sup> questions its relevance:

Of course we must know these details of the life in some way, but it is not clear to me that they get us much forward in the reading of the Life of the Poet. We can be sure that the major emotional events of Eliot's life...are all there in the poems, but so thoroughly transformed into the emotion of the particular poem that they are hardly recognisable and can scarcely be traced back to the life, at least in any one-to-one way (Moody 1994: 3-4).

The actress Fiona Shaw commenting on her dramatic performance of *The Waste Land* at the Liberty Theater, New York in 1995 (see Chapter Three), considers her existing knowledge of Eliot's life, but renders it insignificant in her appreciation of the work itself:

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<sup>24</sup> T.S. Eliot (1953) 'The Three Voices of Poetry' in Eliot, T.S. (1957/1990) *On Poetry and Poets*. London: Faber & Faber, pp.89-102.

<sup>25</sup> James Olney (1994) 'Where is the real T.S. Eliot? or, The Life of the Poet' in Moody, D.A. (ed) (1994/2000) *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.1-13.

Inevitably, one knows that he had a tempestuous relationship with his wife, Vivien that may well be quoted in the poem. But I don't know Vivienne, and I don't know him. What I try to do in the poem is to be as sympathetic as possible to her when he quotes her:

*My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.  
Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.*

It's so neurotic, but if I judge Vivienne harshly, then it doesn't help the work...So I try to be sympathetic to each of the characters as they come along...It seems to be common knowledge that Eliot had a breakdown at Margate, but...It becomes a place of emotional significance and its geography is immaterial. So Eliot's biography is immaterial, I think (Stein 1997).<sup>26</sup>

Olney agrees with Shaw, noting that it is the universality of the subject matter, rather than Eliot's autobiographical references, that is of prime importance, referring to the personal, emotive elements of the Hyacinth girl scene which become "something much more than merely or limitedly personal" (Moody 1994: 10):

This personal experience becomes in the poem a thematic element - the theme of lost love - that speaks not to the poet alone but to all of us...and at that point it avails us little as readers to worry about the name of the lost love (Moody 1994: 8).

The relationship between the personal and the universal is an issue that keeps recurring in both the assessment of Eliot's poetry and of my own literary interpretations. Although my work offers intimate personal revelations based on predominately traumatic experiences, in contrast to Eliot's own denial of universal readings, I also aim to emphasize the possible shared human experience that it exemplifies, such as, the audience's identification with feelings of alienation together with issues concerning loss, memory and mortality (see Chapter Four).

## **2. Visualising Trauma Through Arts Practice**

The recognition of the extent of the autobiographical nature of my work, has led to the realisation that I use literature to create a form of self-representation. In the same manner as Eliot, the work not only draws upon autobiographical facts, but

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<sup>26</sup> 'Illusions and Delusions' Interview with Jean Stein for Grand Street Magazine: Issue 60 Paranoia, 1997.

significant traumatic events, such as my kidney operation and recovery, my parents marital breakdown and my subsequent estrangement from my father. However, what is meant by trauma and what kind of manifestations does it take? Whilst the extensive field of trauma theory was beyond this study,<sup>27</sup> I was able to detect pertinent issues that informed this new development in my practice. Cathy Caruth in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) defines trauma as:

A response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or set of events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event (Caruth 1995: 4-5).<sup>28</sup>

Ann Kaplan in *Trauma Culture: The Politics of Terror and Loss in Media and Literature* (2005) investigates the impact of trauma on "individuals, cultures and nations" referring to major catastrophes like the Holocaust, Hiroshima and 9/11; together with what she terms "'family' trauma, that is trauma of loss, abandonment, rejection, betrayal" (Kaplan 2005: 19).<sup>29</sup> This concept of 'family' trauma is more applicable to my own work, which signifies a need to confront these haunting, embedded memories and recurring issues by translating them through my interpretive practice. Jo Spence describes how in phototherapy, "Trying to recall one's own history is a painful process of selective remembering and selective forgetting. Of knowing and not knowing" (Spence 1986: 85). Indeed, the early work that I created for *Waste Land* between 2005-2006, seeks to occupy this space between what is known and what is not known, introduced by the *PastPresent* photographs (2005) in 'Prelude' which is primarily concerned with the concept of visualising trauma through the act of re-photography using family snapshots within the same domestic setting over twenty years later (see Chapter Four).

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<sup>27</sup> This was mainly due to its emphasis on post-traumatic stress disorder, testimonials and the impact of witnessing traumatic events, such as the Holocaust, which I felt were not relevant to my own practice. However, see Saltzman, L and Rosenberg, E. (eds) (2006) *Trauma and Visuality in Modernity*. Hanover and London: Dartmouth College Press, for debates surrounding the relationship between visual representation, trauma and memory in film, fine art, photography and performance.

<sup>28</sup> See also Caruth, C. (1996) *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*. London, Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press.

<sup>29</sup> Kaplan references T. M. Luhman's concept of "quiet traumas" which has an impact on several generations; "The word 'trauma'...refers to singular or repeated events which injure. Some injuring events are dramatic and soul-destroying. Some are quiet and humiliating" (cited in Kaplan 2005:19). See T. M. Luhman (2000) 'The Traumatized Social Self: The Parsi Predicament in Modern Bombay' in Robben, A. and Suarez-Orozco, M. *Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.158-194.

Indeed, the subject of remembrance and 'working through' traumatic experiences and repressed emotions through arts practice inevitably brings us to consider a psychoanalytical reading of the work. In *Studies in Hysteria*, (1893-5) Freud and Breuer argued that "hysterics suffer mainly from reminiscences" (Freud and Breuer 1893-5/1974: 58) and thought that their suffering could be alleviated through recollection and free association, emphasizing a need for remembering and abreacting. Whilst this research led to the discovery of 'resistance', which was overcome by the analyst's interpretation, it was very much focused upon the past event itself. Freud later replaced this method by concentrating on the "prevailing surface-level of the patients mind...identifying the resistances manifest there, and making the patient conscious of them" (Freud 1914b/2003: 33).<sup>30</sup> This revised technique allowed the patients to recollect repressed memories more successfully and thus overcome 'resistance'. Maud Ellman notes how Freud "...shifted his attention from the past to the present, from reminiscence to resistance, from the secrets to the silences themselves" (Ellman 1987: 92), using *The Waste Land* to demonstrate how Eliot constructed hidden meanings through the creation of a ghostly unstable presence:

Here it is more instructive to be scrupulously superficial than to dig beneath the surface for the poem's buried skeletons or sources. For it is in the silences between the words that meaning flickers, local, evanescent – in the very "wastes" that stretch across the page. These silences curtail the powers of the author, for they invite the *hypocrite lecteur* to reconstruct their broken sense. Moreover, the speaker cannot be identified with his creator, not because he has a *different* personality, like Prufrock, but because he has no stable identity at all. The disembodied "I" glides in and out of stolen texts, as if the speaking subject were merely the quotation of its antecedents (Ellman 1987: 92).

By confronting the 'resistances' or the 'silences' within my past work and recognising the cathartic "abreacting" nature of my autobiographical practice, I was able to identify its meaning in a more open, honest fashion. It could be argued that

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<sup>30</sup> Freud, S. (1914b) 'Remembering, Repeating and Working Through' in Phillips, A. (ed.) (2003) *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Other Writings*. London: Penguin Books, pp.33-42.

the *Forest Fears* (2000) photographs (see Introduction)<sup>31</sup> was the most blatantly autobiographical piece of work I have produced, since it dealt with the experience of pain and recovery from a kidney operation in October 1998. However, I had acknowledged its source from the outset and the fairy tale traditions of *Little Red Riding Hood* and *Hansel and Gretel* were chosen as a literary metaphor during the production period, which acted as a deflective device.<sup>32</sup>

The understanding that I was visualising past traumatic autobiographical experiences and that a psychoanalytic reading of my practice was appropriate was confirmed after revisiting *The Turn of the Screw* (2001) slide projection piece, based on Henry James' novel when I exhibited the work alongside *In the Cage* (2007) from room two, 'Game' from *Waste Land* at the Viewfinder Gallery, London in 2007.<sup>33</sup> Viewing these works together in close proximity was a crucial instigator in allowing the self-realisation that I had made the original work five years after the last time I had seen my father and that the ghost of Peter Quint was in fact the 'ghost' of my absent father, who I wanted to confront regarding allegations from the past. At the time of creation I emphasized my interest in the portrayal of the neurotic governess figure in Victorian literature, however, on re-examination, I am the governess, seeking to protect the innocence of the children in the novel, but still plagued by my imagination.

In *The Autobiographical 'I'*, Liz Stanley considers the way in which retrospective biography operates as way of placing events in historical perspective, which could be applied to the sense of enlightenment gained from reflecting upon my past practice:

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<sup>31</sup> See [www.sallywaterman.com](http://www.sallywaterman.com) for project details and images for *Forest Fears* (2000), *The Turn of the Screw* (2001) and *The Other Side of a Mirror* (1999).

<sup>32</sup> In retrospect, it seems that projects that were only loosely derived from literature, such as *Through the Banisters* (1997), which alluded to *Cinderella* but was much more about the anxiety generated by the unknown territory beyond postgraduate study, were able to freely acknowledge their true autobiographical roots.

<sup>33</sup> *The Turn of the Screw* slide projection was digitised for the solo exhibition 'Still-Moving' at the Viewfinder Gallery, Greenwich, London (5<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> December 2007) which allowed a close re-familiarisation and re-evaluation to take place during the scanning process, as well as viewing the work in conjunction with the 'still-movie' *In the Cage* (2007). See <http://www.viewfinder.org.uk/exhibitions/previous.html#>

However, the linear sequencing of a biography does not operate in a forward mode only. From 'the end' – a death or some major rite of passage in life – we can read images and other biographical information backwards through time, to impose 'real meaning with hindsight': an account of 'what it all meant' that eluded us at the time but was supposedly 'really' always there (Stanley 1992: 21).

This process of re-evaluation and re-positioning of the work's psychological intention was illuminating, yet also quite disturbing and has since informed the creation of subsequent work for *Waste Land*.<sup>34</sup> The *Other Side Of A Mirror* series (1999) drew upon a selection of literary texts including Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899), Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* (1928) and Sylvia Plath's poem, *Mirror* (1961), using fragmented quotations to address issues surrounding the construction of gender identity through the role-play of two masked figures within a derelict room.<sup>35</sup> By the time the project was exhibited, having recovered from my illness, the work had assumed a 'mask' of literary associations surrounding notions of the split self and voyeurism and did not reference any autobiographical connections, despite being in hindsight about the dynamics of parental relationships, the impact of divorce and death, the unveiling of closely guarded secrets and the creation of different personas to cope with these traumatic experiences. It is interesting to note that I have not chosen to discuss this project in any depth during talks about my arts practice, which could represent, like Eliot, a past denial of true, yet traumatic autobiographical associations, which I preferred to keep as a "submerged biography" (Miller 1977: 37).

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<sup>34</sup> It could be read that the series of photographs taken for *The Waves* (1996) signified my daunting move to London in the immediate aftermath of my parents divorce, with the water and sea imagery juxtaposed against the chaotic city experience visually representing Woolf's metaphor of being 'lost at sea'. See Chapter One.

<sup>35</sup> This was an intensive two-year project (1997-1999), which was shot after my Grandfather's death in 1997 and at the beginning of both my employment as an archivist and my relationship with my current partner. During the editing process of aligning images with accompanying literary quotations, the project was influenced by the revealing of secrets from my father's past in June 1998, and was subsequently 'worked through' during my psychotherapy, then illness, kidney operation and recovery in 1999. The work was finally exhibited at the Kingsgate Gallery, London in May 2000.

In his essay, 'Remembering, Repeating and Working Through' (1914) Freud reinforces my sense of renewed comprehension, which retrospectively now seems obvious:

The forgetting of impressions, scenes, experiences comes down in most cases to a process of 'shutting out' such things. When a patient speaks of these 'forgotten' things, he rarely fails to add 'I've known that really, I've just never thought about it (Freud 1914b/2003: 34).

Freud continues with his argument that during therapy, the patient "has to find the courage to focus his attention on the manifestations of his illness...to be reconciled with the repressed element within himself" (Freud 1914b/2003: 38). Perhaps then, it is pertinent that it is only during the concentrated period of doctoral study that an autobiographical recognition has been allowed to take place, resulting in an increasingly intimate, confessional analysis of my practice. I consequently realised the way in which, like Eliot, I developed a kind of 'impersonality' theory or masking device to conceal the fact that I was dealing with recurring traumatic family issues, drawing upon literary texts as a means of translating these difficult experiences into art. In this sense, literature functions as both an affirmation of my experience, but also operates as a kind of displacement or mode of transferral that enables therapeutic distance.

Freud discusses the way in which our repressed experiences become manifest as transference in the form of character traits, embedded attitudes or in ways of reacting to situations. He identifies cases whereby the patient is prone to the "compulsion to repeat", rather than remember repressed memories:

The patient does not *remember* anything at all of what he has forgotten and repressed, but rather *acts it out*. He reproduces it not as a memory, but as an action; he repeats it, without of course being aware of the fact that he is repeating it (Freud 1914b/2003: 36).<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Freud extends this notion further in his later essay, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) pp.56-62. He refers to the fact that "The patient unable to remember all that is repressed within him...Instead he is driven to repeat the repressed matter as an experience in the present, instead of remembering it as something belonging in the past" (Freud 1920/2003: 56).

Drawing upon their historical context, Maud Ellman defines parallels between Freud and Eliot, arguing that since Freud's essay 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920) and Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1922) were both concerned with the overwhelming death toll after World War One, comparisons can be made between Freud's theory of repetition with Eliot's celebratory use of allusions: "Whereas Freud discovers the death drive in the compulsion to repeat, *The Waste Land* stages it in the compulsion to citation" (Ellman 1987: 101). This repetitive drive could be associated with both my past denial of the autobiographical relevance and the sustained 'acting out' of traumatic experiences through my interpretive practice, either by appearing within my work, or by employing surrogate doubles (see Chapter Four). It could also be evidenced by interpretive method, in terms of extracting quotations from the literary source, or by my insatiable tendency for acquiring contextual influences (see Chapter Three).

Deirdre Heddon draws upon Freud's essay 'Remembering, Repeating and Working Through' (1914) to understand trauma in performance art:

The work of psychoanalysis then, is precisely to enable comprehension, achieved through the means of narrativisation, a 'therapeutic process' by which history (and the story) will be reconstructed and transmitted, thereby enabling the event to be externalised...It is also through constructing a narrative from the fragmented memory of trauma that the traumatic event is given a place within the life story, and to that extent the trauma becomes 'mastered'. Words provide the 'therapeutic balm' as the 'unconscious language of repetition', manifested in such symptoms as flashbacks, memory loss and re-enactments (Heddon 2008: 56).<sup>37</sup>

This psychoanalytical approach of actively addressing traumatic experience through the means of 'working through' or 'acting out', creating a narrative in order to reclaim control can be applied to my art practice, whereby trauma is displaced through literary interpretation and role-play (see Chapter Four). Ann Kaplan argues

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<sup>37</sup> Deirdre Heddon references Robbie McCauley's performance, *Sally's Rape* (1989) in which she 'acts out' her Grandmother's rape as a black slave through "a dream of transference" which is indicative of Freud's compulsion to repeat. She notes how the "acting out of Sally's experience makes clear the cross-generational inheritance of trauma; McCauley is haunted by her great-great-Grandmother's experiences" (Heddon 2008: 73). Heddon argues that the repetitive nature of McCauley's work constitutes an 'acting out', yet she also believes the piece also represents a 'working through' since it is also concerned with the transformation of historical representation, rather than just the individual event itself.

that art can offer a role in dealing with traumatic experience, through an act of transferral:

I show the increasing importance of "translating" trauma – that is of finding ways to making meaning out of, and to communicate, catastrophes that happen to others as well as to oneself...Trauma can never be "healed" in the sense of a return to how things were before a catastrophe took place, or before one witnessed a catastrophe; but if the wound of trauma remains open, its pain may be worked through in the process of its being "translated" via art (Kaplan 2005: 19).

In order to demonstrate this process of 'working through' which recounts Freudian theories, Kaplan provides a close analysis of the content and stylistic features of Maya Deren's film *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943)<sup>38</sup> which she views as a response to Hiroshima and the atom bomb and Tracey Moffatt's film *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy* (1989),<sup>39</sup> which documents the racial trauma of Aboriginal rights. Kaplan interprets Moffatt's use of disjunctive, unexplained flashbacks portrayed in black and white against an exaggerated 1950s Hollywood Technicolor, as a mimicry device that replicates the way in which trauma is experienced. Kaplan notes how the viewer contributes to the work's meaning instead of adopting a passive position, which:

Enable[s] a performative 'working through' to take place for viewers as well as for the protagonist of the film. This 'working through' does not mean...that there is a 'cure' for or healing; rather...working through means accepting ongoing mourning, keeping the wound open...Both *Meshes* and *Night Cries* leave the viewer with an uneasy, disturbed feeling, but with a sense of having been moved empathically and ethically (Kaplan 2005: 135).

This notion of 'working through' is addressed in Sarah Pucill's film *Stages of Mourning* (2004), which laments the death of her filmmaker partner and collaborator Sarah Lahire, who died in 2001.<sup>40</sup> In an attempt to address her own bereavement, Pucill adopts reflexive film strategies, such as, revealing the editing

<sup>38</sup> Maya Deren *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) USA 16mm. Black and white. Silent. 14 min.

<sup>39</sup> Tracey Moffatt *Night Cries: A Rural Tragedy* (1989) Australia. Colour. 19 min. Moffatt's *Scarred for Life* photographic series (1994) is also relevant to this concept of 'acting out' past traumatic experiences.

<sup>40</sup> Sarah Pucill. *Stages of Mourning* (2004) Colour 16mm. 17 min. <http://sarahpucill.co.uk/films/stages-of-mourning.php>. I only encountered Pucill's work in March 2008 a year after *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* was completed. Interestingly Lahire produced an experimental film based upon Sylvia Plath's poetry readings. Sandra Lahire. *Lady Lazarus* (1991) 25min Colour 16mm. [http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/sandra\\_lahire/lady\\_lazarus.html](http://www.luxonline.org.uk/artists/sandra_lahire/lady_lazarus.html).

process to present her active re-staging as a cathartic exercise. Pucill reflects upon the notion that "there is a constant oscillation evoked between the past and present" in the film which documents the "split between a multiplicity of selves and between past and present 'self'" (Pucill 2004: 8).<sup>41</sup> This is acted out in the sequence where Pucill lies down amongst enlarged, life-size photographs of her and her partner on her bedroom floor and can be compared with the re-assessment of family snapshots in my *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007) video (see Chapter Four).

However, whilst Pucill concluded that there was an "impossibility of resolution" (Pucill 2004:7) in her engagement with the image of her deceased partner, Alice Anderson's recent film, *The Doll's Day* (2008),<sup>42</sup> plays out a Freudian wish fulfillment of the destruction of the parents through the vengeful defacement of representational dolls, which functions in a similar way to my violent act of burning my father's portrait in Vol. V *Retribution* from room three, 'Sermon' (see Chapter Four). Indeed, Anderson's autobiographical work is laden with psychoanalytical meaning, centred upon the reinvention of traditional fairytales and the self-examination of familial issues, in particular, the mother-daughter relationship. Maud Jaquin observes how, "The tales she invents will help Alice erase the painful marks of her childhood" (Anderson 2008:5),<sup>43</sup> which correlates with my own attempts to confront past events and fractured relationships.

The artist, Frida Kahlo, famously employed metaphorical devices to visualise traumatic experiences, creating evocative self-representations that represented biographical details of her life, including her tram accident, illness and her turbulent marriage to Diego Rivera. *Henry Ford Hospital* (1932), which depicts Kahlo lying in

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<sup>41</sup> Sarah Pucill (2004) 'The Question of the Subject and the Autobiographic in Artists Moving Image Practice' in *Filmwaves Magazine*, Issue 24, no. 2, pp.5-9.

<sup>42</sup> Alice Anderson. *A Doll's Day* (2008) Colour. 10 min. Anderson's film is loosely based on children's story *The Dolls' Day* by Carine Cadby (1915). See <http://www.alice-anderson.org/film/08films.html> or [http://www.artprojxspace.com/ex\\_09anderson.html](http://www.artprojxspace.com/ex_09anderson.html) I saw this work a week after shooting the burning photograph at the Artprojx Space, London in January 2009 and immediately made connections with it on a Freudian level.

<sup>43</sup> Maud Jaquin 'Preface' in Anderson, A. (2008) *Bluebeard*. Paris: Semiose Editions. pp. 1-5. Available at <http://www.alice-anderson.org/texts.htm>

a pool of blood on a hospital bed that appears to be floating in an industrial landscape, was painted after her miscarriage and not only serves as a document of event, but utilises fertility symbolism to 'work through' the trauma of her clinical hospital treatment. Frances Borzello in *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (1998) highlights the fact that Kahlo was partly responsible for bringing emotional and physical pain into self-portraiture (Borzello 1998: 143), which can be clearly seen in work like *The Two Fridas* (1939), which deals with her emotional state in the aftermath of her divorce from Diego Rivera by representing her two different personae: the Mexican Frida in traditional Tehuana dress that Rivera desired and the independent European side that was spurned. Whilst I can relate to Kahlo's openness in communicating such difficult biographical details of her life, Marsha Meskimmon raises the problem that Kahlo's work is too often reduced to these facts, ignoring the work's wider social context of signification, which references Mexican politics, modernism or gendered discourses. Meskimmon warns that female artists who represent traumatic experience are more likely to suffer from, what she terms, a "Psychobiography" reading of their work because of the inherent links between women and personal sphere (Meskimmon 1996: 79).

I am now even more acutely aware of the deeply personal nature of my interpretations and their function as self-representations and am, therefore, continually debating the extent to which I reveal autobiographical facts of my life to my audience (or, indeed to my reader here). Will a full confessional account contribute to the works or does basic knowledge of my parent's marital breakdown, for example, suffice? Whilst I am conscious of Meskimmon's cautionary observations of my work being reduced to a "Psychobiography", I am also reminded by Fiona Shaw that:

I'm sure that the vulnerability of writing must be like being with a lover, except that suddenly the lover is the entire public. To be that intimate with that many people is an incredibly generous thing (Stein 1997).<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> 'Illusions and Delusions' Interview with Jean Stein for Grand Street Magazine: Issue 60 Paranoia, 1997.

Disclosure of the full meaning of my work does vary depending upon my audience, but I believe that the universality of the work's themes and their emotional impact render this issue as insignificant. There is an interplay between my autobiographical stories and how I choose to represent the self, together with what the audience choose to project onto the work themselves.

This recognition of the role of autobiography within my interpretative arts practice, led me to examine the critical issues in female autobiographical writing and performance (Smith 1993, Marcus 1994, Stanley 1995, Gale and Gardener 2004, Heddon 2008) in order to determine whether the approaches I adopted were gender specific. Whilst this study was not exhaustive, it provided an understanding that women's autobiographical writing in particular, deals with the construction of identity, "gender hybridity" (Marcus 1994: 281), intimate confession and the interaction of genres and conventions. Gale and Gardner in *Autobiography and Identity: Women, Theatre and Performance* (2004) highlight the fact that whilst women and autobiography covers a wide territory "in both historical and literary studies the notion of performance and performativity is often used as a framing device in the process of...autobiographical analysis and identity formation" (Gale and Gardner 2004: 1). Their collation of critical essays traces different aspects of female autobiographical performance practice from the late-nineteenth century to present day and identifies issues, such as, identity and subjectivity, the inconsistency of remembrance, role-play and mimicry and the cathartic nature of confessional practice, which can be equally applied to fine art practice.

Deirde Heddon in *Autobiography and Performance* (2008) charts how female performance art became increasingly autobiographical, yet despite being based upon individual stories was also concerned with illuminating universal experience:

It was regarded by women as a means to reveal otherwise invisible lives, to resist marginalisation and objectification and to become, instead, speaking subjects with self-agency; performance, then, as a way to bring into being the self. Autobiographical performances provide a way to talk out, talk back,

talk otherwise. Here, the marginalised subject literally takes centre stage (Heddon 2008: 3).

This method of finding a voice through performance is also raised by Jen Harvie,<sup>45</sup> who emphasizes the value of testifying lived female subjective experience through representations of absence and imagined presence. Harvie highlights Tracey Emin's preoccupation with autobiographical connections to space and place within both her installations and films, which comment "repeatedly about environments she has inhabited, both literally and metaphorically: the bed with its soiled linen, discarded knickers, and used contraceptive pill packets of *My Bed* (1998); the rebuilt Margate beach hut of *The Hut* (1999); and the tent, covered inside with appliquéd names and writings, entitled *Everyone I Have Ever Slept With 1963-1995* (1995)." (Gale and Gardener 2004: 203-4).

Whilst Emin has been criticised for being narcissistic and self-indulgent, Harvie dwells upon the intimate, revelatory style of her work which seems to emulate an 'uncensored exposure' or a kind of stream of consciousness which is quickly executed and unedited with a "sense of urgency" that provides a sense of "rawness and immediate access to Emin" (Gale and Gardner 2004: 204). I was influenced by Emin's short film *Why I Never Became a Dancer* (1994),<sup>46</sup> which is a personal narrative that reflects upon the way in which her sexual exploits during her teenage years in Margate thwarted her ambitions to become a dancer. Emin combines a confessional voiceover with stereotypical visual representations of a seaside resort, before cutting to fragmented, jolted footage of her dancing alone in her studio in the present day, to suggest a kind of active recollection or even exorcism of past traumatic experiences.

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<sup>45</sup> Jen Harvie (2004) 'Being Her: Presence, Absence and Performance in the art of Janet Cardiff and Tracey Emin' in Gale, M and Gardner, V. (eds) (2004) *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, Theatre and Performance*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, pp.194-216.

<sup>46</sup> Tracey Emin *Why I Never Became a Dancer* (1994) Super-8mm. Colour. 6 min. Seen at the British Film Institute, London 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2007 as part of the 'Body and Identity' programme in a four-month season of screenings designed to reflect the themes identified in David Curtis's recent survey. See Curtis, D. (2007) *A History of Artist's Film and Video in Britain*. London: BFI. Pipilotti Rist's *I'm not the Girl Who Misses Much* (1986) and Gillian Wearing's *Dancing in Peckham* (1994) video works were also influential in terms of performance to camera, in the production of *In the Cage* (2007), and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009). See Chapter Four.

Audiences are integrated into Emin's narratives...by the revelations that Emin makes and the sense of intimate knowledge they produce. Emin describes and depicts intimate memories only she can know...By revealing these experiences, Emin effectively enlists her audience into her life - she 'gives' us her memories, 'gives' us her intimate knowledge (Gale and Gardner 2004: 211).

Compared to the explicitness of Emin's confessional practice, the extent to which I reveal my autobiographical references within my arts practice when presenting the work to an audience is something that is still debateable. Gen Doy observes how Emin's openness regarding deeply personal details is extrinsically linked to her essential concern with trauma and identity:

Emin's work deals with the subjects of pregnancy and abortion...she is not shy of mentioning her abortions in interviews, not least because they are such an important part of her selfhood - its assertion and its transcendence/incorporation of pain and loss (Doy 2005: 73).

However, it was the autobiographic preoccupation with the play between the revealing, or masking of the self that was most relevant to my research, which Gabriele Griffin observes:

Opens up contradictions and tensions between what is revealed and what is concealed, between the visible and the hidden, between the real and the imaginary (Gale and Gardner 2004: 157).<sup>47</sup>

These issues led me to question my own motivations for making such autobiographical work, which has become increasingly self-revelatory and psychoanalytical now that I realise my interpretation of *The Waste Land* is "an act of therapy and exorcism" (Miller 1977: 42). It has also had an impact on the way in which I discuss my research with my family, since I am conscious of a certain 'resistance' from both sides due to the personal subject matter, although it is also worth remembering that my 'story' is only one of four family perspectives on events. Nevertheless, Ann Kaplan believes that:

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<sup>47</sup> Gabriele Griffin (2004) 'Troubling Identities: Clare Dowie's *Why is John Lennon Wearing a Skirt?*' in Gale, M and Gardner, V. (eds) (2004) *Auto/biography and Identity: Women, Theatre and Performance*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, pp.153-175. Griffin examines performance artist Clare Dowie's theatre piece *Why is John Lennon Wearing a Skirt?* (1996), where she appears on stage dressed in her school uniform, reflecting upon stories of tomboy behaviour in her past, to not only raise questions of gender politics but to highlight the debates surrounding the split between the subject of performance and the performed self (Gale and Gardner 2004: 157-162).

Telling stories about trauma, even though the story can never actually repeat or represent what happened, may partly achieve a certain "working through" for the victim. It may also...permit a kind of empathic "sharing" that moves us forward, if only by inches (Kaplan 2005: 37).

Laura Marcus in *Auto/biographical Discourses: Criticism, Theory, Practice* (1994) outlines how feminist autobiographies of the 1970s aimed to address the repressed or "buried self" (Marcus 1994: 280), but warns of the dangers of a confessional practice, which could easily be construed as self-indulgent or even overwhelming, and, therefore, inaccessible:

The anxious need to produce more and yet more narrative suggests that confession is indeed endless and that the 'self' cannot ever catch up with itself in autobiographical representation (Marcus 1994: 280).

Since I am using the poem as a displacement device for 'working through' the breakdown of both my parents marriage and my relationship with my father, perhaps it would be pertinent to reframe my interpretation of Eliot's poem as *My Waste Land*?<sup>48</sup> Therefore, in terms of an autobiographical interpretation, room one serves as a reflection on my past and sense of identity informed by place, room two addresses the psychological dynamics of my parents marital breakdown, room three focuses upon the emotional aftermath of their divorce and the disclosure of hidden secrets, room four is concerned with the continual 'haunting' reminder of my father's absence and room five reflects upon the notion of 'surviving' this "quiet" family trauma and examining its effect upon my beliefs as well as anticipating the future (see Chapter Four).

As an artist I am sympathetic to Marcus's observation that "...the autobiographical act must involve a degree of difficulty and struggle, both in 'grasping' the self and in communicating it" (Marcus 1994: 3-4). This difficulty of understanding the self can be likened to Eliot's own perception on dissecting the self and how it could

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<sup>48</sup> I am also influenced by installation artist's Annette Messager and Louise Bourgeois who draw on autobiography. Frances Borzello in *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (1998) highlights the way in which Bourgeois' work is informed by early family experiences, such as her father's unfaithfulness (Borzello 1998: 159).

inform the creative process. In 1914, Eliot wrote to his friend Conrad Aiken, "It's interesting to cut yourself to pieces once in a while, and wait to see if the fragments will sprout" (Eliot 1988: 59).<sup>49</sup> In this respect the autobiographical act of self-examination is embedded within creative production, and could be seen as reminiscent of my interpretive method of fragmentation and extraction of imagery, words, scenes and thematic concerns from the literary text (see Chapter One and Three).

### 3. Phototherapy

This analysis of the self and the confrontation of the past through the means of a therapeutic reconstruction process direct us to the influential work carried out by Jo Spence and Rosy Martin in the early 1980s,<sup>50</sup> which developed from Spence's previous politicised documentary photography experience and collaborations, which aimed to subvert existing photographic genres and expose unrepresented subjects.<sup>51</sup> In *Putting Myself in the Picture: A Political, Personal and Photographic Autobiography* (1986) Spence closely re-examined her family snapshots and realised that they provided no record of her troubled schooling, ill health, broken marriage or unfulfilling employment as a secretary due to implicit dominant ideology, which means that we only consider photographing the "harmony in our lives" at times of leisure, consumption or ownership.<sup>52</sup>

This realisation initiated a method whereby Spence took active control of her own visual representation and became a model as well as a photographer in the creation

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<sup>49</sup> Letter from T.S Eliot to Conrad Aiken, 30<sup>th</sup> September 1914. Eliot, V. (ed.) (1988) *The Letters of T.S Eliot: Volume 1 1898-1922*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

<sup>50</sup> In *Putting Myself in the Picture* (1986) Spence documents her career progression, stating that family photographs were first used in co-counselling therapy in 1983, before being developed in *The Picture of Health* project (1982) which questioned the absence of illness in family photographs and challenged the convention of 'smiling for the camera' by visually documenting her responses to her cancer treatment. This experience led towards her well-known collaboration with Rosy Martin from 1984 onwards on the re-enactment phototherapy work.

<sup>51</sup> Such as the 'Women and Work' and 'Who's Holding the Baby' project with the Hackney Flashers Collective in the mid-1970s and her collaboration with Terry Dennett which founded the independent educational photography workshops and led to the 'Remodelling Photo-History' project (1981-1982). (Spence 1986: 48-121).

<sup>52</sup> Spence recounts how the *Beyond the Family Album* exhibition at the Hayward Gallery in 1979 was an autobiographical investigation into her family and class background, as well as questioning, "what it meant to be a woman" (Spence 1986: 82).

of a new photographic narrative in order to investigate her own identity and "deconstructing [herself] visually in an attempt to identify the process by which [she] had been 'put together'" (Spence 1986: 83). Sidonie Smith in *Subjectivity, Identity and the Body: Women's Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century* (1993), terms Spence's text *Putting Myself in the Picture* as an "ph/au/tobiography", summarising Spence's shift from photographer to model in order to address the invisibility contained with the family snapshot "as an act of autobiographical recovery" (Smith 1993:146). In her essay, 'Woman in Secret' (1995),<sup>53</sup> Jo Spence explains how the re-staging of repressed memories and fantasies from the past in front of the camera was an empowering experience:

Building on work evolved with Terry on what we called the 'theatre of the self', Rosy and I started using techniques learned from being in therapy ...Using the camera...has been for me like searching for clues and making them visible as bits of unsolved mysteries. This was the most profound of all the work I'd done on myself, for once I began to recognise the secrets which I was hiding from myself, then I could set about finding ways of changing things (Spence and Solomon 1995: 93).

At the end of their essay 'Photo Therapy: New Portraits for Old, 1984 Onwards',<sup>54</sup> Rosy Martin and Jo Spence outline the differences between conventional portraiture and re-enactment phototherapy, emphasizing its collaborative nature and how it allows transformation and self-acceptance to take place.<sup>55</sup> The importance of an open-ended "two-way dialogue" (Spence 1986: 184-5) established through a reciprocal relationship based on mutual trust and exchangeable roles of sitter and photographer allow a working through of past desires and painful experiences,

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<sup>53</sup> Jo Spence 'Woman in Secret' (1995) in Spence, J. and Solomon, J (eds) (1995) *What Can A Woman do with a Camera?: Photography for Women*. London: Scarlet Press, pp.86-96.

<sup>54</sup> Jo Spence and Rosy Martin 'Photo Therapy: New Portraits for Old, 1984 Onwards' (1995) in Spence, J. (1986) *Putting Myself in the Picture*. London: Camden Press, pp. 172-193.

<sup>55</sup> Rosy Martin and Jo Spence, "New portraits for old: the use of the camera in therapy," in *Feminist Review* No. 19 (March 1985), pp. 66-92. Rosy Martin notes how they devised the term "re-enactment phototherapy" after they realised that therapists in the United States and Canada referred to "phototherapy", but used it in a different way, stating how, "To try to avoid confusion, we latterly used the term "re-enactment phototherapy," to make clear that our work was drawing upon psychodramatic techniques and was about the creation of new photographic images, within the therapeutic relationship". Martin, R. (2001) 'The Performative Body: Phototherapy and Re-enactment' *Afterimage*, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2001. Approx. 15 printed pages. Available at <http://www.allbusiness.com/professional-scientific/specialized-design/963415-1.html> [16<sup>th</sup> May 2009].

together with the recognition of a multiple self.<sup>56</sup> Two traditions seem to emerge from phototherapy and autobiographical practice that interrogates family relationships, role-play and the forming of identity: first, that of physically re-enacting scenarios, becoming other family members (mothers, fathers) or re-imagining their former selves.<sup>57</sup> Second, there seems to be a growing tradition of utilising the family snapshot as a tool for both autobiographical writing and visual arts practice that encourages the remembrance and the recording of undocumented personal histories (see Chapter Four).<sup>58</sup>

We all have sets of personalised archetypal images in memory, images which are surrounded by vast chains of connotations and buried memories. In phototherapy we can dredge them up, reconstruct them, even reinvent them, so that they can work in our interests, rather than remaining the mythologies of others who have told us about the 'self' which appears to be visible in various photographs...Through the medium of visual reframing we can begin to understand that images we hold of ourselves are often the embodiment of particular traumas, fears, losses, hopes and desires (Spence 1986: 172).

In 'Memento Mori: A Rite of Inheritance' (1995),<sup>59</sup> Rosy Martin reveals how re-enactment phototherapy allowed her to deal with repressed aspects of her life by re-telling them from her perspective, such as becoming herself as a child in order to examine the person behind the 'good little girl', as well as recreating herself as her Mother.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> See Martin, R and Spence, J. 'Photo-Therapy: Psychic Realism as a Healing Art?' in L. Wells (ed.) (2003) *The Photography Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 402-409, pp.408-9 and Martin, R. (2009) 'Inhabiting the Image: photography, therapy and re-enactment phototherapy', *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*, 11 (1), 35-49 which outlines Martin's continuing employment of Phototherapy.

<sup>57</sup> Such as Rosy Martin's re-staging of herself as a child and as her Mother (Spence 1986: 176-177) or Spence's re-enactment of her Mother's 'crime' of being a factory worker (Spence and Solomon 1995: 91) or as a teenager outside the chip shop looking for boys (Spence and Holland 1991: 232)

<sup>58</sup> Refer to photo therapy work in Jo Spence (1986), Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (1991), Jo Spence and Joan Solomon (1995), Rosy Martin and Jo Spence in Wells (2003), Rosy Martin (2009) and Terry Dennett (2009). Autobiographical reflection and writing on family photographs were informed by Roland Barthes (1980), Annette Kuhn (1991 and 1995), Liz Stanley (1995) and Gen Doy (2005). Spence and Martin's use of family snapshots as a prompt for examining self-representation in phototherapy could be applied to my own act of re-photography in the creation of my *PastPresent* photographs (2005) and *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* video (2005), together with the burning of my graduation photograph in 'Sermon': *Vol.V Retribution* (2009) and the resurfacing of the family group photograph in *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009). See Chapter Four.

<sup>59</sup> Rosy Martin 'Memento Mori: A Rite of Inheritance' (1995) in Spence, J. and Solomon, J. (eds) (1995) *What Can A Woman do with a Camera?: Photography for Women*. London: Scarlet Press, pp.67-74.

<sup>60</sup> See also Rosy Martin 'Unwind the ties that bind' in Spence, J. and Holland, P. (eds). (1991) *Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography*. London: Virago. Here Martin reveals how she and Spence adopted therapeutic methods derived from Alice Miller, *The Drama of Being a Child*, Virago, 1987 (Spence and Holland 1991: 210).

Phototherapy is photographing feelings, in all their rawness...I have found that certain issues and ideas which I thought I had worked through and understood, for example in relation to my Mother, could still produce feelings of angst. By making images of these feelings working with Jo, I have been able to integrate my intellectual knowledge at a deeper, unconscious level, to transform it into an inner wisdom (Spence 1986: 174).

The transformative qualities of phototherapy that permits the hidden to become visible through role-play is developed by Joan Solomon, who, having recognised that the majority of her past family photographs documented her as a dancer, her non-performing "dark, chaotic emotional self...was silent" and that through the means of phototherapy, she was able to achieve "a kind of cathartic acknowledgement of the child I never was" (Spence and Solomon 1995: 56). The technique of performing repressed elements of the self in order to 'work through' autobiographical issues reminds us of Freud's observation in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle' (1920) that:

Children repeat everything in their play that has made a powerful impression on them, and that in so doing they abreact the intensity of the experience and make themselves so to speak master of the situation (Freud 1920/2003: 55).

Therefore, it could be interpreted that through the means of role-play within re-enactment phototherapy some sort of learning experience can be acquired by reversing past 'un-pleasurable' experience, which is something I have addressed in my interpretation of *Waste Land* (see Chapter Four). However, Liz Stanley in *The Autobiographical 'I'* (1992) considers the idea of changing our perception of childhood and the past through phototherapy "personally unhelpful", since it only deals with "post hoc constructions" rather than "as it was necessarily literally experienced at the time" (Stanley 1992: 30). Despite this assertion, Stanley's preference for work that "change [s] the present by (trying to) change the present" (Stanley 1992: 30) could be resolved by Spence's more politicised work concerning her experience of illness. Marsha Meskimmon highlights the fact that Spence also used photography as a therapeutic device for actively confronting her fight with breast cancer and validating her experience of being a 'patient' to create a series of

what she believes to be autobiographical works, "since they represent visually the chronological experiences of an individual and they reveal the most personal, psychological responses of that individual to particular details in her life" (Meskimmon 1996: 87).

The emotive photograph *Included?* from the *Narratives of (Dis)ease* (1989) series pictures Spence as a teary child, clutching onto a teddy bear that covers her naked body in order to address her feelings of vulnerability and fear whilst undergoing treatment. Other works, such as, her photographic collage, *How Do I Begin to Take Responsibility for my Body?* (1984),<sup>61</sup> are more confrontational, taking a more political stance by visualising the work's title through isolated words written directly onto her body in abstract photographic fragments. Apart from being indicative of phototherapy itself which "acknowledges the fragmentation process" (Spence 1986: 198) (as well as being reminiscent of my own fragmentary interpretive method), Spence advocates its transformative aspects, "Out of this, for me, has come new activity, new acceptance, and changes I never considered possible" (Spence 1986: 198). However, Spence admitted that her work received mixed responses, from those who perceive her work as narcissistic, to those who welcome the opportunity to address repressed feelings and experience. It is interesting to note that whilst Spence viewed some of her work on social issues as "a kind of 'politicised exhibitionism'", she considered most of her own practice to be self-initiated and "very private" with "no relevance to others" (Spence and Solomon 1995: 95).

#### **4. Feminine Metaphors**

Having identified some of the fundamental issues and processes that arise from female autobiographical practice, I want to investigate the way in which I am influenced by literary metaphors to communicate my traumatic autobiographical experience. To what extent do I create visual equivalents within my practice, and, if

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<sup>61</sup> Taken from 'A Picture of Health' exhibition, Jo Spence in collaboration with Rosy Martin and Maggie Murray. Camerawork, London. 1985.

so do they bear any particularly feminine characteristics? Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's seminal publication, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (1979), heightened an awareness of the literary metaphors employed by female writers like Charlotte Bronte, Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf and Sylvia Plath, who they believe commonly depict:

Images of enclosure and escape, fantasies in which maddened doubles functioned as asocial surrogates for docile selves, metaphors of physical discomfort manifested in frozen landscapes and fiery interiors – such patterns recurred throughout this tradition, along with obsessive depictions of diseases like anorexia, agoraphobia, and claustrophobia (Gilbert and Gubar 1979/2000: xi).

In the process of reflecting upon both past and current work, I became conscious of the various feminine metaphors that I have employed within my arts practice, informed by past undergraduate study of women's literature, which were adopted as a mode of transferral, as Laura Marcus explains:

Via the mediation of metaphor, the experience of the self can be communicated to others...metaphors are used to represent both outside reality and the self (Marcus 1994: 187).

Upon closer inspection I identified that there was a recurrence of imagery concerning the containment of the female body within interior spaces, for instance, the two women 'trapped' in the secret room of *The Other Side of the Mirror* (1999), or the figure 'caught' in the centre of the web-like ornamental banister in *Through the Banisters* (1997), or the governess navigating her way from interior to exterior space in *Turn of the Screw* (2001).<sup>62</sup> This 'female' symbolism has become more prevalent within the *Waste Land* series, especially, *In the Cage* (2007) and *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008) since it has been appropriated as an effective metaphorical device for communicating autobiographical experience of marital breakdown (see Chapter Four).<sup>63</sup>

<sup>62</sup> See [www.sallywaterman.com](http://www.sallywaterman.com) for project visuals.

<sup>63</sup> Works from *Waste Land* that feature images of containment and the relationship between interior and exterior spaces include *In the Cage* (2007), *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008), 'Sermon': Vol.I *Encounter*, Vol.II *Contemplation*, (2008) and Vol.IV *Reverberation* (2009). See Chapter Four.

Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik in *Landscapes of Desire: Metaphors in Women's Fiction* (1990) argue how "rooms, houses, railings and boundaries...function...as metaphors for the way in which society refuses to let women wander beyond the cultural 'room' of marriage and motherhood" (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 33), referring to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1899) and Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (1899).<sup>64</sup> Their study, which examines these familiar female literary texts, alongside more contemporary works by Jean Rhys and Margaret Atwood, proposes that there is a metaphorical binary between the room or house versus the landscape and sea within women's fiction, which symbolizes "the opposition between fixity and fluidity" of women's repressed desires (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 205). They go on to identify a "preoccupation with boundary, threshold and fluidity; through the room/house, water/sea configuration of metaphor [which] explore the hidden boundaries which constrain women within the construct 'woman'" (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 65). The writings of Virginia Woolf, including *To the Lighthouse* and *The Waves*, in particular, are saturated with images of "fluidity, expressed through the trope of water" which they interpret as "an escape from the 'mystic boundaries' of cultural constructs" (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 71).

Horner and Zlosnik suggest that Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* anticipated the French feminists work on *écriture féminine*, stating how "the sea is a metaphor for that writing" (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 61). Contrary to the restrictions enforced by the interior space, metaphorical representations of water and the sea indeed remind us of Helen Cixous's notion of 'writing the body', which is unrestricted and never-ending like the sea:

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<sup>64</sup> Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik detect that women's culture and writing is "positioned on the margin of the dominant discourse [which] seems to express itself in a preoccupation with boundaries, space and occupation" (Horner and Zlosnik 1990:6). This convention was firstly identified by Gilbert and Gubar which provides a summary of what they define as a "distinctly female literary tradition", supported by later studies such as Elaine Showalter's definition of women's culture as a 'wild zone' which "exists in the realms of metaphysics or consciousness rather than in actuality" (Showalter 1986: 262). Showalter, E. (1986) 'Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness' in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature and Theory*. London: Virago, pp.243-270, p.262.

We are ourselves sea, sand, coral, sea-weed, beaches, tides, swimmers, children, waves.../For her joyous benefits she is erogenous; she is the erotogeneity of the heterogeneous: airborne swimmer, in flight, she does not cling to herself; she is dispersible, prodigious, stunning, desirous and capable of others, of the other woman that she will be, of the other woman she isn't, of him, of you (Cixous 1976: 889-890, cited in Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 61-2).<sup>65</sup>

In hindsight, this conflict between house/room and sea/landscape is omnipresent in *The Waves* (1996), where the photographs alternate between each of these opposing environments. The symbolic comparisons that Woolf draws between life's intensities and periods of lull and the rise and fall of the waves, is reinforced by images of the surrogate self pictured within the chaotic city experience (see Chapter One).<sup>66</sup> Depictions of the sea and water within *Waste Land* take on different forms and metaphorical associations. The waves that break on the shore in *Rural Shadow Walks* (2006) in room one 'Burial', are repetitive and relentless, yet doubled, suggesting either a kind of resistance to immersion, or a constant revisiting or 'compulsion to repeat'. In the photographic diptychs *Vol.II Contemplation*, *Vol.III Disintegration* and *Vol.IV Retribution* (2008/9) from room three, 'Sermon', the water is settled and static, appearing unthreatening or even seductive at times, although in room four 'Water', which is concerned with the continuing subliminal presence of the absent father, the sea is dark and foreboding, yet slowed down to become disturbingly mesmerising with its ghostly apparitions in *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) (see Chapter Four).

The metaphorical references to water/landscape lead us to consider issues concerning the reflective self. Whilst the female relationship with mirrors has been well documented, particularly by John Berger in terms of viewing women as objects of the male gaze,<sup>67</sup> in terms of my own research, I was interested in its associations of doubleness, misrecognition and escapism; of the duality between what Robert Sobieszek terms the "readily available exterior self" and "privileged

<sup>65</sup> Cixous, H. (1976) 'The Laugh of the Medusa'. trans. Keith Cohen, Paula Cohen, *Signs*. University of Chicago Press. Vol.1, No.4 (Summer 1976), pp.875-893.

<sup>66</sup> Sea or water imagery feature as a concluding element in both the *Forest Fears* (2000) and *Journey Home* (2002) series. See [www.sallywaterman.com](http://www.sallywaterman.com)

<sup>67</sup> See John Berger (1972/77) *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin Books). pp.45-64.

interior self" (Keledjian 1994: 21). *The Other Side of a Mirror* (1999), a series of photographs concerned with notions of the split self and otherness was inspired by Mary Taylor Coleridge's poem (1882) alongside other authors, such as, Charlotte Bronte, Virginia Woolf, Angela Carter and Lewis Carroll. The concept of a split self: the visible façade and the secret self or 'mad double' within, is acutely captured by the narrator in Taylor Coleridge's poem, who resurrects a "vision of a woman, wild /with more than womanly despair" (l.5-6), but reveals that "She had no voice to speak her dread" (l.18).

Gilbert and Gubar identify dramatizations of imprisonment and escape in nineteenth century female literature using houses as metaphors of a "woman's place" to enact oppositions of enclosure and escape through the depictions of veils, costumes, paintings and mirrors. They maintain that the violence of the mad double, personified by Bertha in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, signified the way in which female authors desired an escape from patriarchal society (Gilbert and Gubar 1979/2000: 85-89), going on to propose that Jane's encounter with the mad wife Bertha, signifies an encounter with "her own imprisoned 'hunger, rebellion and rage'; a secret dialogue of self and soul" (Gilbert and Gubar 1979/2000: 339). In terms of my past work, there is an evasion, or misrecognition of the mirror image, whereby the surrogate self's eyes are averted away from the mirror in *The Waves*, or half hidden behind a mask in *The Other Side of the Mirror*, which complies with Gilbert and Gubar's suggestion that the mirror represents "a sort of chamber, a mysterious enclosure in which images of the self are trapped" (Gilbert and Gubar 1979/2000: 340-1). However, there seems to be an attempt to confront the reflected image in the *Vol.I Encounter* photograph from *Waste Land*, room three, 'Sermon', which appears to catch the self off-guard in an attempt to re-enact past experience. However, this moment of clarity and self-recognition has not been totally achieved; the face is still slightly out of focus and retains a sense of elusiveness or separation from both the self as well as the audience.

However, the notion of essential gender differences in the attitudes regarding representation produced by the reflected self-image reminds us of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949), which structured sexual difference and self-identification around the reflected image:

But all her life the woman is to find the magic of her mirror a tremendous help in her effort to project herself and then attain self-identification...Man, feeling and wishing himself active, subject, does not see himself in his fixed image; it has little attraction for him, since man's body does not seem to him an object of desire; while woman, knowing and making herself object, believes she really sees *herself* in the glass (cited in Chadwick 1998: 3; Meskimmon 1996: 5).

The narcissistic implications of the mirror reflection is also considered by Jennifer Blessing, yet she warns that despite the fact that recognition "can serve to define oneself, to create an identifiable and distinct subject...The mirror can also be a reminder of the pain of separation, of the loneliness that is individuality" (Blessing 1997: 51).<sup>68</sup> However, my own staged reluctance to look directly into the mirror, without the aid of a mask or a play with depth of field, therefore, reveals my inability to perceive the self not only as a unified whole, or essential self but also my avoidance of being bound up in cultural associations of "femininity as something-to-be-looked-at" (Rideal, Chadwick and Borzello 2001: 9). Whitney Chadwick in *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation* (1998)<sup>69</sup> recognises the Western narcissistic identification of woman with the reflected image:

The process of objectification that enables women to describe herself as if from outside the body also implicates her in a masculine dynamic that projects the woman as other. For women artists, the problematic of self-representation has remained inextricably bound up with the woman's internalization of the images of her "otherness" (Chadwick 1998: 10).

In 'The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I' (1949), psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan proposes that the formation of the ego is through the infant's

<sup>68</sup> *Rose is a Rose is a Rose: Gender Performance in Photography* (1997) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by Jennifer Blessing, New York: Guggenheim Museum.

<sup>69</sup> Whitney Chadwick, (1998) 'An Infinite Play of Empty Mirrors: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation' in *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation*. Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. pp.2-35.

identification with the reflected image of itself.<sup>70</sup> Whilst the infant still perceives their body as fragmented parts, the mirror image, which is seen and recognised as a whole signifies the attainment of a sense of self (Homer 2005: 24-25):

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject's entire mental development (Lacan 1977 [1949]: 4).

The construction of the ego is, therefore, based on the misapprehension of wholeness, of an essential "fragmented body-image". Lacan defines the misrecognition of one's own image as a continuing process, rather than just an infantile developmental phase in which the ego is constantly trying to maintain an imaginary sense of unity. This dichotomy is discussed by Laura Marcus, who highlights the fact that Lacan's proposition is developed from Freud's ideas of primary narcissism, outlined in his essay *On the Introduction of Narcissism* (1914).<sup>71</sup> She considers the "doubling effect of the mirror", which reveals a "conflict between the experience of 'self' as a schism and the reflected image as a unified whole" (Marcus 1994: 217), by emphasizing the difference between the 'realist ego', which allows the construction of a "autonomous, self-affirming identity", against the "narcissistic ego", which applies to deconstructionist models of splitting and doubling through amorphous drives or fantasies (Marcus 1994: 216). Marcus concludes that according to Freud and Lacan's theories; "The ego is orientated around two poles: affirmative self-recognition and the paranoid knowledge of a split self" (Marcus 1994: 218).

Indeed, these two different understandings of subjectivity underpin debates surrounding autobiography and self-portraiture, with traditional notions of a unified essential self on one hand, opposed with a post-structuralist position which regards

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<sup>70</sup> Jacques Lacan, *The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience* (1949) Delivered at the 16<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Psychoanalysis, Zurich, 17<sup>th</sup> July 1949.

<sup>71</sup> Marcus refers to Luce Irigaray's concept of autobiomirroring, which develops Lacan's theories by offering up a distorted mirror in the *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974) (Marcus 1994: 220)

the self as "fragmented, unstable, decentred and constructed by discourse" (Doy 2005: 2) on the other.<sup>72</sup> Sidonie Smith's analysis of written autobiographies in *Subjectivity, Identity and the Body: Women's Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century* (1993) identifies an essential self, which she believes to be represented through two spatial metaphors:

Typically the pursuit of selfhood develops in two directions. The self may move consecutively through stages of growth, expanding the horizons of self and boundaries of experience through accretion, but always carrying forward through new growth that globe of an irreducible, unified core. This direction we might call horizontal. Or the self may proceed vertically, delving downward into itself to find the irreducible core, stripping away mask after mask of false selves in search of that hard core at the centre, that pure, unique or true self (Smith 1993: 18).<sup>73</sup>

Whilst this is an attractive metaphorical image, I do not share this belief. In terms of my own practice, I would identify with the postmodern notion of a shifting, multiple self that can never be truly unmasked or understood. However, Smith later acknowledges this alternative notion of selfhood in her review of the shifting theories of subjectivity during the twentieth century in the light of Freud and Marx, observing that:

For both Lacan and Derrida the 'self' is a fiction, an illusion constituted in discourse, a hypothetical place of storytelling. The true self, or core of metaphysical selfhood, can never be discovered, unmasked, revealed because there is nothing at the core. The self has no origin, no history, since both origin and history are, like the self, fictions. Moreover, since the self is split and fragmented, it can no longer be conceptualized as unitary. At any given moment the self is different from itself at any other given moment (Smith 1993: 56).

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<sup>72</sup> Whilst these philosophical debates were on the boundary of my research, Gen Doy provides a useful introduction to the establishment of the Cartesian, essentialist subject, led by French philosopher René Descartes towards a postmodern notion of a shifting, socially constructed self, endorsed by Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan in *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture* (Doy 2005: 1-10). See also Janet Wolff 'Postmodern Theory and Feminist Arts Practice' in Wolff, J. (1990) *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Woman and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press. pp.85-99. In terms of gender politics, Wolff assesses how feminism either drew upon post-structuralist theory to formulate deconstructive strategies to represent the self, or adopted Humanist or celebratory strategies, which were more in line with identifying essential female qualities.

<sup>73</sup> Notably, Laura Marcus observes how twentieth century critical approaches to autobiography adopt metaphors, often used in binary terms to describe the self such as inside/outside, self/world, private/public, subjectivity/ objectivity and the interior space of mind/public world (Marcus 1994: 4). This concept of 'mapping' our lives is also distinguished by Deidre Heddon, who recognises that our experience is frequently described using spatial metaphors, equating life with a "journey" which takes "trajectories", goes "uphill" or "lose" our direction. She relates this to the genre of autobiographical writing itself, stating how "We might think of autobiography as cartography of the self" (Heddon 2008: 88).

Indeed, this concept of a shifting self is reminiscent of Jo Spence and Rosy Martin's re-enactment phototherapy work discussed earlier, which corresponds with my own position. Rosy Martin in her essay 'The Performative Body: Phototherapy and Re-enactment' (2001) asserts that:

The photography sessions are not about "capturing" the image, they are about seeking to make it happen-to "take place." It is about staging the selves and knowingly using visual languages, referring to and challenging other visual representations. It is about the constructions of identities rather than revealing any "essential" identity (Martin 2001:6).<sup>74</sup>

### **5. Female Photographic Self-portraiture**

Having established the fact that my practice utilises literature as a displacement device to communicate traumatic autobiographical experience, I sought to investigate its role as self-portraiture. I was conscious of the fact that whilst in portrait photography, the photographer and viewer are eager to interpret the sitter's gestures and emotions, the constructed nature of the self-portrait means that issues of self-scrutiny and self-exposure come into play. In my own work I am preoccupied with this tension between revealing and concealing of both personal trauma and of the representation of the self through staged photographic and video narratives. I reveal myself to the viewer to a certain extent, yet there is a still a distance, a barrier – the image eludes, yet does not define, there is a need for interpretation, of the relevance and choice of text, how it has been adapted and the reasons for the visual presence (or absence) of the exterior self, which could signify a double burial within this "submerged biography" (Miller 1977:37). Therefore, my research is a self-analytical process, not only of understanding my own interpretive methods, but also, how I choose to visually represent myself in the work.

It is important to note that I am only examining specific forms of female self-representation (in particular, photographic self-portraits), that relate to issues of

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<sup>74</sup> Martin, R. (2001) 'The Performative Body: Phototherapy and Re-enactment' Afterimage, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2001. Approx. 15 printed pages. Available at <http://www.allbusiness.com/professional-scientific/specialized-design/963415-1.html> [16<sup>th</sup> May 2009].

masquerade, performance and self-effacement evident within my own practice and I am not aiming to provide an art historical survey of this vast, well-documented subject.<sup>75</sup> Instead, my research was driven by an investigation into whether gender influenced the way in which the self was visually represented in my practice, drawing upon relevant artist's who share my concerns. Frances Borzello in *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (1998) provides an analysis of female self-representation in art history from the sixteenth century to present day tracing the various incarnations from serious formal portraits as artists at an easel to depictions of motherhood and middle age, to a experimentation with form and gender roles in the twentieth century.<sup>76</sup> She notes a parallel between the interest in psychoanalysis at the beginning of the twentieth century with a rapid increase in the number of female self-portraits produced and the establishment of a tradition of reinvention. She goes on to explain that in her study that she "tried to make sense of what I was seeing by treating the self-portrait as painted versions of autobiography, a way for the artist to present a story about herself for public consumption" (Borzello 1998: 19).

Within the tradition of photographic self-portraiture, Lingwood (1987), Keledjian (1994) Chadwick (1998) and Rideal, Chadwick and Borzello (2001)<sup>77</sup> provide historical surveys of self-representation and identify similar issues of introspection, doubleness and performance, together with debates surrounding notions of revealing (or not) an essential or a multiple self. James Lingwood (1987) notes how

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<sup>75</sup> Frances Borzello (2001) 'Behind the Image' in Rideal, L, with Chadwick, W and Borzello, F (eds) *Mirror, Mirror*. London: National Portrait Gallery. pp.22-31.

<sup>76</sup> See also Marsha Meskimmon (1996) *The Art of Reflection: Women Artists' Self Portraiture in the Twentieth Century* (London: Scarlet Press) and Gen Doy (2005) *Picturing the Self: Changing Views of the Subject in Visual Culture* (London and New York: I B Tauris) for contemporary debates on self-representation. Meskimmon identifies tropes of male empowered self-portraits as figures of Christ or as clothed artist with nude female model before investigating ways that women have reclaimed powers of looking through subversive strategies such as role play and actively picturing the artist with the camera or depicting unrepresented domestic life, ageing and illness.

<sup>77</sup> A significant number of the studies were written to accompany public exhibitions on self-portraiture such as James Lingwood's *Staging the Self: Self-Portrait Photography 1840s-1980s* (1987) at the National Portrait Gallery, London, (then touring to the Plymouth Arts Centre; John Hansard Gallery, Southampton and the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham) and *The Camera I: Photographic Self-Portraits from the Audrey and Sydney Irmas Collection* (1994) by Chris Keledjian at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. Others were more specifically focused upon female self-portraiture such as *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation* (1998) by Whitney Chadwick at the MIT List Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts; (touring to Miami Art Museum, Florida and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, California) and *Mirror, Mirror* (2001) by Liz Rideal with Whitney Chadwick and Frances Borzello at National Portrait Gallery, London.

self-portraiture began in the studio in the nineteenth century before venturing out to represent the self against ruined sites of classical symbolism or "conquered" backdrops of wilderness before experimenting in the twentieth century with self-portraiture depicted through alternative means of fragmentation or distortion,<sup>78</sup> multiple selves,<sup>79</sup> shadows or reflections,<sup>80</sup> and role-play<sup>81</sup> (Lingwood 1987: 5).

Jean-Francois Chevrier in his accompanying essay, 'The Image of the Other',<sup>82</sup> develops Lingwood's claim by arguing that the impact of Expressionism and the work of John Heartfield and Raoul Hausmann meant that "photography ceased to be a means for fixing identities or playing with them...From now on the camera recorded the multiplicity of drives...contained by the abstract image of the self and the individual." (Lingwood 1987: 14) Robert A. Sobieszek<sup>83</sup> considers the effect of modernist experimental techniques that distorted conventional photographic representations by capturing the self-image in reflected mirrors or surfaces (Bill Brandt, Ilse Bing), as a shadow (Walker Evans, Lee Friedlander, Piet Zwart) or through photomontage, combination printing, or optical illusions (Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Franz Roh) (Keledjian 1994: 26-28).

Marsha Meskimmon rejects dominant modes of essentialism and assigns postmodern women's self-portraiture to the production of shifting rather than fixed identities, observing, therefore, that the adoption of avant-garde photographic techniques of superimposition and montage is prevalent (Meskimmon 1996: 92). In

*Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation* (1998) Whitney

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<sup>78</sup> Such as El Lissitzky *The Conductor* (1924), Berenice Abbott *Self-Portrait* (1930) and John Coplans *Back with Arms Above* (1984) Subjective viewpoints of fragmented parts of the body are represented by Lou Stoumen's *My Feet and Shoes, Saylor's Lake, PA* (1935) in *The Camera I* (1994).

<sup>79</sup> Stanislaw Witkiewicz *Multipart Self-Portrait* (1917). Corresponding with Lingwood, Keledjian's publication (1994) includes John F. Collins *Self-Portrait Frame in Frame* (1935) and Peter Keetman *1001 Faces* (1957).

<sup>80</sup> Louis Faurer *Staten Island Ferry, New York* (1946), Kenneth Josephson *Matthew* (1963), Lee Friedlander's *New York City* (1966). Keledjian's text also features similar work by Louis Faurer *Self-Portrait, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, El Station Looking Towards 'Tudor City'* (1946) and Umbo (Otto Umbehr) *Self-Portrait on Beach* (1930).

<sup>81</sup> Alice Austen *Trude and I Masked* (1891), Duane Michels *Self-Portrait as if I were Dead* (1968)

<sup>82</sup> Jean-Francois Chevrier (1987) 'The Image of the Other' in *Staging the Self: Self-Portrait Photography 1840s-1980s* (1987) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by James Lingwood, London: National Portrait Gallery. pp.9-15.

<sup>83</sup> See Robert A. Sobieszek (1994) 'Other Selves in Photographic Self-Portraiture' in *The Camera I: Photographic Self-Portraits from the Audrey and Sydney Irmas Collection* (1994) edited by Chris Keledjian (Los Angeles and New York: LA County Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers)

Chadwick supports this view, recognizing how the female surrealist artists of the 1930s and 1940s produced "unique" self-portraits that undermined conventional representations of female subjectivity through employing Surrealist practices of "doubling,"<sup>84</sup> fragmentation and fetishizing the body" (Chadwick 1998: ix).<sup>85</sup>

Women Surrealists often astutely wove self-awareness into images of identity as a juggling of incompatible roles, a balancing act, a series of performances that leave the subject frayed around the edges, fragmented, not one but many, into complex narratives that simultaneously project and internalise the fragmented self, reproduce and resist dominant discourses (Chadwick 1998: 12).

Janet Wolff extends this argument by proposing that the "radical potential" of modernist deconstructive devices, such as, disrupting narrative flow, montage, re-appropriation and defamiliarization are "by no means outmoded" and are, therefore, also suited to contemporary feminist practice, since they produce a "dislocation of thought" (Wolff 1990: 60-63).<sup>86</sup> Wolff identifies two distinctive types of feminist arts practice: either "celebratory" of essential female experience (seen in the work of Judy Chicago and Nancy Spero) or "deconstructive" (for example, Barbara Kruger or Mary Kelly), which employs such modernist "destabilizing" tactics in order to challenge inherent patriarchal conventions (Wolff 1990: 82, 94-96). These subversive techniques permit the presentation of a fragmented self in *Waste Land* seen in the work, *I Knew Nothing* (2006) from room one, 'Burial' in particular, which employs repetition and slow motion (see Chapter Four).

Although modernist strategies seem to be utilized by both genders, Whitney Chadwick<sup>87</sup> goes further to detect commonalities within the collection of female self-portraits exhibited in *Mirror Mirror* at the National Portrait Gallery in

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<sup>84</sup> Wanda Wulz's photographic self-portrait *Myself + Cat* (1932) employs the modernist strategy of superimposition through combination printing to suggest feminine concerns with masking, doubleness and identity. Reproduced in Frances Borzello's *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (1998), p.193.

<sup>85</sup> Chadwick claims that artists such as Cindy Sherman, Francesca Woodman, Kiki Smith, Louise Bourgeois, Dorothy Cross, Michiko Kon, Paula Santiago and Ana Mendieta subsequently adopted these innovative methods.

<sup>86</sup> See Janet Wolff (1990) ch.4 'Feminism and Modernism', ch.5 'Women's Knowledge and Women's Art' and ch.6 'Postmodern Theory and Feminist Art Practice' in *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

<sup>87</sup> See Whitney Chadwick (2001) 'How Do I Look?' in *Mirror, Mirror* edited by Liz Rideal, with W. Chadwick and F. Borzello London: National Portrait Gallery. pp.8-21. The exhibition was held at the National Portrait Gallery, London (12<sup>th</sup> September 2001 - 20<sup>th</sup> January 2002)

2001/2002. Despite their differences in historical context, class, sexual orientation and ethnicity, Chadwick recognises the existence of specific "gender and representational strategies" (Rideal, Chadwick and Borzello 2001: 9) especially masking and masquerade, cross-dressing, androgyny to introduce ambiguity and fluidity (Rideal, Chadwick & Borzello 2001: 9). She emphasizes the fact that self-portraits by women also challenge "the complex relationship that exists between masculine agency and female passivity in Western art history" (Rideal, Chadwick and Borzello 2001: 9), since traditional representations of the artist were historically produced around perceived 'masculine' qualities of ambition and individualism. She goes on to argue that the female artist can only resolve "the difficulty and paradox of being both active, creative subject – a maker of meaning – and passive object – a site of meaning...through performing the self" (Rideal, Chadwick and Borzello 2001: 14).

Susan Butler in her essay, 'So How do I Look? Women Before and Behind the Camera' considers how the very act of photographic self-portraiture allows technical control and ownership in "creating an image that presents the self in its own terms, as it would like to be seen" (Lingwood 1987: 51).<sup>88</sup> She argues that a woman using a camera could be seen as a "theft of power", since the gaze has traditionally been the male privilege and also identifies female strategies that transform dominant conventions, referring to the work of Alice Austen, Florence Henri, Judy Dater, Cindy Sherman and Susan Hiller, which "adds up to an impressive dossier of conscientious objection, indecent exposure, subversion, theft and general insubordination" (Lingwood 1987: 51). Butler's assertions are reinforced by Rosy Martin, who observes how female artists "have used their own self-representations to explore, expand and reclaim the act of looking and making meanings within cultural production for themselves" (Meskimmon 1996: xvii).<sup>89</sup> Indeed, Whitney

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<sup>88</sup> Susan Butler (1987) 'So How do I Look? Women Before and Behind the Camera' in *Staging the Self: Self-Portrait Photography 1840s-1980s* (1987) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by James Lingwood, London: National Portrait Gallery. pp.51-58.

<sup>89</sup> Rosy Martin, 'How do I Look?' (Forward) in Meskimmon, M. (1996) *The Art of Reflection: Women Artists' Self Portraiture in the Twentieth Century*. London: Scarlet Press, pp.xv-xvii.

Chadwick acknowledges that women have adopted particular devices for communicating the self:

The articulation of self through strategies that identify the self and the exterior world or that register the self through traces, absences, or disguises both affirm and deny the embodied self. Masking, masquerade, and performance have all proven crucial for the production of feminine subjectivity through active agency (Chadwick 1998: 22).

However, it was Joyce Tenneson-Cohen's 1979 monograph *In/Sights: Self Portraits by Women* that enabled the reassessment of the self-representational strategies I employ from a gendered perspective. Tenneson-Cohen declared that her publication was "the first anthology of self-portraits by women ever published in any art media" (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: vi) and was produced as a direct response to the increasing interest in self-examination, prompted by the women's movement and feminist scholarship during the 1970s. Despite the historical context of this publication, I found distinctive similarities between my own practice and several of the themes she recognized within this collection of photographic works, particularly performing the self, together with an intention to create what she summarised as "pictures charged with intense emotion" (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: v).<sup>90</sup> In her accompanying essay, Patricia Meyer Spacks stated that despite noticing a distinctive avoidance of women artists confronting the camera directly, they did not appear passive either, displaying a common desire for self-investigation. Indeed, all of the artists:

allude to the constant role-playing that marks a woman's life...in real life, the world makes conflicting shifting demands; the woman feels divided among her possible selves. So these photographers experiment with double exposures, conjunctions of past and present images, split images...with ways of conveying internal division or complexity (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: 113).<sup>91</sup>

Tenneson-Cohen identified a selection of distinctive themes within these female self-portraits that focused upon the creation of multiple identities, such as self-

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<sup>90</sup> By exhibiting and discussing her own work with others, Tenneson-Cohen discovered that other female artists were working within the same territory, which instigated her final selection of work by sixty-six American photographers from a submission of over 4,000 images.

<sup>91</sup> Patricia Meyer Spacks (1979) 'Self as Subject: A Female Language' in Tenneson Cohen, J. (1979) *IN/SIGHTS: Self Portraits by Women*. London: Gordon Fraser.

transformation (utilizing masks, costumes, or montage); the incorporation of natural forms; explorations of sexuality and the subversion of traditional representations of the nude; the employment of humour and satire as a means of detachment and a sense of nostalgia, portrayed through family snapshots, objects or settings. Reflecting upon the diverse techniques implemented by the female artists to suggest "indirection", including mirrors, shadows, covering the face or showing unexpected fragmented parts of their body, Meyer Spacks questions whether this reliance on such devices "belongs more significantly to the woman or to the artist" but argues that:

the degree of reliance and emphasis on it and the nature of the devices used embody something particularly female. Particularly female: not necessarily uniquely so...Men may employ typically female artistic structures; women may employ male ones. A self-portrait by its very subject matter obviously reveals the gender of its maker; its way of presenting that subject matter might plausibly suggest what gender means to that maker (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: 113).

## **6. Self-Representational Strategies Identified Within Practice**

Therefore, the collection of self-portraiture devices within Tenneson-Cohen's publication was instrumental in leading me to consider two fundamental questions: first, how do I choose to visually represent myself in my work, and second, why do I employ several strategies? Having reviewed both past and current work in the light of these discoveries, I decided to re-name and even extend Tenneson-Cohen's categories to reflect the diversity of the nine different approaches I had identified within my own practice,<sup>92</sup> amalgamating separate images from each project anonymously under each of these different visual strategies. Isolating and regrouping these images individually according to these themes, rather than viewing them as collective bodies of work was revelatory.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> These are: 1. *The Surrogate Double*, 2. *Self-transformation*, 3. *Nostalgia and the Past*, 4. *Subjective Perspectives*, 5. *The Anonymous Figure*, 6. *Dreams, Fantasies and Nightmares*, 7. *Incorporation of Natural Forms*, 8. *Traces of the Self* and 9. *The Disembodied Self*.

<sup>93</sup> Images from different bodies of work I had produced since 1996 were firstly assembled in PowerPoint in June 2008. This allowed a process of re-ordering and then re-assembling of multiple images within the same slide once correlations were identified and groupings discovered.

This exercise unearthed not only these recurrent methods, but also acknowledged issues of self-effacement, exclusion and entrapment; invisibility and anonymity; nostalgia and aloneness. This relates to the fact that I am using masking strategies in order to situate myself apart from my audience due to the deeply personal nature of the work. Yet they are also indicative of my personality; someone whose shyness has restricted her, who finds it uncomfortable to communicate in written and verbal means and has found a formulaic method of self-representation in visual modes. I am conscious of adopting 'masks' or visual methods of creating a fragmented narrative rather than a more explicit approach, as seen in the work of artists such as Tracey Emin.

However, the first strategy that I recognised independently from Tenneson-Cohen's definitions was that of '*The Surrogate Double*', using someone else to represent the self in my work. This was the most common device employed in my early practice (1996-2001) and was due to the practicalities of having the freedom to position and pose the models that were selected due to their visual resemblance to me at the time of production. *The Waves* (1996) series actually cast two female friends, as well as my brother to represent three of the characters from Woolf's novel that I personally identified with, and which I now understand represented different facets of myself (see Chapter One). Indeed, in retrospect, this technique of using surrogate doubles could be read in two different ways: first it facilitated a distancing of the self and avoidance of autobiographical attachment, but on the other hand, it could be interpreted as a device for allowing a kind of wish-fulfilment or fantasy to take place, through a staged and controlled doubling of the self. It is interesting to recognise that I ceased using models for the *Journey Home* (2002) and *Making our Mark* (2004) projects, when my work turned towards more insular narratives surrounding notions of place, journeys and absence.

The second strategy that I identified from Tenneson-Cohen's text was that of '*Self-transformation*', which is evident in the masking of gendered behaviour within *The*

*Other Side of a Mirror* (1999) photographs.<sup>94</sup> Whilst this project employed a surrogate self, I began to actually utilise this method myself during the later stages of *Waste Land* once I had realised I could translate trauma through staged re-enactments, and can be seen in *Vol.I Encounter* (2008), from room three, 'Sermon' where I consciously perform an imagined scenario, and in *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* video (2009) from room five 'Thunder' where I dress up as a bride (see Chapter Four). This device is reminiscent of Maud Ellman's earlier assertion that Eliot effaced himself "through masks, personae and ventriloquy" (Ellman 1987: 3), which is reinforced by Liz Stanley in *The Autobiographical I*, who remarks "A concern with auto/biography shows that 'self' is a fabrication, not necessarily a lie, but certainly a highly complex truth" (Stanley 1992: 242-3). This concept of self-exposure, both in terms of autobiographical subject matter, and of visual representation reminds us of Chris Keledjian's belief that: "Disguising the self can also disclose another persona, another self that for whatever reason is customarily veiled or not openly apparent" (Keledjian 1994: 30), which led me to consider what kinds of 'masks' or elusive methods I adopt in my interpretations.

The act of self-transformation facilitated through the use of masks and role-play in my work is comparable to the photographer Alice Austen (1866-1952).<sup>95</sup> The image of the two naked masked figures regarding each other within a derelict room from *The Other Side of a Mirror* (No.10) resembles Austen's *Trude and I Masked, Short Skirts 11pm, August 6<sup>th</sup> 1891* photograph which similarly depicts two masked female figures looking at each other in an almost mirror-like image, clothed in identical white dresses and adopting the same pose, whilst smoking a cigarette.<sup>96</sup> The duality of the self is implied within this mirrored role-play, which leads us to

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<sup>94</sup> It is interesting to recognise that the surrogate self/eves do not reveal their identity within this series, choosing to conceal themselves behind masks, apart No.26, where the woman's face is half revealed, yet still disembodied. See [www.sallywaterman.com](http://www.sallywaterman.com) for images of this project.

<sup>95</sup> Austen's work, which I only discovered recently in the last two years, eight years after the creation of *The Other Side of a Mirror*, was concerned with performance and role-play, with her assuming different identities with her friends, including male paraphernalia, complete with fake moustaches and hats in *Julia Martin, Julia Bredt, and Self Dressed Up as Men, 4:40pm, Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup> 1891*. The assuming of a male identity in female self-portraiture can also be seen in the work of Frances Benjamin Johnston, Romaine Brooks's *Self-Portrait* (1923) and recently, Catherine Opie's male persona, *Bo* (1994) See Borzello (1998).

<sup>96</sup> I was unaware of Austen's work at the time of production.

question whether they are in fact meant to represent different facets of the same person. Indeed, the literary quotation that aptly accompanied that particular image from *The Other Side of a Mirror* is taken from Kate Chopin's novel, *The Awakening* (1899): "She could only realise that she herself – her present self – was in some way different from the other self",<sup>97</sup> corresponds with Susan Butler's question regarding the multiplicity of the self pictured within Austen's photograph:

But where is Alice in this – which image is the 'real' Alice, which guise the 'true' one? Or perhaps the question is rather, is there a 'true' Alice, one that could be singled out from the multiple selves or aspects Alice Austen confronts us with (Lingwood 1987: 53).

This preoccupation with role-play and performance inevitably leads us to the influential work of Cindy Sherman, who has compiled an impressive anthology of multiple female identities over her thirty year career, from the eighty-four staged photographs from her well-known *Untitled film stills* (1977-1980) to her *Rear-screen projections* (1980-81) and later *History Portraits* (1989-90).<sup>98</sup> Susan Butler notes how the 'real' Cindy Sherman "recedes with every multiplication", succeeding in "being both all and none of these representations" (Lingwood 1987:55). However, Butler acknowledges that Sherman herself has stated they "are not self-portraits" (cited in Lingwood 1987: 55).<sup>99</sup> Marsha Meskimmon highlights the fact that Sherman's photographs are not self-representative, but are rather concerned with the formation of female identity:

Sherman's images are self-consciously produced 'positions' or 'situations' which define women and have little to do with the personal biography of the artist or her psychological responses to events in her life. The distance between the 'real' person pictured and the 'types' explored in the works is critical to their meaning. These works are not about Sherman the woman or the artist, they are about the multiple guises assumed by women in our visual culture (Meskimmon 1996: 90).

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<sup>97</sup> Kate Chopin (1899) *The Awakening and Selected Stories*. ed. Sandra Gilbert. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (1986) London: Penguin. p.88.

<sup>98</sup> Sherman's most recent works were shown at Sprüth Magers, London in April 16th-May 27<sup>th</sup> 2009 and digital images such as the grotesquely made-up Sherman wearing a red dress in *Untitled #470*, 2008.

<sup>99</sup> Originally printed in an interview with Paul Taylor, *Flash Art*, Oct/Nov 1985, p.78.

In this respect, Sherman's work raises issues of ambiguity regarding contemporary female self-portraiture. Frances Borzello in *Seeing Ourselves: Women's Self-Portraits* (1998) states, "It is no longer clear when a self-portrait is a self-portrait" (Borzello 1998: 171). This indistinction can be applied to my own work, whereby the refusal to portray the self directly to the camera could, therefore, categorise the work as 'self-representations', rather than conventional self-portraits. Frances Borzello extends this analysis of postmodern self-portraiture, stating that:

By using herself as the model for every one of her photographs she is arguably producing self-portraits. But by disguising herself in every image, she is negating the concept. Cindy Sherman denies that her work is self-portraiture, but it is certainly a fascinating development of it (Borzello 1998: 171).

Sherman has been frequently compared to French Surrealist photographer, Lucy Schwob, who manipulated images of herself through her alter ego 'Claude Cahun' and whose work is also preoccupied with issues of multiple selves and narcissism. Gen Doy notes that Cahun's *Self-Portrait* (c.1928) defies traditional representations whereby the mirror is used to signify vanity and narcissism, since she looks directly at the camera, rather than at her reflected image, with her androgynous appearance and facial expression implying a kind of masculinity (Doy 2005: 53). In her essay 'In or Out of the Picture: Claude Cahun and Cindy Sherman' (1998),<sup>100</sup> Katy Kline highlights the way in which Cahun's direct look towards the camera contrasts with Sherman's own self-absorption in her mirror image in *Untitled Film Still #2*, (1977), whilst Lucy R. Lippard (1999)<sup>101</sup> argues that Cahun appears as though she has been caught unawares like Sherman standing at her dressing table in *Untitled Film Still #13*, (1978). However, I would point out that unlike Sherman, whose gaze is directed out of frame, in a manner very similar to my own self-representations, Cahun's confronts the camera or audience through her reflected self-image.

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<sup>100</sup> Katy Kline (1998) 'In or Out of the Picture: Claude Cahun and Cindy Sherman' in *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation*. Edited by Whitney Chadwick. Cambridge: MIT. pp. 66-81.

<sup>101</sup> Lucy R. Lippard (1999) 'Scattering Selves' in *Inverted Odysseys: Claude Cahun, Maya Deren, Cindy Sherman*. Edited by Shelley Rice, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. pp. 27-42.

Gen Doy describes how Cahun's staged self-portraits that were produced in collaboration with her partner "construct complex sexual identities which multiply the androgynous-looking artist" through various modes of disguise performed through comparable self-transformation techniques (Doy 2005: 47). Doy emphasizes the historical Freudian context of Cahun's work; arguing how the sudden interest in the unconscious at the beginning of the twentieth century that suggested, "a self ridden with tensions splits and suppressed desires" (Doy 2005: 47) became manifested through Cahun's preoccupation with concepts of the masquerade, androgyny and performance. However, there are distinctive differences between the two artists; whereas Sherman openly acknowledges the separation of the self from her work by calling them *Untitled*, Cahun did title her work as self-portraits, even though she employed evasive devices to alter her appearance. Kline also believes that their intentions were different, arguing that whilst Cahun is actively "ever present" behind her masks, Sherman is "entirely absent from her work" (Chadwick 1998: 79). This distancing is revealed by Sherman's own sense of misrecognition in her reflected image whilst 'in character', which recalls earlier debates raised by Lacan:

With the mirror next to the camera, or while I'm making up or whatever, that's when I'm most into the character. When it really works well, it's really exciting. *I really can't believe that the reflection is mine is the mirror...* There is a flash when you see somebody else. That's what's really interesting...*As soon as I stop looking in the mirror that's when I feel like myself again* (cited in Rice 1999:38).<sup>102</sup>

I find this admission especially helpful when trying to understand my own 'performing' self within my practice. Although Sherman's misrecognition of her mirror reflection is primarily due to the fact that she has 'become' someone else, I was taken by her comment that it was only when she looked away from the mirror that she felt herself again.<sup>103</sup> Cahun's own writing revealed an overriding emphasis

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<sup>102</sup> Cited by Lippard from Thom Thompson, 'A Conversation with Cindy Sherman,' in *Cindy Sherman*, ex.cat (Stony Brook, NY.: State University of New York Art Gallery, 1983), n.p. My italics.

<sup>103</sup> Perhaps the two photographs (No.8 and 9) that accompany a quotation from Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) in *The Other Side of a Mirror* series relate in some way to this sense of separateness, I experience when looking at my own reflection: "The girl I saw was myself yet not quite myself". Jean Rhys (1966/ 1993) *Wide Sargasso Sea*. ed. Francis Wyndham. London: Penguin. p.38.

on the notion of an unstable, shifting self in her work: "[I] divide myself in order to conquer, multiply myself in order to assert myself; briefly, to play with ourselves can change nothing" (Chadwick 1998: 74).<sup>104</sup> Indeed, Cahun saw identity as a masquerade, playing with different stereotypes such as "the narcissist, the lesbian, the aviator, the sportswoman, the pseudo-infant" (Blessing 1997: 143). Her photographic portrait, *IOU (Self-Pride)*(1930) features the telling words: "Beneath this mask, another mask. I will not finish taking off all these faces" (Keledjian 1994:31). Kline observes how:

There is no *single* original Claude to be found. Or, alternatively, authentic aspects of the original Claude are to be found in every one of her multiple manifestations. She might be seen as a demonstration case of Joan Riviere's influential 1929 thesis, which argued that the strategy of masquerade cannot be distinguished from the woman herself (Chadwick 1998: 76).

Psychoanalyst Joan Riviere's landmark essay of 1929, 'Womanliness as Masquerade',<sup>105</sup> is pertinent to this debate, since she identified the way in which "women who wish for masculinity" within predominantly 'male' professional structures, adopt a mask of femininity as a defence mechanism within patriarchal places of power:

Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it – much as a thief will turn out his pockets and ask to be searched to prove that he has not the stolen goods. The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade'. My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing (Burgin, Donald, Kaplan 1986: 38).

Jennifer Blessing in *Rose is a Rose is a Rose: Gender Performance in Photography*, (1997) remarks how Riviere believed that femininity is construed through the masking of masculine behaviour: "She makes no claim for an inherent

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<sup>104</sup> Originally published in Claude Cahun (1930) *Aveux non avenues*. Paris: Editions du Carrefour. p.235.  
<sup>105</sup> Originally published in the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 10, p.303-13, the same year as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Surrealist manifesto and one year after Virginia Woolf's *Orlando* in 1929 (Blessing 1997: 138). The notion that gender is performed rather than biologically inherent is most famously argued by Judith Butler. See Butler, J. (1990/1999) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York and London: Routledge.

femininity, but rather constructs feminine identity as an alienated social performance" (Blessing 1997: 10).

This notion of performing the self relates to one of the themes of *'Nostalgia and the Past'*, identified by Tenneson-Cohen whereby family snapshots, objects and settings are used "to re-examine what did or did not take place, to fantasize about what might have been" (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: ix). Part of the reason for adopting such ambiguous visual strategies in my work relates to troublesome issues of familial resemblance and my perception of self-representation within family snapshots, together with my uneasiness with the actual physical process of having my photograph taken within this context. Due to the recent acknowledgement of the autobiographical nature of my work, I have only recently adopted this strategy for *Waste Land*, which has served as an underlying recurring structuring device that has been utilized in *PastPresent* (2005), *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2006), *'Sermon' Vol.V Retribution* (2009) and *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009). The self-reflexive re-appropriation of the past through the re-photography of family photographs in these works seeks to address issues of memory, recognition and phototherapy (see Chapter Four).

Issues surrounding posing and performance within family snapshots are relevant to this form of visual representation, which recalls questions regarding the essential self and photographic truth. Roland Barthes' contemplated issues of misrecognition and likeness in *Camera Lucida* (1980/2000) stating that "All I look like is other photographs of myself, and this to infinity" (Barthes 1980: 102). As a sitter, I am conscious that I perform for the camera and adopt a particular pose or same, positive expression that becomes a kind of unrepresentative, repetitive 'mask', identifying with Barthes' assertion that "I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object" (Barthes 1980:13-14). The problem of being unable to connect with this kind of family photograph raises poststructuralist debates of subjectivity surrounding unknowingness and fluidity. Barthes' expression

of difficulty in recognising his mother from her portrait, could be construed as evidence that there is no such thing as an essential personality:

Yet I did not "find" her. I recognised her differentially, not essentially. Photography thereby compelled me to perform a painful labour; straining toward the essence of her identity, I was struggling among images partially true, and therefore totally false (Barthes 2000: 66).

This sense of uncertainty concerning identity is echoed by Gertrude Stein's observation in her 1938 publication, *Everybody's Autobiography*: "And identity is funny, being yourself is funny, as you are never yourself to yourself except as you remember yourself and then of course you do not believe yourself" (Stanley 1992: 65). However, Susan Butler in her essay, *So How do I Look? Women Before and Behind the Camera* recognizes that:

To photograph oneself is unavoidably something of a schizoid undertaking. For it implicitly acknowledges the division, the difference between one's own self-perception and an external self, perceived by others. It brings into play the consciousness of self as other (Lingwood 1987: 51).<sup>106</sup>

Consequently, the difficulty I have with the exterior self that 'performs' in family snapshots is confronted by using multiple self-representational strategies that are controlled and created by myself. It is important to realise that my self-portraits are not always necessarily concerned with visualising the self within the frame, since I also adopt '*Subjective Perspectives*' which signifies my presence through the embodiment of the camera. Therefore, the kind of images that employ this method inherit a particular immersive, performance quality, whereby the audience is allowed to share my perspective, such as, the views from the train interior in *Journey Home* (2002) and the discovery of footprints in *Making our Mark* (2004), or

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<sup>106</sup> These concerns with performance together with the shifting dynamics of family relationships are evidenced in Trish Morrissey's photographic series, *Seven Years*, (2003). Morrissey chooses to re-stage or re-enact scenarios of particular childhood snapshots, with her elder sister such as a birthday party in *April 16th 1984* or a visit to the seaside in *August 8th 1982* in order to draw attention to both the fabricated nature of these kinds of photographs as well as invite us to interpret their awkward gestures and facial expressions. What I found interesting about this series, apart from the shared inspiration of re-constructing a past memory, is the way in which the awkwardness of both the relationship between the two siblings, as well as the self-consciousness of puberty is re-captured in the images, so that the viewer can instantly recognise and identify with these shared emotions.

to participate more actively in a walk around the grassed moat of Carisbrooke castle in the *Full Circle* video (2005).

Other works like *The Turn of the Screw* (2001) oscillate between the governess's subjective viewpoint of the desolate house and images that show her viewpoint within the environment. For *Waste Land*, I adopted 'Subjective Perspectives' to suggest a heightened emotional state, evident in *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008), *Sermon: Vol. IV Reverberation (No.2)* (2009) and *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009). This strategy corresponds with Vertov's notion of the 'cine-eye', which I used to effectively capture the multiplicity of the city experience in my *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006), acting as a *flâneur*, an observer and interpreter of the city and was to used to determine an autobiographical connection to place (see Chapter Four).

Patricia Meyer Spacks identifies how the collection of photographs in Tenneson-Cohen's monograph represents "A self which has no self, a being of uncertainty and mystery, which emerges repeatedly from these photographs" (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: 111). This evasive quality is most evident within 'The Anonymous Figure' strategy, which was deployed through the 'Surrogate Self' in the majority of my projects since 1996 and was also used extensively in *Waste Land* in conjunction with a performing self (see Chapter Four).<sup>107</sup> Spacks develops Tenneson-Cohen's observations, stating that there is a "characteristic reliance on indirection, obliqueness...These women rarely confront themselves directly" (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: 112). This absence of direct face-to-face confrontation with the camera is repeatedly echoed within my own work, where the self or surrogate self appears as

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<sup>107</sup> See in particular *The Waves* (1996), *Through the Banisters* (1997), *Forest Fears* (2000), *Turn of the Screw* (2001), *In the Cage* (2007), *Sermon Vol.I Encounter* (2008), *Vol.II Contemplation* (2008), *Vol.IV Reverberation* (2009), *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009) and *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009).

an anonymous 'thinking subject' or figure within an exterior landscape or interior space, shrouded in isolation and obscurity.<sup>108</sup>

This avoidance of confrontation with the camera, reminds me of Sam Taylor-Wood's series *Self Portrait Suspended I-VIII* (2004) where she appears to float stretched out in mid-air within a neutral interior space. Taylor-Wood admits her work has a significant amount of herself in it, but maintains that the audience does not need to know her history in order to understand the work.<sup>109</sup> However, she was also not aware of the extent that she hid her face in her work, (for instance, within her *Escape Artist* (2008) series where she is suspended from balloons,) until she was questioned about it in a recent documentary produced for *The South Bank Show* (Cain 2008).<sup>110</sup> I can relate to this predicament since my own realisation of the extent to which I adopt evasive strategies had been recently acquired during practice-based doctoral research and can identify with Taylor-Wood when she admits to "Needing to have a mask and feeling slightly removed", whilst at the same time acknowledging the autobiographical element within her practice; "I don't like revealing, but I do" (Cain 2008).

Another way that I mask the self is by drawing upon '*Dreams, Fantasies and Nightmares*'<sup>111</sup> as a mediating mode to communicate different anxieties generated by traumatic experiences. This strategy is evident in past works, *Through the Banisters* (1997), *The Other Side of a Mirror* (1999), *Forest Fears* (2000) and *Turn of the Screw* (2001), which transport the viewer to metaphorical places of escapism, entrapment, curiosity, fear and anticipation. Whilst some of these offer respite and a 'happy ending', (being able to reach the edge of the wood in *Forest Fears*), others are condemned to endless repetition, (marked in the inescapable

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<sup>108</sup> Although some of my photographs present recognisable models/selves, they seldom look directly at the audience, choosing instead to look out of or into the frame, like 'The Girl' Cindy Sherman's film stills.

<sup>109</sup> *Sam Taylor-Wood: The Eye Series* (2004, 2005) Illuminations. 26 min.

<sup>110</sup> *Sam Taylor-Wood* documentary (2008) *The South Bank Show*. Episode 16. ITV productions.16/11/08. Dir. Matt Cain.

<sup>111</sup> This strategy is evident in past works *Through the Banisters* (1997), *The Other Side of a Mirror* (1999), *Forest Fears* (2000) and *Turn of the Screw* (2001), which depict both dreamlike and nightmarish visions.

circular narrative of *Turn of the Screw*). In *Waste Land* I am either caught up in the re-imagining of past experience, such as the family arguments in *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008), haunted by the absent father in *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) and *Who is the Third who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009), acting out frustrations *In the Cage* (2007), or playing out imagined fantasies in *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009).

However, identification with this theme was initiated by a connection to Joyce Tenneson-Cohen's own *Self-Portrait*, (1979) which portrays an anonymous figure in a white nightdress walking bare foot in the snow, holding a bird cage. Tenneson-Cohen describes how the image was formulated from a dream, which possessed a subconscious psychoanalytical meaning:

The picture here was actually taken immediately after a powerful dream I had of walking through a dense fog with a birdcage. I awoke suddenly feeling tense, not able to remember if the cage door was open or closed. Glancing out of the window, I saw an incredibly heavy fog, and with great excitement, I rushed outside picking up a birdcage I had bought six months earlier. This picture emerged effortlessly. Many months later I realised it was a metaphorical equivalent for the internal struggle I was going through at the time about personal freedom (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: ix-x).

Although I only encountered this particular image in 2007, my *Forest Fears* photographs (2000) closely resembles that of Tenneson-Cohen's work both in stylistic terms, as well as being motivated to create a self-portrait based upon vivid, metaphorical dreams. Volume II, *Babe in the Wood* from the series is reminiscent of the fairy tale tradition, in particular, *Little Red Riding Hood*, depicting an adolescent girl lost in the woods, which provokes memories of childhood nightmares of threatening places. However, this volume also implies a positive self-recognition, since it was based on a dream I had whilst in hospital, recovering from a kidney operation, which traced a spiritual journey of being alone in a dark, foreboding forest, but eventually finding my way out in order to rediscover my own life.

Tennessee-Cohen's collection of works that relate to the '*Incorporation of Natural Forms*' can be applied to the *Forest Fears* (2000) photographs, together with the *Rural Shadow Walks* (2006) and *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) videos from *Waste Land*. Volume I, *Storm Damage* from the *Forest Fears* series drew upon the traumatic emotions generated from the fear, pain and recovery experienced from my kidney operation, and is represented through the metaphorical and cultural symbolism of nature in terms of growth, decay and ageing. The pairing of the naked, scarred body against the scarred, knotted internal organs of the tree suggests that both the body and the environment are fragile entities, susceptible to pain.

This work is reminiscent of Sam Taylor-Wood's *Self Portrait as a Tree* (2000), which was taken whilst Taylor-Wood was undergoing chemotherapy treatment, but didn't recognise its significance until later when she realised how close she had been to death.<sup>112</sup> This image of an isolated tree, bent by the prevailing wind, which shares similar female metaphorical associations, was notably shot the same year as my *Forest Fears* series, but was not discovered by me until a couple of years ago. Taylor-Wood's interest in creating metaphorical landscape's is evident in her recent work *Ghosts* (2008), a series of large-scale photographs of the Yorkshire moors inspired by Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847).<sup>113</sup> By claiming that an image of two trees are representative of Heathcliff and Catherine's turbulent relationship (Cain 2008) she is interpreting the novel thematically by visualising its concerns with desire, thwarted love and an underlying bleakness.

This female identification with the metaphorical landscape reminds us of earlier discussions by Gilbert and Gubar, Elaine Showalter and Horner and Zlosnik.

Referring to Imogen Cunningham's *Self-Portrait* (1906) which complies with

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<sup>112</sup> Discussed during the *Sam Taylor-Wood: The Eye Series* (2004, 2005) Illuminations. 26 min. This autobiographical relationship to her work, reminds us of Taylor-Wood's earlier seminal photograph, *Self-Portrait in a Single Breasted Suit with Hare* (2001), which was made in response to her second battle with cancer, which resulted in a mastectomy.

<sup>113</sup> Seen on 22nd November 2008 at the 'Yes/No' exhibition at the White Cube gallery, London. Each photograph has a sense of presence due to their large scale (43x53.5").

expectations of the Romantic anonymous nude in countryside under the guise of pictorialism, Susan Butler also notes "the association of woman with nature, as opposed to culture" (Lingwood 1987: 53), which recalls Elaine Showalter's notion of a 'wild zone' (Showalter 1986: 262), yet continues the debate by contemplating the fact that whilst

In a male dominated culture, nature may be a kind of prison for the feminine: woman and her functions *confined* to 'nature', to the natural...But perhaps nature may also be perceived as a potential zone of escape from an oppressive culture (Lingwood 1987: 54).

This concept is indicative of performance artist Ana Mendieta, who depicted her body as a trace in the landscape in the *Siluetas* series (1973-1977), made in remote locations outside Iowa City and in Oaxaca, Mexico and documented by photography and film. Helaine Posner in 'The Self and the World: Negotiating Boundaries in the Art of Yayoi Kusama, Ana Mendieta and Francesca Woodman'<sup>114</sup> highlights the play between absence and presence of Mendieta's body which becomes imprinted in the landscape. Mendieta defines her practice, which is rooted in dislocation and a desire for physical reconnection to her homeland:

I have been carrying out a dialogue between the landscape and the female body (based on my own silhouette). I believe this has been a direct result of my having been torn from my homeland (Cuba) during my adolescence. I am overwhelmed by a feeling of being cast from the womb (nature). My art...is a return to the maternal source. Through my earth/body sculptures I become one with the earth...I become an extension of nature and nature becomes an extension of my body (cited in Chadwick 1998: 164).<sup>115</sup>

One photograph portrays Mendieta's naked body lying within a rocky crevice, amongst flowers that shield her face and most of her body, symbolising a kind of mother earth metaphor. In later works, it is only the ghostly impression of Mendieta's body that remains, marked out with seaweed in front of an impending

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<sup>114</sup> Helaine Posner 'The Self and the World: Negotiating Boundaries in the Art of Yayoi Kusama, Ana Mendieta and Francesca Woodman' in Chadwick, W. (1998) *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. pp.156-171.

<sup>115</sup> Donald Kuspit (1996) 'Ana Mendieta, Autonomous Body' in *Ana Mendieta*. Santiago de Compostela: Centro Galego de Arte Contemporanea, p.51.

wave, flattened in the snow or etched out as an outline inscribed in the earth.

Posner notes the change in Mendieta's work:

As the series progressed, her seemingly natural, reciprocal relationship with the land became increasingly ambiguous - her body vanished; only her silhouette, or shadow remained...The artist gradually disappears as self metaphorically fuses with other, calling to mind the primal bond between infant and the mother (earth) in a nearly beatific state of union (Chadwick 1998: 166).

This increasing preoccupation with immersion within Mendieta's *Siluetas* series parallels my own concerns with notions of disappearance and invisibility. Whilst depictions of shadowy presences do exist within the self-portraits in Tenneson-Cohen's publication, I devised the strategy '*Traces Of The Self*' to represent the blurred figures, unidentifiable reflections, ghostly shadows or leftover imprints that appear in a few of the images from *The Waves* (1996), *Journey Home* (2002) and *Making our Mark* (2004). This theme has become more prominent within *Waste Land*, whereby the self is revealed as a shadow in the *Urban and Rural Shadow Walks* (2006), a blurred figure *In the Cage* (2007), *Sermon Vol.I Encounter* (2008) and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009), or an apparition in *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009).

The evasive qualities of this particular technique, where only fragmented traces of the self are presented to the audience, operate in a similar way as those produced by the photographer Francesca Woodman.<sup>116</sup> Helaine Posner comparing the work of Mendieta and Woodman recognises the autobiographical element of their work, claiming that they both create "highly intense self-representations... deeply rooted in their own experience" (Chadwick 1998: 170). Woodman's phantom presence that occupies her *House* and *Space* series of photographs (1975-6), constructed through long exposures "capture the unstable or permeable boundary between her fragmented body and a derelict house interior" (Chadwick 1998: 169). These two series are reminiscent of the heroine in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow*

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<sup>116</sup> Helaine Posner states how Woodman produced about 500 10x8" black and white photographs that were predominately self-portraits over a period of eight years until her suicide aged 22 years old in 1981 (Chadwick 1998:167).

*Wallpaper* (1899), who likewise slowly immerses herself within her enclosed surroundings. Having tried to disappear behind the fireplace in *House 4, Providence, Rhode Island*, (1975-1976), merge into the wall in *House 3, Providence, Rhode Island*, (1975-1976) or cover her naked body and face with remnants of wallpaper in *From Space 2, Providence, Rhode Island*, (1975-1976), we see a blurred, performing figure in *Space 2, Providence, Rhode Island*, (1975-1978) which is indicative of the four photographs of the twirling surrogate self in Vol.II *Butterfly from my Through the Banisters* series (1997) or the ghostly form reflected in the distorted tube mirror from *The Waves* (1996). Herve Chandès in the preface to Woodman's 1998 exhibition catalogue from the *Foundation Cartier pour l'art Contemporain* in Paris observes how:

Displaying to view the ghostly and evanescent presence of her own body in movement, Francesca Woodman suggests the passing and the ephemeral, the transitory and fragile, these photographs allow us to see time in all its elusiveness. The way she frames her shots fragments and isolates her subjects and shows the urgency of representation. Always wanting to disappear, Francesca Woodman melts into and loses herself in her surroundings, or, in other places, plays with the idea of mutilation and hints at the violent serenity of a fragmented body (Schwarzenbach 1998: 7).

Closely related to this visual strategy is that of '*The Disembodied Self*', which again is well documented within Tenneson-Cohen's collection of self-portraits by women, but is not recognised as a distinctive category. There is proliferation of images within my practice that only show isolated parts of the body, such as, my scarred torso in *Forest Fears: Vol.I Storm Damage* (2000) or my feet in the *Higher Ground/Underground* video (2005), together with my eyes in *I Knew Nothing* (2006) or my hands in *PastPresent* (2005) and *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* video (2007) from *Waste Land*. This fascination with the fragmented self relates back to prior discussions concerning postmodern notions of multiple selves and fractured identities and the impact of modernist experimental means of distorting the self (Lingwood 1987, Chevrier 1987, Sobieszek 1994). Indeed, Whitney Chadwick referencing women's surrealist self-portraits observes how:

Bodies and body parts swell, mutate, dissolve, double, and decompose before our eyes as the body registers cultural, as well as personal, fears and anxieties...Breaking with the notion of unitary self that dominated post-Enlightenment thinking, the Surrealists embraced incoherence, disjunction, fragmentation. Women deeply internalized this refusal of bodily and psychic fixity, often representing themselves using images of doubling, fragmentation, projection (Chadwick 1998: 14).<sup>117</sup>

Many contemporary artists have appropriated this experimental approach to self-portraiture to effectively communicate feminine interests, including the French installation artist Annette Messager, who has openly acknowledged her debt to Surrealism:

I always feel that my identity as a woman and as an artist is divided, disintegrated, fragmented, and never linear, always multifaceted ...always pictures of parts of bodies... I always perceive the body in fragments (cited in Chadwick 1998: 21).<sup>118</sup>

In her piece *My Vows* (1989), countless small-scale black and white images of isolated features including mouths, eyes, noses, hands, legs and sexual body parts collectively hang from string forming a unified circle shape, whereas *My Trophies* (1986-88), feature large-scale close-ups of her ears, eyes, hands and neck, hand decorated with fantastical imagery that hang forward towards the audience, in a monumental, yet imposing fashion. This continued interest in the fragmentation of the body could signify my ability to recognise the body in isolated form from my own perspective, rather than as a unified, essential whole.

This elusiveness and fragmentation is comparable to Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley's observation in *Reading the Wasteland: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation* (1990) that "Marie, the hyacinth lovers, Madame Sosostriis, and the affluent woman are all faceless" (Brooker and Bentley 1990: 184).<sup>119</sup> They detect how the women in Eliot's poem are "defined more by their hair than by their

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<sup>117</sup> Whitney Chadwick 'An Infinite Play of Empty Mirrors: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation' in Chadwick, W (ed) *Mirror Images: Women, Surrealism and Self-Representation* Cambridge, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. pp.2-35.

<sup>118</sup> Sheryl Conkleton and Carol S. Eliel, (1995) *Annette Messager*. New York: Museum of Modern Art. p.70. See also the Swiss artist, Hannah Villiger's polaroids of her own fragmented body.

<sup>119</sup> Maud Ellman interestingly detects how Eliot fails to give an identity to mortality "With the dead souls flowing over London Bridge, the corpses in the garden and the hooded hordes ...these figures have no faces, or else they are hidden and unrecognisable" (Ellman 1987: 109).

faces" (Brooker and Bentley 1990: 182), referring to the Hyacinth girl's wet hair, the typist smoothing her hair with automatic hands, the woman in 'A Game of Chess' brushing her hair into "fiery points" and the woman who "drew her long black hair out tight" (part five, 'What the Thunder Said'). Indeed, Eliot's misogynistic representation of women in his poetry is well documented (Levenson 1999: 178, Ellman 1987: 98-106, Miller 1977: 53, 88), which arguably relates to the sexual failure of his marriage to Vivienne (Miller 1977: 27). Deborah Parsons draws upon the way in which Eliot's fragmentary female depictions are associated with sexual disgust in *Street Walking the Metropolis: Women, City and Modernity* (2000), explaining how the:

Female flesh in *The Wasteland* is objectified into the typist's sordid objects, the working-class woman's false teeth, the grimy but sexually available bodies of the Thames maidens. Like the rag picker or the surrealist who perversely venerate unwanted fragments, Eliot is fascinated by the fragments and leftovers of the female body (Parsons 2000: 185).<sup>120</sup>

This insight seemed to suggest that whilst my engagement with *The Waste Land* allowed for my preoccupation with elusive self-portraiture, (which is continually disembodied, anonymous or "faceless") to be acknowledged, I was also able to challenge Eliot's derogatory depiction of women by subverting the poem through my adoption of these modernist strategies to create a fragmentary, shifting, non-sexualised self-portrait. In this sense, I would argue that by appropriating these "faceless", disembodied visual representations, as an effective device for the masking of autobiographical experience, my interpretation of the poem offers a 'talking back' to Eliot by proposing an androgynous self-representation that transcends his uneasiness with the female form.

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<sup>120</sup> Parsons, D L. (2000) *Street Walking the Metropolis: Women, City and Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.185. For further debates on the female grotesque see also Julia Kristeva (1982) *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. New York: Columbia University Press, where she outlines her theory of the abjected body of the mother and the concept of the 'monstrous-feminine' and Janet Wolff 'Reinstating Corporeality' in Wolff, J. (1990) *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Woman and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp.120-141, p.129-130.

## 7. Multiple Selves: Multiple Strategies

So what could be the reasons for employing a range of different visual strategies, rather than just one? One possibility is that it could relate to the stylistic concerns of the literary source, with different techniques chosen to suit the visual aesthetics of the period. Although this is certainly true of the *Waste Land* project, it could be contested when applied to my past works. More likely, however, is that it relates to my belief in the postmodern concept of a fragmented self with no singular subjectivity, reaffirmed by Joan Solomon in *What Can A Woman do with a Camera?* (1995), who identifies the fact that "our multilayered self is always shifting" (Spence and Solomon 1995: 10).<sup>121</sup>

In terms of *Waste Land*, it could also be construed that I represent a kind of female *Tiresias*; embodying all of the women in the poem as an observer agent, facilitating multiple selves and interpreting the events through my eyes in a way that is reminiscent of Robert Richardson's notion of a 'seer'.<sup>122</sup> Indeed, this relates back to what Laura Marcus believes to be "the radical split between the self that writes and the self that is written" (Marcus 1994: 183) in autobiographical writing. Deirde Heddon echoes both Marcus's distinction and the problematic of defining multiple selves:

The activity of representing the 'self' adds a further problematic layer to notions of 'truth' because, in the act of representing the self, there is always more than one self to contend with; the self is unavoidably split. There is the self who was and the self who is. There is the self who is performed, and the performing self. Which 'self', then, is being presented? (Heddon 2008: 27).

Consideration of the central issues arising from female self-portraiture, primarily that of masking and performance, led to the recognition of the multiple visual

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<sup>121</sup> Interestingly, this notion of multiple identities is drawn upon by Virginia Woolf in her modernist novel *The Waves* (1931), when Bernard describes himself as "I am not one person; I am many people; I do not altogether know who I am" (Woolf 1932/1992: 212).

<sup>122</sup> See Robert Richardson (1969) 'Waste Lands: The Breakdown of Order' in *Literature and Film*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp.104-118, p.108-9. See Richardson's comparison of *The Waste Land* with Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* in Chapter One.

strategies I adopt to create evasive self-portraits that pay homage to the literary text's stylistic concerns as well as reflecting my own shifting identity.

Joan Solomon in her introduction to *What Can A Woman do with a Camera?: Photography for Women* (1995) suggests that "Painful encounters with the self can stimulate a process whereby we are enabled to create new ways of seeing and representing ourselves" (Spence and Solomon 1995: 10). This is indicative of the self-analytical processes I have undertaken during doctoral study in order to identify and examine the way in which literature functions as a resource to represent the self, which was in part prompted by a realisation of the parallel with Eliot's own inversion of his impersonality theory through the admission of the autobiographic quality embedded in his work in later life. Indeed, my recent acknowledgement of the highly personal nature of my practice led to the notion that I visualise past traumatic experiences through literary narratives to create a form of self-portraiture as a therapeutic act. In this sense, literature is employed as a displacement device in order to translate these experiences through a protective layer.

But why are these self-representations so evasive? There appears to be a contradiction between the fragmentary strategies employed compared to the explicit, autobiographical subject matter. My self-effacing approach is also a reflection of my inherent shyness and modesty. It is a way to avoid drawing attention to the self, yet at the same time it could be argued that these 'autobiographical self-representations' are more suggestive than the performed representations of the exterior self within the family snapshot, that I find such difficulty with. Whitney Chadwick distinguishes the fact that the "tension between identification and otherness contributes to the difficulty of interpreting the self-portrait" (Rideal, Chadwick and Borzello 2001: 12). By visualising past traumatic experiences, I am conscious that I am revealing myself to my audience, yet I counteract that implication, not only by employing literature as a masking device,

but also through the multitude of recurrent, yet elusive visual strategies I adopt, which allows me to remain simultaneously inaccessible and maintain what Erika Billeter terms as a "sense of loneliness" (cited in Keledjian 1994: 9) through a visual exclusion of the self. To extend ideas of subjectivity further, the examination of my practice could also adhere to the evolutionary nature that Jo Spence identifies, having reflected upon her life through the re-assessment of her family snapshots by eschewing the very idea of selfhood that is preoccupied with process and misrecognition, which is never-ending:

My continual rethinking of the past, as my consciousness changes, is impossible to stabilize. This reworking is initially painful, confusing, extreme. As I become more aware of how I have been constructed ideologically, as the method becomes clearer, there is no peeling away of layers to reveal a 'real' self, just as a constant reworking process. I realise that I am a process (Spence 1986: 97).

## CHAPTER THREE: 'THE WASTE LAND'

### 1. *The Waste Land*: Adaptation Context

Having investigated the central debates regarding methods of interpretation and self-representation in the previous two chapters, I will now address the hybrid qualities of literary adaptations within an alternative arts context. By choosing to adopt the social sciences case study model as a comparative device (Gray and Malins 2004: 117), I will provide a critical analysis of a selection of contemporary case studies derived from T.S Eliot's poetry across multiple disciplines and consider their contribution to the evolution of my *Waste Land* project. I will then reflect upon my own intentions and processes as a practitioner-researcher by examining my "re-contextualisation" of the poem, (which replicates Eliot's own appropriation of literary, religious and mythological sources) and my own interpretive methods, assessing the way in which the chosen latitude affected the production of work.

It is important to remember George Bluestone's assertion (see Chapter One) that the adaptation itself signifies a "different aesthetic genera" (Bluestone 1957/2003: 5). Now that it is understood that I respond autobiographically to the chosen literary text, I want to focus on *how* I develop conceptual works to represent the self. I am also conscious of Robert Stam's earlier remarks (see Chapter One) that the source contains "visual cues" that the adaptor can "take up, amplify, ignore, subvert, or transform." (Naremore 2000: 68).<sup>1</sup> In *Putting Myself in the Picture* (1986), the photographer Jo Spence discussed the way in which she attempted to re-interpret Charles Perrault's popular fairy tale *Cinderella*,<sup>2</sup> since she was frustrated by the unchallenging literal illustrations associated with the story which she believed prevented other possible readings from taking place:

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Stam 'Beyond Fidelity: The Dialogics of Adaptation' in Naremore, J. (2000) *Film Adaptation*. London: Athlone Press, pp.54-76.

<sup>2</sup> This image/text work was produced whilst Spence was a mature student at the Polytechnic of Central London from 1980-1982. (Spence 1986:98) See also Sarah Moon's 1983 photographic interpretation of Charles Perrault's fairytale *Little Red Riding Hood*, in which she transports the girl's lonely wanderings to empty city streets, under the wolf's surveillance. Moon, S. (1983/2002) *Little Red Riding Hood*. Mankato, Minnesota: Creative Editions.

In most stories the pictures repeat what the words tell us, so I began to be interested in pictures which by saying something different from the text opened up a space for new meanings to emerge. I wanted to contradict or demythologise the story (Spence 1986: 100).

Therefore, whilst Spence remained faithful to the original in the accompanying script, she created an alternative photographic interpretation, repositioning the story to be centred upon a one-parent family and providing images of domestic interiors or events, such as, her brother ironing, photographs of Princess Diana and found images from beauty advertising, signifying a '*commentary*' (Wagner 1975), '*transformation*' (Kline 1996) or '*process of creation*' (Hutcheon 2006), which constitutes a merging of these adaptation modes.<sup>3</sup>

Whilst the potential latitude of translation initially overwhelmed me during my own early experiments, as I followed a systematic 'testing out' of various interpretive methods informed by Wagner (see Chapter One), it was the questioning of their purpose that led to an engagement with Walter Benjamin's essay 'The Task of the Translator' (1923),<sup>4</sup> where he acknowledges that in the process of translation from one language into another, "the original undergoes a change" (Arendt 1999: 73). As well as appreciating the inherent cultural and historical differences in language, Benjamin argues that translation also needs to take into account the "emotional connotations" of words in order to communicate their true meaning, rather than merely finding equivalents:

Fragments of a vessel, which are to be glued together, must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way, a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognisable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel (Arendt 1999: 79).

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<sup>3</sup> This female subversion of traditional fairytales is also evident in Alice Anderson's film *Bluebeard* (2007), which reinvents Charles Perrault's story by making Bluebeard a woman. *Bluebeard*. Dir. Alice Anderson. Film, colour, 12' (2007). See <http://www.alice-anderson.org/film/07films.html>

<sup>4</sup> Benjamin, W. (1923) 'The Task of the Translator' in Arendt, H. (ed.) (1999) *Illuminations*. London: Pimlico, pp.70-82.

In the light of Benjamin's comments, Linda Hutcheon draws attention to his belief that whilst translation is something that cannot be literally reproduced, "it is an engagement with the original text that makes us see that text in different ways" (Hutcheon 2006:16). Whilst I am not attempting the 'task of a translator' in terms of the transferral of one language into another in my media arts practice, I was particularly taken by Benjamin's emphasis upon capturing the emotional aspects of the original text's words and the transformative nature of the translation process itself.

Therefore, having positioned my research within the context of existing Eliot adaptations, I believe that this philosophy of an active engagement or dialogue with the source text in order to create a renewed vision has been achieved by all of the case study examples I have chosen to investigate and is also something that I have strived for in my own interpretation of this seminal text. Timon Koulmasis's fictional film *The Waste Land* (France, 1989)<sup>5</sup> is the closest in format and distribution to a conventional literary film adaptation, but stylistically his black and white film is poetic in nature, reproducing Eliot's montage effect, as well as paying homage to early avant-garde cinema through its chosen editing technique, which is explained by Thierry Jousse in his review for *Cahiers Du Cinema* (1989):

Timon Koulmasis films a succession of moments rather than a continuous story. We find ourselves in the domain of the fragmentary which means that the space between the sequences are as important as the sequences themselves...Empty frames, black images, silence, irrational breaks - ways indicating cinematographic modernity - are used to introduce discontinuity. So, in *The Waste Land* editing has a central role since it puts in order the apparent disorder of the images...the formal pattern that underlies *The Waste Land* is to be found in music.<sup>6</sup>

This disposal of the expected cinematic narrative flow of images, which are replaced by a "succession of moments," created through a disruptive experimental play with

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<sup>5</sup> *The Waste Land*, Dir. Timon Koulmasis. Film, 35mm, black and white, 89' (1989). First Award-International Young Directors' Film Festival, Belfort 1987, International Film Festival Cannes 1988 - Perspectives du Cinéma Français, International Film Festival Mannheim 1988. See <http://www.timonkoulmasis.eu/en/fiction/the-waste-land.html> for further information. I have been unable to see the film, since it is not available on DVD and only exists as a 35mm print.

<sup>6</sup> Extract from review taken from *Cahiers Du Cinema*, 1/1989 and reproduced on Koulmasis's website. <http://www.timonkoulmasis.eu/en/fiction/the-waste-land.html>

"empty frames", gives emphasis to the rhythmic and fragmentary aspects of this modernist poem and reminds us of the similarities made between film and poetry by Cheryl Potter, Robert Richardson and Viktor Shklovsky, regarding structure, rhythm, montage and metaphor, together with my last 'commentary' experiment, 'No.6. Interpretation: 10 Mini Narratives' (see Chapter One). Apart from opening up the possibility of experimenting with such structural editing devices within my own interpretation, Koulmasis's film adopts a psychological and philosophical response to Eliot's poem, which is reminiscent of the thematic nature of my earliest photographic adaptations and 'analogy' experiments (see Introduction and Chapter One). Koulmasis's interpretation is also evocative of the loss of order identified by Robert Richardson in his comparison between Eliot's poem and Federico Fellini's film, *La Dolce Vita* (1960) (see Chapter One):<sup>7</sup>

The film is inspired by his poem in that it expresses an atmosphere, a state of being somewhere "in between", between old and new, life and death, youth and growing adult, ancient ruins and urbanistic ruins of our modernity, a world that is lost and another not born yet... the characters of the film move in this state of mind, but even if Madame Sosostris makes a short appearance in the film, the film has no other direct references to the poem, its structure, its narration or its "historical" contents. There are rather glimpses at it. *A general feeling or mood. No interpretation at all* (Koulmasis 2009).<sup>8</sup>

Although it is difficult to assess Koulmasis's comments, having not been able to view the actual film itself,<sup>9</sup> I find it interesting that whilst he believes his response to the poem is purely thematic, signifying a "general feeling" he goes to the extreme of stating that there was "no interpretation at all". Surely any artefact that

<sup>7</sup> Contemporary artists have been inspired by the poem's bleak, apocalyptic vision, its heightened psychological states of mind and its metaphorical allusions to 'waste' which was evidenced in Paradise Row gallery's exhibition at the 2008 Zoo Art Fair, Royal Academy, London (17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> October 2008) entitled 'The Waste Land', after Shezad Dawood's work *The Waste Land* (2008), which featured a wall of animal skulls each inscribed with the sacred Hindu *Om* symbol representing creation. The exhibition, which featured represented artists such as Jake and Dinos Chapman, Justin Coombes and Kirk Palmer was marketed as being "inspired by Eliot's fragmented poem and the world" and juxtaposed foreboding quotations from Eliot's poem with sensational newspaper headlines concerned with climate change and the current financial crisis. See <http://www.paradiserow.com/exhibitions/20/> or <http://www.zoartfair.com/exhibitors2008.php>.

<sup>8</sup> My italics. When questioned about the extent of his reliance upon Eliot, Koulmasis admitted that whilst the film was influenced *The Waste Land*, he also drew upon a variety of poetry that he was reading at the time, as well as the play *Caligula* (1938) by Albert Camus. Email correspondence. Koulmasis, T. ([timon.koulmasis@orange.fr](mailto:timon.koulmasis@orange.fr)) (30 June 2009) *Source for The Waste Land*. Email to Sally Waterman ([email@sallywaterman.com](mailto:email@sallywaterman.com)).

<sup>9</sup> In our email correspondence, Koulmasis explained how the twenty-year old film only exists as an "old 35mm print."

is even vaguely "inspired" by an original source does, in fact, undertake some kind of broader interpretative process as identified by Wagner, 1975 ('*analogy*'), Kline, 1996 ('*transformation*') or Hutcheon, 2006 ('*process of creation*') (see Chapter One)? It is important to realise that the interpretations of *The Waste Land* that I have identified from the last twenty years<sup>10</sup> which exist outside the canon of conventional film adaptation and incorporate a variety of disciplines, including a theatrical performance, an installation, a comic book and independent artist film tend to take a freer approach to the original literary source, rather than a faithful '*transposition*' (Wagner 1975), that cannot always be defined by one particular interpretative method alone.

Interestingly, Martin Rowson's graphic novel (1990),<sup>11</sup> casts the characters from *The Waste Land* as Eliot's own contemporaries, (with Dame Edith Sitwell as Tiresias and featuring Vivienne Eliot, Wyndham Lewis, Ezra Pound, John Quinn and W.B Yeats) into a convoluted detective story that suitably focuses upon the interpretation of mysterious clues and appropriates the *Film Noir* genre of *The Big Sleep* (1946) and *The Maltese Falcon* (1941),<sup>12</sup> transforming the poem into what Linda Hutcheon (2006) terms 'a *process of creation*' or re-interpretation. By contrast, Manuel Saiz's five-minute film *Burial of the Dead* (1998-9)<sup>13</sup> takes a simpler, conceptual approach to the source material by juxtaposing Eliot's own

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<sup>10</sup> During my research, I have found a distinct absence of earlier interpretations of Eliot's poem that have been exhibited, performed or published within the public arena, although this research is not exhaustive and has been primarily focused on a European context.

<sup>11</sup> Rowson, M. (1990) *The Waste Land*. Harmondsworth: Harper Collins. Kevin Jackson discusses how the Eliot estate imposed restrictions on Rowson's satirical interpretation, resulting in different, tamer version being printed in the UK, compared to the USA. The graphic novel was since turned into an opera, with music by Stephen McNeff, libretto by Andy Rashleigh, directed by Caroline Sharman for the Modern Music Theatre Troupe. *The Waste Land* played at the Donmar Warehouse from 9-14 May 1994 then toured to the Hay-on-Wye Literary Festival (23 May), Middlesbrough (25 May), Hexham (26 May) and Berwick-Upon-Tweed (27 May). See <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/t-s-eliot-the-sequel-first-that-film-now-this-waste-land-opera-based-on-a-comic-no-wonder-lawyers-acting-for-the-eliot-estate-are-so-busy-1433576.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Humphrey Bogart stars as a detective in both films. *The Big Sleep* (1946) directed by Howard Hawks. *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) directed by John Huston.

<sup>13</sup> *The Burial of the Dead (Karaoke Remix)* Film. Dir. Manuel Saiz, 5', Betacam, shown in Impakt, Utrecht (The Netherlands), Greenwich Film Festival at APT Gallery (London) and in Speaking Bodies at the Gallery 101, Ottawa (Canada) [www.manuelsaiz.co.uk](http://www.manuelsaiz.co.uk), [http://www.galeriamoriarty.com/expos/saiz/cv\\_en.pdf](http://www.galeriamoriarty.com/expos/saiz/cv_en.pdf). I met Manuel Saiz at the *Art Summer University*, a series of talks and screenings by eighteen international artists over four days which he curated at Tate Modern, London in 2007. Karin Kihlberg and Reuben Henry's film *The Poets* (2006), 9 mins was screened at this event and shows two Chinese actors reciting texts in Mandarin, which are subtitled as T.S. Eliot's poems, although in reality they are only the commands taken from the artists' screenplay.

voice recording of the first section of the poem, against enlarged subtitles that reinforce the experience, which appear on screen with a bouncing ball that accentuates each word as it is spoken. Pictured above these 'subtitles' we see a blackbird dart nervously between three windows from the outside in a looping piece of video footage that creates a hypnotic state of mind. The work is difficult to place within the confines of orthodox film adaptation methods, since Saiz is primarily concerned with the mechanics of filmmaking itself with the piece signifying an exercise in phonetics and rhythm and not just an interpretation of Eliot's poem.

## **2. Deborah Warner *The Waste Land* (1995)**

However, the most eminent adaptation of *The Waste Land* is Deborah Warner's film, which was commissioned for the BBC in 1995 and screened at the Cannes film festival in 1996,<sup>14</sup> having been originally delivered as a poetry reading by the actress Fiona Shaw at the Schaubuhne am Lehniner Platz in Berlin.<sup>15</sup> The work was then performed live in "non-theatrical sites selected by Warner for their atmospheric reaction with this great modernist poem and its famous "heap of broken images" (Taylor 1996),<sup>16</sup> for example, an empty English fort in Phoenix Park, Dublin and the Amphitheatre de Morphologie in Paris. In a faithful rendition of Eliot's poem, Shaw literally personifies its multiple identities and fluctuating moods in the form of a dramatic monologue, acting out its lines with lively, accentuated gestures and convincing facial expressions along with significant alterations in her vocal range and emphasis. In his review of the Paris performance for *The Independent*, Paul Taylor admired the fact that Warner has "an ability to illuminate

<sup>14</sup> *The Waste Land* (1995) Film. Dir. Deborah Warner. Fitzroy Productions and Illuminations. 35 min. Transmitted on BBC2 10:00pm 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1995, Selection Officielle, Un Certain Regard (nominee), 49<sup>th</sup> Cannes Film Festival 1996. Warner's theatrical production of *The Waste Land* premiered at the Kunsten Festival des Arts in Brussels, before touring worldwide to the Dublin Theatre festival, the Liberty Theatre, New York and Wiltons Music Hall, London, amongst other alternative venues in cities such as Paris, Montreal, Toronto, Milan during 1996-1997 (Taylor 1996, Stein 1997). I saw a revived performance at Wilton's Music Hall, London on the 1<sup>st</sup> January 2010 to celebrate the building's 150<sup>th</sup> birthday. See <https://www.nationaltheatre.org.uk/54603/productions/the-waste-landbr-at-wiltons-music-hall.html>

<sup>15</sup> Date unknown. (Stein 1997) It is interesting that Warner's film evolved out of a more conventional, expected mode of translation of the poetic form from written text to spoken recital within a public context.

<sup>16</sup> Taylor, P. (1996) 'Space: The Final Frontier: Interview with Deborah Warner' *The Independent*, Life & Style, Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> April 1996 [Online] <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/interview-deborah-warner-space-the-final-frontier-1304528.html> [27th April 2007]

the complex or the rhetorically puzzling by cutting straight to the heart of the human emotion behind it" (Taylor 1996), noting how Shaw manages to embody the multitude of voices that occupy the poem, with her androgynous appearance suggestive of the ambiguous Tiresias, who represents both sexes. In his accompanying 'Notes', Eliot describes this character as "the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest...What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem" (Eliot 1940/1999: 42).<sup>17</sup>

In Warner's film version, each section of Eliot's poem is given distinctive characteristics, with their varying tone and content signified by a change in the colour palette of the set design, lighting and costume, supported by alterations in camera framing and movement. Therefore, we see Shaw dressed in black 'act out' Eliot's lines against a neutral white background in part one, 'The Burial of the Dead', before cutting to a more theatrical darkened space, illuminated by low-hanging light bulbs in part two, 'A Game of Chess', where the camera follows the movement of Shaw walking seductively across 'stage' or frame wearing a long red dress, before closing in on a static mid-shot to capture her dramatic gestures. Part three, 'The Fire Sermon' retains the same backdrop, but pictures Shaw in sombre black attire and ending with a close-up on her face for the last stanza ("Burning, burning, burning" l.308). The luminosity of the brightness that emanates from the doorway in which Shaw stands half naked in white trousers with her back to the camera in part four, 'Death by Water', serves as a dramatic contrast, heightened by the zoomed camera movement from long shot to close-up as she turns her head to deliver its lines about the death of Phlebas in a reassured, knowing fashion. The last part of Eliot's poem, 'What the Thunder Said' opens with an extreme close-up of Shaw's eyes, before pulling back to a head and shoulder mid-shot that reveals a slightly reddish tinted background and Shaw wearing a

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<sup>17</sup> See 'Notes on *The Waste Land*: III *The Fire Sermon*', no.218 in Appendix A:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a 'character', is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem (Eliot 1940/1999: 42).

vest-top, her gestures replicating the poetry's incantatory rhythms through closed eyes and direct addresses to camera.

Ben Brantley, in his review of Warner's live production at the Liberty Theatre for *The New York Times*, acknowledges the success with which Shaw personifies the expressive nature of Eliot's poem through the diversity of its voices:

Like any great work of art, *The Waste Land* can't be distilled into easy answers. Ms. Shaw and Ms. Warner have the sense to respect its ambiguity. That doesn't mean, however, that this production is ever muddy or confused. Each of the poem's many elements has been given sharp, vital and immediate life. Ms. Shaw is equally convincing as a dimwitted, mercenary fortuneteller ...and a trio of Hindu thunder gods; as the heartbreakingly vulnerable "hyacinth girl" of the poet's memory and the entire chipper population of a Cockney pub (Brantly 1996).<sup>18</sup>

According to the orthodox film adaptation theory methods (see Chapter One), Warner's interpretation of *The Waste Land* could be categorised as a 'transposition' (Wagner, 1975), in terms of its fidelity to the text by Shaw's literal, dramatic poetry reading. However, its shift in medium and emphasis on theatricality and emotional responses, together with Warner's desire to stage the poem within deliberately symbolic settings, whether that is the film's mise-en-scene, or the selection of a suitable architectural environment that corresponds to the poem's thematic concerns, means that it occupies the looser framework of Linda Hutcheon's 'formal entity or product', or Karen Kline's 'pluralist' approach, since whilst it remains traceable to the source, it also becomes an individualised piece of work. However, the difficulty in this application of film adaptation theory that cannot be easily attributed to one particular method, reinforces my earlier point that the hybridity of alternative fine art literary interpretations defies such rigid categorisation.

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<sup>18</sup> Brantly, B. (1996) 'Memory and Desire: Hearing Eliot's Passion' *The New York Times*, Monday 18<sup>th</sup> November 1996 [Online]. [http://theater2.nytimes.com/mem/theater/treview.html?html title=&to1s\\_title=WASTE%20LAND,%20THE%20\(PLAY\)&date=19961118&byline=By%20BEN%20BRANTLEY&id=1077011432872](http://theater2.nytimes.com/mem/theater/treview.html?html title=&to1s_title=WASTE%20LAND,%20THE%20(PLAY)&date=19961118&byline=By%20BEN%20BRANTLEY&id=1077011432872) [27th April 2007]

Warner's dramatic staging of *The Waste Land* was the first adaptation that I became aware of during my research and instigated an interest in performance, triggering an experiential, emotive response to the poem, which has since manifested within my own work. Warner's film was particularly instrumental in forming the decision to create a series of individual works which varied in tone and intensity rather than one, linear film which I had originally contemplated.<sup>19</sup> Like Warner, I have also chosen to remain faithful to the text to a certain degree by replicating the structure of the poem for the final gallery installation of *Waste Land*, transforming its five parts into five rooms or 'environments' that echo the stylistic distinctions evident within her filmic interpretation. Each space articulates of different media, including photographic, video and sound installations to create a rich tapestry of both competing and complementary visual and aural repetitive fragments that the audience deciphers, not unlike Eliot's poem.

The shift in tonality between each room echoes the changes in the set's colour palette within Warner's production, beginning with black and white photographs of *PastPresent* in the Prelude, contrasted by the colourful assault of intense works in room one, 'Burial', before moving into muted neutral tones of the room two, 'Game' that are reminiscent of a chess board. Room three, 'Sermon' marks a return to black and white photographic imagery to deliver poignant messages relating to the aftermath of my parents' divorce, before being lulled into the dark, murky green-blue depths of *The Deep Sea Swell* in room four, 'Water'. The works within room five, 'Thunder' is communicated through a minimized colour palette of muted blues and greens, together with ghostly black and white, suggesting a sense of foreboding bleakness and uncertainty (see Chapter Four).

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<sup>19</sup> This decision was also informed by my early video experiment 'No.6 Interpretation: 10 mini narratives' described earlier in Chapter One, section 4. *The Waste Land: Early Experimental Works* (November 2004-September 2005).

### 3. John Smith *The Waste Land* (1999)

Having made the decision to create shorter, more experimental film and photographic artefacts, I was drawn towards other contemporary artists who have based their work on Eliot's poem. John Smith's five-minute film, *The Waste Land* (1999),<sup>20</sup> has been a critical influence on my doctoral research, since he adopts a more instinctive, carefree approach to the original source material. Smith's short film opens to the sound of Eliot's own reading of "HURRY UP PLEASE ITS TIME" at the end of part two, 'A Game of Chess' (l.165-172) juxtaposed with the literal scene of a typical East End London public house. The repetition of "Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night" in Smith's own languid vocal rendition initiates the subjective hand-held camera movement of the speaker into the men's lavatory, where he recites the beginning of part three, 'The Fire Sermon' (l.173-186) whilst the camera firstly fixates upon the texture of the wall, before panning around, replicating his roaming gaze and surveying the decrepit interior, moving downwards to the urinal to literally reinforce the sense of vulgarity described by Eliot in his depictions of the squalid riverbank's "empty bottles" and "cigarette ends".

I can relate to Smith's 'do-it-yourself' philosophy and his preference for working on his own, since I, too, like to retain artistic control by shooting and editing my own work. Smith's desire to work independently also means that most of his films are shot within his local environment (Cosgrove and Lanyon 2002: 70). Smith's autobiographical connection to the text through his recurring sense of place, is visually explored and represented through point of view filmmaking techniques which parallel the '*Subjective Perspectives*' self-representational strategy I also

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<sup>20</sup> *The Waste Land* (1999) video, colour, sound, 5'. Funded by the Arts Council. Screened at 'Brief Encounters', Short Film Festival, Bristol; Cork International Film Festival, Ireland; BBC British Short Film Festival, London; Lux Cinema, London; 'European Media Art Festival', Osnabruck, Germany; Oberhausen International Short Film Festival, Germany; Rotterdam International Film Festival, Netherlands (1999) 'Festival de Cine Huesca' Spain, Dallas Video Festival, USA (2000) and as part of the 'UK/Canada Video Exchange 2000' Touring programme - Montreal, Vancouver, Ontario, Winnipeg, Canada and Buffalo, USA with 'The Girl Chewing Gum'. Available for view at <http://www.johnsmithfilms.com/texts/sf81.html>, <http://www.tank.tv/9.html> or [http://lux.org.uk/media/fiv/the\\_waste\\_land.flv](http://lux.org.uk/media/fiv/the_waste_land.flv)

frequently adopt in my own practice, such as, in the *Higher Ground/Underground* (2005) video shot around my own locale of Greenwich park, London.

Discussing *The Waste Land*,<sup>21</sup> Smith revealed that he had thought of the amusing 'anagram' of Eliot's name from 'toilet' as a student and consequently shot the work in his local East End pub.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, a promotional summary of Smith's film and video works describes *The Waste Land* as: "A personal interpretation of the poetry and letters of TS Eliot which explores the ambiguities of language and space in a scenario built around an anagram" (Cosgrove and Lanyon, 2002: 124). Smith recounted how he had opened a random page of *The Waste Land* and found immediate connections between the poem and the interior of the pub toilet, having never read it before. This approach is consistent with his continuing practice of drawing upon his ironic sense of humour to create visual puns. A.L Rees comments upon the way in which Smith's interpretation makes literal connections to the source material, whilst at the same time creating a deliberate re-emphasis, which alternates between 'transposition' and 'commentary' (Wagner, 1975):

The film opens with T.S Eliot's own reading of the pub scene in the poem, his plausibly cultivated English, scoured of his American accent, only creaking when he takes on the cockneyfied voices of Lil and her pals. An extended point of view shot, made with a handheld video camera, takes us into a pub lavatory. John Smith's own voice now recites the 'city waste' section of the poem in the urinal, with casual and swaying references to each line ("or other testimony of summer nights" is keyed to a shot of the condom machine). A one-liner in real time like the first part of *The Girl Chewing Gum*, the film ends with a door sign that switches the expected word 'TOILETS' to its literalized anagram 'TSELIOT'. It is...a homage to *The Waste Land* as the founding moment of London's modernist imaging, a collage poem akin to montage cinema, translatable across time and medium, not quite taken back to its sordid roots from its high cultural ground, but close enough. The effect is to rehumanise the poem, to 'make it new' as Ezra Pound claimed (Cosgrove and Lanyon 2002: 27).<sup>23</sup>

I can identify with Rees' claims, since I have always consciously recognised and paid homage to the poem's modernist roots, but am also aware of "rehumanising"

<sup>21</sup> Talk at Toynbee Studios, London as part of Gary Stevens' Performance Lab for Artsadmin on the 6<sup>th</sup> October 2007.

<sup>22</sup> The Northcote in Leytonstone, London

<sup>23</sup> Al Rees 'Associations: John Smith and the artists' film in the UK' in *John Smith: Film and Video Works 1972-2002* (2002) (ed) M. Cosgrove and J. Lanyon, Bristol: Picture This Moving Image & Watershed Media Centre, pp.14-31.

the text by making an autobiographical interpretation that also addresses its potential universal relevance, rather than replicating its elitist status. Smith's interpretation not only offered a thematic reading of the poem that found metaphorical equivalents, but also raised the possibility of creating a series of shorter video works based upon a particular extract from the poem, filmed within one particular location, which could be translated to my *Shadow Walk* video series (2006) from room one, 'Burial' that traces my journey through local rural and urban landscapes on the Isle of Wight and around south-east London.

#### **4. Chris Marker *Owls At Noon Prelude: The Hollow Men* (2005)**

Having shifted from my initial research on mainstream cinema<sup>24</sup> to performance-based adaptations and independent artist film, it was French film director Chris Marker's two-channel video installation, *Owls at Noon Prelude: The Hollow Men* (2005), an adaptation of T.S Eliot's later poem, *The Hollow Men* (1925)<sup>25</sup> that reinforced the notion of creating an experiential gallery installation, rather than a experimental film comprising five sections to be screened within a cinematic context. The perpetually moving image/text sequence, that follows a repetitive A/B pattern synchronised across eight screens, uses animated black and white photographic still images in a way that is reminiscent of, yet a notable

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<sup>24</sup> The first two case study examples of films that I had draw upon as initial starting points in my research were Sally Potter's *Orlando* (1996) and Jane Campion's *A Portrait of a Lady* (1996).

<sup>25</sup> *Owls at Noon Prelude: The Hollow Men* (2005) two-channel, eight LCD screen video installation, music, 19', edition of 6; Co-organized by Mary Lea Bandy, Chief Curator of Film and Media, Museum of Modern Art, and Colin MacCabe, Professor of English and Film, University of Pittsburgh and conceived for the opening of The Yoshiko and Akio Morita Gallery, Museum of Modern Art, New York (27<sup>th</sup> April-13<sup>th</sup> June 2005) Thereafter shown at the Prefix Institute of Contemporary Art, Toronto (27<sup>th</sup> January-4<sup>th</sup> March 2006), Dazibao Centre de Photographies Actuelles, Montreal (16<sup>th</sup> November- 16<sup>th</sup> December 2006), Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane (10<sup>th</sup> April-26<sup>th</sup> May 2007), New Galerie De France, Paris (23<sup>rd</sup> February- 5<sup>th</sup> April 2008), Porta Sant'Agostino, (in collaboration with GAMEC - Galleria d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Bergamo) Bergamo, Italy (8<sup>th</sup> March-6<sup>th</sup> April 2008), Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich (12<sup>th</sup> March-29<sup>th</sup> June 2008), The Gus Fisher Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand (29<sup>th</sup> August-4<sup>th</sup> October 2008) and Peter Blum Gallery, Chelsea New York (16<sup>th</sup> May - 19<sup>th</sup> September 2009). I saw Marker's installation in his exhibition 'Farewell to Movies' at Museum für Gestaltung, Zürich on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2008, where it was installed on eight video screens recessed into the wall, accompanied by headphones in subdued lighting conditions within a temporarily partitioned gallery space, rather than the darkened immersive environment at MOMA, New York, where the audio was played aloud within the gallery. The Bergamo installation is available to view at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vghQFWMvhNM>. For images of *Owls at Noon* see Hansche, R.J. (2009) 'The Crisis of Cognition: On Memory and Perception in Chris Marker's *The Hollow Men*', *Hyperion: On the Future of Aesthetics*, IV (1) 27-36. [Online] Downloaded PDF. 13 printed pages. Available at <http://www.nietzschecircle.com/hyperion0918.html>. [26<sup>th</sup> June 2009]

advancement from Marker's seminal film, *La Jetée* (1962).<sup>26</sup> Both works share not only stylistic techniques, but are also concerned with articulating the emotional repercussions of war. Inspired by Eliot's reflection on the aftermath of World War One, Marker's interpretation takes a firm political stance, transporting the poem's "hollow men" into multiple, unidentified painterly faces that seem to melt and merge into the background, or as blurred identical, silhouetted figures joined hand in hand like cut out paper dolls. Marker montages these visual representations of "sightless" figures with archive photographs of trench warfare, corpses lying in coffins, field hospital group photographs, graphic stills of barbed wire fences and ghostly outlines of winter trees, juxtaposed against close-up portraits of beautiful women, gazing out of the frame.

Andres Janser describes how Marker drew upon "the suggestive potential of discreetly animated images and texts in order to lend more urgent form to the memory of World War I" (Janser and Reble 2008:57)<sup>27</sup> using found footage from the Great War to remind us of recent conflicts in the Balkans and the Middle East. Indeed, the unrelenting ghostly presence of these traumatic gazes, which Raymond Bellour describes as "mournfully enigmatic" (Leonard, Martin and Bellour 2008: 16)<sup>28</sup> are accompanied by an unsettling piano soundtrack entitled *Corona*, composed by Toru Takemitsu, which I personally perceived to be "screeching out of time with the visuals".<sup>29</sup> Rainer J. Hansche in her recent essay 'The Crisis of Cognition: On Memory and Perception in Chris Marker's *The Hollow Men*' (2009) compares it to the mesmerizing soundtrack of Francis Ford Coppola's 1979 film

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<sup>26</sup> Dir. Chris Marker, *La Jetée* (1962), black and white film, 28 mins. Argos films. Made almost entirely of photographic film stills, the film depicts the account of a prisoner who recalls his life before the destruction of Paris in the Third World War. *La Jetée* (1962) informed my transition from photography to moving still imagery in *The Turn of the Screw* (2001) and later influence *In the Cage* (2007) for room two, 'Game'.

<sup>27</sup> Andres Janser 'Adieu-Bonjour' in *Chris Marker A Farewell to Movies* (2008) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by Andres Janser and Christina Reble, Zurich: Museum für Gestaltung. pp.50-61.

<sup>28</sup> *Chris Marker: Owls At Noon Prelude: The Hollow Men* (2008) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by Robert Leonard, Adrian Martin and Raymond Bellour, Brisbane: Institute of Modern Art.

<sup>29</sup> Phrase taken from my personal notebook, which documented my immediate responses to Marker's installation at Museum für Gestaltung, Zurich.

*Apocalypse Now*, since it "sustains a continuous tone of disaster" (Hansche 2009: 29-30).<sup>30</sup>

Indeed, the repetitive nature of Marker's two-channel video takes a thematic approach to the source text by reinforcing the message that history is inevitably repeating itself by creating "an echo chamber in which the viewer can either remember or witness for the first time the reality of a civilization's self-slaughter." (<http://www.moma.org/visit/calendar/exhibitions/115>) Indeed, the carefully choreographed fragmented, fleeting images and text replicate the way in which we retrieve our memories and emotively respond to viewing old photographs, as the camera zooms, pans or moves across the frame, each time fading away or reappearing through transition modes of superimposition or fade to black. The archive photographs themselves that Marker draws upon are digitally manipulated using filters and effects to solarize or pixellate the image so that they appear to disintegrate and become like impressionistic paintings, signifying the fading memories of survivors and subsequent generations. Extracts from Eliot's poem appear on screen as either whole paragraphs or as enlarged blurred letters that gradually scroll across the screen in different directions and different sizes, broken up or superimposed to be illegible at times. Raymond Bellour observes how:

words appearing like sculptural fragments whose meaning, shattered in a kind of intense mutism, no longer comes across as only an echo of words already read – words on which the fragmentation confers a menacing dimension and an almost autonomous life (Martin and Bellour 2008: 16).

Indeed, the transitory words that pass across the screen function as objects, creating an open-ended, seductive narrative.<sup>31</sup> Jay Murphy remarks how Marker "succeeds in lulling one into a hypnagogic state usually associated with television viewing, while leading one to also induce the viewer to create their own experience"

<sup>30</sup> Coppola's film is derived from Joseph Conrad's novel *Heart of Darkness* (1902), which was also appropriated by T.S. Eliot in his poem *The Hollow Men*. The first line of Eliot's poem reads, "Mistah Kurtz - he dead". The photojournalist in *Apocalypse Now* says "This is the way the fucking world ends. Look at this fuckin' shit we're in, man. Not with a bang, but with a whimper, and with a whimper, I'm fucking splitting, Jack." <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0078788/trivia>.

<sup>31</sup> I was interested to see that the text within Marker's moving image sequences operated more as objects, rather than words, since my early experiments with this technique had proved unsuccessful, because they produced a doubling, illustrative effect that was too literal.

(Murphy 2005: 36-37).<sup>32</sup> Marker describes his new work in terms of montage that parallels Eliot's own assemblage of fragments gathered from a variety of sources in both *The Hollow Men* and *The Waste Land*:

Owls at noon, night birds in the day, things, objects, images that don't belong, and yet you are there. Leaflets, postcards, stamps, graffiti, forgotten photographs, frames stolen from the continuous and senseless flow of TV stuff...Its from that raw material, the petty cash of history, that I try to extract a subjective journey through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Everybody agrees that the founding moment of that era, its mint, was the First World War, and that it was also the background on which T.S Eliot wrote his beautiful and desperate poem *The Hollow Men*. So the Prelude to the journey *will be a reflection upon that poem*, mixed with some images gathered from the limboes of *my memory* (Martin and Bellour 2008: 13).<sup>33</sup>

It could be seen that Marker provides a comparatively faithful 'transposition' (Wagner, 1975) of *The Hollow Men*, by literally visualising the grim reality of the trenches of World War One that inspired Eliot's poem, when he refers to the lines "This is the dead land". However, he also reinvents the poem, creating a personal "reflection" on contemporary history, which is indicated by the autobiographical statement at the beginning of the sequence, which reminds us of the fact that he was only four years old when the poem was written. Reviewers of Marker's installation are in agreement as to Marker's chosen latitude of modification, with Raymond Bellour commenting on "the admirable poem he transforms" (Martin and Bellour 2008: 18) and Rainer J. Hansche suggesting that the work is "a variation on Eliot's poem that is at once an embodiment of and a commentary upon it" (Hansche 2009: 29). Greg Hooper in his review of Marker's exhibition at the Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, goes further to conclude that "Marker resists reproduction or illustration...taking Eliot's poem and reworking it into partial quotes, fragmentary paraphrase and comment" (Hooper 2007) which echoes my own interpretive method.<sup>34</sup> Andréa Picard describes Marker's interpretation as "An engaged and

<sup>32</sup> Murphy, J. (2005) 'More of What It Is: Catching Up with *Chris Marker*', *Afterimage*, 33 (2), 31-37.

<sup>33</sup> My italics. Raymond Bellour (2008) 'Marker's Gesture' in *Chris Marker: Owls At Noon Prelude: The Hollow Men* (2008) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by Robert Leonard, Adrian Martin and Raymond Bellour, Brisbane: Institute of Modern Art. Bellour mentions that Marker's text was originally placed at the entry to the installation at the Museum of Modern Art, New York, dated 6<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

<sup>34</sup> However, it could be argued that it was the restrictions enforced by the Eliot estate that influenced Marker's technique of fragmentary extraction and revision of the poem.

engaging dialogue with Eliot's poem" (Picard 2006)<sup>35</sup> and highlights the fact that although Marker had to re-write Eliot's text, rather than deliver it in its entirety due to strict copyright laws, the constraints produced what she considers to be a more "compelling" work.

Therefore, *Owls at Noon* begins with Marker's own introduction to the work, citing the First World War as "The war to end all wars they said /Which we would discover quite untrue /Less than 80 seasons later" (Janser and Reble 2008: 34, l.6-8) before launching into "We are the hollow men/We are the stuffed men" (l.1-2), which are repeated in different formations, illegibly travelling across screen in opposing directions. In a manner similar to Katie Mitchell's theatrical re-scripting of Virginia Woolf's novel *The Waves* (see chapter one), where she redistributes phrases to other characters, or isolates and combines fragments of text, Marker replaces words for more autobiographic examples<sup>36</sup> and also paraphrases certain parts of the poem.<sup>37</sup> In this respect, Marker's interpretation of *The Hollow Men* traverses several adaptation modes like Jo Spence's *Cinderella* (1980-82), since it could be defined as either a 'commentary' (Wagner, 1975), 'process of creation' (Hutcheon, 2006), or 'transformation' (Kline, 1996) that concentrates on producing an emotive, yet politicized response to the source, that recalls the hollowness of W.B. Yeats' sentiment, "Things fall apart, the centre cannot hold".<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Picard, A. (2006) 'FILM/ART: Prelude as postscript: Chris Marker's *The Hollow Men*', *Cinemascope*, Issue 26 [online] Approx 3 printed pages. [http://www.cinemascope.com/cs26/col\\_picard\\_filmart.htm](http://www.cinemascope.com/cs26/col_picard_filmart.htm) [23<sup>rd</sup> June 2008]

<sup>36</sup> Such as "Rat's coat, crowskin...Behaving as the wind behaves" (l.33/35) becoming "Cat's coat, owlskin, and the rest/ Behaving as cats behave" (Janser and Reble 2008: 35, l.28-29. Marker's secures his own anonymity by frequently replacing his portrait for a cat. His own elusiveness is intriguing and this method of substitution can be compared to my own evasive self-representational strategies.

<sup>37</sup> For example, by replacing "Eyes I dare not meet in dreams / In death's dream kingdom" (l.19-20) with "How often did we meet in dreams /Those eyes Eliot didn't dare to meet?" (Janser and Reble 2008: 34, l.17-18). The full text of Marker's re-scripted version of *The Hollow Men* (but without a sense of its visual representation) is available in *Chris Marker A Farewell to Movies* (2008) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by Andres Janser and Christina Reble, Zurich: Museum für Gestaltung, pp.34-37. Marker's preoccupation with the collecting and assembling fragments from different sources (evident in his archive project, *Immemory* (1997)) together with his fascination with time and memory parallels Eliot's own concerns. The concept of re-scripting the chosen text through the extraction of phrases that strike a personal resonance, is of particular relevance to my own interpretation.

<sup>38</sup> Taken from his 1920 poem, *The Second Coming*. See Introduction.

## 5. Juan Muñoz *The Waste Land* (1987)

Marker's emphasis on igniting an emotive response from the audience was also indicative of Juan Muñoz's installation, *The Wasteland* (1987).<sup>39</sup> Muñoz had an interest in creating psychological environments, which frequently featured distortions of the human figure within space, including acrobats, mannequins and dwarfs. He used the illusionary effect of optical floors in works, such as, *The Wasteland* (1987) and *The Prompter* (1988) to heighten the tension of these constructed scenes, in which the audience is also part of the imagined drama. *The Wasteland* (1987) features an empty gallery space with a linoleum floor consisting of a tessellating pattern of black, yellow and grey tiles that form an optical illusion, leading the audience across the space towards an isolated ventriloquist dummy perched on the edge of a shelf in the corner, whose inherent muteness provocatively reminds us of the many characters within the poem. Muñoz's conceptual reading of Eliot's text focuses upon its non-communication and sense of fragmentation, which is accurately translated into a psychological space, that readily challenges the viewer. Michael Wood in his essay 'To Double Business Bound' describes how:<sup>40</sup>

the small bronze figure of a ventriloquist's dummy, looking not unlike a shrunken version of T.S Eliot himself. What sort of wasteland is this, and what is the dummy doing on the shelf? He seems quite comfortable, and doesn't appear to be missing his master or the realm of speech...Are we the speaker he is waiting for, the master who has abandoned him there? Why does his calm so disturb us? Have we ever thought that a simple floor, like a complex poem, could evoke the regimented horror of modern life, that sense of the living, marching dead, that Eliot evokes through the brilliant collocation of city businessmen and Dante's limbo? (Wagstaff 2008: 107).

It seems that Muñoz, like Marker, was drawn towards Eliot's bleak vision of contemporary life and managed to communicate its sense of uneasiness and hopelessness through a remarkably apt solution. Muñoz similarly drew upon a rich

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<sup>39</sup> *Juan Muñoz: A Retrospective*, Tate Modern, London, 24<sup>th</sup> January-27<sup>th</sup> April 2008. Visited 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008. Juan Muñoz *The Wasteland* (1987), bronze, steel and linoleum, dimensions variable. Collection of Elayne and Marvin Mordes, Palm Beach, Florida. Available at <http://www.tate.org.uk/modern/exhibitions/juanmunoz/rooms/room3.shtm>

<sup>40</sup> Michael Wood 'To Double Business Bound' in *Juan Muñoz: A Retrospective* (2008) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by Sheena Wagstaff, London: Tate Publishing, pp.105-109.

variety of sources from literature, mythology, philosophy, music, film, poetry, theatre and illusion to create his work, with his notebooks featuring references to key figures such as Robert Bresson, Joseph Conrad, John dos Passos, James Joyce, Edward Lear, Piet Mondrian, Robert Smithson, Robert Louis Stevenson and Paul Valery, amongst others (Wagstaff 2008: 97). Sheila Wagstaff, the curator of Muñoz's recent retrospective at Tate Modern, London (2008) noted how Muñoz was particularly inspired by the different voices in Eliot's poem, together with its religious and mystical allusions and was also influenced by his later poem *Little Gidding* from *The Four Quartets* (1942).<sup>41</sup> According to Wagstaff, Muñoz's "personal copy of Eliot's poems is heavily annotated, while his notebooks contain many quotations from Eliot" (Wagstaff 2008: 97).<sup>42</sup> The extent of Muñoz's contextual influences is something that I can identify with, since, like Marker, I habitually absorb and collect sources during the pre-production stage, which I then appropriate in my practice.

Michael Wood addresses the notion of storytelling that is commonly associated with Muñoz's work, suggesting that his intention varied over time, perhaps like Eliot's subversion of his impersonality theory: "Muñoz earlier said he was 'worried' by the accusation that he was tending towards literature, but then accepted the challenge and said he was indeed a storyteller" (Wagstaff 2008: 107). Shelia Wagstaff believes that Muñoz was inspired by *The Waste Land*, but chose to interpret its thematic concerns, rather than faithfully illustrate the text.<sup>43</sup> In this respect, Muñoz's interpretation of Eliot's poem is quite open, adopting a generalized perspective that could signify a 'analogy' (Wagner, 1975), 'transformation' (Kline,

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<sup>41</sup> Sheena Wagstaff 'A Mirror of Consciousness' in *Juan Muñoz: A Retrospective* (2008) Exhibition catalogue (edited) by Sheena Wagstaff, London: Tate Publishing, pp.95-103.

<sup>42</sup> Juan Muñoz's *Stuttering Piece* (1993), which he created five years after *The Waste Land* (1987) is derived from a collection of sources, including a Beckett play and overheard conversations, but the reference to Eliot's poem is very prominent. It is a much more intimate work, whereby a sound-scape is attached to the small-scale sculptural work of two figures sitting upon a shelf. The subtle emotional engagement, which meant that the audience had to stand quite near the piece to hear the audio track influenced the installation of *Hushing the Room Enclosed*, in that I wanted the emotional soundscape to be attached to the work, rather than dominate the gallery space. The accompanying voiceover was transcribed as: "What did you say? /I didn't say anything/You never say anything. You never say anything/No. But you keep coming; you keep coming back to it".

<sup>43</sup> I consulted Sheena Wagstaff after her curator's talk with Marko David, curator of public programmes at Tate Modern on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2008, which was in collaboration with the *Juan Muñoz: A Retrospective*, Tate Modern, London (24<sup>th</sup> January-27<sup>th</sup> April 2008).

1996) or a 'process of creation' (Hutcheon 2006) since it extracts and concentrates upon a particular aspect. I would agree with Wagstaff since, like Marker and Warner, Muñoz took an emotional approach to the source material, but instead chose to create a conceptual work that spatialized the text so that it becomes an experiential environment. The psychological dimension of Muñoz's installation is closely aligned with my own concern for visualizing traumatic experience and I found that by participating in his work as a spectator, the possibility of engaging the audience in this fashion was initiated, influencing the completion of the unsettling multi-layered sound-scape for the photographic installation, *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008) in room two, 'Game' (see Chapter Four).

The process of discovering and analysing other works derived from Eliot's poetry, which span a significant range of disciplines, including theatre, film, video and installation, was imperative for the development of my own interpretation of *The Waste Land*, in terms of identifying method, style and purpose in the light of film adaptation theories. Whilst my evaluations have centred upon their similarities to my own work, it is also important to acknowledge their differences. Although I was influenced by Deborah Warner's emotional dramatization of the poem and the stylistic devices employed to distinguish each separate part of the poem through colour, costume and lighting, her interpretation faithfully delivered each line from the poem, which is significantly different to my own approach. John Smith's short film brought to light the possibility of visualizing a short section from the text in a personal, intuitive fashion using a subjective viewpoint, yet his chosen subject matter was in some ways quite literal, featuring the obvious interior of a London pub suggested by the poem, as well as being more motivated by the rendering of a visual pun on Eliot's name.

Whilst I associated myself both with Chris Marker's process of re-scripting the original text and adopting a thematic approach and his chosen video installation format, I do not share his political agenda. I was intrigued by the way in which

Juan Muñoz's installation spatialized the poem so that it achieved a psychological impact upon the audience, but felt that in comparison to my own method, it was quite reductive in the way in which it became an abstract concept derived from a thematic response. By comparing my practice with that of artists working within a relevant context, I realised that my own interpretive method is distinctly different from those I had encountered in that I responded autobiographically to the literary text, utilising it as a self-representational tool. In this way, my approach to interpretation could signify a new mode of fine art adaptation that extends Linda Hutcheon's concept of the '*process of creation*' (Hutcheon 2006:8) since the interpretation of the literary text itself is not the prime focus of the work, but rather serves as a masking device to create elusive self-portraits that communicate parallel traumatic experiences.

## **6. Re-contextualisation: The Role of Allusions**

Having originally 'tested out' conventional film adaptation methods in my early experiments, I developed an approach that allowed for the kind of artistic freedom that the actress Fiona Shaw described for her performance in Warner's production by responding emotionally to the source material, in a similar manner to Marker and Muñoz:

I don't think I am interpreting it—I have no line on it. I'm not trying to say what I think Eliot is trying to say to an audience. I'm only trying to be true to each beat of it and to render it with as much life as I can (Stein 1997).

During my research I was continually questioning the relationship between the finished visual artefact and the original literary text. I was concerned whether the completed works would become a separate entity, which would mean that there was no need for the poem as a reference point (see Chapter One). I also deliberated the extent of my potential audience's prior experience of *The Waste Land* and, if their lack of knowledge would alienate them from gaining a full appreciation of the work. However, as my research became increasingly

preoccupied with notions of self-representation, it became clear that literary texts served an important function as a form of displacement that deflected attention away from the self, yet provided a relevant thematic, psychological and conceptual framework that enabled the recollection of autobiographical experience. This chosen interpretive method meant that whilst the works are traceable to the source, they are also able to stand alone, appealing to uninformed audiences through their universality. I would argue that all of the practitioners who have interpreted Eliot's poem within an alternative arts context have concentrated upon the thematic, metaphoric and emotive aspects of this modernist text, embodying and transforming it, rather than being concerned with issues of fidelity.

This method of re-invention can be aligned with that of appropriation employed by postmodern artists to "re-function" previous work by "re-contextualising" it (Hutcheon 2006: 90). This is reflected in the *Waste Land* project, since it was not only derived from Eliot's poem, but was also informed by a host of contextual influences drawn from a broad terrain of arts disciplines, including film, fine art, literature and photography. Bernard Sharratt in 'Eliot: Modernism, Postmodernism and After' claims that Eliot's recycling of past literatures which he reveals in the accompanying 'Notes on *The Waste Land*',<sup>44</sup> operate as both surface details and structural devices within *The Waste Land* constituting it as a post-modern text (Moody 1994: 230).<sup>45</sup> Therefore, it could be argued that Eliot's poem can be interpreted as postmodernist because of its reliance upon the appropriation of cultural and literary sources, together with its open-endedness, which makes it more relevant to a contemporary audience. In terms of the work's development, these contextual influences helped to articulate and visualise the style, theme or mood that I needed to achieve and allowed me to make sense of the work when presenting it to an audience. Although I had previously adopted this method during pre-production, this technique was exploited for *Waste Land*, paying homage to

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<sup>44</sup> See *The Waste Land* poem in Appendix A.

<sup>45</sup> Bernard Sharratt 'Eliot: Modernism, Postmodernism and After' in Moody, D. (ed) (1994/2004) *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.223-235.

Eliot's extensive use of allusions by actively sourcing relevant works during the pre-production phase to formulate a particular thematic language and afterwards to locate it within a cultural context.<sup>46</sup>

In these accompanying 'Notes', Eliot acknowledges the prime importance of Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* about the Grail legend and James Frazer's *Golden Bough* about fertility ceremonies, alongside literary texts by Baudelaire, Dante, Marvell, Milton, Shakespeare and references from popular culture, historical events, Christianity, Buddhism and Greek mythology. James Longenbach in his essay "'Mature Poets Steal': Eliot's Allusive Practice' (1994), warns of the excluding nature of Eliot's appropriation: "Teasing out the allusions, we, as readers, become part of that difficult process of transmission. If we do not know the references, we may feel excluded" (Moody 1994: 177).<sup>47</sup> Indeed, literary criticism has been pre-occupied with deliberating the meaning of Eliot's sources and it is part of the reason why the poem is considered so difficult and elitist (see Introduction). Maud Ellman highlights the fact that critics are primarily concerned with tracking Eliot's references:

Whether they envisage the poem as a pilgrimage, a quest for the Holy Grail, an elegy to Europe or to Jean Verdenal, these readings treat the text as if it were a photographic negative, tracing the shadows of a lost or forbidden body (Ellman 1987: 92).

This metaphor of the photographic negative is quite apt, in that whilst these sources provided the foundation of *The Waste Land*, as readers, it is the final print

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<sup>46</sup> For example the *Encounter* photographic diptychs from 'Sermon', Volume I references William Hogarth's *The Rake's Progress* No.1-8 (1734) and *Before and After* (1736) together with a range of photographic work including Bill Brandt's *Top Floor, A Night in London* (1938), Anders Peterson's *Untitled series, 1967-1970 from 'Café Lehmitz'* (1978), Nan Goldin's *The Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1983) and Lucy Levene's *Come and Be my Baby* (2001) in particular. The first photograph, *Perceived the scene and foretold the rest* (2008), was inspired by Francesca Woodman's depiction of the blurred figure within her work, especially *Space 2, Providence, Rhode Island* (1975-1978), together with Duane Michals' portrait of *Joseph Cornell* (1972) and his photographic sequences *The Fallen Angel* (1968) and *I Remember the Argument* (1970), which assisted in the development of the 'Traces of the Self' strategy. The reflected self-portrait in the second diptych, *Her brain allows one half formed thought to pass* (2008) appropriates Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Still No.2* (1977), Helen Chadwick's *Vanitas II* (1986), Sam Taylor-Wood's *No. III* from the *Soliloquy series* (1998) and the moment when Orlando notices his change of sex in the mirror in Sally Potter's film *Orlando* (1992) (based upon Virginia Woolf's novel).

<sup>47</sup> James Longenbach (1994) "'Mature poets steal': Eliot's allusive practice' in *The Cambridge Companion to T. S. Eliot*. Ed. A. David Moody. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 176-188.

or poem that we interpret. Harriet Davidson in 'Improper Desire: Reading *The Waste Land*' (1994) argues that "Knowing the story of the quest for the Grail or the significance of the Tarot does not, of course, hurt when reading *The Waste Land*" (Moody 1994: 125).<sup>48</sup> I would agree that whilst my prior knowledge of metaphysical poetry or Shakespeare was not imperative for appreciating the work as a whole, I recognised their thematic contributions and gained access to another level of understanding. Although Eliot provides references to the sources that he uses in his accompanying 'Notes', these are by no means exhaustive and I discovered further meanings of specific details mentioned in the poem during my initial research.<sup>49</sup> James Longenbach asks the pertinent question regarding the function and effect of Eliot's allusions:

And while it's true that knowledge of Eliot's models and sources does enrich a reading of his poetry, it is ultimately more important to understand the nature of Eliot's allusive practice - to ask not only *what is the source?* But *why does Eliot allude?* and *how do we experience the allusion?* (Moody 1994: 176).

In his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), Eliot claims that appreciation of new work exists in relation to those produced by "dead poets and artists" (Kermode 1975:38) and that "the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past" (Kermode 1975:39). Therefore, since a comparative exercise is inevitable, Eliot employs these contextual influences to renew our readings of them, creating an interwoven tapestry of allusions that comment upon each other and assert a sense of circularity through the notion that history repeats itself. Eliot revealed that he used the "mythical method" (Kermode 1975: 178), which re-invigorated the sources he admired as "a way of controlling,

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<sup>48</sup> Harriet Davidson (1994) 'Improper Desire: Reading *The Waste Land*' in Moody, D. (ed.) (1994/2004) 6<sup>th</sup> ed. *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.121-131.

<sup>49</sup> The footnotes of the reprinted version of *The Waste Land* included in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature* (1993), describe at some length the origins of the character Marie in part one, 'The Burial of the Dead' who was actually the cousin of the drowned King Ludwig (Abrams 1993: 2147). However, there is no real need for the audience to know this information to fully appreciate its associations of memory, since we are aware that *The Waste Land* is a dense, complex poem with many layers of meaning.

of ordering, of giving shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" (Kermode 1975: 177).<sup>50</sup>

What struck me most about Eliot's use of allusions was that of open-endedness, whereby the sources lead you out of the poem towards infinite reference points.

Jacob Korg in his essay, 'Modern Art Techniques in *The Waste Land*' (1968) investigates their function in the poem:

These quotations communicate, not by carefully controlled meaning, as the other words in the poem do, but by their associations, which are at once more immediate and less exact than the meanings of words...They exemplify, or embody, meaning...In short, they function as objects rather than words (Martin 1968: 91).<sup>51</sup>

Korg goes on to suggest that the incorporation of these quotations within the text performs like bricolage in modernist art (Martin 1968: 92). Indeed, recognition of the poem's use of montage, both in terms of the inclusion of allusions, together with the amalgamation of different voices, images, such as, "Unreal city" (l.60) and separate scenes, is something that I have tried to integrate within my own interpretation of the text by creating individual scenarios or fragments that overlap with each other and repeat themselves, gradually building up layers of meaning over five exhibition spaces (see Chapter Four). A prime example of this technique in *Waste Land* is the appearance of a particular family group snapshot in *PastPresent* (2005), from 'Prelude', which then reappears within *Fortune-telling/Retelling* (2007) in room one, 'Burial', before emerging again as a ghostly apparition from beneath the waves in *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) in room four, 'Water'.

Robert Richardson observed how *The Waste Land* is:

a continuous succession of scenes and images, which build up impressions only cumulatively, impressions, which are neither, complete, nor fully recognised until the end (Richardson 1969: 107-108).

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<sup>50</sup> Eliot, T.S. 'Ulysses, Order and Myth' (1923) in Kermode, F. (ed.) (1975) *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot*. London: Faber & Faber.

<sup>51</sup> Jacob Korg 'Modern Art Techniques in *The Wasteland*' in Martin, J. (ed.) (1968) *A Collection of Critical Essays on 'The Wasteland'*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. Originally published in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, XVIII (June 1960), 456-63.

The *Waste Land* project, therefore, seeks to reproduce this collage effect through the assembly of individual photographic and video works in the final installation created by the repetition of self-representational strategies, visual metaphors and the appropriation of past works.<sup>52</sup> By re-enacting Eliot's use of allusions and replicating his filmic montage technique in this way, *Waste Land* represents a multi-layered stylistic interpretation of the original text. Potentially, the audience can re-familiarise themselves with the poem and trace Eliot's original sources, before recognising my own interpretive methods and autobiographical connections, together with my contextual and critical framing. Whilst, it is not imperative to trace all of these references for an understanding of the work, this extensive use of contextual referencing operates as yet another deflective masking device, which forces the reader to undertake a decoding exercise and serves as a further burying technique to distract attention away from the self (see Chapter Two).<sup>53</sup>

## **7. My *Waste Land* Interpretive Methods**

As I approached each part of *The Waste Land*, I constantly reflected upon and refined the interpretive procedures that I followed (see Chapter One). Informed by Ezra Pound's radical revision of the poem, it became clear that I adopt the role of an editor, interacting with the source text and then re-imagining and transforming it through a process of re-familiarisation and extraction of fragmentary elements that possessed an autobiographical significance. Therefore, the first stage of the process is to acquire some understanding of its meaning and critical framework to enlighten my identification with specific quotations, imagery or thematic concerns. Crucially at this 'searching stage' I am trying to determine how specific aspects of the text can signify the self and how best to represent these visually, both in terms of the various self-representational strategies and feminine metaphors I have identified during my research (see Chapter Two), together with stylistic

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<sup>52</sup> Such as the washed-up photograph in *Unreal City* from Vol.III, 'Disintegration' from the 'Sermon' photographs which is reminiscent of a similar photograph in *The Waves* (1996).

<sup>53</sup> Rather, it is important to remember Maud Ellman's comparison, made earlier between Freud's compulsion to repeat and Eliot's "compulsion to citation" (Ellman 1987: 101).

considerations, including the most appropriate medium (whether photography or video). After a final 'break-through' stage of forming autobiographical attachments and deciding upon key aspects, these isolated quotations or re-scripted phrases are then worked through and supported by the collation of relevant contextual influences, either sourced from my existing knowledge, acquired through text-based research or through recent encounters at exhibitions,<sup>54</sup> that are either acknowledged at the time or realised in hindsight.

I then enter into a 'experimentation' phase, drawing upon past work and testing out options, refining these concepts and re-editing my chosen quotations. Central to this process is the sketchbook, which functions as a reflective document that not only records the creative 'journey' itself, but also acts as a 'place' where theory and practice intersect. This process of combining contextual influences, project development and theoretical underpinning within one location allows the research to evolve in a productive, reflexive fashion and is actively used as a reference point, consistently consulted at different stages of the idea development and commented upon retrospectively when evaluating the work for dissemination purposes.<sup>55</sup> Whilst the actual 'production stage' of shooting is an open, organic procedure which draws upon a loose storyboard,<sup>56</sup> or idea, but is receptive to alteration once on location, the 'post-production stage' of editing images or video sequences and aligning with final quotations or sound-scapes is a much more considered and tentative process.

Indeed, as a 'practitioner-researcher', I am now acutely aware that doctoral research has encouraged a deeper interrogation and analysis of my intentions through the continual process of critical self-reflection and the modification of my research questions and objectives, which in turn is fed by my immersion within

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<sup>54</sup> I take advantage of living in London by frequently attending a range of exhibitions from established arts institutions to alternative artist-run spaces, building up an archive of material to draw upon and recording particular works that have made a personal impact in my notebooks.

<sup>55</sup> Different projects were usually worked on simultaneously, with those from the same section of the poem interwoven in the sketchbook order. However, projects from different sections were worked through from opposite ends of the same sketchbook, such as room three, 'Sermon' and room four, 'Water' whose project development lies across two sketchbooks.

<sup>56</sup> Whilst my creative process can be likened to the conventional three stages of production in filmmaking, it is by no means as rigid or systematic, since by working independently and autonomously as an artist, it is not determined by budgets or collaboration with large production crews.

relevant theoretical discourses. This active cyclical process, which oscillates between theory and practice, has facilitated the unearthing of new understandings and connections.<sup>57</sup> By focusing on thinking through practice, I am constantly questioning my prior assumptions in order to reframe my work and articulate my ideas more effectively, as well as understanding its historical and contemporary context and its future direction.<sup>58</sup> I adopt heuristic approaches within my research and I am conscious of 'making sense of the work', through what Professor Desmond Bell terms as a kind of 'auto-onography'<sup>59</sup> in which the project is presented, reflected upon and then revised through participation within a critical discourse.<sup>60</sup> Whilst this identifies the research as particular to fine art practices, which is primarily concerned with interpretation, critical reflection, and experiential discovery, comparisons can be made to pedagogy, which encourages reflection and critique, particularly David Kolb's experiential learning cycle (1984) and Donald Schon's 'reflection-on-action' (1983); which "does not simply involve doing, but also reflecting, processing, thinking and further understanding" (Fry, Ketteridge and Marshall 2003: 15).

I have found that 'testing out' my research through work-in-progress exhibitions has been fundamental to its development, by situating it within a context, allowing critical dialogue to challenge my ideas and enabling the consequent process of re-evaluation and revision to take place.<sup>61</sup> I have shown a number of works from the

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<sup>57</sup> Dr. Ivana Wingham (University of Brighton) described art research as a 'conversation' between theory and practice, which could either be a quick exchange or an extended dialogue in her brief presentation at 'The Art of Research: Research Narratives' symposium at the Chelsea College of Art and Design, 27<sup>th</sup> October 2008.

<sup>58</sup> Adapted from my artist statement for 'The Art of Research: Research Narratives' symposium at Chelsea College of Art and Design (27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> October 2008)  
<http://www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk/testresearch09/48105.htm>

<sup>59</sup> Term identified by Professor Desmond Bell, (Queens University, Belfast) in his paper at the AVPhD symposium, University of Sussex, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007. Bell extends art pedagogy by identifying how artistic research can be defined through the processes of "reading-reflecting-making-presenting-reflecting-writing-re-making-re-writing."

<sup>60</sup> This rather difficult phase of articulation and reaffirmation is assisted through a critical dialogue with an audience, facilitated by seminar presentations, conference papers, work-in-progress exhibitions and individual feedback with trusted colleagues. Issues and questions raised by this interaction are then fed back into the work and are then resolved or modified by re-examination and evaluation of both my library-based research and creative documentation, before final adjustments are made.

<sup>61</sup> I have exhibited work within a research context at the University of Plymouth, such as the installation of *The Rural Shadow Walks* in the 'Immersion' exhibition (2008), with the LOCATE Research Group, (formed in September 2007), alongside fellow doctoral candidates at the University of Plymouth Nicola Gilmour, Kayla Parker and Mel Morrell as part of the 2008 Land/Water and the Visual Arts 'Landscape

*Waste Land* project within different presentation formats, including two solo exhibitions, 'Still-Moving' at the Viewfinder Photography Gallery, London (2007)<sup>62</sup> and 'The Waste Land: Game (PhD Work-in-Progress)' at the Viewpoint Gallery, Plymouth College of Art (2008).<sup>63</sup> Principally, participation in the practice-led doctoral exhibition and symposium, 'The Art of Research: Research Narratives' at Chelsea College of Art and Design in October 2008,<sup>64</sup> where I showed *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008) proved that the work was also able to stand alone without any reference to Eliot's poem. Interestingly, the reviewers detected an experiential narrative that was concerned with "emotional aspects of the home" through a sense of enclosure enforced by the subjective viewpoint of the transitional hallway space and accompanying sound-scape that spatialized the text. Even without prior knowledge of the work's reference to the non-communication of the speakers in part two of *The Waste Land*, they identified the fact that, although the work seemed highly personal, it possessed a universal appeal, which reassured me of earlier concerns about its accessibility.<sup>65</sup>

This reflective strategy has led to a new understanding of my interpretive methods, which can be categorised into four approaches, which correspond with my employment of multiple self-representational strategies. First, are those works based upon isolated, fragmented lines from the poem, for example, the photographic diptychs from 'Sermon' (2008-2009), or *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009). Second, a re-scripting exercise, similar to Katie

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and Beauty' symposium. I am associated with this particular research centre. See <http://landwater-research.co.uk/lw.php?pg=sally-waterman>

<sup>62</sup> The solo exhibition 'Still-Moving' at the Viewfinder Gallery, London (5<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> December 2007) featured two still-movies; *In the Cage* from room two, 'Game' and *The Turn of the Screw* (2007).

<http://www.viewfinder.org.uk/exhibitions.html#>

<sup>63</sup> Sally Waterman: 'The Waste Land: Game', Viewpoint Gallery, Plymouth College of Art (23<sup>rd</sup> April-3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008) [http://viewpoint.plymouthart.ac.uk/?page\\_id=55](http://viewpoint.plymouthart.ac.uk/?page_id=55) I worked as a part time lecturer in Film Arts at Plymouth College of Art from September 2005-January 2009. This exhibition which tested out three works from room two, 'Game' resulted in the abandonment of the four-channel video *Quartet Manoeuvres* (2008) due to its dependency upon a thematic interpretation, which lacked identifiable autobiographical links.

<sup>64</sup> This three-day event from the 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> October 2008 was led by keynote presentations by Professor John Wood (Goldsmiths College) and Dr. Elizabeth Price (RCA/Kingston University) My critical statement regarding practice-based arts research is available at:

<http://www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk/testresearch09/48105.htm>

<sup>65</sup> The experimental format of this event meant that the work was initially viewed by a peer group who were asked to write their reactions to the work, including what defined it as practice led research on cards, which were then discussed as a group in front of the artist. The next day the artist was allowed to speak about the work and answer any questions that were raised.

Mitchell's re-invention technique (see Chapter One), through an amalgamation of several lines, for instance the re-scripting of the paranoid woman's speech in *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008),<sup>66</sup> or the combination of references to the "frosty silence" (l.323), "The shouting and the crying" (l.325), the "empty chapel" (l.388) and the key in the door which "confirms a prison" (l.413) in *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009). Third, those works that are inspired by a specific action, character, or image, such as Marie's sledge ride in *PastPresent* (2005), Madame Sosostris in *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007), or the appearance of another person "on the other side of you" (l.365) in the video, *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009). Lastly, I form a particular identification with a thematic or conceptual concern within the text, for example, the break down of communication within *In the Cage* (2007), or the quest for interpretation in *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007).

In relation to the case study examples discussed earlier, my own interpretations are sympathetic to Smith, Marker's and Muñoz's work and are situated in the spaces between, 'commentary' and 'analogy' (Wagner 1976) 'pluralist' and 'transformation' (Kline 1996) or 'process of creation' (Hutcheon 2006), re-imagining the text through an extraction process based on autobiographical identification. Apart from recognising the fact that these multiple approaches of adaptation replicate the multiple self-representational strategies I employ in my practice, it is also worth noting how each work can embody several of these four interpretive methods, rather than just one, since it is a result of autobiographical identification, that does not favour one particular mode.<sup>67</sup>

This varying latitude is reflected not only in the choice of titles for each individual work but also by each room. Since I am not creating a faithful translation of Eliot's

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<sup>66</sup> The accompanying soundscape featured the repetition and overlaying of extracted lines from part two, 'Game' from *The Waste Land* spoken with different emotional emphasis, together with an additional mantra of 'Never get married, never have children' that was spoken by my mother, which complimented Eliot's own lines: 'What did you get married for if you don't want children?' (l.164).

<sup>67</sup> In fact, most works employ three of these approaches whilst *I Knew Nothing*, *Hushing the Room Enclosed*, *The Deep Sea Swell* and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* embody all four.

poem, I have subsequently called the project *Waste Land*, with each individual room edited down to 'Burial', 'Game', 'Sermon', 'Water' and 'Thunder', to indicate a certain distance from the original text and to diffuse any potential expectations of fidelity from the audience. Each work references the poem in some way, with some titles being more obvious than others. Works based upon isolated lines from the poem, such as, *I Knew Nothing*, *Hushing the Room Enclosed* or *The Deep Sea Swell* suggest a more direct relationship, by taking specific quotations as their title, whilst other works like *PastPresent* and *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* indicate their thematic approach by the creation of new titles that interpret the actual works.

Despite formulating and refining these different interpretive methods, I encountered three main challenges during the production of the *Waste Land* series: first, that of literalness, second, that of distancing, and third, that of obscured meaning. These interconnected areas alternated between providing the obvious visual solution, becoming too separated from the original text, or creating work that was too densely interwoven with theoretical, stylistic and contextual references. Although I encountered problems of literalness during my early video experiments where I realised there was no need to show and tell (see Chapter One), it seemed to be a persistent issue that continued to resurface throughout the project.

*The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) video evolved from a literal concept that was then later refined and reinvented over a significant period of time during doctoral study (2007-2009). Whilst out walking (April 2007), a single rose drifted by underneath a pier which I immediately felt could symbolise the body sinking beyond view in part four, 'Death by Water'. I later re-staged this scene (July 2007), filming a series of roses floating on the water, together with footage of the sea itself and edited an experimental split screen sequence (September-November 2007), where the rose seemed to be pulled towards the image of the sea on the left hand side, creating a sense of uneasiness. However, I was not satisfied with this obvious visual solution and took a break from this piece, which allowed time for reflection. After gaining a

critical perspective from questioning my original motivations for this room, I realised this work was concerned with the absence of my father, and consequently employed my '*Nostalgia and the Past*' self-representational strategy, to superimpose one of the family snapshots from *PastPresent* with the sea footage to imply the resurfacing of repressed memories.

The second problem of distancing was encountered during the production of the final work in room five, 'Thunder', which I originally conceived to be a black and white photograph, entitled *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009) of an anonymous self at the edge of the sea, informed by the lines: "The sea was calm...I sat upon the shore" (ll.420-423). This work was intended to be an appropriation of my first series of photographs derived from *The Waste Land* (1992), signifying a reconsideration of my original reference point now that the project was near completion. Inspired by the use of metaphorical images of fluidity and immersion in women's literature to represent an escape from patriarchal society (from the father) (see Chapter Two), I appeared within a series of photographs (assisted by my partner, Nick) shot on a beach on the Isle of Wight, firstly, as a figure in black at the edge of the sea and secondly, as a figure in white walking into the water. By positioning my body on the threshold of the shoreline, I wanted to communicate my need for clarity and resolution at the end of the project, yet also suggest an air of indecision, as I reflected upon the fragments I had accumulated.<sup>68</sup>

My attachment to these photographs was a prime example of becoming too distracted by an initial concept, and I realised that these images of a woman at edge of sea were far too romantic. This collection of potential images had become too distanced from Eliot's poem itself, relying too much upon both female literary

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<sup>68</sup> Brooker and Bentley highlight the double meaning of the word 'shore' that Eliot deliberately altered in his edited notes, referring to the fact that: "As a noun, shore indicates the margin where land and sea meet, but as a verb, it denotes the effort to set things in order" (Brooker and Bentley 1992: 202). In this respect, the original desire to address my emotions through a still photographic image (or a 'noun') implies a state of stasis, whereas the final 'solution' to this last room with its two split screen video installations in *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009) and *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009), denotes a sense of progress resolved not only through the duration of the moving image (the 'verb'), but also by the two walking performances themselves.

theory and contextual influences, so that they represented another entity (see Chapter One).<sup>69</sup> Instead, I had identified a connection between the notion of uncertainty in part five, 'What the Thunder Said', with the ambiguous ending of Kate Chopin's novel, *The Awakening* (1899), drawing upon Edna's final walk into the sea, (which some critics have interpreted as an obvious defeated death, whereas others have viewed as a celebratory act of defiance and spiritual awakening) (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 61). In hindsight, it became clear that whilst these images were beautiful, they were quite 'illustrative' of Chopin, and had little connection to *The Waste Land*, so were, therefore, abandoned.

This distancing from the literary source relates to the third problem of creating an incomprehensible interpretation<sup>70</sup> through an over-reliance on theoretical concerns, which, I believe, was partly a direct consequence of pursuing doctoral research and becoming too entrenched with the meaning and accountability of the practice when working in such an intense fashion. This corresponds with current debates concerning a tendency for 'illustrating theory' in practice-based doctoral research, which I became aware of during my studies.<sup>71</sup>

This predicament of producing over-complicated visual solutions was also encountered during the development of work derived from part five, 'What the Thunder Said'. I originally conceived a multi-screen video installation based upon

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<sup>69</sup> Much like my early *Street Life* analogy video experiment, which eventually became *Passing Through* (2005). See Chapter One.

<sup>70</sup> The *Quartet Manoeuvres* (2008) four-screen video installation from room two, 'Game' was a good example of creating meaning that was too implicitly hidden within the work. The video was based upon the section's full title: 'A Game of Chess' together with the parallels drawn between the high and low classes, whose inhabitants are bound up in a repetitive cycle of mundane tasks. Each of the four screens depicted close-up abstract imagery, which included footage of mussels clinging to the rock on the Isle of Wight, graffiti on a wall in Deptford, the ornate ceiling of the painted hall in Greenwich and a row of beer glasses above a local pub. These short clips were shot by a subjective, roaming camera that moved in different directions to replicate the movements of different chess pieces during the editing stage, constantly moving into new combinations across the multiple screens. However, I became distracted by both the concept of the chessboard, (which mimicked human actions) and the actual aesthetics of the piece, finding difficulty in expressing exactly what the work was about. The final decision to withdraw this multi-screen video from room two came after testing it out during 'The Waste Land: Game (PhD Work-in-Progress)' exhibition at the Viewpoint Gallery, Plymouth College of Art (2008) since it was realised that the autobiographical links to place were too ambiguous and the work bore little relation to my developing modes of self-representation.

<sup>71</sup> Dr. Joram ten Brink, (University of Westminster) highlighted this issue in his keynote paper at the AVPhD symposium at the University of Sussex, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007, emphasizing the role of theory to arise from the practice, rather than practice becoming an illustration of theory.

the lines "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (l.430), which I felt summarised the difficult process of 'making sense' of my own work within the writing up stage of my doctoral research by establishing order and coherence out of the fragments I had accumulated over time. I became apprehensive about how the *Waste Land* series would end and, therefore, revived my connection with literary criticism to redefine the meaning of this last section of Eliot's poem, so that I could compare these readings with my own autobiographical connections. Indeed, the final stanza of *The Waste Land* contains a multitude of sources, which Brooker and Bentley claim are meaningless to the speaker:

They illustrate a position of exhaustion 'after' meaning, a position of refuge not only from surrounding ruins, but from the need to interpret, the compulsion to make sense of the fragments (Brooker and Bentley 1992: 201).

James Miller in *T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land: Exorcism of Dreams* shares their perspective, stating how at this point, Eliot was "reconstructing his life...out of the fragments of the ruin he has struggled throughout to comprehend and salvage" (Miller 1977: 114).

The poem ends on an uncertain note, between order and chaos, which was reflected in my own thoughts on the *Waste Land* project, since the creative and critical process of 'working through' family trauma had left me in a state of flux between therapeutic insight and acceptance, whilst also re-activating suppressed emotions and prompting difficult questions. Consequently, I wanted to create an ambiguous work that was not conclusive and occupied the margin of un-decidability, signified by the shoreline in the poem, which echoed my internal struggle, as well as the process of completing the doctoral research itself.

I envisaged this work to be comprised of repetitive glimpses of other works from *Waste Land*, which would serve as a visual reminder of the audience's progression through each room, as well as new work that addressed the themes of

disintegration, loss, journeys and uncertainty. Miller believes that this final part of the poem provides a summary of the whole created through imagery that encourages the reader to recall references to the "unreal city" and memories of the arid landscape in 'The Burial of the Dead', ending with "a conclusion that is not a conclusion but an obscure beginning" (Miller 1977: 114). By using subversive modernist methods of superimposition, montage and speed adjustment, as well as allowing each sequence to move across the different screens to form different combinations, I hoped to pay homage to both the poem's structure of repetitive allusions, characters and events, together with this concept of trying to find meaning out of these fragments.

However, as the work evolved it soon became apparent that I was in danger of becoming too caught up with stylistic concerns and literary criticism. It was necessary to rationalize my ideas and focus upon the main autobiographical issues that arose from my engagement with this part of the poem, which was the continued estrangement from my father (triggered by "Who is the third who walks always beside you?" l.359), the memories of past marital arguments which had informed my views on marriage, together with my own journey through the poem itself, which in the process of carrying out research had become a means to work through traumatic experience in order to construct a form of self-portraiture (see Chapter Two). I also wanted the work to anticipate the future in some way too, identifying with the lines "Shall I at least set my lands in order?" (l.425). This re-assessment process of interrogating my original ideas and identifying key issues, enabled the development of ideas for the performative re-enactment of my parent's wedding in *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009) and the metaphorical walk into infinity, separated from my father in *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009), creating more open-ended works, that the audience could respond to.

Indeed, the production of works for the last room, 'Thunder', corresponded with the actual process of writing chapters three and four, which meant that I was perhaps more acutely conscious of the debates arising from my doctoral research. Despite initially becoming distracted from the original text by contextual influences and theoretical concerns during the pre-production stage, I overcame these problems of literalness, distancing and convoluted meaning and found that this constant fluctuation between theory and practice allowed for pertinent insights to be discovered, challenged, re-worked and re-contextualised, as I managed to 'write through practice' as well as 'create through theory'.

As a result of thinking through writing, I have been able to identify and articulate my interpretive methods and processes more explicitly by comparing the work to relevant case studies and distinguishing not only their similarities and differences, but also their influence on the *Waste Land* project, which has enabled me to firmly situate my practice within this alternative arts context. It has become apparent that whilst my literary interpretations share particular characteristics with other practitioners by employing allusions, or taking a thematic approach, my work is distinctive, in that I adopt multiple methods and employ literature as a masking device to represent the self and repressed memories. As a practitioner-researcher the heuristic processes of testing out, interrogating, reflecting and re-inventing are central to the project's development and the activity of reviewing and acknowledging the difficulties I faced has heightened my awareness and critically informed the production of the final works.

## CHAPTER FOUR: 'ANALYSIS'

It is now appropriate to consider the interrelationship between theory and practice, reflecting more specifically upon the issues and insights that materialised from the work that I produced for *Waste Land* (2005-2009) and to evaluate the final installation itself.<sup>1</sup> Rather than examining each artefact independently in a chronological fashion, I will assess them according to three key areas: 'A Modernist Framework', 'Inhabiting Place' and 'Transformations', linking theoretical debates raised in previous chapters with method and process. These three distinct topics arose through the reassessment of the self-representational strategies I identified during my research, with each one initiating or representing several of these visual modes that are evident within my practice.

By grouping the works together in this comparative format, I am able to clarify how thinking through practice allowed for distinctive insights to emerge. First, by positioning myself within the modernist framework of the poem, I was able to experiment with subversive methods of self-representation informed by contextual influences, for instance, superimposition to signify multiple identities, together with the establishment of '*The Disembodied Self*' strategy, which perceived the body in fragments to symbolize my reluctance to recognise the self as a unified whole. Second, informed by its modernist context, the poem's references to the city instigated an autobiographical representation of place, which oscillated between London and the Isle of Wight, triggering the use of '*Subjective Perspectives*' to suggest an authorial voice through a series of immersive video walks through the landscape, instigating the creation of metaphorical waste-land-scapes. Third, the acknowledgment that I visualise past traumatic experiences led to the

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<sup>1</sup> *Waste Land* (2005-2009) includes: Prelude: *PastPresent* (2005); room one, 'Burial': *Rural Shadow Walks* (2006), *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006), *I Knew Nothing* (2006) and *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007); room two, 'Game': *In The Cage* (2007) and *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008); room three, 'Sermon': Vol. I *Encounter* (2008), Vol. II *Contemplation* (2008), Vol. III *Disintegration* (2008), Vol. IV *Reverberation* (2009) and Vol. V *Retribution* (2009); room four, 'Water': *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) and room five, 'Thunder': *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009) and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009). The work was installed on the first floor of the Scott Building, University of Plymouth from the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Please refer back to the illustrations and DVD at the beginning of the thesis.

establishment of a transformative practice, which employed four self-representational strategies that responded to the seminal phototherapy work of Jo Spence. Initially, *'Nostalgia and the Past'*, utilised family photographs as a device to aid memory and working through past experience, adopting a consistent *'Subjective Perspective'*. Other works from the *Waste Land* project were more concerned with the active re-staging of real or imagined scenarios, which lent itself to *'Self-transformation'* and the recognition of the recurring *'Anonymous Figure'*.

### 1. A Modernist Framework

Whilst it is important to recognise that modernism has been traditionally assigned to male achievement,<sup>2</sup> women like Gertrude Stein, Dorothy Richardson, Lee Miller and Leonora Carrington, who have been marginalised from the modernist canon in both literature and art history, have since been reinstated by feminist theory (Wolff 1990:54).<sup>3</sup> Marianne Dekoven reminds us that the rise of modernism from 1880-1920 coincided with the first wave of feminism in the suffrage movement and emergence of an independent, educated 'New Woman', championed by Virginia Woolf's essay 'Professions for Women' (1931) (Levenson 1999: 174).<sup>4</sup> However, Dekoven exposes in her survey of female modernist writers, that literary modernism was founded by an Anglo-American male, misogynistic and elitist movement whose members, (including Eliot, Joyce, Pound, Lawrence and Yeats), reacted against the influence of such women writers as Chopin, Perkins Gilman, Woolf and Stein, who she argues made a comparable contribution (Levenson 1999: 175-6).

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<sup>2</sup> Griselda Pollock identifies the fact that all of the artist's named on 'The Development of Abstract Art' chart made by Alfred H Barr, director of the Museum of Modern Art in 1936 are male. See Griselda Pollock, 'Modernity and Spaces of Femininity', in Pollock, G. (1988) *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, p.50-90, 50. Earlier work has been concerned with the history of women artists and the theorisation of sexual difference. See Pollock, G and Parker, R. (eds) (1981) *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

<sup>3</sup> Janet Wolff, 'Feminism and Modernism' in Wolff, J. (1990) *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Woman and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp.51-66.

<sup>4</sup> Marianne Dekoven 'Modernism and Gender' in Levenson, M. (1999) *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.174-193.

However, Janet Wolff claims that despite the fact that modernism as an institution lost its potential by the mid twentieth century due to its exclusion of women, modernist strategies that were developed in the 1920s could be employed by contemporary feminist arts practice to challenge dominant patriarchal discourses (Wolff 1990: 62-63). She asserts that modernism and postmodernism share particular stylistic characteristics of "self-reflexivity, de-centring of the subject, alienation effect, consciousness of, and attention to, the medium itself, use of new media, and so on", highlighting the main difference as the "reliance of modernism on theory" compared to postmodernism's "rejection of grand theory" (Wolff 1990: 98-99),<sup>5</sup> Marsha Meskimmon agrees that modernist depictions of fragmented and multiple identities, through montage and superimposition could be used as a means to visually represent the postmodern shifting female self (Meskimmon 1996: 92).<sup>6</sup> It is recognised that a significant amount of postmodern feminist practice utilises film and photography, which Wolff argues are more capable of employing such deconstructive strategies, citing the work of Susan Hiller, Barbara Kruger and Mary Kelly as examples (Wolff 1990: 98).

As a female artist working in both video and photography and creating gendered self-representations, I was interested in pursuing Griselda Pollock's call for female artists to adopt modernist strategies,<sup>7</sup> together with Wolff's suggestion that feminists should pursue "a kind of modified modernism" which separates "modernism-as-institution from modernism-as-practice." (Wolff 1990: 99). Indeed, whilst I became aware of modernism's social and political context, my doctoral research centred upon the experimental techniques employed in early avant-garde film and photography, particularly in self-portraiture, such as, reflected surfaces,

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<sup>5</sup> See Bernard Sharratt 'Eliot: Modernism, Postmodernism and After' in Moody, D. (ed) (1994) *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.223-235, p.230, for a discussion on how Eliot's appropriation of past literatures and allusions could be seen as postmodern.

<sup>6</sup> Modernist stylistic strategies used in self-portraiture were identified by Lingwood (1987), Chevrier (1987), Sobieszek (1994) and Chadwick (1998) in Chapter Two.

<sup>7</sup> Griselda Pollock 'Feminism and Modernism', in Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock (eds), (1987) *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women's Movement 1970-1985*. London: Pandora, p.104.

the shadow or photomontage (see Chapter Two),<sup>8</sup> which led to the use of superimposition to communicate a multiple self along with the development of the 'Disembodied self' visual strategy, whereby only isolated parts of my face and body are represented. The fragmented self dominates much of the work within *Waste Land*, especially 'Prelude' and room one, 'Burial', which was a direct response to an engagement with these modernist devices at the beginning of my research; evident in the hand holding the photographs in *PastPresent* (2005) and *Fortune-telling/Retelling* (2007), the close-up of my eyes in *I Knew Nothing* (2006) and the fleeting shadow in the *Shadows Walk* videos (2006).

From the onset, my study was underpinned by acquiring an understanding of the modernist context of *The Waste Land* to establish the extent to which Eliot was informed by his contemporaries (see Introduction),<sup>9</sup> exploring whether links could be made between his poetic devices and the representation of time and space adopted by cubism, in particular.<sup>10</sup> During the early stages of *Waste Land*, I was intent upon embedding these modernist techniques within the work itself, not only as homage to Eliot and my dissection of the source text, but using these aesthetic devices as a means of enforcing my evasive self-representative strategies through Wolff's concept of a "modified modernism". Therefore, I initially identified relevant works from modernist art, photography and film, drawing inspiration from avant-garde filmmakers Germaine Dulac, Sergei Eisenstein, Fernand Leger and Dziga Vertov to identify key de-familiarisation devices including the distortion of filmic time, montage, superimposition, play with depth of field, repetition and the freeze

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<sup>8</sup> See Robert A. Sobieszek (1994) 'Other Selves in Photographic Self-Portraiture' in Keledjian, C. (ed) (1994) *The Camera I: Photographic Self-Portraits from the Audrey and Sydney Irmas Collection*. Los Angeles and New York: LA County Museum of Art and Harry N. Abrams, Inc. Publishers, pp.26-28.

<sup>9</sup> Eliot himself admired the work of Wyndham Lewis, Jacob Epstein and Edward Wadsworth in particular and I was eager to make these fine art connections within my own interpretation, understanding the poem in a visual and well as literary sense. Please see Eliot, V. (ed.) (1988) *The Letters of T.S. Eliot: Volume I 1898-1922*. London: Faber & Faber, especially 4th April 1915: Letter to Mrs Jack Gardner about a cubist exhibition at the Goupil Gallery (Eliot 1988: 94), 12th January 1920: Letter to Sydney Schiff about Wyndham Lewis's group exhibition at Rutter's [Adelphi Gallery] in London (Eliot 1988: 355) and 14th February 1920: Letter to Scofield Thayer about the European art market (Eliot 1988: 361).

<sup>10</sup> Literary critics such as Jacob Korg (1960) and Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley (1992) instigated my interest in aligning Eliot's poetry with cubism and then applying these techniques in my early video works. See also Glen Macleod 'The Visual Arts' in Levenson, M. (1999) *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.194-216, p.202.

frame.<sup>11</sup> My investigations centred upon cinematic quality of experimental modernist literature,<sup>12</sup> and, in particular, the correlations between film and modernist poetry made by Robert Richardson (1969), Cheryl Potter (1990) and Viktor Shklovsky (1994) regarding their shared characteristics of rhythm, structure, montage and metaphor (see Chapter One).

Jewel Spears Brooker and Joseph Bentley in *Reading the Waste Land: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation* (1990) make distinct associations between Eliot's poem and modernism, reinforcing Jacob Korg's belief that the quotations within the text perform like bricolage in modernist art (Martin 1968: 92) (see Chapter Three). They observe that:

Somewhat in the manner of modern painters, Eliot forces 'multiperspectivism' upon his readers. As Picasso and Braque juxtapose several perspectives on canvas, so Eliot juxtaposes many perspectives of the same idea or object, thus causing us to be aware of the limits of every perspective and of the desirability of moving from one perspective to another and, finally, of comprehending many perspectives at once. The female portrait at the centre of *The Waste Land*, for example, is a cubist portrait, comprehending facets of Cleopatra, a nervous contemporary woman at her dressing table, a pub gossip, and many others. (Brooker and Bentley 1990: 11)

This notion of 'multiperspectivism' corresponded with the awareness of the increasing multiple self-representational strategies I adopted in my practice. I tried to create my own 'cubist portrait' in the short experimental *I Knew Nothing* (2006) split screen video, which was heavily influenced by the avant-garde cinematic language employed by Leger and Vertov, with the constant disruption of filmic linearity acquired through varying rhythms and repetition. The work portrays a disembodied self; the close-up of my face and the continual blinking of the eye crying, since I "could not speak", paired with the perpetual re-appearance of the sun bursting through the clouds as "the heart of light", potentially signifying my

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<sup>11</sup> My main influences were Rene Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924), Germaine Dulac's *The Seashell and the Clergyman* (1927) Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924), Fernand Leger's *Ballet Mecanique* (1923-24), Man Ray's *Emak Bakia* (1926) and Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). See O'Pray, M. (2003) *Avant-garde Film: Forms, Themes and Passions*. London: Wallflower Press and Rees, A.L. (1999) *A History of Experimental Film and Video*. London: BFI.

<sup>12</sup> Highlighted by Bluestone (1957), Cohen (1979), Sinyard (1986) and Orr and Nicholson (1992) in Chapter One.

right 'all-seeing' eye. The use of the split screen was subsequently extended to depict not only an unstable, split self, but notions of undecidability and shifts between past and present or present and future and is replicated in later works, through the photographic diptychs 'Sermon' (2008-2009) and the two channel video works *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009), *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009) and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009).<sup>13</sup>

*I Knew Nothing* appropriates the framing of two extreme close-ups of a woman's face in Fernard Leger's film *Ballet Mécanique* (1923-24): the repetition of her lips smiling and the mechanical opening and closing of her eye. The disorientation created through disruptive strategies of slowing down the footage and endlessly repeating slightly different takes was informed by the washerwoman scene in Leger's film, where a woman is seen mounting the steps with her laundry and climbs to the top "only to reappear instantly below, where she started again to repeat her tiresome chore." (Lawder 1975: 152).<sup>14</sup> Apparently it was Leger's intention "to astonish the public, then to make them slowly uncomfortable, and finally to push the adventure to the point of exasperation." (Lawder 1975: 152) I adopted Leger's playful attitude when producing this work, breaking up the original video footage into several short sequences, which I then randomly reassembled, working in an unscripted, automated fashion during the editing process to convey not only a sense of desperation but an unconscious compulsion to repeat, an acting out of repressed emotion (Freud 1914b/2003:36) and a destabilised state of mind.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> This stylistic device is related to the subsequent employment of the grid formation in the *Shadow Walks* videos (2006) and *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008).

<sup>14</sup> This key moment recurs a total of twenty one times in quick succession, interrupted only twice by images that seem to ironically comment on her predicament; the downward movement of an industrial machine and a close-up shot of a woman's mouth breaking into a smile.

<sup>15</sup> The resulting non-linear narrative also acknowledged Vertov's parallel editing technique in *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929), whereby images of a woman drying her face in a towel are quickly intercut with repeated shots of window shutters opening and closing with an increasing pace over a period of thirty seconds that results in a disorientating strobe effect, concluding with a shot of the camera lens stopping down.

Having previously worked solely in photography, I made the transition into digital video at the beginning of my doctoral research,<sup>16</sup> which meant that I adopted an open approach to video editing, testing out different possibilities without the need to restrict myself to expected filmic conventions. The repetition of short sequences within *I Knew Nothing*, means that the accompanying sound-scape is also disrupted, creating a haunting repetition of gulls crying that seems to provide a mocking response to the lamentation, set against the backdrop of the incessant droning noise of an aeroplane. Comparisons can be made with Mark Gertler's painting *Merry-Go-Round*, which he produced in 1916 in response to World War One, depicting the horrified rigid bodies of people collectively trapped on a continuously revolving carousel to symbolically represent the unrelenting nature of war itself. This haunting metaphor of endless circularity is embodied in *I Knew Nothing*, whereby the action is repeated on a looping sequence that temporarily ends with my eyes eventually closing; as her "eyes failed", only to restart again with the same momentum, suggesting a compulsion to repeat and a refusal to move forward.

The exploitation of freeze frame imagery within *I Knew Nothing*, acknowledges the sudden unexpected pause of the horse and carriage in Dziga Vertov's film, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) that forces the viewer to reflect upon hidden details that are usually swept past in the duration of film. Walter Benjamin in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936) comments on the impact of the close-up or slow motion in film.

By close-ups of the things around us...by focusing on hidden details of familiar objects...the film, on the one hand, extends our comprehension of the necessities which rule our lives; on the other hand, it manages to assure us of an immense and unexpected field of action...With the close-up, space expands; with slow motion, movement is extended...slow motion not only presents familiar qualities of movement but reveals in them entirely unknown ones...The camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses (Arendt 1999: 229-30).

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<sup>16</sup> My first works were the walking videos *Full Circle* and *Higher Ground/Underground* (2005), which were made in association with the *Making our Mark* photographs that were exhibited at Quay Arts, Isle of Wight during the first year of my doctoral research (19<sup>th</sup> March - 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2005).

This defamiliarisation is precisely what Ezra Pound and other modernist artists were striving for, and is something that I experimented with during this stage of the project. I was interested in exploring how the still and moving image could intersect,<sup>17</sup> yet also appreciated the differences between them in terms of duration and space. In her essay 'Melancholy Objects' (1979),<sup>18</sup> Susan Sontag emphasizes the fact that whilst "the reading time of a book is up to the reader, the viewing time of a film is set by the filmmaker and the images are perceived only as fast or as slowly as the editing permits" (Sontag 1979: 81). She continues by stating that the still frame from the film is, therefore, contradictory, since it has been plucked from the cinematic flow. Indeed, Walter Benjamin observed that compared to a painting (or photograph), which allows for contemplation, film cannot "cannot be arrested", since, "No sooner has his eye grasped a scene than it is already changed" (Arendt 1999: 231). More recently, Laura Mulvey analyses the meaning of the freeze frame in *Death 24 x a Second: Stillness and the Moving Image* (2006):

While the flow of the image at 24 frames a second tends to assert a 'now-ness' to the picture, stillness allows access to the time of the film's registration, its 'then-ness'. This is the point, essentially located in the single frame, where the cinema meets the still photograph, both registering a moment of time frozen and fossilized (Mulvey 2006: 102).

Therefore, by employing the freeze frame, constantly adjusting the speed and playing with film's linearity through repetition, *I Knew Nothing* sought to create a disembodied portrait that extends the limitations of the still image, whilst at the same time disrupts the flow and permits a contemplation of individual still frames. Its "then-ness" defamiliarizes the work by freezing particular moments in the sequence that are usually rendered invisible to the naked eye, for example, the circular pattern of the reflection of the sun's rays being caught and held onto, or allows closer scrutiny and an emotional identification to take place within this recurring cycle by lingering upon the tightly closed eye lid.

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<sup>17</sup> This is most evident in 'still-movie' works like *In the Cage* (2007) that was developed from my earlier slide projection *The Turn of the Screw* (2001) comprised entirely of eighty still photographic images made into a moving image sequence.

<sup>18</sup> Susan Sontag 'Melancholy Objects', in Sontag, S. (1979) *On Photography*. London: Penguin, pp.51-82.

Intrigued by the potential effect of this freeze frame technique to facilitate a psychological attachment in the audience, I decided to experiment and extend its use further for the *Rural Shadow Walks* (2006) video projection. This time the sporadic pausing of each of the four individual sequences in the work's grid formation, not only interrupts the visual flow, but also disrupts the accompanying sound-scape of feet walking on a pebbled beach, the wind whistling and the waves breaking on the shore in a more distinctive fashion. All of the video footage featured in this work consists of two superimposed layers of the same walk, which I shifted out of sync to produce a doubled effect, employing the same structuring method as *I Knew Nothing*, by using short clips that are re-worked and constantly repeated in different formations.

These subversive strategies emulate the multiple planes of the 'cubist portrait' by presenting a disembodied, fragmentary self. The use of the freeze frame in this work originated from my intention to signify the experience of walking through a familiar rural landscape, operating much like the pauses to admire the view or collect mementoes from such a journey. My experimental method of video editing allowed me to test out what would happen if all four video streams paused simultaneously. Encouraged by the result, I allowed the interruptive pause to continue for what at first seemed to be an excessive five second duration. However, such a distinctive, unexpected break in the multi-channel sequence produces a jarring, yet mesmerizing effect. The extended freeze frame also served to remind the viewer that it is not a meditative walk, but an autobiographical representation of place and memory and acted like a temporary snapshot or record of the event, opening up the possibility for further contemplation to take place.

My experiments concerning the cross-over between film and photography attempted to re-create the multiple perspectives and simultaneous representations of duration and space evident in cubist paintings like Pablo Picasso's *Seated Nude*, (1909-10) and Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending A Staircase*, (1912) by

implementing superimposition and repetition techniques within my work based upon part one of Eliot's poem, 'The Burial of the Dead'. Taking these contextual references as a demonstration of these concerns with multiplicity and time, I began to experiment, informed by the creation of visual metaphor through superimposition in Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924), Rene Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924) and Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929),<sup>19</sup> by combining two layers of video footage on top of one another in the *Rural Shadow Walks* (2006) and *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006) video projections to suggest autobiographical attachment to place through recurring journeys.

By comparison, the *Fortune-Telling/Re-telling* (2007) video, superimposes three layers of footage together to imply past, present and future, by combining the assessment of family photographs with a game of patience and a tarot card reading. The work is derived from the character Madame Sosostri's tarot card reading in part one of *The Waste Land* (see Appendix A), where she introduces key characters, such as the drowned Phoenician sailor, Phlebas, and attempts to decipher the ambiguous meanings of each card, warning of the potential dangers that lie ahead. Assuming Madame Sosostri's interpretive role, I try to remember and understand the story behind each family snapshot, through the self-referential act of remembering, making sense of the memory itself by reflecting upon my own autobiographical experience against the familiar domestic backdrop of the grey carpet of my childhood bedroom. Whilst the appearance of my hand holding the photograph or card in the frame presents a disembodied self, echoing the *PastPresent* photographs and the *I Knew Nothing* video, this employment of superimposition implies a multiple, shifting self as we simultaneously view different hands performing different functions.

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<sup>19</sup> For example, the implication of personality traits through the superimposition of animals, such as a fox and an owl over the faces of private agents in *Strike*, the imagery of machinery coupled with factory workers in *Man with a Movie Camera* and the over-layered cityscape with a chessboard in *Entr'acte*.

Indeed, the over layering of these childhood photographs with the playing cards and tarot reading makes a distinction between what is known, (the past) and what is unknown, (the future) insinuating a need for a re-evaluation of the past, together with an attempt to acknowledge the uncertainty of the future in the present. The assemblage of these three different strands of footage is woven together in a wave technique of varying levels of opacity, whereby each layer flows in and out of prominence (or consciousness) to imitate the act of remembering, constructing several layers of meaning that fluctuate between the past, present and future. The repetition of some of the childhood photographs that appear in the *PastPresent* series, together with the fluctuating nature of the work itself, operate like the montage of recurring motifs, different voices and fleeting scenarios that exist within *The Waste Land*. I was interested in pursuing the connection Brooker and Bentley make between Eliot's re-organisation of time in the poem with the re-organisation of space in cubist painting:

Perspective in cubism is not only multiplied, but destabilized as the viewer is put into motion. The relation between the subject and object goes from fixity to fluidity. And in *The Wasteland* there is a continuous instability in which images dissolve, re-form, melt, and overlap...The traditional assumption of wholeness is abandoned (Brooker and Bentley 1990: 31).

I recognised that this preoccupation with instability and multiplicity associated with cubism and the transient nature of the changing scenes in Eliot's poem could be represented through my own evasive self-portraiture as stylistic devices.

Consequently, my experiments focused upon fluidity, together with reproducing the sense of disorientation manifest in Virginia Woolf's vivid description of London's chaotic streets in 'The London Scene' (1931-32), where "Oxford Street rolls off upon it a perpetual ribbon of changing sights, sounds and movement...like the fragments of a picture puzzle" (Woolf 1931/2, 1993:114).<sup>20</sup> I wanted to replicate this modernist stream of consciousness, encapsulating what she refers to as 'the myriad of impressions...an incessant shower of innumerable atoms' (Woolf 1931/2,

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<sup>20</sup> Woolf, V. (1931-2) 'The London Scene' in Woolf, V. (1993) *The Crowded Dance of Modern Life*. London: Penguin, p.107-132.

1993: 8) which can be likened to Cubism and the actual collage structure of the poem itself, which deviates between disparate sources and time. Sanford Schwartz in *The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot and Early 20th Century Thought* (1985) identifies this shift, observing how "...the modern artist no longer *represents* a pre-existing reality but *presents* a new set of relations, as 'model', through which to order the world anew" (Schwartz 1985: 103). Schwartz draws upon Ezra Pound's response to a Vorticist painting which transformed his perception of the cityscape (Schwartz 1985: 107) to communicate new representations of modern experience, rather than faithfully replicating reality:

I have my new and swift perception of forms, of possible form-motifs; I have a double or treble or tenfold set of stimulae in going from my home to Piccadilly. What was a dull row of houses is become a magazine of forms. There are new ways of seeing them...The tangle of telegraph wires is conceivable not merely as a repetition of lines; ones sees the shapes defined by the different branches of wire. The lumberyards, the sidings of railways cease to be dreary (Schwartz 1985: 107).<sup>21</sup>

Having begun to appropriate disruptive modernist strategies of avant-garde film within my own video experiments to represent the '*Disembodied Self*', my attention turned towards their abstract representations of the multiplicity of city life, which seemed to enliven Eliot's own depiction of the city inhabitants in part one 'The Burial of the Dead', who "flowed over London Bridge so many" (l.63) (see Appendix A). As a former commuter in London,<sup>22</sup> I felt that I could in some way reflect upon this experience by reinterpreting Eliot's own journey to Lloyds bank in King William Street, which he transformed into the seductive, yet unsettling image of the "Unreal city" (l.60).

Compared to the celebratory attitude towards the machine age evident in other modernist representations of the city in the visual arts, Eliot's own vision of London is perceived as derogatory and alienating, with city commuters depicted as a

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<sup>21</sup> Originally printed in 'Affirmations II. Vorticism,' in *New Age*, n.s.16 (14 Jan.1915), p.278. Reproduced in Schwartz. S. (1985) *The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot and Early 20th Century Thought*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press. p.107.

<sup>22</sup> From September 1996-June 2005.

mechanicized, dispirited souls inhabiting a dismal urban environment, and rushing to work by the "dead sound on the final stroke of nine" (l.68). This portrayal of urban disintegration is prevalent throughout the poem, which ends in part five, 'What the Thunder Said' with the ominous re-working of the popular nursery rhyme: "London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down" (l.427). Indeed, Eliot's squalid description of the river Thames which is full of rubbish, occupied by rats and littered with the aftermath of drunken liaisons in part three 'The Fire Sermon', corresponds with the sordid proposition from Mr Eugenides and the sounds of drunken entertainment in public bars.

The *Testimony of summer nights* photograph from 'Sermon Vol.III Disintegration' of the lone shoe and broken beer bottle lying abandoned on the river bed seeks to represent the city waste in the poem, as well as evoking my past memories of drunken excess, using the 'Subjective Perspective' strategy to imply a surveying stance.<sup>23</sup> Lyndall Gordon in her biography *T.S. Eliot: An Imperfect Life* claims that Valerie Eliot's 1971 publication of Ezra Pound's revisions to *The Waste Land* reveals "Eliot's revulsion for the 'carbuncular clerk', 'spotted about the face' whose hair is thick with scurf and thick with grease, and who spits and urinates in corners" (Gordon 2000: 181). Yet, Eliot's admission in a letter to his friend Conrad Aiken that he was "relieved" to be back in London, since whilst "In Oxford I have the feeling that I am not quite alive - that my body is walking about with a bit of my brain inside it, and nothing else" (Eliot 1988: 74),<sup>24</sup> was something that I found I could identify with.

Capturing the multiplicity of the modernist city experience through the superimposition of different journeys acquired autobiographical focus in the creation of the *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006) video projection, which consists of four

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<sup>23</sup> This work was influenced by Keith Arnatt's *Pictures from the Rubbish Tip* (1988-89) and Cindy Sherman's *Disaster* series (1986-89).

<sup>24</sup> Letter from T.S. Eliot, Merton College, Oxford to Conrad Aiken (31<sup>st</sup> December 1914). Eliot, V. (1988) *The Letters of T.S. Eliot, Vol.I*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p.74. I share Eliot's opinion that the everydayness of suburban experience, without stimulation of city life is constraining, describing Oxford as "very pretty, but I don't like to be dead".

individual walks through London, displayed in grid formation, indicative of modernist painters, such as, Mondrian.<sup>25</sup> Unlike the alternating layering effect of the *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* video, two takes of the same walk through the cityscape are superimposed on top of one another to echo Eliot's recurring fragmentary depictions of city life in *The Waste Land*. The decision to arrange four separate, yet doubled sequences in a grid formation was informed in particular by Fernand Léger's painting *The City*, (1919) and Gino Severini's *The Boulevard* (1910-11) which seemed to embody not only Brooker and Bentley's definition of 'multiperspectivism', but also Pound's renewed vision of the cityscape.<sup>26</sup>

By placing these four walks together in a grid with a slight gap between them means that the audience is conscious of viewing a series of different walks, with the structure of competing works replicating the way in which the passer-by's attention is diverted by the "myriad of impressions" (Woolf 1931-2/1993:8) whilst walking through the built environment. The superimposition technique raises the issue that whilst this was a repetitive journey different experiences occurred each time, characterized by the varying viewpoints and doubling effect of passing particular signposts or landmarks, (the telephone box, or shop), together with uncanny recurring actions (the pedestrian crossing sounding at the same time during both walks). The *Urban Shadow Walks*, therefore, pays homage to these past commuting rituals, where a sense of destination was absolute, initiating a random association of fragmented thoughts and memories triggered by walking through this city environment.

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<sup>25</sup> This modernist geometric grid formation was later applied to the *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008) photographic installation in room two, 'Game'.

<sup>26</sup> Pound's description of the cubist painting of the city had a profoundly enlightening effect on my own perception of London, as a visual stimulus and initiated my early thematic video experiment, *Street Life* (June 2005) which documented a journey by bus through the city's west end and attempted to create a multiple, chaotic impression of the cityscape by superimposing two layers of footage of the passing street from the bus window. Whilst I was encouraged by this experimental technique, upon reflection I made the important realisation that I was in danger of becoming too distracted by the aesthetics of this modernist contextualisation, rather than being guided by Eliot's poem. Therefore, it was recognized that this early 'testing out' of method was merely a detached, technical exercise, which bore no relation to issues of interpretation or self-representation and consequently it became a separate work entitled *Passing Through* (2005), which existed outside of my research. This problem of being 'carried away' from the central research concerns by contextual influences or a particular creative concept was also evident in the *Quartet Manoeuvres* (2008) video, whereby the rigorous process of critical evaluation leads either to a re-emphasis or being discarded altogether (see Chapter Three).

The *Urban Shadow Walks* video was also influenced by early city films, including Charles Sheeler and Paul Strand's *Manhatta* (1920), Sergei Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924) and Walther Ruttmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927), which provided an important contextual framing in the interpretive process by encapsulating the spirit of the modern city. However, it was Dziga Vertov's film, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) that both creatively and critically supported my own documentation of London, especially his critical objective to record 'life-as-it-is' or 'life-unawares' (Petric 1987: 4)

I am the cine-eye. I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world only as can I see it. Now and forever I free myself from human immobility. I am in constant motion. I draw near, then away from objects...I plunge full speed into a crowd... manoeuvring in the chaos of the movement, recording movement, starting with movements composed of the most complex combinations (Roberts 2000: 20).

I tried to replicate Vertov's notion of 'cine-eye' whilst filming by trying to portray the sense of mobility and human interaction within the crowd from my own 'Subjective Perspective'. The doubling of these two different takes employed two different camera 'cine-eyes'; one which concentrated on the view ahead and the other which imitated the rapid movement of my eye, as I was distracted by particular sights and sounds that I encountered on the street. This superimposition technique creates quite a dense and chaotic effect that was both frustrating, yet compelling to watch as a viewer, intensifying the audience's engagement when viewed as a life-size video projection, so that they too participate in the experience.

## **2. Inhabiting Place**

The autobiographical emphasis of my study initiated my interest in documenting personal journeys and routines as a means of representing the self and in part, developed from my preliminary research on the territory Elliot occupied whilst he

was in London around the City and Bloomsbury.<sup>27</sup> Reflecting upon my own experience of living in London,<sup>28</sup> *City from Urban Shadow Walks*, records my walk based upon Eliot's vision of these dispirited commuters who "fixed his eyes before his feet" (l.65) as a kind of performance, 'acting out' their collective journey across London Bridge and becoming part of the rhythm of this mindless activity. However, whilst Eliot's associates the crowd who "flowed over London Bridge so many" (l.62) with death and the lost souls in Dante's *Inferno*, the prominence in my interpretation is placed upon the tidal flow and multiplicity of the city experience instead, portraying an active, yet not overcrowded journey shot on a bright September morning, rather than the "brown fog of a winter dawn" (l.61) to communicate my separation from this routine.

The *City* film also attempted to imaginatively retrace Eliot's own footsteps by embodying the camera itself, which was held just below eye level, pointing either straight ahead or randomly distracted whilst walking. This filming technique had been previously tested out in my *Higher Ground/Underground* (2005) video,<sup>29</sup> and traced a familiar walk through Greenwich Park, London to the station, perceived through the continual view of my feet and the passing ground-scape. However, more importantly was the acknowledgement of a 'Subjective Perspective', whereby the camera eye replicated my own perception of the sights around me as I recorded "life as it is", exploiting Vertov's "cine-eye" concept. This self-representational strategy had also been employed in the earlier *PastPresent* (2005) photographs where the appearance of my hand holding the family snapshot within the photograph not only highlights the time lapse of thirty years, between the initial childhood event and the photographic re-enactment, but also invites the audience

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<sup>27</sup> Eliot's first residence in London was 28 Bedford Place, Russell Square and had many associations in the area, including visits to Virginia Woolf's residence in Gordon Square, the Omega Group meetings in Fitzroy Square and his later role as editor at Faber & Faber in Queen Square. I began my initial experiments by filming around the City and Bloomsbury, either by bus or by walking to gain a sense of Eliot's terrain and imagining his journeys through London, whilst carrying out early biographical research. *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006) evolved not only from the superimposed *Street Life* (June 2005) video experiment, but also from early illustration experiments of passing commuters, that combined both static and walking footage, slowed down to signify the "Unreal city".

<sup>28</sup> I have lived in London since 1995.

<sup>29</sup> I produced two video installations to accompany my *Making our Mark* (2004) photographs, based on Romantic poetry, *Higher Ground/Underground* (2005) and *Full Circle* (2005).

to share in my comparative exercise. The second cityscape film from *Urban Shadow Walks, Market*, was shot within my familiar home territory of Deptford market and aimed to visualise Woolf's concept of the "incessant shower of innumerable atoms" (Woolf 1926/1993: 8) in this bustling environment, as the "cine-eye" is constantly diverted by the vast array of merchandise on display and the competing sights and sounds of the street environment and its browsing occupants. The piece also seeks to represent the multicultural aspects of Eliot's poem with its expansive tapestry of different voices, languages and references from a broad terrain of mythical and literary history.

Indeed, the concept of the crowd and the city was a modernist concern, which was fundamental to the evolution of my *Urban Shadow Walk* video in determining the role of the observer on the street.<sup>30</sup> However, in order to understand Vertov's and Woolf's responses to this rapidly evolving urban landscape, we need to trace the origins of modernity which situated Paris and London as sites of consumption in the mid-late nineteenth century, experienced by a male *flâneur*, (Benjamin 1973 and 1982, Pollock 1988: 67) who was free to roam the public spaces of the city.<sup>31</sup> Deborah Parsons in *Street Walking the Metropolis: Women, City and Modernity* (2000), claims that Edgar Allen Poe's short story, *Man of the Crowd* (1845) anticipated modernity's concern with the alienating experience of the city and the role played by the observing artist (Parsons 2000: 22). The narrator's description of the chaotic crowded street scene observed from a café window in Poe's story, bears remarkable similarities to the etiquette of the city commuters in my *City shadow*

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<sup>30</sup> Indeed, descriptions of walking through the city in modernist literary texts such as Wyndham Lewis's *Tarr* (1918), John Dos Passos' *Manhattan Transfer* (1925), Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (1922) and *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) mirrored the chaotic atmosphere that was evident in my interpretation of *Waste Land*, as well as emphasizing the role of the interior monologue of the street walker, who, apart from absorbing and reacting to their environment, are also preoccupied with their own individual thoughts and concerns.

<sup>31</sup> This figure that passed through the crowd was firstly portrayed by French symbolist poet Baudelaire in his city poems within *Fleurs du Mal* (1857) and later in Georg Simmel's essay 'The Metropolis and Mental Life' (1905) but was identified by Walter Benjamin as the *flâneur*, an observer, collector and interpreter of the modern city in his unfinished *Passagenwerk* or *Arcades Project* (1927-1940) on Paris city life in the nineteenth century. This collection was not published until 1982. (<http://www.litencyc.com/php/sworks.php?rec=true&UID=5738> ) See also Walter Benjamin (1973) *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism* Trans. Harry Zohn. London: NLB (First published in German in 1969) for debates on flânerie informed by the work of Baudelaire.

walk, who are bound up in their individual journeys, oblivious of their surrounding counterparts:

By far the greatest number of those who went by had a satisfied business-like demeanour, and seemed to be thinking only of making their way through the press...when pushed against by fellow-wayfarers they evinced no symptom of impatience, but adjusted their clothes and hurried on (Poe/Galloway 1986: 180).

Although the narrator is distanced from the crowd at this moment, his attention is caught by an old man, intrigued by his constant need to immerse himself in the crowd, proceeding to follow him around the city streets until dawn, finally deducing that "He is the man of the crowd" (Poe/Galloway 1986: 188). Nearly fifteen years later, Charles Baudelaire vividly captures the freedom enjoyed by the *flâneur* in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays* (1859/60), which is based upon the painter Constantin Guys, who "...rejoices in his incognito...we might liken him to a mirror as vast as the crowd itself...reproducing the multiplicity of life" (Baudelaire 1964/2005: 9-10).<sup>32</sup>

However, Griselda Pollock in her essay 'Modernity and the Spaces of Femininity' (1988)<sup>33</sup> emphasizes the way in which the *flâneur* was an exclusively male type, since middle class women were confined to the private domestic sphere. In this masculine territory, measured by commodity and voyeurism, interaction in the crowd would have been a dangerous experience for a woman who could have been mistakenly taken for a prostitute.<sup>34</sup> Pollock highlights this gender division between public and private domain:

For women, the public spaces thus construed were where one risked losing one's virtue, dirtying oneself; going out and the idea of disgrace were

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<sup>32</sup> *The Painter of Modern Life* first appeared in the *Figaro* in instalments on the 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1863, although it was written earlier between November 1859 and February 1860. (Baudelaire 1964/2005: 301)

<sup>33</sup> Griselda Pollock, 'Modernity and Spaces of Femininity', in Pollack, G. (1988) *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*. London and New York: Routledge, pp.50-90.

<sup>34</sup> Janet Wolff references the different types of women on the street, as identified by Baudelaire, such as the lesbian, prostitute, widow and the older woman, who were regarded as equal (Wolff 1990: 41).

closely allied. For the man going out in public meant losing oneself in the crowd away from both demands of respectability (Pollock 1988: 69).<sup>35</sup>

Pollock draws attention to the fact that not only were women denied the opportunity to experience anonymity in the crowd, "They did not have the right to look, to stare, scrutinize or watch...They are positioned as the *object* of the *flâneur's* gaze (Pollock 1988: 71). Janet Wolff develops Pollock's argument further in her essay, 'The Invisible *Flâneuse*: Women and the Literature of Modernity' (1990)<sup>36</sup> questioning the possibility of a female *flâneuse*, by observing how the French novelist George Sand was only able to freely explore the streets of Paris disguised as man in 1831 (Wolff 1990: 41).

Therefore, the possibility of a female *flâneuse* is firmly denied by Janet Wolff, Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson and Griselda Pollock (Pollock 1988: 71). Whilst Wolff claims that, "the essential point is that such a character was rendered impossible by the sexual divisions of the nineteenth century" (Wolff 1990: 47), Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson in 'The *Flâneur* on and off the Streets'<sup>37</sup> believes that women's interaction with the city is led by a materialistic desire, where she is unable to maintain the critical distance of *flânerie* (Tester 1994:27). Pollock argues that women today are still subjected to the voyeuristic modes of looking endorsed by the *flâneur*:

Modernity is still with us, ever more acutely as our cities become in the exacerbated world of post modernity, more and more a place of strangers and spectacle, while women are ever more vulnerable to violent assault while out in public and are denied the right to move about our cities safely. (Pollock 1988: 89-90)

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<sup>35</sup> In a letter to Conrad Aiken, Eliot himself reveals the impressionable affect of city life on a young inexperienced man, which highlights the role of male spectatorship. Letter from T.S Eliot, Merton College, Oxford to Conrad Aiken (31<sup>st</sup> December 1914). Eliot, V. (1988) *The Letters of T.S Eliot, Vol.I*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, p.74. In this letter Eliot discloses how: "One walks about the street with one's desires, and one's refinement rises up like a wall whenever opportunity approaches" (Eliot 1988: 74).

<sup>36</sup> Janet Wolff, 'The Invisible *Flâneuse*: women and the literature of modernity' in Wolff, J. (1990) *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Woman and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp.34-50. See also Janet Wolff 'The Artist and the *Flâneur*: Rodin, Rilke and Gwen John in Paris' in Tester, K. (1994) *The Flâneur*. London: Routledge, pp.111-137 where Wolff continues her argument that "flânerie is gendered" (Tester 1994:115).

<sup>37</sup> Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson 'The *Flâneur* on and off the Streets' in Tester, K. (1994) *The Flâneur*. London: Routledge, pp.22-44.

During the process of filming my own walks through familiar territories in London for the *Urban Shadow Walks* (2006), I was aware of passing through the urban space as a filmmaker, detached from the crowd by looking down at the screen of my video camera whilst walking and, therefore, experiencing the environment through a mechanical device. The experience of surveying the cityscape through a small video camera provided me with the appropriate 'disguise' (like George Sand), allowing me to adopt an active role of looking, rather than becoming a passive object of desire. Although I felt free to wander through the streets, these four different walks at different times of day provoked different reactions.<sup>38</sup> I felt most at ease during the walk from my home to my local train station at 8:30am (*Station a.m*) and my walk across London Bridge in *City*, since I had a particular focus to my journey. *Market* could be argued as the most authentic experience of *flânerie*, in that I had no definite destination apart from browsing the stalls along the length of the high street and whilst I was surrounded by consumer goods, although contrary to Parkhurst Ferguson's assertions, I did not feel distracted by them. Although I was observed, I was unchallenged during filming due to the nature of the crowded market place and my separation from them as an artist observer. By contrast, my walk home in *Station p.m.* was a more unsettling experience, since it was dark and the streets were quite desolate, so I became more fearful not only of my status as a lone female on the streets in possession of a fairly expensive video camera, but also conscious of the few male shop traders watching me as I walked past.

My experience of these walking films, shot from a '*Subjective Perspective*' opened up debate about whether I had managed to become a *flâneuse*, or whether the active associations of looking through a camera, and dressing in an androgynous fashion had provided me with an adequate male persona like George Sand. The lack of accompanying crew and the small-scale equipment meant that I was

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<sup>38</sup> Notably, I was casually dressed (and fairly androgynous) in jeans, trainers and a hooded top, so as not to stand out in the crowd, which reminds us of Pollock's point about the vulnerability of women on the street, referring to rape cases where women were 'asking for it' because of what they were wearing (Pollock 1988: 89).

assumed to be either a student or an artist,<sup>39</sup> and so I was consequently ignored or treated only with vague interest. Deborah Parsons returns to the women in Baudelaire's writing, such as, the lesbian, mourner and prostitute, arguing that despite being marginalised in the public domain, they are all nevertheless observers, which could "formulate the beginnings of the conceptual idea of a *flâneuse*" (Parsons 2000: 24). Wolff's conclusion had rested upon the notion of validating the experience of such women, "a poem written by 'la femme passante' about her encounter with Baudelaire perhaps" (Wolff 1990: 47), which suggests that an alternative model is possible, rather than being ruled out altogether. Indeed, Parsons proposes the possibility of the female *passante*, based on the enigmatic mourner encountered by Baudelaire who returns his look, and so cannot be objectified and in this respect, can "...act as a metaphor for the woman as artist-observer of the city" (Parsons 2000: 72).

Questions surrounding the proposition of a female *flâneuse* were informative, yet it was important to realise that my interest was focused more specifically upon the modernist period of the 1920s, (sixty years on from Baudelaire and Poe), taking greater influence from filmmakers like Vertov and female modernist writers like Virginia Woolf. Although Janet Wolff discusses Virginia Woolf's novel *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) in her later essay 'Feminism and Modernism', noting how she employs modernist strategies of shifting points of view and disrupted narrative to describe her walk through the city from a female perspective, she doesn't ascribe it to any revised notions of a female *flâneuse* (Wolff 1990: 60). However, Deborah Parsons effectively charts the way in which modernist artists and writers like Elizabeth Bowen, Romaine Brooks, Dorothy Richardson, Jean Rhys and Virginia Woolf all "flirt with the quintessential characteristics of the bourgeois *flâneur*" (Parsons 2000: 226), finding:

an external anonymity in the crowd that then allows them the freedom to conduct a female pilgrimage...As an elusive figure in the crowd, the woman can deny voyeuristic objectification – what seems threatening ...to the

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<sup>39</sup> Deptford is well known as an artistic-hub. See <http://www.deptfordartmap.co.uk/>

observing male...is protective and usefully concealing for the urban woman (Parsons 2000: 227).

I was encouraged by Parsons' analysis of both Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* (1925) and Dorothy Richardson *Revolving Lights* (1923), the seventh book of *Pilgrimage*, whose protagonist Miriam Henderson takes fifty page walk through London from the City to her home in Bloomsbury, (Parsons 2000: 73-75) and her conclusion that the image of the urban walker in women's writing as an "elusive and ambiguous" (Parsons 2000: 229) woman who walks away from the gaze parallels my own evasive self-representational strategies. For my *Urban Shadow Walks*, I was conscious of acting like a *flâneuse* or female *passante*; reacting to the crowd and the streetscape by "reproducing the multiplicity of life", yet maintaining a critical distance. This sense of anonymity was implied by taking a 'Subjective Perspective' by embodying the camera, coupled with the fleeting appearance of my shadow and, therefore, not revealing myself directly to the audience in a play between presence and absence as I remain elusive, yet ever present. In this sense, I too embodied the ambiguity of the urban stroller depicted in female literature by blending into the surrounding environment. Yet Parsons suggestion of a female *passante* seems problematic when applied to my experience of filming the *Urban Shadow Walks* around London, since the possibility only became a reality when using the camera as a prop, adopting androgynous dress, filming expected activities, by becoming a commuter or shooting at a respectable time of the day. As a woman I am conscious of being objectified whilst walking through the city and in this respect agree with Pollock and Wolff's cautionary observations of continued female vulnerability, which prevents them from fully adopting the role of *flâneur*.

The decision to picture my own shadow within the frame was initially instigated by Eliot's claims to show the reader "something different" from "Your shadow at morning striding behind you / Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you" (l.27-29) in part one, 'The Burial of the Dead' (see Appendix A). The *Station (am)* and *Station (pm)* videos from *Urban Shadow Walks* document my former daily walk

from my home to New Cross station during the morning and evening commute, utilising my shadow to reinforce not only the passing of time, but also to show "something different"; a '*Trace of the Self*' from a '*Subjective Perspective*', rather than enlisting someone to film me walking. However, the motif of the shadow<sup>40</sup> became an appropriate method for allowing the embodiment of the self within the work, as well as accentuating my continued autobiographical interpretation of the poem. In *Picturing the Self* (2005) Gen Doy reflects upon a family snapshot of her as a child pictured with her father in which her mother's shadow is cast onto the photograph:

the unsettling and surprising effect, which the sight of the photographer's shadow has on the viewer of the photographs. We expect it to be absent. When the shadow is there, the image addressed to, and works to include, the person taking the photograph, rather than just anyone who happens to view the photograph (Doy 2005: 141).

Having established the modernist context of Eliot's poem in relation to my own city experience, as well as devising appropriate methods of superimposition, the shadow and subjective filming, the evolution of the accompanying *Rural Shadow Walks* video projections was informed by Lyndall Gordon's observation that "an antithesis that persists in *The Waste Land* between damned city and the desert" (Gordon 2000: 156) (See Introduction). This antithesis that Gordon identified was re-worked as an autobiographical comparison between my life in London and the Isle of Wight. It could be argued that the translation of *The Waste Land* into these two distinctive 'Urban' and 'Rural' landscapes signifies a significant departure from the sense of aridity and urban disintegration evident within Eliot's poem and is consequently reminiscent of Linda Hutcheon's concept of adaptation as "(re) interpretation and then (re-) creation" (Hutcheon 2006: 8)(see Chapter One). However, whilst I am not attempting to faithfully illustrate the poem, but rather connect with particular elements that strike an autobiographical resonance, certain

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<sup>40</sup> My *Shadow Walks* were also influenced by German Expressionist film, particularly the sinister monster's shadow ascending the stairs in Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's '*Nosferatu*' (1922) and the shadow of Cesare about to murder one of his victims in Robert Wiene's '*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*' (1919).

features within the *Shadow Walks* videos are still recognisable to the viewer or reader.

Prompted by early experimental works that identified with Eliot's vivid description of the London Bridge commuters and the incantatory invitation to "Come in under the shadow of this red rock" (l.26) in part one of the poem, I selected locations that corresponded with these textual references and then considered the different journeys that I made within each space. The *Rural Shadow Walks* videos comprise of four individual walks shot on the Isle of Wight: *Sea, Rock, Grave and Beach* displayed in the same grid formation as the *Urban Shadow Walks*. In contrast to the specificity of location in the *Urban Shadow Walk* series, this accompanying work visualises a shoreline, an arid terrain, a cliff face and a graveyard, assuming a metaphorical sense of place and the formation of identity by representing the self within the Isle of Wight landscape.

Therefore, the *Rock* video sequence maps the formation of the red cliff face of Yaverland Bay, before eventually meeting and merging with the actual shadow of the "red rock" itself, reinforcing concepts of presence and absence of the self. *Sea* traces a walk along the edge of the waves, which dwells upon my continued connection to the sea, referring in particular to the lines "Oed' und leer das Meer", as well as Madame Sosotris' warning to "Fear death by water". *Beach* depicts the desolate nature of Fort Victoria, evoking the "roots that clutch" and the "stony rubbish" and lastly, *Grave*, records a walk through the graveyard of Wellow Baptist Chapel on the Isle of Wight where my grandparents are buried, and is drawn directly from the references to mortality and rebirth in Stetson's closing speech, as well as reminding us of the title of part one, 'The Burial of the Dead'. Most importantly, *Rural Shadow Walks* produce a sense of re-connection to the landscape and a meditation on particular childhood memories, together with the recollection of many philosophical and intimate conversations generated from walking in the countryside.

It could be argued that these walking videos serve a therapeutic function in that by recording the sensations and rhythms experienced during the activity, they operate as a meditation on both the past and the present, enlivening memories associated with place and re-imagining past actions. According to Rebecca Solnit in *Wanderlust: A History of Walking* (2001),<sup>41</sup> the physical act of walking aids the recollection process: "To walk the same route again can mean to think the same thoughts again" (Solnit 2001:77), likening the process to reading by retrieving memories from the past much like objects in a museum. Therefore, the act of walking through these contrasting environments in the *Urban and Rural Shadow Walk* videos have allowed different aspects of my identity to become represented through an autobiographical connection to the landscape, visualized using the shadow, (or '*Traces of the Self*') and the embodiment of the camera (or '*Subjective Perspectives*') so that it becomes a kind of performance.<sup>42</sup>

The importance of place led towards the construction of 'metaphorical waste-landscapes' during the production of *Waste Land*, which operate as fantasy spaces that exist on the boundaries of reality, like Elaine Showalter's definition of female culture as a 'wild zone' (Showalter 1986: 262). Indeed, the establishment of psychological interpretations of the literary source text progressively relied upon the employment of visual metaphors to communicate the depths of lived traumatic experience, informed by the female literary tradition identified by Gilbert and Gubar (1979) and Horner and Złosnik (1990) (see Chapter Two). This technique was developed during the production of the 'Sermon' photographic series and is clearly demonstrated in the photograph, *He promised "a new start" I made no comment* from Vol.IV *Reverberation* (2009), which employs the '*Subjective Perspective*' strategy to draw parallels between the foreboding absence of this "unreal"

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<sup>41</sup> Rebecca Solnit provides an accessible overview of both the historical, cultural and sociological associations of walking. In particular, the comparison between the urban stroller and the rural Rambler and the way in which writers and artists have incorporated walking into their practice provided a useful context for this particular aspect of my research, which evolved from my interest in Wordsworth and the Romantic poets' excursions in the Lake District that informed my *Making our Mark* photographs (2004). Solnit, R. (2001) *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*. London; New York: Verso.

<sup>42</sup> Much has been written about pedestrian performance, which is beyond the scope of this study, yet I am indebted to a range of artists who practice is concerned with walking such as Richard Long, Janet Cardiff, Francis Alys, Sophie Calle and Vito Acconci in particular.

cityscape and the speaker's state of mind. This 'metaphorical waste-land-scape' seems to dramatise the futility of the speaker's empty promises, with immediate connections made between the two bridges that encroach upon the view from either side, with the redundant, yet majestic pillars left behind from an uncompleted bridge and the partial jetty that doesn't quite extend to the edge of frame.

Indeed, the use of such structures to create visual metaphors was also evident in the second photographic diptych from the 'Sermon' series, *Vol.II Contemplation* (2008), which re-interprets the poem's references to Eliot's recovery from mental illness at Lake Geneva, Switzerland where he was mourning both the loss of his dear friend Jules Verdenal and his disastrous marriage to Vivienne. This particular pair of photographs draws upon the parallels I identified between Eliot's life and my own experience of psychotherapy in the aftermath of events resulting from my parents' divorce, by attempting to communicate these fractured emotions through a 'metaphorical waste-land-scape' inspired by the following lines:

By the Waters of Lemman I sat down and wept  
Sweet Thames, run softly til I end my song,  
Sweet Thames run softly, for I speak not loud nor long (ll.182-184).

As an '*Anonymous Figure*' in black in the landscape,<sup>43</sup> this work purposefully recalls the earlier image of myself trapped between two pillars *In the Cage* from room two, 'Game'. The first photograph in this volume, *I can connect nothing with nothing* (2008) presents an unstable self that hovers nervously at the edge of the frame, communicating my state of mind at this difficult time, whilst the second image, *Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long* (2008) pictures the self as a miniaturized figure, engulfed by the large scale of an abandoned industrial structure standing at the river's edge within this bleak, foreboding landscape.

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<sup>43</sup> I was particularly influenced by various depictions of the back of isolated figures within barren metaphorical landscapes seen in the work of the painter David Casper Friedrich and photographers Elina Brotherus and Susanna Majuri.

Having lived near the river Thames at Deptford, London for the past eleven years I have formed a strong personal connection that I wanted to exploit in this project, since the Thames features so strongly in the poem. The photograph *But at my Back from Time to Time I Hear* (2009) from Vol.IV *Reverberation* features a more stable, reflective self, pictured in winter dress, suggesting the passing of time between each volume in the 'Sermon' photographs. The grandeur of Greenwich, (the birthplace of Queen Elizabeth I) appearing in the background, implies the weight of personal and public history placed at my back with the river at high tide reminding us of the inevitable flow of passing time. On reflection, the autobiographical importance of water and the sea in the *Rural Shadow Walks* video (2006), the *Sermon* photographs (2008-9) and *The Deep Sea Swell* video (2009) is linked to both my ancestry (Waterman) and my birthplace on the Isle of Wight with its changing moods and tides personified by my multiple self-representational strategies.

The employment of these 'metaphorical waste-land-scapes' and the underlying presence of water set against urban and domestic environments within the *Waste Land* project reminds us of female literature's concern with "the opposition between fixity and fluidity" (Horner and Zlosnik 1990: 205) (See Chapter Two) and arguably corresponds with both the "multiperspectivism" of cubist perspectives and the "instability" within Eliot's poem noted earlier. In comparison to depictions of enclosure within interior spaces in works like *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008), there is an emphasis upon an immersion in the landscape manifested in the video installations *Rural Shadow Walks* (2006) and *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009), which are visualised through visual strategies of 'Traces of the Self' and the 'Incorporation of Natural Forms'. The elusiveness of the projected ghostly doubled 'Traces of the Self' in *Rural Shadow Walks*, which presents the idea of chasing one's own shadow during repeated walks within autobiographical environments, engenders the notion of a present self eclipsed by a previous, past self, along with tropes of memory and ageing. This concept of immersing the self in the landscape as a form of escapism

or of disappearance, is also indicative of the ultimate immersion – that of death and of burial.

The well-known desolate landscape of Dungeness, Kent pictured in the video projection, *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009), became an appropriate metaphorical 'waste-land-scape', which alludes to the "stony places" (l.324), the "flat horizon" (l.370) or "the arid plain" (l.424) (see Appendix A), and the lack of water (or spirituality) in Eliot's poem and is evocative of the experienced emotional barrenness resulting from what Ann Kaplan terms as "family trauma" (Kaplan 2005: 19) (See Chapter Two). The work develops both the '*Anonymous Figure*' and '*Dreams, Fantasies and Nightmares*' themes, by presenting two figures dressed in black (my brother and I) slowly walking together on the right hand side of a disused rail into the distance, coupled with a single male figure representing my father (played by my partner) walking on the left hand side of the track, based upon the apparitions seen during Christ's journey to Emmaus and Shackleton's Antarctic expedition appropriated by Eliot in part five 'What the Thunder Said':

Who is the third who walks always beside you?  
When I count, there are only you and I together  
But when I look ahead up the white road  
There is always another one walking beside you (ll.360-363).

Whilst the small derelict building on the horizon, which the figures walk towards could be perceived as a final resting place, the rail itself provides a useful metaphor for the family separation, providing not only a route forward on a journey into the future, but a barrier, which firmly divides the father from his daughter and son. This sequence plays out my acknowledgement of the fact that despite our estrangement, my father will exist as a continued ghostly presence within my consciousness in our parallel existence on the journey towards oblivion or death; "He who was living is now dead / We who were living are now dying" (ll.328-329), with the use of slow motion distilling the performed action, suggesting a psychological, nightmare space, rather than a recalled event rooted in reality.

The two environments depicted within the accompanying *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* split-screen video projection (2009)<sup>44</sup> in room five 'Thunder',<sup>45</sup> are similarly laden with symbolic meaning, but this time are used to communicate my feelings about matrimony, employing the '*Dreams, Fantasies and Nightmares*' self-representational strategy (see Chapter Two). The work features two performed walking videos which 'act out' the emotional repercussions of my parents marital breakdown through role-play, drawing upon the poem's references to the "frosty silence" (l.323), "the shouting and the crying" (l.325), and the "maternal lamentation" (l.367). The first re-enactment on the left-hand screen pays homage to my parents own wedding, which was held in the idyllic hilltop setting of Brook church on the Isle of Wight where you see my '*Anonymous Figure*', dressed as a bride with a trailing veil walking up towards the church. The appearance of the ruined church folly in the right hand screen operates as a distant memory echoing the "Tolling reminiscent bells" (l.383) and "tumbled graves" (l.387) around "the empty chapel" (l.388) where "only the wind's home" (l.388) and is symbolic of the disintegration of my parent's marriage.

Employing the '*Dreams, Fantasies and Nightmares*' strategy, the woman in white has cast off her veil and chooses to walk around the outside edge of the ruin, rather than walk through the arch itself, suggests a resistance to the 'expected' route by defying 'penetration', with the darkened arch of the church doorway and the 'gap' within the remaining wall of the church ruin pared down into sexualised feminine metaphors. Both sequences are in black and white, to signify a staging of past events, as well as an imagined projection of a fantasy space. The intended differences between these two realities was achieved by employing contrasting editing styles, whereby the bridal walk traces the journey from the path to the church door in real time, cut together following the basic rules of continuity editing,

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<sup>44</sup> The main filmic influences which contextualised this work's development were Maya Deren's *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943), Andrei Tarkovsky's film *Mirror* (1974), Derek Jarman's *The Last of England* (1987), Bill Viola's *The Passing* (1991) and Alice Anderson's *The Doll's Day* (2008).

<sup>45</sup> Both video installations in the last room 'Thunder' were edited down to five minute looping sequences to replicate the fifth room.

whilst the right hand sequence is relayed through a more disrupted narrative, heightened by exaggerated slow motion and strobe effects.

Whilst making these final works, I was conscious of Eliot's creative process whilst he was writing part five, 'What the Thunder Said' in Lausanne, Switzerland. It was there whilst he was recovering from a nervous breakdown that Eliot admitted in his essay 'The Pensees of Pascal' (1931):

some forms of illness are extremely favourable, not only to religious illumination, but to artistic and literary composition. A piece of writing meditated without progress for months or years, may suddenly take shape and word, and in this state long passages may be produced which require little or no touch (Kermode 1975: 237).<sup>46</sup>

Therefore, both of the video works in 'Thunder' were edited in a fairly quick, random fashion that employed the same processes as in the earlier construction of *I Knew Nothing* (2006) in room one, 'Burial'. Despite the necessity for articulating the insights and knowledge gained from the rigour of doctoral research through a written narrative account, this focus upon an intuitive, emotional response to the source text during the production of 'Thunder' that was in sympathy with Eliot's own experience, effectively represented the end of my self-examination by communicating the culmination of my research through practice.

### 3. Transformations

The realisation that literature is used as a means of displacement for visualising past traumatic experience has led to the increasing recognition of the poem as a therapeutic tool for 'working through' the breakdown of my parents marriage and my subsequent estrangement from my father (see Chapter Two). I acknowledged

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<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, Valerie Eliot highlights the fact that the final published version of section V *What the Thunder Said* remained the "pretty much the same" as the first handwritten draft (Eliot 1971:71). The clarity and importance of his vision whilst he was recovering in Switzerland is explained by Eliot in a letter to Bertrand Russell [15<sup>th</sup> October 1923] when he appreciates that: "It gives me very great pleasure to know that you like *The Waste Land*, and especially Part V, which in my opinion is not the best part, but the only part that justifies the whole at all" (Eliot 1971: 71).

the way in which, like Eliot, I realised that I had developed a kind of 'impersonality' theory to conceal the work's autobiographical meaning, instead emphasizing adaptation processes and employing 'The Surrogate Double' which was repeated over time. I was, therefore, condemned, according to Freud to the "compulsion to repeat", by unconsciously acting this theory out, rather than confronting repressed memories (Freud 1914b/2003: 36). Once I became aware of the need for "remembering and abreacting" (Freud 1914b/2003: 33) this experience, the importance of constructing narratives within my autobiographical practice was brought to the forefront, which led to the re-consideration of Jo Spence's seminal phototherapy work (see Chapter Two). Spence's method of constructing a "Theatre of the Self" (Spence and Solomon 1995: 93) whereby clues to repressed issues were discovered using, firstly, family snapshots and secondly, staged re-enactments in order to allow acceptance to take place, was central to my own project development. Informed by work in psychotherapy, Spence describes how:

This work is a kind of permission giving session in which you are encouraged to go over old stories in new ways. This should never be seen as pure recall (which is impossible) but rather a way of reconstructing past events so that we can make more sense of them in the light of new knowledge (Spence 1986: 142).

I interpreted Spence's method of performed role-play through the 'Self-transformation' strategy that acts out traumatic experience, evident in the work, *In the Cage* (2007), *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008), *Sermon Vol.I Encounter* (2008), *Sermon Vol.II Contemplation* (2008), *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009) and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009). The use of the family photograph in *Waste Land* also operated as an important device to re-examine childhood memories and my relationship with my father through the benefit of dramatic irony. It is interesting to note that all of the four works that feature this technique, *PastPresent* (2005), *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007), *Sermon Vol.V Retribution* (2009) and *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009), are also framed by a 'Subjective Perspective' which re-enacts the very procedure of looking at photographs, which is then shared by the audience. Whatever approach was taken,

either drawing upon family photographs or role-play, I was conscious of Spence's advice that:

...you cannot deconstruct without a reconstruction process going on simultaneously as it does in phototherapy, where each time you deconstruct you are at the beginning of the next phrase of putting things together again (Spence 1986: 186).

*PastPresent*, (2005) was the first resolved work produced for the *Waste Land* project and marked the shift towards creating an autobiographical interpretation of the poem, elicited by the reference to Marie's sledge ride in part one 'The Burial of the Dead'. The transferral of emotions from "I was frightened" (l.15) to "In the mountains, there you feel free" (l.17) activated a powerful childhood memory of learning to ride a bicycle and prompted a consideration of why the past is either inadvertently romanticised or perceived with a trusted nostalgia, as a time where fears were overcome. I managed to trace a photograph of myself, (aged about six years old) and my brother with our new bicycles on Christmas day, but realised upon closer inspection that the camera provided an inaccurate illusion, since the cycle's stand was down, as I was not able to ride at that particular point in time. From this initial family snapshot, which seemed to replicate Marie's own state of nervousness, I rediscovered other photographs from my childhood, that were all taken around the exterior of the family home on the Isle of Wight, where my Mother still lives, immediately drawn towards the potentiality of a comparison between past and present, together with a sense of an emotional attachment to the family home.

I then edited together six photographs that were shot during the same period and which documented group portraits, (my brother and myself), leisure activities (playing in the paddling pool with friends in the back garden), and special occasions, (my birthday party tea on the patio). The series also included a tightly grouped posed family photograph pictured in the back garden of the new house, which was shot in 1976, when I was only two years old. I found this image

particularly poignant, since it represented such promise of family unity, yet in hindsight I could not help but feel a sense of loss and disillusionment in the dramatic irony of knowing how the future unfolded. Questioning the very nature of the photographic truth reminded me of a particular photograph by Duane Michels entitled, *This Photograph Is My Proof* (1974), which pictures a couple seated on a bed looking directly towards camera and raises debates concerning the way in which photographs seemingly serve as tangible evidence of the past. The handwritten text underneath his photograph reads:

This photograph is my proof. There was that afternoon, when things were still good between us, and she embraced me, and we were so happy. It did happen, she did love me. Look, see for yourself! (Livingstone 1997: 201).

Viewing this group photograph whilst actually being there on the Isle of Wight, I was acutely aware of the fact that the vegetation and trees in the garden had since become fully established and that the present scene was vastly different from that represented in the old family snapshot. This perception instigated the act of re-photography to allow for perceptive comparisons between these two tenses to be made, suggesting a tension between a carefree past with a present day absence, as well as operating as an effective distancing tool.<sup>47</sup> I originally imagined this work as a digital video piece, beginning with an extreme close-up of the family snapshot, which would then zoom out into the surrounding environment to reveal the photograph within the present day context. At the same time I also shot some still black and white photographs of my hand holding the snapshots within the same frame, as I was still uncertain of working in this new medium of moving image. However, upon reflection, I found that the duration and continuous movement of the moving image was a barrier to an emotional engagement, since the still photographs by comparison allowed space for the necessary contemplation of the comparative process to take place. The black and white photographic images were also more symptomatic of memory. Gen Doy notes how monochrome images give "an impression of nostalgia, pastness and...of death" (Doy 2005: 147). This

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<sup>47</sup> This method was influenced by Kenneth Josephson's photograph *New York State* (1970).

association reminds us of what photography represents and how it can be applied to the ritual of family photography itself. According to Susan Sontag in her influential essay 'In Plato's Cave' (1979) from *On Photography*:

All photographs are *memento mori*. To take a photograph is to participate in another person's (or thing's) mortality, vulnerability, mutability. Precisely by slicing out this moment and freezing it, all photographs testify to time's relentless melt (Sontag 1979: 15).<sup>48</sup>

Sontag's identification of photography's relationship to "time's relentless melt" is in accordance with the central issues of Eliot's poem, not only with the continual reminder of history as a recurring cycle, with everyday scenes of modern life juxtaposed with classical allusions, but also the references to "vulnerability, mutability" which echo the poem's own concern with uncertainty. The family snapshots I sourced for both *PastPresent* (2005) and the later *Fortune-telling/Retelling* (2007), which pictured my own life from childhood to present day, were not only a reminder of my own mortality, but were also part of the wider collective human experience. Therefore, the series is concerned with our ability to re-witness and to re-assess our own perceptions of past events, places, people and emotions as well as a sense of knowingness that arises from an apparently idyllic family portrait, questioning the very concept of a photographic truth, in terms of portraying a faithful representation. Whilst the images themselves signify unity, in the sense that the family home has remained the same after thirty years, this illusion of stability masks the reality of a marital breakdown and separation of the family unit, which could be implied by the overgrown vegetation within the mature, established garden. As a piece of phototherapy, the work encourages the recollection of childhood memories, but also represents an exploration into the tension between the remembering of the event and the actual remembering of the emotional response, now that the reality of the situation is known.

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<sup>48</sup> Susan Sontag (1979) 'In Plato's Cave' in Sontag, S. (1979) *On Photography*. London: Penguin. pp.3-24.

The 'Subjective Perspective' strategy of the hand holding the photograph within the frame chosen to reassess my past, echoes Spence's belief that through phototherapy's "visual reframing" we are able to understand how particular images could be the "embodiment of particular traumas, losses, hopes and desires" (Spence 1986: 172). This method of drawing upon the 'Nostalgia and the Past' theme previously identified by Joyce Tenneson-Cohen (Tenneson-Cohen 1979: viii) (see Chapter Two) as a means of 'working through' past trauma and actively engaging with recalled memory, was developed for the later *Fortune-Telling/Re-Telling* (2007) video,<sup>49</sup> which sourced fifty two photographs (to replicate the number of playing cards in a pack), that featured significant moments in my life from when I was born until my brother's wedding in October 2006.

The images in this condensed autobiographical self-portrait are placed on top of one another in an arbitrary fashion, discarded after being held and remembered. Particular photographs that capture my imagination or 'prick me', to reference Barthes' definition of the 'punctum' (Barthes 1981/ 2000: 27), such as, the group family portrait already seen in *PastPresent* or a Polaroid of my scarred body after my kidney operation, are singled out and paused upon for a moment longer. The superimposition of the three layers of footage that signify the past (the assessment of family snapshots), the present (a game of patience) and the future (my tarot card reading) varies in opacity, so that sometimes the work is trebled and sometimes each layer is fully visible. This constantly shifting viewpoint represents my thought processes at the time of re-enactment as my consciousness wavered between reminiscence, comparison to the present and contemplating the future. Liz Stanley in *The Auto/Biographical Eye I: The Theory and Practice of Feminist Auto/biography* (1995) refers to the dramatic irony achieved from looking back over past family photographs:

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<sup>49</sup> This project was influenced by Robert Frank's films *Conversations in Vermont* (1969) and *True Story* (2004) where he reflects upon past work and memories through the process of re-filming existing photographs, which I saw in his retrospective exhibition; *Robert Frank: Storylines*, Tate Modern (28<sup>th</sup> October 2004-23<sup>rd</sup> January 2005).

With benefit of hindsight, from a subsequent 'moment' to that of the photograph, I can see this innocent lack of knowledge. What came after was my father's death, that of my lover's father and those of two friends, then my mother's devastating stroke. The photograph holds, but does not reveal to any outsider, pain, death and loss. However, the seeing eye that perceives this is still 'I', still mine, and anyway this succeeding 'moment' holds more than pain alone (Stanley 1992: 52).

The process of selecting appropriate photographs was quite traumatic in one way, since having laid out the images in order on the floor I saw my whole life unfolded in front of me in this visual autobiography, which seemed very much like a part of a universal life cycle, where other people would have shared similar life experiences. The decision to use the grey carpet as a backdrop arose from this activity, since they were edited on my bedroom floor in my home on the Isle of Wight and I aimed to replicate the original assessment process with its domestic associations. During the pre-production stage, I considered how representative my selection of photographs actually was, since I obviously could not include everything.<sup>50</sup> The first observation was that of the ageing process and the fact that despite my changing appearance over time, I still recognised my multiple selves presented in the later images. However, there was a sense of detachment and misrecognition from early photographs of myself as a young child, which could relate to the formation of memory at a certain age. Liz Stanley identifies this problem, referring to a photo from her own childhood entitled '*Lizabeth Ann Stanley aged 2 years and 3 months*':

The child is me – or so she is said to be, so I am told. But I do not know her. My memory cannot reach this child: she sits alone looking out and I look back into her eyes and see and feel nothing (Stanley 1992: 45).

Despite this barrier to memory the collection of family photographs portrayed a wide range of subjects and provided fruitful material in terms of phototherapy, since it emphasized the fact that despite the traumatic events in my life and my family breakdown, there was 'evidence' of positive memories that was reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's poignant metaphor of life as comparable with the fluctuating rhythm of the sea; "the incessant rise and fall and rise again" (Woolf 1931/1992:

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<sup>50</sup> Since I was thirty-two at the time of pre-production, this calculated at 1.6 images per year, which I vaguely stuck to.

228) in the closing lines of her novel *The Waves* (1931).<sup>51</sup> The photographic collection, therefore, documented family bonds, the people I knew and the relationships I had, as well as charting the prescribed rituals of Christmas, birthdays, weddings and graduations.

Apart from the Polaroid of my scar from my kidney operation, the photographs do not obviously depict the troubled, traumatic experience that Spence describes in her review of family photography (see Chapter Two).<sup>52</sup> However, viewers can detect the distinctive absence of my father in the later Christmas day family portraits shot around the festive dining table. In the process of reviewing these family snapshots, I was able to detect hidden meanings within particular images, for instance, the photograph of me resisting the arms of my father at a time when I was experiencing the imminent breakdown of my parents' marriage. Despite this uncovering of suppressed meanings, it is significant that the work employs masking devices of superimposition in order to partially obscure this personal unveiling of the self, so that the pace at which the narrative unfolds means that the audience who are unfamiliar with these photographs are only able to quickly grasp its content before the other two layers of the game of patience and the tarot reading intervene and clouds their vision. In this sense, *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* presents a fragmented, chaotic representation, consisting of competing narratives, whereby the viewer can only apprehend '*Traces of the Self*' within the family snapshots, which, in turn, become generic significations of shared human experience.

However, this work was primarily made as a private meditation upon my personal history and functions as an empowering form of phototherapy, rather than a purely nostalgic exercise in that I was able to rediscover positive childhood memories by reflecting upon key events, people and experiences, acknowledge the time spent with my father, and most importantly, confront painful experiences and difficult

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<sup>51</sup> This visual metaphor was pertinent to me during the production of *The Waves* series of photographs (1996)

<sup>52</sup> See Spence, J. (1986) *Putting Myself in the Picture: A Political, Personal and Photographic Autobiography*. London: Camden Press.

issues through the actual physical process of looking through these carefully chosen photographs in an act of re-assessment. The over-layered game of patience and positive tarot reading provided a suitable backdrop, suggesting solitary play and chance, forefronting my anxious curiosity about the future yet reminding me of life's unpredictability and randomness.

Nevertheless, I sought to take the concept of phototherapy to another level in order to acquire some kind of closure or cathartic release of my resentment towards my father through a more destructive means. Therefore, the last photograph in the *Sermon series, Vol.V Retribution* (2009) captures a therapeutic act of burning a photograph of my graduation portrait with my father,<sup>53</sup> as a twenty-one year old (the last time I saw him). In terms of signification, this family snapshot reveals divided emotions: I am smiling, reassured of my success, yet my father appears to be grimacing, his lips tightly closed, perhaps denoting his awareness of what lies ahead. This photograph was a direct response to Eliot's references to Buddha's 'Fire Sermon' in part three of *The Waste Land*, with the actual title caption: *Burning burning burning burning* taken from this work, which Eliot observes in his accompanying notes, "corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount" (Eliot 1940/1999: 44). The title for this volume 'Retribution' was chosen since it signified my motivation for a kind of vengeance against my father's actions, performed through this disobedient yet defiant act of burning the only two copies of this analogue photograph I possessed, shot from my '*Subjective Perspective*'. The actual process of burning the photograph outside in my yard, assisted by my partner, was a tense experience in itself, marked by the extreme chill of a January afternoon, which meant that the camera's motor-drive kept freezing up, encouraging flared tempers during production, which seemed in hindsight to be strangely ironic.

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<sup>53</sup> I was aware of Hollis Frampton's film *Nostalgia* (1971) where photographs are filmed whilst they slowly burn, and was also drawn to the references to the Buddha's Fire Sermon suggested by Bill Viola's 'Fire Woman' from the *Love/Death: The Tristan Project* (2005)

Despite the unpredictability of shooting such a transitory moment, I had chosen to shoot on analogue black and white film to foreground the ritualised act and to allow a critical distance between the actual process of burning the photograph and the editing and selection process. Although this meant that I was not diverted by the certainty of immediate playback in digital photography, I was left with only four possible frames out of one roll of film to choose from where the content of the image was still clearly distinguishable to the viewer. The final image personifies both my anger towards my father, as well as performing a sense of closure and nullification. This transference of traumatic experiences into staged therapeutic artworks, reminds us of Freud's observation in *The Pleasure Principle* (1920) that children repeat intense experience in play in order to regain control (Freud 1920/2003: 55). Therefore, it could be interpreted that reversing these 'un-pleasurable' experiences and gaining autonomy of the situation through the means of re-enactment phototherapy, some kind of learning experience can be achieved.<sup>54</sup>

This attempt to eradicate my father's existence at the end of the 'Sermon' photographic series in *Burning burning burning burning* (2009), is partially alleviated in room four, 'Water' which is preoccupied by the continual, subconscious haunting reminder of my father's absence, as I am caught between a continual nostalgic resurfacing of past memories and the cathartic process of burial or acceptance of this separation. Literary critics have interpreted the meaning of part four of *The Waste Land*, 'Death by Water' in two different ways; firstly, as a signification of death by water without resurrection, or secondly, to symbolize the sacrificial death that precedes rebirth (Abrams 1993: 2157). James E. Miller asserts that because 'Death by Water' ends with the physical description of "Phlebus, who was once handsome and tall as you" (l.321), it "suggests that the poet has not yet become reconciled to the loss, that he has not yet been plucked out of the burning, burning, burning depicted at the end of "The Fire Sermon"" (Miller 1977: 112). However, by contrast, Harriet Davidson in 'Improper Desire: Reading The Waste

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<sup>54</sup> This work can be associated with Alice Anderson's film *The Doll's Day* (2008). See Chapter Two.

Land',<sup>55</sup> shares many other critics' opinions (Brooker and Bentley 1992: 159; Gordon 2000: 182), by concluding that this section of the poem operates a healing function, stating how "The peaceful surrender of the body to the water suggests an acceptance of death and change...in opposition to the anxiety about change at the end of 'The Fire Sermon' (Moody 1994: 129).

The resulting video projection, *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009), applies these conflicting interpretations to my own fluctuating emotions regarding the absence of my father, through the creation of a visual metaphor that embodies my preoccupation with the struggle between continuing resurfacing and closure. The ghostly layering of past and present is communicated by the slow emergence of the family photograph,<sup>56</sup> or '*Traces of the (former) Self*' appearing against the surface of a mesmerising, slow motion seascape. The split-screen work, which is suggestive of a divided self, features two, abstract moving images of the sea filmed from overhead, offering a doubled vision of the same subject, which implies a recurring re-visitation of the same persistent memory. However, each shot presents a slightly different perspective, a wide shot and a closer viewpoint, as well as being slowed down to slightly different speeds. This misalignment creates a disjuncture or barrier, yet also a point of comparison as we gradually define the indistinct outline of the photograph, which gradually enlarges to fill the frame before dissolving from view into the foreboding sea. Serving as a bridging device from the vengeful burning of the photograph in room three, 'Sermon', the piece begins with the sound of my agitated breath against a black screen, which signifies coming to terms with the trauma from the past, as it slowly calms down and resembles the lulling appearance of the rise and fall of waves. The edited script taken from this section of the poem is whispered as we watch the rising of the family photograph from the depths of memory, and implies a renewed consideration of the past, having

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<sup>55</sup> Harriet Davidson 'Improper Desire: Reading The Waste Land' in Moody, D. (1994) *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.121-131.

<sup>56</sup> This particular family snapshot was previously seen in both the *PastPresent* photographs (2005) and the *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* video (2007).

suppressed "the cry of gulls, and the deep sea swell" (l.313) and instead moving towards "Entering the whirlpool" (l.318) through doctoral research.

The very process of undertaking this phototherapy work prompted a series of questions that I had previously evaded. Did the work symbolise Davidson's interpretation of "acceptance of death and change"? Was I finally acknowledging the permanent absence of my father and ready to move on, or could it mean that I was still troubled by the past? *The Deep Sea Swell* could on the one hand signify a burial of the past and the laying to rest of family issues, but it could also represent my feelings about him and imply hidden, darker undercurrents that refuse to disappear and continue to resurface. Whilst this sense of closure and resolution is evident within the mesmerising quality of *The Deep Sea Swell*, which offers some form of respite, it also summons suppressed emotions from its murky depths, heightened by the rasping breath, which indicates the psychological nature of this seemingly unthreatening work. In his essay, 'Mourning and Melancholia' (1917),<sup>57</sup> Freud proposes that these two maladies share inherent qualities such as dejection and loss of interest in the outside world from the loss of a love object (Freud 1917/1991: 252). However he recognises that mourning is more accepted as a painful experience because "when the work of mourning is completed the ego becomes free and uninhibited again" (Freud 1917/1991: 253). I would suggest that this personal traumatic experience occupied both mourning and melancholia at the time, but this work was an endeavor to lay the lost object of the father to rest in order to become 'free'. In this sense, I was moved by Lyndall Gordon's spiritual view that "The drowning at the end of 'Death by Water' is not seen to be a disaster, but a stage of purification and metamorphosis" (Gordon 2000: 182).

Having firstly utilized the self-representational strategy of '*Nostalgia and the Past*' to draw upon Spence's method of phototherapy using the family photograph, my increasingly autobiographical research turned towards transferring my traumatic

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<sup>57</sup> Freud, S. (1917) 'Mourning and Melancholia' in Dickson, A. (ed) *On Metapsychology*, Penguin Freud Library, vol.11 (1991), Harmondsworth: Penguin, pp. 247-68.

experience through performed role-play derived from an autobiographical attachment to the text. The staging of such recalled experience is most clearly apparent in *Hushing The Room Enclosed* (2008), a four channel photographic installation, combining still metaphorical images of firmly closed doors and disintegrating stairways with a looping sound-scape of neurotic voices and shuffled footsteps.<sup>58</sup> The work reinvents the paranoid conversation in part two of *The Waste Land*, 'A Game of Chess' (see Appendix A), which has been compared to Eliot's own marriage to Vivienne Haigh-Wood. Lyndall Gordon describes the scene as:

hell itself, the diabolical routines of marital power play...[where the male character] Entrapped 'In the Cage'...shuns the physical proximity of his wife, refusing to notice her barrage of anxious questions...her frantic plea for communication (Gordon 2000: 179).

The development of the resulting photographic images focused upon the poem's ability to aid the recollection of parental arguments and familial disturbances from the past that were overheard behind closed doors, or took place within these transitory spaces. The grid formation and dynamic composition of this environment shot from a '*Subjective Perspective*' creates a feeling of claustrophobia. Whilst the decision to work in the still photographic image successfully fulfilled my intentions of a fixed, inescapable environment, the intense, over layered sound-scape was added to inscribe myself within the work and reinforce this sense of remembered experience, as well as suggesting a play between absence and presence.<sup>59</sup>

As a means of 'working through' these traumatic memories, I was conscious of performing a re-enactment when recording the voiceover, managing to achieve a range of different tones and emotional intensities by allowing myself to enter a particular state of mind and literally 'acting out' my teenage memories in the studio. At the time of production I found this engagement surprisingly empowering,

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<sup>58</sup> This work was also influenced by Alia Syed's repetitive film *Watershed* (1994), Tina Keane's film's *Clapping Songs* (1981) and *Headmac* (1982), Bruce Nauman's *Raw Materials* sound installation Tate Modern's Turbine Hall, the overlapping conversation of female figures from history in Caryl Churchill's play *Top Girls* (1982) where key female figures from history meet over dinner and the grid-like formation of Mondrian's *Tableau 2* (1922).

<sup>59</sup> I firstly considered the possibility of shooting digital video with action shots of doors closing and unidentified feet running down the stairs, but decided it would be too centred upon lived experience in the present, rather than the re-staging of past events.

but retrospectively realised that I was drawing upon the need to confront repressed experiences outlined in Freud's essay *Remembering, Repeating and Working Through* (1914), together with Ann Kaplan's (2005) concept of "translating trauma" (see Chapter Two) once I had seen the work installed within a gallery setting.<sup>60</sup> I experimented with over-layering tracks of my own voice to imitate the overriding sense of paranoia in the poem so that they entered into some kind of unreciprocated dialogue with each other, which was produced by moving tracks across from left to right and at different levels, balanced by expected sounds of footsteps on the stairs within a five minute looping sequence.

Having realised that the work lacked a certain quality, I was taken by Harriet Davidson's notion of *The Waste Land's* "...interest in metamorphosis and use of quick juxtapositions, [which] blurs the proper boundaries between things; different characters and voices confusingly mutate into each other" (Moody 1994: 122). I reconsidered my attachment to the lines "What you get married for if you don't want children?" (l.164), which reminded me of the mantra my mother used to always pronounce out of frustration: "Never get married, never have children" which seemed to become embedded within my psyche. Rosy Martin discusses the therapeutic process of becoming herself as child and as mother in *Putting Myself in the Picture* (1986), which similarly recalls particular mantras repeatedly spoken by her mother such as: "I gave up my life for you" (Spence 1986:174). I persuaded my mother to record these two phrases and included a couple of them in the final soundtrack, but it was interesting for her to acknowledge the fact that since she no longer believed it she felt a certain resistance to speaking them, which resulted in a lack of genuine delivery. I, therefore, recorded an additional voiceover by my mother's friend, who 'acted out' the lines with an expressive vocal range, which was

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<sup>60</sup> *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008) was first exhibited as four photographic prints as part of 'The Waste Land: PhD Work-in-Progress: Game' at the Viewpoint Gallery, Plymouth College of Art in April 2008 and later in October 2008 at the practice-led doctoral symposium exhibition 'The Art of Research: Research Narratives', Banqueting Hall, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London. However, the most successful installation was in *Waste Land*, Scott Building, University of Plymouth in January 2010 where it was shown within a darkened space on four computer monitors. The works will ultimately be installed as duratrans on lightboxes.

suggestive of a Greek chorus commentating upon events, and provided the necessary emotional gravitas of a middle-aged woman.<sup>61</sup>

The depiction of barriers and transitory environments in *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008) conforms to the distinct tradition of female artists' and writers' preoccupation with 'in-between' spaces such as balconies, stairways and doorways.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, Gilbert and Gubar (1979) and Horner and Zlosnik's (1990) recognition of the spatial metaphors employed by female writers, such as, Charlotte Bronte, Emily Dickinson, Charlotte Perkins Gilman and Virginia Woolf, who were concerned with notions of boundaries and containment within interior spaces, contrasted with notions of fluidity and escape into the natural landscape (see Chapter Two), parallels Griselda Pollock and Janet Wolff's surveys of women painters' in the late nineteenth century which charts the process of separation of men and women into public and private spheres in the mid nineteenth to early twentieth century.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, the intensity of the close framing of imposing doors and disintegrating stairwells heightened by their formal grid formation serves to obstruct the artist and viewer from accessing the desperate overheard pleas for communication, as well as constructing a physical barrier that signifies a difficulty to escape from persistent memories.

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<sup>61</sup> This concept of a staged narrative was influenced by Sam Taylor-Wood's video installation *Pent-Up* (1996) which consists of five screens, featuring five characters who appear to rant aloud in their own private worlds, yet it becomes increasingly clear that they are responding in some way to each other's predicaments, with questions such as "Did I embarrass you the other night?" met with the words "No more than usual". The staging of a domestic argument across a two channel video projection in the corner of the gallery in Taylor-Wood's *Travesty of a Mockery* (1995) was equally informative in the production of *Hushing the Room Enclosed*, where the unexpected movement of actors from one frame to the other across the gap during their fight signifies a violation of their personal space.

<sup>62</sup> This concern with barriers located within interior spaces is evident in my past work: *Through the Banisters* (1997), *The Other Side of a Mirror* (1999) or *The Turn of the Screw* (2001) See Chapter Two.

<sup>63</sup> Griselda Pollock explains how women were categorised by their roles of mother and wife, which meant that they were resigned to an interior, domestic space (Pollock 1988: 68). Pollock closely examines the work of painters Berthe Morisot and Mary Cassatt, who compared to the public territories occupied by men, depict scenes within of dining rooms, drawing rooms, bedrooms, verandas and private gardens, which all signify "places of seclusion and enclosure" (Pollock 1988: 63) or socially acceptable activities of bourgeois recreation, such as promenading, boating or visits to the theatre (Pollock 1988: 56). See Griselda Pollock, 'Modernity and Spaces of Femininity', in Pollock, G. (1988) *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*. London and New York: Routledge, pp. 50-90. Janet Wolff draws upon Pollock, claiming this separation was maintained by cultural ideologies, practices and institutions (Wolff 1990:12) comparing Georg Grosz's painting *Café* (1915) with Gwen John's *Corner of an Artists Room* (1907-1910) to highlight the debates surrounding modernity's notion of the male *flâneur* (Wolff 1990: 57-59). See Janet Wolff, J. (1990) *Feminine Sentences: Essays on Woman and Culture*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

The 'still movie' projection, *In the Cage* (2007), which appears opposite *Hushing the Room Enclosed* as a life-size projection in room two, 'Game', visualises the title's image of imprisonment through an imaginary space, that adopts the self-representational strategy of '*Dreams, Nightmares and Fantasies*'.<sup>64</sup> The piece reflects upon the complications of personal relationships, which are viewed as a series of gestures, consisting of choices with parallels drawn between Eliot's troubled marriage and my own experience of parental divorce. Drawing upon the non-communication between the poem's speaker's, together with Eliot's cultural references to the Philomel myth and the game of chess in Thomas Middleton's play *Women Beware Women*, *In the Cage* conceptually interprets these themes as chess manoeuvres that are 'acted out' by myself, contained by two pillars which metaphorically represent the struggle between my parents who imprison my body in the centre of the frame. The work portrays my attempt to negotiate my escape through to the 'other side' through the recessed space, like, Carroll's *Alice Through the Looking Glass* or Jean Cocteau's film, *Orphée* (1950), which metaphorically offers a potential doorway towards resolution or death, but proves impenetrable. As a form of transformative re-enactment that epitomises the frustration of my passive position within my parents 'marital power play', the work wrestles with impossible emotional barriers in an endless circular narrative that is condemned to repetition. Through the self-representational strategies of '*Self-Transformation*' and '*The Anonymous Figure*' I became a performer, dressed in black like a chess piece, in this dream-like sequence of slowly dissolving stills, which concludes with my immersion as I disappear into the surrounding environment, appearing as a ghostly '*Trace of the Self*', never revealing myself to the audience.

Indeed, my increasing interest in masquerade and role-play acknowledges the work of female artists like Claude Cahun, Tracey Emin, Cindy Sherman and Sam Taylor-Wood, who similarly present multiple selves in their staged self-representations

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<sup>64</sup> The work re-envisages Eliot's original title, which was drawn from Sibyl, the Greek mythological figure in the poem's epigraph as well as Henry James' novella, *In the Cage*. On an autobiographical note, the sequence consists of 33 still images and is slowed down to 3 minutes, 33 seconds, to reference my age at the time of production.

raising issues of ambiguity and elusiveness that challenge the conventions of self-portraiture (see Chapter Two). The performing self was deliberately developed in the photographic diptychs produced for room three, 'Sermon',<sup>65</sup> which were made after I became aware of the range of self-representational strategies that I employed in my practice, and features the devices of 'Self-Transformation', 'Traces of the Self', 'The Anonymous Figure' and 'Subjective Perspectives'. Vol.I *Encounter* (2008), is an autobiographical response to the meaningless seduction of the typist, which is witnessed by the mythical figure Tiresias, who has "foresuffered all", experiencing life as both male and female.<sup>66</sup> These two photographs 'act out' re-imagined events of alleged betrayal, with a sense of intruding upon a scene in *Perceived the scene and foretold the rest*, where the audience shares in that experience as a voyeur, but is left to interpret its ambiguous connotations. Shooting on analogue black and white film contributed an effect of separation from the surveyed event, as well as employing its poetic qualities to shield from the base nature of disturbing revelations. Importantly, it is within the second image, *Her brain allows one half formed thought to pass that* I look directly at camera for the first time and 'reveal' myself to the audience through the reflected mirror image, which is reminiscent of the masking of behaviour in the *Other Side of a Mirror* series. This therapeutic staged re-enactment, which records an identification with my father achieved through an off-guard moment in role-play, was a significant gesture which symbolized a movement into new territory of dealing with these difficult, sensitive issues by trying to subvert or confront my continual evasiveness. However, the short depth of field means that my face is still slightly blurred and I remain at a critical distance from my audience.

This increasing desire to stage the self as a performer within the later works (rather than picturing just my hand or shadow), represented both my increasing awareness

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<sup>65</sup> For a discussion on the performative role of re-enactment phototherapy see Rosy Martin 'Inhabiting the image: photography, therapy and re-enactment phototherapy' *European Journal of Psychotherapy and Counselling*, Vol.11 (No.1) March 2009, 35-49, p.43.

<sup>66</sup> The vulgarity of the seduction scene was contextualised by the work of Bill Brandt, Nan Goldin, Cindy Sherman, Maya Deren, Hogarth, Sam Taylor-Wood, Duane Michels and Virginia Woolf's novel, 'Orlando', adapted by the film director Sally Potter in the pre-production stage.

of the autobiographical and therapeutic purpose of my practice, together with my ability to discuss more explicitly the purpose of these self-representations, which saw a development from the 'Surrogate Self' (1996-2001)<sup>67</sup> with a 'Subjective Self' (2002-2009)<sup>68</sup> and finally a 'Performing Self' (2006-2009).<sup>69</sup> Consequently, the split-screen video projection, *The Awful Daring of A Moment's Surrender* (2009) marked a new direction in my practice, since it was the first time I deliberately chose to dress-up myself and source relevant costumes and props and adopt a more considered 'Self-Transformation' self-representational strategy, appearing as a woman in white, rather than a woman in black, seen previously within the *In the Cage* (2007) projection and the *Sermon* (2008-2009) photographs.<sup>70</sup>

I found that by physically embodying the hope of this "awful daring of a moment's surrender" (1.403) by 'becoming' a bride in this staged "Theatre of the Self" (Spence and Solomon 1995: 93) did in fact permit a transformation of perception to take place, in that it raised questions concerning my opinions about marriage and initiating an acceptance that it is not a guarantee of permanence. The nervous sound of my breathing and hesitant footsteps, together with my restricted bodily movements imposed by my costume made this experience more authentic as I allowed myself to imagine how I would feel if this performance was real, as well as speculating what my parent's wedding was actually like whilst carrying out the role play activity itself. By engaging in this fashion I recognised not only the seriousness of this commitment in terms of generational differences of what was expected at that time, but also became more appreciative of what this event symbolized to my mother, since the process of making this work also triggered her positive

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<sup>67</sup> Beginning with *The Waves* (1996) until *The Turn of the Screw* (2001)

<sup>68</sup> Beginning with *Journey Home* (2002) with the most recent being *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009)

<sup>69</sup> Beginning with *I Knew Nothing* (2006) and the most recent work, *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009)

<sup>70</sup> It is worth noting that whilst I have previously sourced props for my shoots (such as the governess's costume for *The Turn of the Screw* 2001) these were for my surrogate self, played by another model that bore physical resemblance. This opportunity to 'dress-up' myself was on reflection a obvious solution bearing in mind the amount of time I spent as a child dressing up and pretending to be someone else (as an artist I shied away from this activity since I didn't want to become too indebted to the work of Cindy Sherman). This new performing role has also meant that I have had to collaborate with others for the first time in order to film my actions and body in the frame, most commonly my partner as well as my brother and a close friend.

reminiscence of her 'perfect' day in this fairytale location and led to an honest discussion between us.

During my research, I became increasingly interested in applying Jo Spence's and Rosy Martin's concept of "visual reframing" (Spence 1986:186); embodying traumatic experience recalled by the literary text through re-enactment phototherapy as a way of "saying the unsayable, seeing the unseeable, [and] facing the unfaceable" (Martin 2001: 3) to my own practice.<sup>71</sup> In particular, I was drawn to Martin's assertion that:

Re-enactment phototherapy is about making visible process, change and transformation, by going to the source of an issue or an old trauma, re-enacting it and making a new ending; a new possibility; a new way of being, visible (Martin 2009: 41).

During the development of work for the last room, 'Thunder', I became preoccupied by the notion of 'surviving the *Waste Land*' within the present tense, informed by the past, whilst at the same time nervously anticipating the future and striving for a sense of closure. Having established the fact that this collection of works was primarily focused upon the self-representation of family trauma relayed through literary interpretation, I wanted to reflect upon the emotional effect of producing this type of work in terms of how it has, on one hand positively confronted and resolved certain issues, whilst on the other, has also been a difficult and challenging process that has disturbed past memories. This two-fold reaction seemed to parallel the open-ended, divided nature of the final part of Eliot's poem itself, where a clear resolution is unavailable. Lyndall Gordon observes how:

The last lines divide our feeling between antithetical states. On the one hand are three holy words and a damp gust bringing rain to the arid land; on the other, London Bridge is falling down and madness returns. *The Wasteland* stops short of salvation, and leaves us between collapse and recovery, between 'The horror! The horror!' of the Unreal City and some unspoken 'reality' – we are haunted by hints of 'reality' but unable to possess them. The last lines jolt us faster between these extremes. There are limitations of sublime peace, but are they fading or approaching? In either case, there is

<sup>71</sup> Martin, R. (2001) 'The Performative Body: Phototherapy and Re-enactment' Afterimage, 1<sup>st</sup> November 2001. Approx. 15 printed pages. Available at <http://www.allbusiness.com/professional-scientific/specialized-design/963415-1.html> [16<sup>th</sup> May 2009].

no finality, no full stop. *Completion remains for the reader* (Gordon 2000: 190).<sup>72</sup>

This ambiguous ending is detected by a number of other literary critics, with James Miller in *T. S. Eliot's Personal Waste Land: Exorcism of Dreams* (1977), arguing that part five, 'What the Thunder Said' presents "a conclusion that is not a conclusion but an obscure beginning" (Miller 1977: 114). Harriet Davidson in her essay 'Improper Desire: *Reading The Waste Land*' goes further to identify that, "This final section returns to a barren waste, an inhuman landscape where repetition suggests a pointless circularity" (Moody 1994: 129).

In this respect, it seemed fitting that the *Waste Land* project ends with two ambiguous walking video pieces: *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009) and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009), which recall the two *Shadow Walk* video projections (2006) from room one, 'Burial'. Yet these most recent works occupy metaphorical landscapes and as a result of the developments in my research, employ a more conscious role of walking as performance, rather than as a purely subjective journey through autobiographical environments. It is significant that in both works we follow figures moving forward into the distance towards some kind of destination, as I anticipate the future and some kind of closure on this family trauma, with the physical act of walking denoting some kind of meditation and progression. The "antithetical states" identified by Lyndall Gordon between the possibility of peace and the overriding threat of madness in the poem<sup>73</sup> is transformed into the opposition between the positive portrayal of the anonymous figure in white who relinquishes her veil in *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender*, compared to the more sombre, funeral procession-like walk in *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?*

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<sup>72</sup> My italics. This issue of leaving the last works open-ended to allow for the audience's interpretation became of prime importance to me after discussions with colleagues during the editing process.

<sup>73</sup> Brooker and Bentley assert that despite a series of references to the metamorphosis of suffering into poetry or music in 'What the Thunder Said', (such as Philomel's nightingale song) the allusion to Thomas Kyd's Elizabethan revenge play *The Spanish Tragedy* (1594) in the lines "Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe" (l.431) within the last stanza of the poem denies the possibility of "redemption through art" (Brooker and Bentley 1992: 206) as art is used as a destructive, rather than a transformative force.

Both videos are not only on a looping sequence, which interprets this concept of circularity and an indecisive state of mind, but also feature variations on the same action and incomplete or disrupted sequences that replicate the way in which we repeat certain acts or recall events in different ways. Despite earlier difficulties in finding an initial solution for this final room that was in danger of becoming too overcomplicated and dense (see Chapter Three), I feel that these two walking videos effectively embody "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (l.430) through the culmination of re-lived trauma, emotions and beliefs so that I am, therefore, able to "Set my lands in order" (l.425) by burying the past and envisioning the future. By positioning the *Waste Land* project within the context of modernism, notions of inhabiting place and the transformative nature of performance-based re-enactments, I have been able to identify how I draw upon literary interpretation as a means of channelling past traumatic experiences through recalled memory. I have also understood how I construct a multiple, shifting self through particular self-representational strategies and fragmentary interpretive methods which has enabled me to take crucial decisions regarding medium, mode and method in an explicit and informed manner.

#### **4. Evaluation of *Waste Land* Installation**

The actual installation of *Waste Land* at the University of Plymouth<sup>74</sup> allowed me to consider both the interaction of the works within each room, together with the interaction between the rooms themselves. Whilst each of the eleven photographic and video pieces are bound together by the poem itself, they are also connected theoretically (e.g. issues of self-representation), thematically (e.g. inhabiting place), metaphorically (e.g. creation of 'waste-land-scapes'), emotionally (e.g. dealing with loss and separation), aesthetically (e.g. modernist framework) and methodologically (e.g. interpretive method). I was eager to see the project in its entirety and to assess the overall effect, in relation not only to my research, but

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<sup>74</sup> The work was installed on the first floor of the Scott Building, University of Plymouth from the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

also within the context of future audiences.<sup>75</sup> In this respect, it was important to determine what issues aside from adaptation, autobiography, self-portraiture arose from the exhibition itself and I was encouraged by my ability to detect ideas concerning family and relationships, the past and recalled memories, landscape and place, and breakdown and estrangement.

Although the available exhibition space was not divided into chronological order and compromises had to be made,<sup>76</sup> the distinct shift between each room in terms of colour palette, mood, setting and subject matter was recognised, signalling an experiential journey through the gallery space. Indeed, it became quickly apparent that scale was central to its understanding, with a need to install the majority of the works at life size to encourage audience participation and universal connection.<sup>77</sup> Therefore, the Prelude, *PastPresent* (2005) served an indication of what followed, presenting a contemplative reassessment of past family life, perceived with a sense of dramatic irony inferred through the method of re-photography. The employment of this distancing device, shot from a subjective perspective in black and white, not only signified a separation from reality but also invited the audience to actively engage in the experience. As we moved into room one, 'Burial', we encountered a chaotic, vibrant environment concerned with the examination of past and the exploration of place. The title was suggestive of immersion, a burial within the landscape, of memories and of emotions. The two active *Shadow Walk* video projections were held in opposition in terms of location, yet both visualised a journey where the self blended into the environment, contrasting with the interiority of the fixed, close-up viewpoints of *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* and *I Knew Nothing*.

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<sup>75</sup> Please refer to the exhibition text in Appendix B, which was written to appeal to a broader, non-academic audience and was used in pitching the project to potential galleries for future dissemination.

<sup>76</sup> It is worth noting that I had to work with the space and resources available to me, which meant that the exhibition was regarded as a 'testing out' rather than perceived as a polished gallery show. The main concerns were that of linearity and sound overspill in room 114, which was divided into three spaces. Lack of space meant that the works in room five 'Thunder' had to be shown on four monitors rather than be projected, although it meant that I was able to evaluate alternative formats. Please refer to the *Waste Land* installation images and DVD 2 at the beginning of the thesis, together with the Viva Installation room plan in Appendix C.

<sup>77</sup> Therefore, accounting for restrictions imposed by the space, the two *Shadow Walks* projections in room one and *In the Cage* in room two needed to be larger to become fully immersive, whilst *I Knew Nothing* would ideally be shown on a slightly smaller screen on a more discreet wall-mounted monitor.

The muted tonal range of room two, 'Game', reflected the exasperated emotions experienced in *Hushing the Room Enclosed* and *In the Cage*, enforced by spatial metaphors that symbolized containment and restriction. The action was relayed within claustrophobic interior spaces that recalled family conflict through relived memories associated with transitory environments, or through the transference into acted gestures within an imagined space. Room three, 'Sermon' offered a quiet respite after the intensity of rooms one and two, through a sequence of black and white photographs that provided clues to the troubled voiceover of "Never get Married" from *Hushing the Room Enclosed* through the re-staging of real and imagined events. This intensity was carried through into room four, 'Water' with the rasping breath and the ghostly re-appearance of a family photograph through the murky green-blue sea in *The Deep Sea Swell*, creating a reminder of the father's absence.<sup>78</sup> The final room, 'Thunder' was more solemn in tone, acknowledging loss through the juxtaposition of two performative walking videos concerned with marriage, separation and death, marking a circular end to the *Waste Land* through its associations with room one, 'Burial'. The pairing of *The Awful Daring* and *Who is the Third* functioned in a similar fashion to the works in room two, 'Game', in that there was a dichotomy between a real and metaphorical landscape, between relived experience and imagined nightmare.

Throughout *Waste Land*, an elusive self was presented to the audience utilising a variety of strategies to signify a postmodern, multiple, shifting identity (See Chapter Two).<sup>79</sup> Due to its autobiographical stance, every room embodied both a 'Subjective Perspective' and 'Nostalgia and the Past' through an association with

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<sup>78</sup> I was pleased with the effect of the floor projection, which allowed the audience to feel as though they were falling into the sea themselves. The size was restricted by the height of the ceiling and I would ideally have liked it to be slightly larger (about 200x100cm).

<sup>79</sup> Each room includes between three and seven of the different self-representational strategies identified in chapter two. These are as follows: Prelude: (x3) Nostalgia and the Past, Subjective, The Disembodied Self; Room 1: (x5) Nostalgia and the Past, Subjective, Traces of the Self, Incorporation of Natural Forms, The Disembodied Self; Room 2: (x6) Nostalgia and the Past, Subjective, Traces of the Self, Anonymous figure, Dreams and Fantasies (Nightmares); Room 3: (x7) Nostalgia and the Past, Subjective, Traces of the Self, Incorporation of Natural Forms, Anonymous figure, Self-transformation; Room 4: (x6) Nostalgia and the Past, Subjective, Traces of the Self, Incorporation of Natural Forms, The Disembodied Self, Dreams and Fantasies (Nightmares); Room 5: (x6) Nostalgia and the Past, Subjective, Anonymous figure, Self-transformation, Dreams and Fantasies (Nightmares), The Disembodied Self.

family snapshots, objects and settings. It is also important to note that although the self remains fairly anonymous throughout, we see the gradual appearance of a performing self through a 'Self-Transformation' mode informed by Spence and Martin's re-enactment phototherapy, that drew upon 'Dreams, Nightmares and Fantasies' as we progressed through the rooms. These different forms of self-representation operated as visual echoes, with the recurrence of isolated hands, eyes or feet (a 'Disembodied Self'), seen in *PastPresent*, *Fortune-telling/Re-telling*, *I Knew Nothing* and *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* or the 'Anonymous Figure' dressed in black, portrayed within *In the Cage*, the *Sermon* photographic series and lastly accompanied by another figure in *Who is the Third who Walks Always Beside You?*

Indeed, the recurring visual motifs, symbolism, themes and filming techniques embedded within *Waste Land*, appropriated the montage effect of Eliot's poem and sought to bind the works together within the exhibition. The poetic *Unreal City* photograph, Vol.III *Disintegration* (2008) from 'Sermon', presented a recognisable still image captured from the *Urban Shadow Walks* video seen earlier in room one, 'Burial' at the edge of the shoreline, recreating the reverberations in Eliot's poem.<sup>80</sup> This use of repetition within the exhibition is also indicative of the circular nature of the self-examination process itself, as particular memories, emotions and issues continue to be readdressed. The reappearance of the family snapshot utilising the 'Nostalgia and the Past' strategy was an effective example, with distinctive links made between the photographs in *PastPresent*, *Fortune-telling/Re-telling*, *Sermon Vol.V Retribution* and *The Deep Sea Swell* demonstrating a 'working through' of past trauma. These echoes extended to the repetition of sounds within *Waste Land*, such as, the wind whistling in *The Awful Daring* in room five, reminding the viewer of the *Rural Shadow Walks* from room one, the alluring sound of the sea in *The*

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<sup>80</sup> The phrase "Unreal city" features in part I 'The Burial of the Dead' (l.60), then again in part III, 'The Fire Sermon' (l.207) and lastly as "Unreal" in part V, 'What the Thunder Said' (l.377). The technique is also an appropriation of an earlier image of a washed photograph of a female commuter from *The Waves* (1996), which is a tribute to Eliot's own re-scripting of sourced allusions.

*Deep Sea Swell* in room four recalling the *Rural Shadow Walks*, or the footsteps from *Hushing the Room Enclosed* recurring in *The Awful Daring*.

One of my main concerns prior to seeing the installation was the interaction of the different sound-scapes, both within each space, as well as between each room, (particularly the open plan layout of room 114, with its mezzanine level divided into three different spaces: rooms two, four and five). I initially thought that the sound from these works would compete, but found instead that they complimented each other, forming enlightening combinations that reinforced the work's meaning. Having only previously viewed or exhibited one piece at a time, I was struck by the over-layering tapestry effect of hearing each work simultaneously. In room one, the merging of rural and urban environmental sounds (walking on pebbles, relentless breaking waves with the drone of traffic and overheard conversations on the street) provided a constant, relentless assault yet possessed a compelling quality, a background theme tune of everyday life. This seemed an appropriate backdrop to the assessment of family photographs in *Fortune-telling/Re-telling*, with the appearance of myself as a baby accompanied by the sound of a crying baby in the *Market* video.<sup>81</sup>

Whilst the *In the Cage* projection in room two was silent, you were able to overhear the layered sound-scape of doors slamming, shuffling footsteps and voiceover (such as "I never know what you are thinking", "Never get married, never have children" or "Hushing the Room Enclosed") from the *Hushing the Room Enclosed* photographic installation, which successfully complimented the work by underpinning the transference of this sense of entrapment and desperation into the movements of the figure confined between two pillars in the imagined space. Although you could still hear the sound of *Hushing the Room Enclosed* in the outside corridor space of room three, 'Sermon' when the doors were opened, it had

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<sup>81</sup> Whilst the viewer was invited to wear headphones for *I Knew Nothing*, the background sound of the space was still audible against the work's droning aeroplanes and screeching seagulls, suggesting the inability to escape from this assault

to contend with the noise of room one 'Burial' as well. Within an ideal gallery environment, it would be possible to hear the reverberating sounds of "Never get married" and "What shall I do now?" whilst viewing 'Sermon' Vol.I and II, which would act like a dramatic monologue, reaffirming the action within the images.

This particular installation at the university, allowed for new combinations of sounds that would not normally occur if the works were encountered in chronological order. Whilst some of these were not imperative to the work,<sup>82</sup> I did find that some of these interwoven sounds were quite instructive, for example, the amalgamation of the rising photograph in *The Deep Sea Swell* with the rhythmic sound of the sea, deep breathing and "forgot the cry of gulls...profit and loss", juxtaposed with "Stay with me, speak to me" and "Never get married never have children" from *Hushing the Room Enclosed* resonating in the distance.<sup>83</sup> Despite having prior reservations about the interaction of sound within the project, the overlapping environmental noises and voiceovers struck a deep emotional chord, creating haunting phrases and sensations that remained with you after the show. I am, therefore, open to a broader dissemination of the work, which can now encompass a divided partitioned gallery space, rather than a rigid division of five separate rooms.

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<sup>82</sup> For example, whilst standing up close to *In the Cage* in room two, the viewer was also able to hear the wind whistling, crickets and footsteps from *The Awful Daring* from room five, together with the distant sound of the waves and cries of "forgot the cry of gulls" from *The Deep Sea Swell* in room four, which echoed the 'cries' of *Hushing the Room Enclosed*.

<sup>83</sup> I also took note of the sound of "What shall I do now?" and "Never get married" from *Hushing the Room Enclosed* whilst seeing bride walk towards door of church in *The Awful Daring*, which seemed to provide an authorial warning.

## CHAPTER FIVE: 'CONCLUSION: REFLECTIONS ON PRACTICE'

### 1. The Reflective Practitioner-Researcher

During the research process, I have been conscious of the debates surrounding what constitutes fine art doctoral research and have attempted to determine its characteristics within this relatively new, yet rapidly growing field.<sup>1</sup> In order to regulate the quality of practice-based research, Victor Burgin (2006) proposes that three different types should be established; first the 'PhD (history and theory emphasis)', second, 'PhD (practice emphasis)' or lastly, the 'Doctor of Fine Arts' degree (DFA) which privileges practice, accompanied by a series of short essays.<sup>2</sup> According to these models, I would classify myself as undertaking "a PhD with a parenthetical notation in practice", where there is "equal emphasis on the writing and the visual work" (Burgin 2006: 8), since I was motivated from the onset to investigate the interrelationship between theory and practice.

In retrospect, doctoral research has encouraged a deeper analysis and interrogation of my intentions through the continual process of critical self-reflection and the modification of my research questions, placed within a theoretical discourse. As a practitioner-researcher, I developed a research narrative, whereby new meanings and associations were allowed to emerge, coincide, crossover and become evidenced. I became aware of a cyclical process that simultaneously shifted not only between practice and theory, but also between different arenas within my interdisciplinary research. Experiential, heuristic processes were employed throughout, with an emphasis on testing out and experimentation, evaluation and

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<sup>1</sup> During my doctoral research, I attended a number of symposiums which debated the very nature of practice-based research including the National Postgraduate AHRC conference at University of Portsmouth (26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> November 2005), AVPhD Symposium, University of Sussex (4<sup>th</sup> July 2007), 'Theorie Cum Praxi' AVPhD Slade Research Centre, London (15<sup>th</sup> February 2008) and 'The Art of Research: Research Narratives', Chelsea College of Art and Design (28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October 2008). I also visited the AVPhD Viva Viva exhibition at the P3 Gallery, University of Westminster (8<sup>th</sup> December 2008) that not only presented the artworks of PhD completions, but also featured a reading area with copies of their theses.

<sup>2</sup> Burgin, V. (2006) 'Thoughts on Research degrees in Visual Arts Departments', *Journal of Media Practice*, Vol.7, issue 2, November 2006, pp.101-108. Available at <http://www.avphd.ac.uk/library/files/victorburgin.thoughtsonresearch.pdf>.

modification in order to gain an understanding and 'make sense' of the work itself (see Introduction and Chapter Three). Central to this procedure was the ongoing documentation within the sketchbook, the opportunity to present the research in different contexts, participation in 'polished' as well as 'in progress' exhibitions, shared critical dialogue and considered reflection (see Chapter Three).<sup>3</sup>

Although I was initially daunted by the prospect of writing the thesis, and finding the right balance between theory and practice within this academic format, I found that the writing became a practice of its own kind whereby I was able to formulate my own dialogue and find an appropriate voice. Commenting upon the role of writing in doctoral research, Dr Elizabeth Price, speaking at 'The Art of Research: Research Narratives' symposium at Chelsea College of Art,<sup>4</sup> stated: "I felt very enabled, that I could use writing to help me think about the thinking I was doing on making the work" (Price 2008: 11).<sup>5</sup> I can relate to Price's method in that by adopting a descriptive narrative of my processes, obstacles and insights, writing became a means to articulate my thoughts more readily, as I began to make new associations through the amalgamation of interwoven elements, which is reflected in the chapter structure.

## **2. Processes of Self-Representation**

Initially my objective was to re-evaluate my arts practice and discover new insights into interpretative processes through the creation of a new body of work derived from T.S Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Viewing the poem as an artefact to be visually interpreted, my research began with an examination of orthodox film adaptation

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<sup>3</sup> The plenary at the end of the AVPhD symposium, University of Sussex (4<sup>th</sup> July 2007) concluded that doctoral candidates should be able to become "critically aware and creatively able", emphasizing the need for critical responsiveness where theory arose out of practice.

<sup>4</sup> 'Art of Research: Research Narratives Day Two Keynote' by Dr Elizabeth Price, 28th October 2008, Available from: <http://www.chelsea.arts.ac.uk/testresearch09/48101.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> See also Macleod, K., A Singular Encounter with Art Theorisation: A Speculation Concerning Art/Writing in the Context of Doctoral Research. In: van Koten, H. (ed), *Proceeds of Reflections on Creativity*, 21 and 22 April 2006. Dundee: Duncan of Jordanstone College, 2007. ISBN: 1 899837 56 6. Available from <http://imaging.dundee.ac.uk/reflections/abstracts/KatyMacleod.htm> for a discussion of Price's PhD thesis submission, along with debates surrounding the relationship between writing and practice in doctoral research.

theory, which concentrated on Bluestone (1957), Wagner (1975), Kline (1996), Cartmell and Whelehan (1999) and Hutcheon (2006) to establish the key debates within this genre, especially its emphasis upon fidelity criticism, the latitude of translation and the range of methods available to the adaptor (see Chapter One). Although this theoretical context provided a useful framework for a series of early video experiments, based upon Wagner's three modes of adaptation (1975), it felt like a formality at times and I was unsure that I would be able to produce work that I would be satisfied with as an end product.

Notably, my '*transposition*' experiments highlighted problems of literalness and predictability caused by showing *and* telling (Hutcheon 2006: 23), whilst my attempts to create '*analogy*' sequences in particular, recognised the danger of producing work that was so distanced from the original source that they became separate entities, which questioned the very need for the literary text. During my practice-led research, I was able to recognise my creative processes and respond to the difficulties I encountered, including creating obtuse meaning, triggered by an over-reliance on theoretical concerns. Consultation with literary scholarship on *The Waste Land* correlated with the dominance of case study analysis in film theory, which privileges the source, yet it was also realised that adaptation can provide accessibility to dense literary texts (Naremore 2000, Mitchell 2007) (see Chapter One).

Nevertheless, the critical analysis of other visual interpretations of *The Waste Land*, produced by Juan Muñoz (1989), Deborah Warner (1995), John Smith (1999) and Chris Marker (2005) enabled the realisation that the adaptation methods identified specifically by Wagner, Kline and Hutcheon were perhaps too restrictive and not necessarily suited to fine art interpretations of literary texts (see Chapter Three). I consequently allowed myself to consider the possibility of hybrid approaches that utilised multiple methods or occupied the space in-between these rigid definitions. Despite the formulaic way of testing out Wagner's modes, these experiments

became more open-ended and resulted in a shift from literal translation to non-literal, thematic interpretation that employed several methods, for example, the isolation of particular lines or a re-scripting exercise, together with a connection to specific images, characters or concepts.

This chosen method was informed by the acknowledgement that I was dealing with an impressionistic modernist text that deviated from the linearity and definable narratives of traditional realist fiction. It was important at this stage to situate *The Waste Land* within the modernist context, and I, therefore, investigated the use of bricolage, multiple perspectives, allusions, metaphor and cinematic structure in Eliot's poem, highlighted by Jacob Korg (1960) and Sanford Schwartz (1985) (see Chapter's Three and Four), which seemed to reflect the subversive stylistic techniques employed by avant-garde filmmakers Germaine Dulac, Sergei Eisenstein, Fernand Leger, Man Ray and Dziga Vertov. It became apparent that modernist literature, specifically poetry, shared similarities with film in terms of rhythm, repetition and metaphor, (Robert Richardson 1969, Cheryl Potter 1990 and Viktor Shklovsky 1994), so that the transition from modernist poem to moving image could be regarded as a more harmonious process (see Chapter One).

However, it was biographical research on Eliot that led to an identification with the shift from his theory of impersonality outlined in his essay, 'Tradition and the individual Talent' (1919), to his later admission of the true autobiographical nature of his work (Miller 1977, Ellman 1987, Gordon 1998 and Brooker 2004),<sup>6</sup> that instigated the recognition of my practice as a form of self-portraiture, which had been previously shielded by an emphasis upon literary adaptation. This insight accentuated the fact that my visual interpretation of *The Waste Land* was also "a submerged biography" (Miller 1977: 37), that shared Eliot's effacement through "masks, personae and ventriloquy" (Ellman 1987: 3) (see Chapter Two).

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<sup>6</sup> Evidenced in 'The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism' (1933) and *On Poetry and Poets* (1957).

Through the re-evaluation of my past works, it was clear that they dealt not only with autobiographical experience, but, more importantly, with harrowing events or painful emotions. In view of this, literature is utilised as a displacement device for channelling difficult autobiographical experience, enabling the recollection and re-imagining of past trauma. By questioning how literature operated as a resource to represent the self within my practice, the *Waste Land* project became an attempt to address the breakdown of my parent's marriage, their divorce and the consequent estrangement from my father.

This particular kind of domestic experience paralleled Ann E. Kaplan's (2005) pertinent debates regarding the concept of 'family trauma', which she believed could be 'translated' through art (Kaplan 2005:19) (see Chapter Two). Indeed, identification with Jo Spence and Rosy Martin's method of re-enactment phototherapy allowed for the notion of transformative role-play "as an act of therapy and exorcism" (Miller 1977: 42) to emerge during my research. Whilst I recognised the relevance of a Freudian analysis of my practice, I focused specifically upon aspects of "remembering and abreacting" (Freud 1914b/2003:33) outlined in his essay 'Remembering, Repeating and Working Through' (1914) which assisted the confrontation of these repressed memories.

Moving away from Eliot and the poem, my explorations became increasingly centred upon theoretical debates within autobiography and representation in order to determine whether my methods were gender specific (Smith 1993, Marcus 1994, Stanley 1995, Gale and Gardner 2004, Heddon 2008), distinguishing fundamental concerns such as the cathartic nature of confessional practices, in terms of what we choose to reveal or conceal (see Chapter Two). Marsha Meskimmon warns of the risk of work by female artists being reduced to "psychobiography" (Meskimmon 1996: 79), since they are more commonly associated with the personal sphere, referring to the artist Frida Kahlo in particular, whose practice is inevitably interpreted in the light of the traumatic events she experienced.

The study of women's self-portraiture detected a subversion of objectification, replaced by an involvement with masquerade, role-play and self-effacement, together with the creation of shifting rather than fixed identities (see Chapter Two).<sup>7</sup> Indeed, my attempt to re-position my practice identified a habitual employment of elusive visual strategies. Prompted by Joyce Tenneson-Cohen's survey, *IN/SIGHTS: Self Portraits by Women* (1979), the methods I adopt included: 'The Surrogate Double', 'Self-Transformation', 'Nostalgia and the Past', 'Subjective Perspectives', 'Dreams, Fantasies and Nightmares', 'the Anonymous Figure', 'Incorporation of Natural Forms', 'Traces of the Self' and 'the Disembodied Self' (see Chapter Two and Chapter Four). This approach signified a shifting subjectivity within my practice that can never be truly unmasked and corresponded with the fluidity and staging of the self by artists Francesca Woodman, Ana Mendieta and Sam Taylor-Wood. The ambiguity of these self-portraits (Borzello 1998: 171), together with their purpose of communicating traumatic autobiographical experience, meant that I termed them more appropriately as 'self-representations'.

Indeed, this identification of a fragmented, multiple self led to an association with contemporary postmodern feminist arts practice to challenge dominant patriarchal discourses and represent female subjectivity by employing subversive modernist techniques, such as, disrupting narrative flow, montage and re-appropriation (Pollock 1987, Wolff 1990, Meskimmon 1996, Chadwick 1998) (see Chapter Four). Having deviated from Eliot's poem and its modernist context, this development was reminiscent of Brooker and Bentley's perception of *The Waste Land* as a "cubist portrait", formulated by "multiperspectivism" or over layered shifting viewpoints

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<sup>7</sup> Susan Bright's recent publication, *Autofocus: The Self-Portrait in Contemporary Photography* (2010), identifies a renaissance in the genre of self-portraiture in last ten years and places her study within a postmodern context around issues of gender, race and sexuality, with the selected artist's work grouped together under themes of 'Autobiography', 'Body', 'Masquerade', 'Studio & the Album' and 'Performance'. Acknowledging Claude Cahun's seminal work using the performed self, Bright highlights the current preoccupation with masquerade and role-play, suggesting the fact that the self is "all persuasive but also elusive, hidden, collaborative, duplicitous, camouflaged, constructed, disguised, discursive and fleeting, always present but impossible to pin down" (Bright 2010: 21). Although some of the artists used similar methods of self-representation, such as the family album and role-play, only a few were influenced by art historical sources, with none drawing upon literary texts as a means of self-representation.

(Brooker and Bentley 1990: 11) and reconnected my interpretive method to my self-representational practice, bringing the research back to the source text.

### **3. Self-Representational Practices**

By examining the relationship between the completed work and Eliot's poem, I was able to identify several connections, which had informed the research and creative production, suggesting that my interpretation was indeed guided by my chosen source. The thematic and conceptual content of *The Waste Land* underpinned my metaphorical interpretation, yet I was also influenced by its modernist context and stylistic concerns, together with the appreciation of Eliot's allusive practice, which allowed the development of my own contextual influences. Having formulated a biographical connection with Eliot, I drew parallels between the disintegration of Eliot's marriage with that of my parents'. In particular, it was the subversion of Eliot's impersonality theory (see Chapter Two) that unearthed my autobiographical intentions and elusive modes of self-representation, which corresponded with Eliot's fabrication of the self through his poetry and excessive allusions.

Whilst it was questioned whether Eliot was problematic as a choice to address issues of female self-representation, because of his misogynistic portrayal of women, who appear as fragmented body parts or unidentified "faceless" figures in his poetry (Miller 1977, Ellman 1987, Brooker and Bentley 1990, Levenson 1999, Parsons 2000), it was recognised that this was not my initial starting point. However, in retrospect, my interpretation could be perceived as a gendered 'talking back' to Eliot, or more perceptibly, a 'talking back' to my father (see Chapter Four). By employing such evasive self-representational strategies within my art practice, the project could be reframed as 'My *Waste Land*', since Eliot's derogatory depiction of the female body has been reclaimed as a form of self-portraiture, much like Alice Anderson's and Jo Spence's re-invention of traditional fairytales (see Chapter Two and Three).

As a result of the research, I have been able to recognise five different models of gendered self-representation that contribute to the field of female self-portraiture. First that of an *'Adapted Self'*, whereby literature acts as a form of displacement and, second, the creation of the *'Elusive Self'* through my chosen visual strategies. Third, a *'Shifting Self'*, to represent an unstable subjectivity, together with the multiple stylistic, adaptation and self-representational methods I adopt. Fourth, was the definition of an *'Inhabiting Self'*, that occupies metaphorical *'waste-land-scapes'* and lastly, a *'Performing Self'*, that actively participates in therapeutic re-enactments. It could be argued that there is a relationship between the ways in which the self is visually represented, (seen only through traces, shadows, or in partial forms) with my selective interpretative method (see Chapter One and Three). Based upon these findings, I, therefore, suggest that in terms of theorising interpretation, these *'Literary Fragmentations'* that strike an autobiographical resonance, *parallels* the elusive self-representational visual strategies utilized within the work that operate as *'Fragmentations of the Self'*.

Having situated my practice within a relevant historical, theoretical and contemporary context it became evident that a considerable proportion of women's art practice is autobiographical in nature; however, my research focused on those which dealt specifically with traumatic experiences, in particular, Tracey Emin, Frida Kahlo, Ana Mendieta, Tracey Moffatt and Sarah Pucill. Indeed, there is a established tradition of staged female self-portraiture, seen in the work of artists like Claude Cahun, Cindy Sherman, Jo Spence and Francesca Woodman who employ methods of masking, role-play and fragmentation. Consequently, I would propose that whilst my multiple self-representational strategies can be allied with many of my contemporaries, there are few artists who produce self-portraits derived from literature. Although I have found distinctive similarities with the work of Alice Anderson and Sam Taylor-Wood, who are also concerned with visualising trauma, their practice does not consistently draw upon literary sources.

#### 4. A Praxis of Adaptation

As a multiple multimedia installation, *Waste Land* is structurally and stylistically unique in comparison to prior adaptations discussed in Chapter Three, (which have translated the text into a theatrical performance, a short artist film or a individual installation), in that it comprises five rooms consisting of eleven video and photographic works. Regardless of this fact, the analysis of other fine art interpretations of Eliot's poetry in the light of film adaptation theory enabled the realisation that my own interpretive method is distinctly different from those artists and filmmakers I had encountered since their rationale was driven by politicized viewpoints, cultural commentary, aesthetic, psychological or humorous approaches to the source text.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, I have discovered that I interpret literature emotionally and selectively in order to produce ambiguous self-portraits, allowing the text to function as a mediating tool for the recollection and visualisation of past traumatic experience. This alternative method is firmly positioned within a fine art context, and aims to adopt a therapeutic stance, utilizing adaptation as autobiography, realised through a re-scripting process of fragmentary extraction based upon empathy and identification. In this sense, I allow myself to 'speak' through the text, in order to unlock and re-imagine past memories so that some form of conversion can take place through staged re-enactment. By 'acting out' these recalled experiences instigated by literary interpretation, I would maintain that my method moves beyond Wagner's '*Analogy*' (Wagner 1975: 227), Hutcheon's '*process of creation*' (Hutcheon 2006: 8), or Kline's mode of '*transformation*' (Kline 1996: 72), since the process performs a functional, cathartic role in order to create another form; that of self-portraiture, rather than being primarily concerned with varying levels of fidelity to the source (see Chapter One and Three).

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<sup>8</sup> It is noteworthy that all of the works derived from Eliot's poetry that I have identified in this study were created within last twenty years, from Juan Muñoz's installation *The Waste Land* (1987) to Chris Marker's video installation *Owls At Noon Prelude: The Hollow Men* (2005) (see Chapter Three).

Indeed, as my research progressed, I was increasingly conscious of the fact that I was working through the poem systematically to discover my praxis of adaptation, in the course of carefully considered thinking and testing out of practice. Whilst I have examined each of the completed works from *Waste Land* in depth (see Chapter Four), it is important to realise that there is a visible evidence of my evolving practice over the five-year research period, and across the five rooms of the final installation, as I became aware of, and, refined my interpretive method. Therefore, I would suggest that certain works are more successful than others, notably, those produced between 2008-2009. In this respect, I propose that the four most significant works are *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008), *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009), *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009) and *Who is the Third who Walks Always beside You?* (2009).

What is unique to these works is a process of 'becoming', of an emotional embodiment of the text through a re-imagining of repressed memory. As looser, open-ended adaptations, there is a conscious 'letting go', not only of the burden of fidelity to the source text, but, in particular, a lack of inhibition of communicating deeply personal issues as the work became less self-conscious. In terms of making, these were the most confessional pieces and, are, consequently, highly emotive and intimate, possessing a haunting, unnerving intensity that reaches a certain pitch. The *Hushing the Room Enclosed* photographic and sound installation was the first time I allowed such a transformation to take place in the actual process of making, by actively recollecting past family arguments through the paranoid woman's speech in Eliot's poem and re-enacting them through recorded voiceover. By pairing the manipulated, multi-layered soundscape with the static photographic images of stairs and doorways, I constructed an experiential narrative that imposed a jarring effect on the spectator.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Feedback from the audience at the Chelsea College of Art installation included one lady who said it made her feel "uncomfortable" (28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October 2008: *The Art of Research: Research Narratives*, Chelsea College of Art and Design).

It is notable that the development of *The Deep Sea Swell* video occurred at the same time as the ritualistic burning of the family photograph in *Sermon: Vol.V Burning burning burning*, which served as a bridging device for the 'working through' of past trauma. Informed by a Freudian reading, together with Jo Spence and Rosy Martin's phototherapy work, there is a sense of a learning process taking place through an examination of the past. Indeed, the pre-production notes within my sketchbook refer to "picking up emotional affects of the poem through key issues", and this re-surfacing of repressed memories subsequently led to the creation of the visual metaphor of the family photograph emerging from the depths of the sea, to represent the continued absence of my father and my conflicting sentiments.

The processes recorded in the sketchbook development of the last room, 'What the Thunder Said', reveals an intensity of thinking and a close reading of the poem, together with a deep engagement with literary criticism, as I was thinking about how the series was going to end, and what the works would symbolise, in terms of my 'family trauma'. By this stage of my research I was acutely aware of my adaptation method, using the poem as a channelling device to recall and represent autobiographical experience, which adopted an intuitive, subjective response to the source text. The three key points that were identified in relation to this part of the poem and documented in my sketchbook, was, first, memories of past parental marital arguments, together with a questioning of the institution of family and marriage.<sup>10</sup> Second, my continued estrangement from my father ("But who is that on the other side of you?" l.365) informed by an acceptance of his eternal haunting presence after making the previous works, *Sermon: Vol.V* and *The Deep Sea Swell*. Lastly, Eliot's reference to Christ's journey to Emmaus, compared to my own artistic

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<sup>10</sup> Quotations that were extracted from the poem in my sketchbook included: "the frosty silence" (l.323), "the shouting and the crying" (l.325), "sullen faces sneer and snarl" (l.344), "Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison" (l.415), "Murmur of maternal lamentation" (l.368), "Tolling reminiscent bells that kept the hours" (l.384), "Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel/There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home" (l.388-89), "The awful daring of a moment's surrender" (l.404), "Your heart would have responded" (l.411), "These fragments I have shored against my ruins" (l.431), "Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata" (l.433) ("Give. Sympathize. Control").

journey through the poem and through each of the final 'rooms', as I reflected upon the experience, desiring closure; "Shall I at least set my lands in order?" (l.425).

This journey was translated into the two symbolic performance videos, *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* and *Who is the Third who Walks Always beside You?*, where the physical act of walking allowed some kind of meditation and progression to take place. Both videos were conceived at the same time and shot within a month of each other, and marked a significant progression in my practice, whereby I became an active performer within the work, dressing up as a bride and participating in a mournful visual representation of separation. In so doing, these works, like *Hushing the Room Enclosed* and *The Deep Sea Swell*, spatialized *The Waste Land* into an experiential installation format, which permitted immersion by the audience, as well as myself.<sup>11</sup>

By comparison, the early *Waste Land* works were less effective, since they were too literal or close to the text, as well as laboured to theoretical concerns or a modernist context. Whilst *PastPresent* established the re-examination of family history, it alluded to familiar conventions of re-photography and was preoccupied with the signification of family snapshots. Whilst the *Urban Shadow Walks* and *Rural Shadow Walks*, together with *I Knew Nothing* were rooted in stylistic methods of avant-garde filmmaking and historical research on the *flâneur*, they were also closely connected to Eliot's poem, referencing recognisable imagery and landscapes. The remaining works, *Fortune-telling/Re-telling*, *In the Cage* and the *Sermon* photographs signified an important transitional phrase in my investigation, since, whilst they performed a therapeutic role, they produced a closed narrative,

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<sup>11</sup> Bill Viola's evocative video works particularly influenced my transition from photography to video art. I saw *Nantes Triptych* (1992) for the first time in *Between Cinema and a Hard Place*, Tate Modern (12<sup>th</sup> May-3<sup>rd</sup> December 2000) which had a physical as well as emotional effect on me, and have subsequently seen *Bill Viola: The Passions*, The National Gallery, London (22<sup>nd</sup> October 2003-4<sup>th</sup> January 2004), and *Bill Viola, The Tristan Project*, Haunch of Venison and St. Olaves College, London (21<sup>st</sup> June-2<sup>nd</sup> September 2006).

which was inaccessible to potential audiences and, therefore, operated as a form of experimental research, rather than as publicly viewed work.<sup>12</sup>

The *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* video is a prime example of this, being representative of a successful method of phototherapy through the re-assessment of childhood family snapshots, yet only having a personal relevance. This was due to the fact that, rather than creating an emotional connection for audience, its over-construction through superimposition techniques, meant they could only quickly comprehend an image, before subsequent layers distorted their view. On reflection, *In the Cage* was too conceptual in its approach and difficult for the audience to empathize with, although viewers were able to detect notions of entrapment and escapism.<sup>13</sup> The *Sermon* photographs were too literal and overwhelmed by connections to Eliot, theoretical issues and contextual influences that masked the true meaning of work, as I had difficulty in deciding how much to reveal and, therefore, created a desensitized recollection of memory where traumatic experience was held at distance, rather than confronted. However, the performative aspects of Vol.I and Vol.V were the most emotive, whereby acting out for camera in the close-up mirror reflection signified a 'getting into character', caught in moment of consciousness, and the vengeful burning of the photograph in Vol.V which prompted a shift in emphasis towards the process of making as therapy.

In terms of future dissemination, it is pertinent to ask, what the relationship is between the four successful works and the poem? Past experience of exhibiting different pieces from *Waste Land* has led me to the conclusion that whilst they are traceable to the source, they can also be viewed independently. One of the key observations I acquired from the talk I delivered in association with the 'Still-

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<sup>12</sup> It is relevant to state that the re-enactment phototherapy method established by Spence and Martin, based on co-counselling is not made for public consumption.

<sup>13</sup> Feedback from artist talk, Plymouth College of Art, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2008 (in association with 'The Waste Land: PhD Work-in-Progress' exhibition, Viewpoint Gallery, 22<sup>nd</sup> April-3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008).

Moving' exhibition at the Viewfinder Photography Gallery in London,<sup>14</sup> was that the audience felt that knowledge of the literary text allowed them to gain another level of complexity and enrichment, despite the fact that the work did function successfully without prior understanding of source material. However, it was the installation of *Hushing the Room Enclosed* in the 'The Art of Research: Research narratives' exhibition at Chelsea College of Art, which proved that they could also be seen as distinct works in their own right (see Chapter Three).<sup>15</sup> Considered in this way, I can claim a sense of ownership over my interpretation, as the text becomes my own, rather than Eliot's, through a transformation process that becomes representative of the self and of family trauma.

To summarise, the thesis that emerges from my research is that by allowing oneself to respond emotionally and selectively to an existing text through re-enactment, literary adaptation can act as catharsis for the recollection and re-staging of previously repressed memories. In this respect, I have demonstrated that there is space for a distinctive method of fine art adaptation theory to exist alongside the canon of existing literature that acknowledges fundamental concerns of the genre, yet offers a very different means of intention, approach and outcome. Rather than being preoccupied by the translation from one medium into another and the associated issues of fidelity and latitude, I have established an alternative, unorthodox method that employs literary adaptation, not only as a autobiographical tool, but, more importantly, as a therapeutic process, which permits the externalisation of past traumatic experiences through constructed visual narratives. Through the research that substantiates this thesis, I have discovered an innovatory method of self-representation, one in which the very procedure of literary interpretation is used as a mechanism for the re-imaging of memory, which, therefore, becomes an integral part of the resulting elusive self-portrait.

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<sup>14</sup> Artist talk, London Independent Photographers group, 18<sup>th</sup> December 2007 in association with the solo exhibition, 'Still-Moving', Viewfinder Gallery, Greenwich, London (5<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> December 2007).

<sup>15</sup> *The Art of Research: Research Narratives*, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London (28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> October 2008).

## APPENDIX A.

**T.S. Eliot (1888–1965)**

### **THE WASTE LAND (1922)**

#### **I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD**

April is the cruellest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers.  
Summer surprised us, coming over the Starnbergersee  
With a shower of rain; we stopped in the colonnade,  
And went on in sunlight, into the Hofgarten, 10  
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.  
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Litauen, echt deutsch.  
And when we were children, staying at the archduke's,  
My cousin's, he took me out on a sled,  
And I was frightened. He said, Marie,  
Marie, hold on tight. And down we went.  
In the mountains, there you feel free.  
I read, much of the night, and go south in the winter.

What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow  
Out of this stony rubbish? Son of man, 20  
You cannot say, or guess, for you know only  
A heap of broken images, where the sun beats,  
And the dead tree gives no shelter, the cricket no relief,  
And the dry stone no sound of water. Only  
There is shadow under this red rock,  
(Come in under the shadow of this red rock),  
And I will show you something different from either  
Your shadow at morning striding behind you  
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;  
I will show you fear in a handful of dust. 30

*Frisch weht der Wind  
Der Heimat zu.  
Mein Irisch Kind,  
Wo weilest du?*

'You gave me hyacinths first a year ago;  
'They called me the hyacinth girl.'  
—Yet when we came back, late, from the hyacinth garden,  
Your arms full, and your hair wet, I could not  
Speak, and my eyes failed, I was neither  
Living nor dead, and I knew nothing, 40  
Looking into the heart of light, the silence.  
*Od' und leer das Meer.*

Madame Sosostris, famous clairvoyante,  
Had a bad cold, nevertheless  
Is known to be the wisest woman in Europe,  
With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,  
Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor,  
(Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)  
Here is Belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,  
The lady of situations. 50  
Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,  
And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,  
Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,

Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find  
 The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.  
 I see crowds of people, walking round in a ring.  
 Thank you. If you see dear Mrs. Equitone,  
 Tell her I bring the horoscope myself:  
 One must be so careful these days.

Unreal City, 60  
 Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,  
 A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many,  
 I had not thought death had undone so many.  
 Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,  
 And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.  
 Flowed up the hill and down King William Street,  
 To where Saint Mary Woolnoth kept the hours  
 With a dead sound on the final stroke of nine.  
 There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying 'Stetson!  
 'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae! 70  
 'That corpse you planted last year in your garden,  
 'Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?  
 'Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?  
 'Oh keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,  
 'Or with his nails he'll dig it up again!  
 'You! hypocrite lecteur!—mon semblable,—mon frère!

## II. A GAME OF CHESS

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,  
 Glowed on the marble, where the glass  
 Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines 80  
 From which a golden Cupidon peeped out  
 (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)  
 Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra  
 Reflecting light upon the table as  
 The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,  
 From satin cases poured in rich profusion;  
 In vials of ivory and coloured glass  
 Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes,  
 Unguent, powdered, or liquid—troubled, confused  
 And drowned the sense in odours; stirred by the air 90  
 That freshened from the window, these ascended  
 In fattening the prolonged candle-flames,  
 Flung their smoke into the laquearia,  
 Stirring the pattern on the coffered ceiling.  
 Huge sea-wood fed with copper  
 Burned green and orange, framed by the coloured stone,  
 In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.  
 Above the antique mantel was displayed  
 As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene  
 The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king  
 So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale 100  
 Filled all the desert with inviolable voice  
 And still she cried, and still the world pursues,  
 'Jug Jug' to dirty ears.  
 And other withered stumps of time  
 Were told upon the walls; staring forms  
 Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.  
 Footsteps shuffled on the stair.  
 Under the firelight, under the brush, her hair  
 Spread out in fiery points  
 Glowed into words, then would be savagely still. 110

'My nerves are bad to-night. Yes, bad. Stay with me.  
 'Speak to me. Why do you never speak? Speak.  
 'What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?

'I never know what you are thinking. Think.'

I think we are in rats' alley  
Where the dead men lost their bones.

'What is that noise?'

The wind under the door.

'What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?'

Nothing again nothing.

120

'Do

'You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you remember

'Nothing?'

I remember

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

'Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?'

But

O O O O that Shakespeherian Rag—

It's so elegant

So intelligent

130

'What shall I do now? What shall I do?'

'I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

'With my hair down, so. What shall we do to-morrow?'

'What shall we ever do?'

The hot water at ten.

And if it rains, a closed car at four.

And we shall play a game of chess,

Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door.

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said—

I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,

140

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.

He'll want to know what you done with that money he gave you

To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.

You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,

He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.

And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,

He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,

And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.

Oh is there, she said. Something o' that, I said.

150

Then I'll know who to thank, she said, and give me a straight look.

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

If you don't like it you can get on with it, I said.

Others can pick and choose if you can't.

But if Albert makes off, it won't be for lack of telling.

You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.

(And her only thirty-one.)

I can't help it, she said, pulling a long face,

It's them pills I took, to bring it off, she said.

(She's had five already, and nearly died of young George.)

160

The chemist said it would be alright, but I've never been the same.

You are a proper fool, I said.

Well, if Albert won't leave you alone, there it is, I said,

What you get married for if you don't want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,

And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot—

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME

Goonight Bill. Goonight Lou. Goonight May. Goonight.

170

Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.

Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good night, good night.

### III. THE FIRE SERMON

The river's tent is broken: the last fingers of leaf  
Clutch and sink into the wet bank. The wind  
Crosses the brown land, unheard. The nymphs are departed.  
Sweet Thames, run softly, till I end my song.  
The river bears no empty bottles, sandwich papers,  
Silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends  
Or other testimony of summer nights. The nymphs are departed.  
And their friends, the loitering heirs of city directors;  
Departed, have left no addresses. 180  
By the waters of Leman I sat down and wept...  
Sweet Thames, run softly till I end my song,  
Sweet Thames, run softly, for I speak not loud or long.  
But at my back in a cold blast I hear  
The rattle of the bones, and chuckle spread from ear to ear.

A rat crept softly through the vegetation  
Dragging its slimy belly on the bank  
While I was fishing in the dull canal  
On a winter evening round behind the gashouse 190  
Musing upon the king my brother's wreck  
And on the king my father's death before him.  
White bodies naked on the low damp ground  
And bones cast in a little low dry garret,  
Rattled by the rat's foot only, year to year.  
But at my back from time to time I hear  
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring  
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.  
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter  
And on her daughter 200  
They wash their feet in soda water  
*Et, O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!*

Twit twit twit  
Jug jug jug jug jug jug  
So rudely forc'd.  
Tereu

Unreal City  
Under the brown fog of a winter noon  
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant  
Unshaven, with a pocket full of currants 210  
C.i.f. London: documents at sight,  
Asked me in demotic French  
To luncheon at the Cannon Street Hotel  
Followed by a weekend at the Metropole.

At the violet hour, when the eyes and back  
Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits  
Like a taxi throbbing waiting,  
I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,  
Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see 220  
At the violet hour, the evening hour that strives  
Homeward, and brings the sailor home from sea,  
The typist home at teatime, clears her breakfast, lights  
Her stove, and lays out food in tins.  
Out of the window perilously spread  
Her drying combinations touched by the sun's last rays,  
On the divan are piled (at night her bed)  
Stockings, slippers, camisoles, and stays.  
I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs  
Perceived the scene, and foretold the rest—  
I too awaited the expected guest. 230  
He, the young man carbuncular, arrives,  
A small house agent's clerk, with one bold stare,

One of the low on whom assurance sits  
 As a silk hat on a Bradford millionaire.  
 The time is now propitious, as he guesses,  
 The meal is ended, she is bored and tired,  
 Endeavours to engage her in caresses  
 Which still are unreprieved, if undesired.  
 Flushed and decided, he assaults at once;  
 Exploring hands encounter no defence; 240  
 His vanity requires no response,  
 And makes a welcome of indifference.  
 (And I Tiresias have foresuffered all  
 Enacted on this same divan or bed;  
 I who have sat by Thebes below the wall  
 And walked among the lowest of the dead.)  
 Bestows on final patronising kiss,  
 And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit...

She turns and looks a moment in the glass,  
 Hardly aware of her departed lover; 250  
 Her brain allows one half-formed thought to pass:  
 'Well now that's done: and I'm glad it's over.'  
 When lovely woman stoops to folly and  
 Paces about her room again, alone,  
 She smooths her hair with automatic hand,  
 And puts a record on the gramophone.

'This music crept by me upon the waters'  
 And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.  
 O City city, I can sometimes hear  
 Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street, 260  
 The pleasant whining of a mandoline  
 And a clatter and a chatter from within  
 Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls  
 Of Magnus Martyr hold  
 Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

The river sweats  
 Oil and tar  
 The barges drift  
 With the turning tide  
 Red sails 270  
 Wide  
 To leeward, swing on the heavy spar.  
 The barges wash  
 Drifting logs  
 Down Greenwich reach  
 Past the Isle of Dogs.  
     Weialala leia  
     Wallala leialala

Elizabeth and Leicester 280  
 Beating oars  
 The stern was formed  
 A gilded shell  
 Red and gold  
 The brisk swell  
 Rippled both shores  
 Southwest wind  
 Carried down stream  
 The peal of bells  
 White towers 290  
     Weialala leia  
     Wallala leialala

Trams and dusty trees.  
 Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew  
 Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees  
 Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.'  
 'My feet are at Moorgate, and my heart  
 Under my feet. After the event  
 He wept. He promised "a new start".  
 I made no comment. What should I resent?'  
 'On Margate Sands. 300  
 I can connect  
 Nothing with nothing.  
 The broken fingernails of dirty hands.  
 My people humble people who expect  
 Nothing.'

la la

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning  
 O Lord Thou pluckest me out  
 O Lord Thou pluckest 310

burning

#### IV. DEATH BY WATER

Phlebas the Phoenician, a fortnight dead,  
 Forgot the cry of gulls, and the deep seas swell  
 And the profit and loss.

A current under sea

Picked his bones in whispers. As he rose and fell  
 He passed the stages of his age and youth  
 Entering the whirlpool.

Gentile or Jew

O you who turn the wheel and look to windward, 320  
 Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

#### V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces  
 After the frosty silence in the gardens  
 After the agony in stony places  
 The shouting and the crying  
 Prison and place and reverberation  
 Of thunder of spring over distant mountains  
 He who was living is now dead  
 We who were living are now dying  
 With a little patience 330

Here is no water but only rock  
 Rock and no water and the sandy road  
 The road winding above among the mountains  
 Which are mountains of rock without water  
 If there were water we should stop and drink  
 Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think  
 Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand  
 If there were only water amongst the rock  
 Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit  
 Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit 340  
 There is not even silence in the mountains  
 But dry sterile thunder without rain  
 There is not even solitude in the mountains  
 But red sullen faces sneer and snarl  
 From doors of mudcracked houses

If there were water

And no rock  
If there were rock  
And also water  
And water  
A spring 350  
A pool among the rock  
If there were the sound of water only  
Not the cicada  
And dry grass singing  
But sound of water over a rock  
Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees  
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop  
But there is no water

Who is the third who walks always beside you?  
When I count, there are only you and I together 360  
But when I look ahead up the white road  
There is always another one walking beside you  
Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded  
I do not know whether a man or a woman  
—But who is that on the other side of you?

What is that sound high in the air  
Murmur of maternal lamentation  
Who are those hooded hordes swarming  
Over endless plains, stumbling in cracked earth  
Ringed by the flat horizon only 370  
What is the city over the mountains  
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air  
Falling towers  
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria  
Vienna London  
Unreal

A woman drew her long black hair out tight  
And fiddled whisper music on those strings  
And bats with baby faces in the violet light  
Whistled, and beat their wings 380  
And crawled head downward down a blackened wall  
And upside down in air were towers  
Tolling reminiscent bells, that kept the hours  
And voices singing out of empty cisterns and exhausted wells.

In this decayed hole among the mountains  
In the faint moonlight, the grass is singing  
Over the tumbled graves, about the chapel  
There is the empty chapel, only the wind's home.  
It has no windows, and the door swings,  
Dry bones can harm no one. 390  
Only a cock stood on the rooftree  
Co co rico co co rico  
In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust  
Bringing rain

Gangā was sunken, and the limp leaves  
Waited for rain, while the black clouds  
Gathered far distant, over Himavānt.  
The jungle crouched, humped in silence.  
Then spoke the thunder  
D A 400  
*Datta*: what have we given?  
My friend, blood shaking my heart  
The awful daring of a moment's surrender  
Which an age of prudence can never retract  
By this, and this only, we have existed 405

Which is not to be found in our obituaries  
Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider  
Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor  
In our empty rooms

D A

410

*Dayadhvam*: I have heard the key  
Turn in the door once and turn once only  
We think of the key, each in his prison  
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison  
Only at nightfall, aetherial rumours  
Revive for a moment a broken Coriolanus

D A

*Damyata*: The boat responded  
Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar  
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded  
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient  
To controlling hands

420

I sat upon the shore  
Fishing, with the arid plain behind me  
Shall I at least set my lands in order?

London Bridge is falling down falling down falling down

*Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina*  
*Quando fiam ceu chelidon—O swallow swallow*  
*Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie*  
These fragments I have shored against my ruins  
Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.  
Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.

430

Shantih shantih shantih

## NOTES

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (Macmillan). Indeed, so deeply am I indebted, Miss Weston's book will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do; and I recommend it (apart from the great interest of the book itself) to any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble. To another work of anthropology I am indebted in general, one which has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean *The Golden Bough*; I have used especially the two volumes *Adonis*, *Attis*, *Osiris*. Anyone who is acquainted with these works will immediately recognize in the poem certain references to vegetation ceremonies.

### I. THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD

Line 20 Cf. Ezekiel 2:7.

23. Cf. Ecclesiastes 12:5.

31. V. *Tristan und Isolde*, i, verses 5-8.

42. Id. iii, verse 24.

46. I am not familiar with the exact constitution of the Tarot pack of cards, from which I have obviously departed to suit my own convenience. The Hanged Man, a member of the traditional pack, fits my purpose in two ways: because he is associated in my mind with the Hanged God of Frazer, and because I associate him with the hooded figure in the passage of the disciples to Emmaus in Part V. The Phoenician Sailor and the Merchant appear later; also the 'crowds of people', and Death by Water is executed in Part IV. The Man with Three Staves (an authentic member of the Tarot pack) I associate, quite arbitrarily, with the Fisher King himself.

60. Cf. Baudelaire:

'Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves,  
Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant.'

63. Cf. *Inferno*, iii. 55-7:

'si lunga tratta  
di gente, ch'io non avrei mai creduto  
che morte tanta n'avesse disfatta.'

64. Cf. *Inferno*, iv. 25-27:

'Quivi, secondo che per ascoltare,  
non avea pianto, ma' che di sospiri,  
che l'aura eterna facevan tremare.'

68. A phenomenon which I have often noticed.

74. Cf. the Dirge in Webster's *White Devil*.

76. V. Baudelaire, Preface to *Fleurs du Mal*.

## II. A GAME OF CHESS

77. Cf. *Antony and Cleopatra*, II. ii. 190.

92. Laquearia. V. *Aeneid*, I. 726:

dependent lychni laquearibus aureis incensi, et noctem flammis funalia vincunt.

98. Sylvan scene. V. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 140.

99. V. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, vi, Philomela.

100. Cf. Part III, l. 204.

115. Cf. Part III, l. 195.

118. Cf. Webster: 'Is the wind in that door still?'

126. Cf. Part I, l. 37, 48.

138. Cf. the game of chess in Middleton's *Women beware Women*.

## III. THE FIRE SERMON

176. V. Spenser, *Prothalamion*.

192. Cf. *The Tempest*, I. ii.

196. Cf. Marvell, *To His Coy Mistress*.

197. Cf. Day, *Parliament of Bees*:

'When of the sudden, listening, you shall hear,  
A noise of horns and hunting, which shall bring  
Actæon to Diana in the spring,  
Where all shall see her naked skin...'

199. I do not know the origin of the ballad from which these lines are taken: it was reported to me from Sydney, Australia.

202. V. Verlaine, *Parsifal*.

210. The currants were quoted at a price 'carriage and insurance free to London'; and the Bill of Lading, etc., were to be handed to the buyer upon payment of the sight draft.

218. Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a 'character', is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand Prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman, and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias sees, in fact, is the substance of the poem. The whole passage from Ovid is of great anthropological interest:

'...Cum Iunone iocos et 'maior vestra profecto est  
Quam, quae contingit maribus', dixisse, 'voluptas.'

Illa negat; placuit quae sit sententia docti

Quaerere Tiresiae: venus huic erat utraque nota.

Nam duo magnorum viridi coeuntia silva

Corpora serpentum baculi violaverat ictu

Deque viro factus, mirabile, femina septem

Egerat autumnos; octavo rursus eosdem

Vidit et 'est vestrae si tanta potentia plagae',

Dixit 'ut auctoris sortem in contraria mutet,

Nunc quoque vos feriam!' percussis anguibus isdem

Forma prior rediit genetivaeque venit imago.

Arbiter hic igitur sumptus de lite iocosa

Dicta Iovis firmat; gravius Saturnia iusto

Nec pro materia fertur doluisse sui que

Iudicis aeterna damnavit lumina nocte,

At pater omnipotens (neque enim licet inrita cuiquam

Facta dei fecisse deo) pro lumine adempto

Scire futura dedit poenamque levavit honore.'

221. This may not appear as exact as Sappho's lines, but I had in mind the 'longshore' or 'dory' fisherman, who returns at nightfall.

253. V. Goldsmith, the song in *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

257. V. *The Tempest*, as above.

264. The interior of St. Magnus Martyr is to my mind one of the finest among Wren's interiors. See *The Proposed Demolition of Nineteen City Churches* (P. S. King & Son, Ltd.).

266. The Song of the (three) Thames-daughters begins here. From line 292 to 306 inclusive they speak in turn. V. *Götterdämmerung*, III. i: The Rhine-daughters.

279. V. Froude, *Elizabeth*, vol. I, ch. iv, letter of De Quadra to Philip of Spain:

'In the afternoon we were in a barge, watching the games on the river. (The queen) was alone with Lord Robert and myself on the poop, when they began to talk nonsense, and went so far that Lord Robert at last said, as I was on the spot there was no reason why they should not be married if the queen pleased'

293. Cf. *Purgatorio*, V. 133:

'Ricorditi di me, che son la Pia;  
Siena mi fe', disfecemi Maremma.'

307. V. St. Augustine's *Confessions*: 'to Carthage then I came, where a cauldron of unholy loves sang all about mine ears'.

308. The complete text of the Buddha's Fire Sermon (which corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount) from which these words are taken, will be found translated in the late Henry Clarke Warren's *Buddhism in Translation* (Harvard Oriental Series). Mr. Warren was one of the great pioneers of Buddhist studies in the Occident.

309. From St. Augustine's *Confessions* again. The collocation of these two representatives of eastern and western asceticism, as the culmination of this part of the poem, is not an accident.

#### V. WHAT THE THUNDER SAID

In the first part of Part V three themes are employed: the journey to Emmaus, the approach to the Chapel Perilous (see Miss Weston's book), and the present decay of eastern Europe.

357. This is *Turdus aonalaschkae pallasii*, the hermit-thrush which I have heard in Quebec County. Chapman says (*Handbook of Birds in Eastern North America*) 'it is most at home in secluded woodland and thickety retreats.... Its notes are not remarkable for variety or volume, but in purity and sweetness of tone and exquisite modulation they are unequalled.' Its 'water-dripping song' is justly celebrated.

360. The following lines were stimulated by the account of one of the Antarctic expeditions (I forget which, but I think one of Shackleton's): it was related that the party of explorers, at the extremity of their strength, had the constant delusion that there was *one more member* than could actually be counted.

367-77. Cf. Hermann Hesse, *Blick ins Chaos*:

'Schon ist halb Europa, schon ist zumindest der halbe Osten Europas auf dem Wege zum Chaos, fährt betrunken im heiligen Wahn am Abgrund entlang und singt dazu, singt betrunken und hymnisch wie Dmitri Karamasoff sang. Ueber diese Lieder lacht der Bürger beleidigt, der Heilige und Seher hört sie mit Tränen.'

401. 'Datta, dayadhvam, damyata' (Give, sympathize, control). The fable of the meaning of the Thunder is found in the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*, 5, 1. A translation is found in Deussen's *Sechzig Upanishads des Veda*, p. 489.

407. Cf. Webster, *The White Devil*, V, vi:

    '...they'll remarry

Ere the worm pierce your winding-sheet, ere the spider  
Make a thin curtain for your epitaphs.'

411. Cf. *Inferno*, xxxiii. 46:

ed io sentii chiavar l'uscio di sotto  
all'orribile torre.

Also F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality*, p. 346:

'My external sensations are no less private to myself than are my thoughts or my feelings. In either case my experience falls within my own circle, a circle closed on the outside; and, with all its elements alike, every sphere is opaque to the others which surround it.... In brief, regarded as an existence which appears in a soul, the whole world for each is peculiar and private to that soul.'

424. V. Weston, *From Ritual to Romance*; chapter on the Fisher King.

427. V. *Purgatorio*, xxvi. 148.

'Ara vos prec per aquella valor  
'que vos guida al som de l'escalina,  
'sovegna vos a temps de ma dolor.'  
Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina.

428. V. *Pervigilium Veneris*. Cf. Philomela in Parts II and III.

429. V. Gerard de Nerval, Sonnet *El Desdichado*.

431. V. Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*.

433. Shantih. Repeated as here, a formal ending to an Upanishad. 'The Peace which passeth understanding' is a feeble translation of the conduct of this word.

## APPENDIX B: Exhibition Text

### **Sally Waterman: *Waste Land* (2005-2009)**

*Waste Land* is the culmination of a five-year project, which comprises eleven photographic and video installations derived from T. S. Eliot's 1922 poem. The chosen literary text functions as a mechanism through which the self is represented, utilising adaptation as autobiography. Waterman re-invents the source material through a re-scripting exercise, seeking associations with certain images, themes, characters or conceptual ideas to create a form of self-portraiture. In particular, literature operates as a masking device for a confessional practice based upon visualising past traumatic experiences. Through the transformative methods of constructed narratives, metaphorical landscapes and performed re-enactments, the *Waste Land* project became an attempt to work through the marital breakdown and divorce of Waterman's parents and her subsequent estrangement from her father. Difficult, yet universal experiences of conflict, betrayal, loss and separation are illuminated through a cathartic translation from poetry into visual art, where repressed memories are addressed through staging the self.

Due to the work's personal nature, Waterman adopts elusive modes of self-representation in order to situate herself apart from the audience. Resisting traditional objectified representations of women in Western art history she appears as an anonymous figure, a ghostly trace or a disembodied self. This multiple, shifting female subjectivity is reinforced through subversive, stylistic methods of superimposition, speed adjustment, repetition and fragmentation, acknowledging the poem's modernist context and drawing upon the work of early avant-garde filmmakers such as Dulac, Eisenstein, Leger, Man Ray and Vertov. Appropriating the bricolage effect of literary, mythological and cultural allusions within *The Waste Land*, Waterman's own interpretation is informed by a range of artistic influences, including Claude Cahun, Maya Deren, Frida Kahlo, Chris Marker, Juan Muñoz, Jo Spence, Sam Taylor-Wood and Bill Viola, which constructs another layer of interpretation in this submerged autobiography.

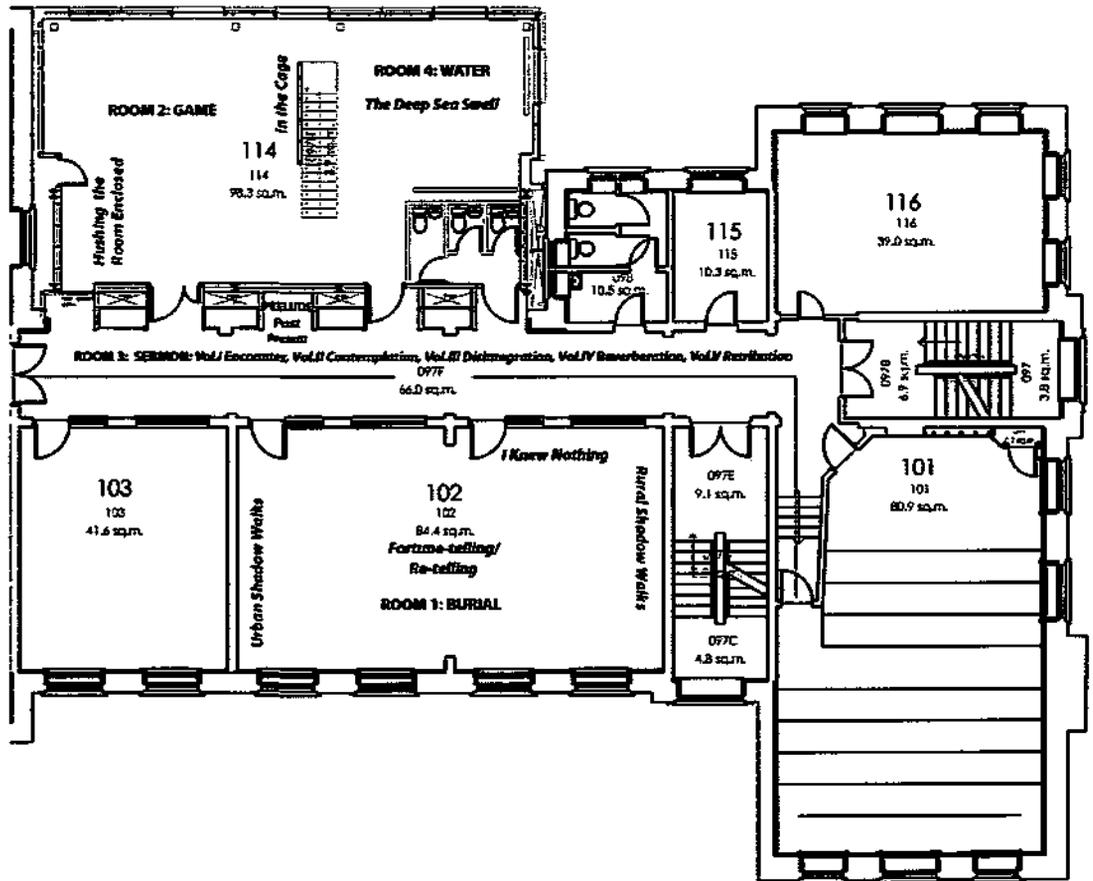
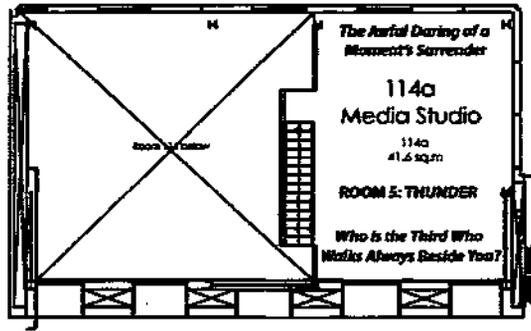
The five distinctive sections of Eliot's poem are converted into five gallery installations that experientially represent different stages of the artist's self-examination of family trauma. The overall sequence is introduced by a series of photographs, *PastPresent* (2005), which highlight issues of memory, identity and family rituals. Room one, 'Burial', serves as a meditation on the past and on the autobiographical importance of place, made evident within the *Rural* and *Urban*

*Shadow Walks* (2006) video projections filmed in the artist's childhood home of the Isle of Wight and her current residence in Deptford, London. Painful memories are recalled in the *I Knew Nothing* (2006) split screen video work supported by efforts to predict the future amid nostalgic re-assessments in *Fortune-telling/Re-telling* (2007). The second room, 'Game', deals with the complications of personal relationships, viewed as a series of manoeuvres, with parallels drawn between Eliot's troubled marriage and the artist's own experience of parental divorce. The non-communication between the poem's speakers is conceptually interpreted as a series of gestures that are acted out by Waterman, entrapped between two pillars on a sparse stage-like space within *In the Cage* (2007). The accompanying haunting sound-scape of the *Hushing the Room Enclosed* (2008) photographic installation reinforces this sense of paranoia with its static grid formation of interior transitory spaces where conversations are overheard and arguments initiated.

Room three, 'Sermon', focuses upon the emotional aftermath of separation and the disclosure of hidden secrets, portrayed through five photographic diptychs (2008-2009) that are reminiscent of Hogarth's *The Rake's Progress*, and conclude with the therapeutic burning of a graduation photograph of the father and daughter in *Retribution: Burning, burning, burning, burning* (2009). Room four, 'Water', is concerned with the continual haunting reminder of her father's absence, suggested by the emerging family snapshot from the watery depths in *The Deep Sea Swell* (2009) floor projection video. The final room, 'Thunder', addresses Waterman's continued estrangement from her father in the symbolic, funereal walking performance video, *Who is the Third Who Walks Always Beside You?* (2009). The accompanying *The Awful Daring of a Moment's Surrender* (2009) confronts the artist's matrimonial beliefs through role-play by re-imagining past events and projecting into the future through the proposition of surviving the *Waste Land*.

## APPENDIX C: Waste Land Exhibition Plan

Scott Building, University of Plymouth, January 2010



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