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FAMILY AND OTHER RELATIONS A thesis examining the extent to which family relationships shape the relations of art.

DALTON, PENELOPE

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FAMILY AND OTHER RELATIONS

A thesis examining the extent to which family relationships shape the relations of art.

by

PENELOPE DALTON

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth

In partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Dartington College of Arts

March 2008

Abstract

Family and other relations: a thesis examining the extent to which family relationships shape the relations of art. *by Penelope Dalton*

This thesis is sited in contemporary issues concerning gender and identity in relation to the arts. It aims to examine the nature of the family and the extent to which relationships and identities in the family might be analogous to the relations of fine art; these include relations between the artist and the artwork, between what is defined as 'art' and what is not, between the artwork and the viewer. It also touches on some of the other, innumerable relationships encountered in the arts: relations of materials form, feeling, thinking and making.

The thesis contains a discussion of the nature of family identities and relationships based on my own experiences in the mid-twentieth century and today. Families are at first divided into two main types, *normative* and *ethical*. These types represent the difference between ideal or stereotypical family relations and the way families actually live in practice. Analogies are made between normative families and traditional modes of defining art and ethical family relations and ethical notions of art. In the last chapter I suggest that relations that are core and normative are linked to marginal relations through ethical links made by liminal figures that pass between them.

Although issues of identity, patriarchy and binary difference appear in theoretical writings on art criticism and practice, there appears to be little contemporary debate in these issues in relation to the family and its relationships. The thesis begins to map out the terrain of such a field of enquiry.

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Author's Declaration

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Publications/Exhibitions:

2001. Journal article. 'Psychology and the subject of art education' in J. and J. Swift, *Disciplines, Fields and Change in Art Education*, Article Press: Birmingham. vol.3. pp. 83-96. [Appendix C. 1]

2003. Journal article. 'Where is 'the subject' of contextual practice?' in *The Journal of Visual Art Practice*, Intellect Publishers. 3:1. [Appendix C.2]

2003. September. *Imprinting Works* solo show of interim research work at the Dartington Gallery.

2004. Review essay 'Losing it': for exhibition of screen based work *Losing it*. Fenton gallery, Cork, Eire. [Appendix C.3]

2004. Interim exhibition of research practice. Margaret Street Gallery. Dept. of Art. Birmingham Institute of Art and Design.

2005. Review essay: 'Textures of memory' for Barbara Howey's exhibition: *Techniques of Memory*. Huddersfield Art Gallery. March. [Appendix C.4.]

2006. 'Feminist methodologies in art education: a critique' in *n.paradoxa: Journeys*. vol 17 (Jan). [Appendix C.5]

2006. Book Chapter and discussion: 'Like' in *Art Becomes You*., Henry Rogers (ed.) Article Press: Birmingham. [appendix C.6]

presentations given and conferences attended

2001. Paper: 'The creative construction of identity' given at the conference: *Performing The World*, New York. March

2001. Lecture by Invitation: 'Vision and subjectivity' Dept of Art & Architecture. Parson's School of Art. New York. October.

2002. Paper: 'Materials and meaning' given at the *Human Development Symposium*. Dept of Psychology. University of Central England.

2004. Paper: 'Like', given at conference, *Art Becomes You!* Birmingham Institute of Art and Design. University of Central England, Birmingham 1st May.

2004. Conference attended: *Predicaments in Visual Culture: Mediated Pleasures in (post) Feminist*

Chapter One it will be written in bold type and the reader is invited to turn to the glossary to access its wider range of possible associations.

Introduction to the Chapters and Their Contents

The aim of the thesis is to examine the extent to which family relations shape the relations of art. Through the example of the father/daughter relation, I demonstrate that binary, hierarchical male/female relations underpin the notion of a family, and how they seem to be reiterated in the processes of art making.

The first chapter introduces the scope of the background research and my intention to use experience and events in my family and in art practice. I explain the use and limitations of analogy as a research tool, and explain how I will trace back the analogies that link family relations to an unlike entity such as the relations of art.

I explain how I began the research intuitively, that is, having an emotional predisposition to enquire into father-daughter relations and believing, without evidence that normative family-like relations in art are undermining art's capacity for openness and fundamental change.

In Chapter Two I begin to discuss the binary practice of printing in the context of the normative family and the contradictory and elusive figure of the daughter.² I employ print as a particularly appropriate research medium because it has dominant and subordinate relations that I can compare to those of the father and daughter in the traditional family. Printing and its processes and materials can also be understood as analogous to any other binary relations: those of the family, of language, of cognition or the binary structure of analogy itself.³ Binary printing practices and processes have been carefully documented over the years so they can be unearthed, experimented with, retraced and analysed and made explicit and visible.

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2004. Interim exhibition of research practice. Margaret Street Gallery. Dept. of Art. Birmingham Institute of Art and Design.

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Guide to the Role of Practice and Access to Appendices.

The printed images that are bound in this submission are used to illustrate the text that carries the main narrative and arguments of the thesis. They consist of reproductions of artists' work, documentations of my studio practice and material drawn from published and uncopyrighted sources. They are printed as thumbnails, reproduced to illustrate and extend the text, or remind and introduce the reader to artworks and ideas mentioned in the text. These are small and not intended to disturb the writing. Other prints are proofs of experimental artworks I made in relation to the research and are bound in Appendix B. The outcomes of these experiments represent possibilities for future work in other mediums, scales and formats.¹

All the text and images in this document are printed. Many of the images have been remediated through other processes; they may have originally been drawings, photographic film transparencies, light projections but appear here reduced and formally subordinated to the reading of the text. I have used domestic printing technologies throughout and the final version of text and the materials I use are as required in the regulations: defaulted as black ink on a white paper substrate under 100 gsm.

Printing and its processes are ancient and have become incorporated into everyday language. Words that are used to name certain kinds of printing practice such as *impression*, *stereotype*, *case* and *imposing* are included - as well as a small selection of commonly used terms - in a glossary that either shows how printing terms have been transposed to everyday language or how familial and bodily terms are instantiated in printing. [Appendix A.] The first time a term appears in the text after

Chapter One it will be written in bold type and the reader is invited to turn to the glossary to access its wider range of possible associations.

Introduction to the Chapters and Their Contents

The aim of the thesis is to examine the extent to which family relations shape the relations of art. Through the example of the father/daughter relation, I demonstrate that binary, hierarchical male/female relations underpin the notion of a family, and how they seem to be reiterated in the processes of art making.

The first chapter introduces the scope of the background research and my intention to use experience and events in my family and in art practice. I explain the use and limitations of analogy as a research tool, and explain how I will trace back the analogies that link family relations to an unlike entity such as the relations of art.

I explain how I began the research intuitively, that is, having an emotional predisposition to enquire into father-daughter relations and believing, without evidence that normative family-like relations in art are undermining art's capacity for openness and fundamental change.

In Chapter Two I begin to discuss the binary practice of printing in the context of the normative family and the contradictory and elusive figure of the daughter.² I employ print as a particularly appropriate research medium because it has dominant and subordinate relations that I can compare to those of the father and daughter in the traditional family. Printing and its processes and materials can also be understood as analogous to any other binary relations: those of the family, of language, of cognition or the binary structure of analogy itself.³ Binary printing practices and processes have been carefully documented over the years so they can be unearthed, experimented with, retraced and analysed and made explicit and visible.

In Chapter Three, I look more closely at the gendered and familial binary relations of art through debates on difference, generated by the historical figure of *The Laocoön*. I suggest that all forms of representation have binary protocols at some fundamental level; and that art's differentiating codes performatively reiterate difference, and predispose the art's audiences to approach other aspects of the world in similar relations to those of the heterosexual binary relation. I speculate on the possibility that up to the mid- twentieth century, the growth and ubiquity of printing may have had some part to play in naturalising binary relations that are lived as relationships in the normative family.

Having set up the fundamental nature of gendering binaries in the first three chapters, in Chapter Four I recount how my practice with materials and my memories of experiences in the family, cuts across imagined polarity of binary difference and led me to revise some of my earlier assumptions. I recount how everyday experience, social and historical context, the effects of enlightened research, the environment, the feelings of the body, and art practice with messy materials and mediums all intervene to dissolve the regulatory effects of imaginary binary representations; How art's matter and the irregularities and waywardness of everyday experience confounds and interrupts potentially hierarchical family-like abstract binary relations and oppositional polarities.

In Chapter Five, I move from thinking of the family as series of binary normative relations to imagining it as a complex structure made up of both normative and ethical relationships. I recount how my practice shifted from analogue binary processes to more complex (yet still fundamentally binary) digital processes. Digital printing I speculate is constructed in 'childish' fetishistic relations that refer back to relations with infants to their parents. I go on in this chapter to construct a composite image

with a centre core and varying borders around the edges, to stand as an analogy for 'the family' in that it contains elements that are like normative and ethical relations.

In Chapter Six, I enlarge the combinatory figure of the dot to examine its blurred edges. I employ spatial margins and borders as analogies for the limits of definitions of the family and of art and the role of analogy itself.

I speculatively conclude that family relations are instantiated in the relations of art in areas that are infantile, basic and common. These are crucial, unconscious and appealing factors in art, but work with other social relationships beyond the sphere of the family that can and do override the family's regulating effects.

- ¹. The term 'medium' can be confusing as it is used for the materials of artmaking as well as contemporary image and information communication and broadcasting that uses photography film, tv, computer generated imagery and other screen based technologies. In this work, I have adopted the precedent of Rosalind Krauss in (1999) *"A Voyage on the North Sea": Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*. Thames & Hudson: London. Chapter 1. Here she uses the plural form 'mediums' to refer to matter: to physical materials such as ink, paint and pigment and the plural form 'media' to refer to virtual systems of image and information and broadcasting that employ these mediums. See glossary Appendix A
- ². Unless otherwise noted in the text, I will be using the term *print maker* and *print making* to describe those who make prints in general terms, but in particular those who have an enquiring or critical practice into the nature of printing as a medium. (I regard myself as primarily a print maker.) *Printmaking* and *printmaker* refer to traditional fine art practices and are commonly used in this context, and the terms *printer* and *printing* are generally reserved for commercial printing processes and practices. I use the term *printer* to refer to a person who does printing, and *printing machine* to digital printing machines.
- ³. Binary oppositions are said to be at the heart of Western philosophical thinking. To briefly summarise: one term of the binary opposition (nature over culture, presence over absence, speech over writing, rational over irrational) is privileged. By association (or analogously) this predisposes the formation of systems (philosophical, societal, and so on) and the operations of power (God, Truth, Man, Being, Consciousness, and so on) as working in similarly binary relations. Derrida's notion of deconstruction, employing Saussurian analysis of linguistic relations, exposed the arbitrary nature of linguistic binary relations, and thus questions the arbitrary relations of hierarchy on which those relations rest: what is dominant in one context can be subordinate in another, polar binaries can be equal or interdependent. Questioning the privileging of one term in binary relations reveals that one term cannot exist without the other, and the positive value assigned to one term may be reversible depending on context. See Derrida, J. (1978) *Writing and Difference*. Trans. A. Bass. Routledge: London and New York. See also:
<http://www.cs.odu.edu/~toida/nerzic/content/relation/definition/definition>. 30.07.07

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

The thesis is based on the hypothesis that relationships in the **family** shape many of those in art, and my aim is to find out if this is so and then, to what extent.¹

Much of the research has been carried out through **reflection** on my changing family relationships, speculatively comparing them to the relations I experience in art-making. It is sited in contemporary debates on gender, subjectivity and identity in relation to art and draws on literature primarily from feminism, aesthetics, cognitive science, research on the family and research on printing. Existing theories are called on to support, **enlarge** and confirm the intuitions that arose through practice, and have served to check, contradict or **realign** what the experience as practice suggested. Similarly, the practice modified how I interpreted, questioned or interrogated what exists as theory. This written submission represents the attempt to document my inchoate and unorganised thoughts and practices in a more orderly **form**, to follow the considerable changes in my thinking as the research progressed and indicate how the changes came about.

I began this **text**, writing about my father and my relationship to him. The memories I consciously evoked were of two scenarios. The first was the family context, and in particular the eight years when I lived alone with my father between the age of eleven and nineteen. The second is the context of art and the different historic and socially specific contexts of his and my practice: his as a printer in what was known as *The Print*, the London newspaper industry and mine as a print maker in the context of fine art. I count both my lived relationships in the family and print making as experience and practice that informed my research. My father as an older man (who is now dead) also represented the past: my own past and older concepts that I have adopted and to

which, like to him, I am emotionally **bound** or committed to in practice.

As I engaged in the research, I became preoccupied with how the past **imposed** itself on the present and on my practice. As I went on, I felt that these preoccupations had become too **backward** looking and my mode of writing predominantly **reactive**, reflective and critical of existing forms. I needed a more dynamic **figure** with the creative potential to **pull** me into the future. Continuing with a family analogy I drew on my relationship with my daughter, Connie. Like me, she had been the youngest **child**, 'little girl' in the family. So the work itself came to have a time-based family-like narrative: reflecting on the **generation** past and inheritance with the father-figure, speaking from the present from my present **positioned** identity as a daughter and a mother, and projecting into the future and the unknown with the figure of the little girl.

the background of normative family relations

...a substantial dimension of family life today is experienced through imagination, in a dreaming state, if you will. This dreaming takes two forms – one directed to the future, the other to the past. ...The past has become by far the more capacious space of the family imaginary, making memory the dominant muse of our times. It is where we find the safest place to dream and the safest storage for the virtual families on which contemporary families have become so reliant.²

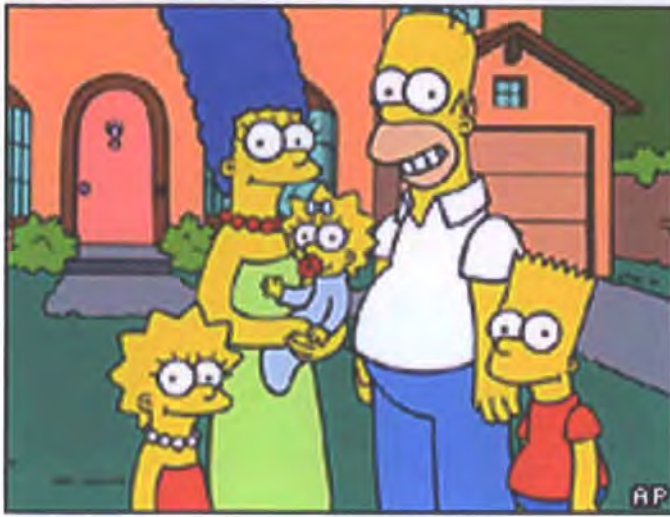
My early childhood, in common with others in the 1950s in Britain, was shaped in - what have been defined in social theory as - *normative* family relationships.³ The ideal of the normative family was most commonly lived in the twentieth century as a **nuclear-type** organisation: a family consisting of a father, mother and their legitimate children living in the same household. Normative relations do not necessarily describe the organisation of real families and may not be the way that all family relationships are actually lived;

The nuclear family of the post-war world, with its male breadwinner, was a construction of what family life *should* look like ... there *were* single parents in the 1950s ... and there were also working mothers,

and same sex relationships, but these did not fit the normative picture of family life.⁴

The normative nuclear family is partly an aspirational image, an ideal lived through customs and traditions based on commonly held beliefs of how families ought to be and how individuals should relate to each other.⁵ John Gillis, a contemporary researcher on family relations, has explored the centrality of what he calls the '**virtual family**'.⁶ Modern life, he argues, has destabilised the traditions of family life but an *idea* of the family is lived. This image of a family is partly nostalgic and enables people to hold the family together formally as an imaginary entity in a way that sees them through difficulties, over time and across great distance.⁷

The normative family is represented as having a fundamentally patriarchal character.⁸ It has been considered normal and traditional for instance for a father to be the primary wage earner and to represent and support the family financially; mothers are often assumed to be the right people to care for children and manage the home. Children are essential to the image of the nuclear family, and the relation of **parent** to child is characterised by hierarchy and power: privileging age and civic identity and the legal responsibility of parents.⁹ The 'claustrophobic, economic' modern nuclear family has been described as arising coterminous with industrial Capitalism in the West, important as a virtual and imaginary construct that can be mobilised towards economic end. It is only defined as 'nuclear' when children are born and ends when they leave home.¹⁰ In the ideal nuclear family children are legitimate, are dependent on and live with their biological mother and father until adulthood, when they are assumed to leave home and create nuclear families of their own. The normative nuclear family was in the twentieth century the model towards which most people aspired, even if they never managed to replicate the ideal. In the



Illus. 1. 2007. The Simpsons. stock image.

remained the most common mode of family organisation up to and beyond the 1970s.¹¹ [Illus.

1] The nuclear family is an ideal that is still active today reflected in advertising and in the popular forms of novels, film and tv soap operas, and is the form through which, during most of the

twentieth century, legal, moral, social and economic decisions have been calculated regarding housing, paid work, individual therapy, tax laws, education and social welfare. So although the normative family may be shaped through archaic, patriarchal, mythic ideals or through nostalgic memories, it is instantiated in modern institutional and discursive forms, underpinning economic practices that in turn maintain those fictions as lived realities, shaping subjectivities and lived relationships.¹²

My family was at first, a model of traditional nuclear family organisation. Looking back, this to me as a child, felt right and proper. I liked the fact that our family looked like the family with father, mother, son and golden-haired daughter advertised on the breakfast cereal packet. It was satisfying that my father was older and taller than my mother, and it seemed natural that my brother was older and taller than me; he and I were complacently described as a 'pigeon pair'. My father had a well-paid 'steady' job; my mother worked part-time in 'casual' waitressing and looked after the home and us; this too was the norm. It seemed natural that my brother came first and that his education was taken more seriously than mine. First born sons had been

culturally privileged in the traditions of primogeniture in the grand narratives of fairy stories, religion and myth, whilst the same narratives reiterated the invisibility of daughters, especially the youngest in the normative nuclear family and I was inclined to regard my own relation to the rest of the family as normal, like other girls I knew.¹³ Habitual social behaviours of censure, gossip, jokes and teasing kept people 'in their place': a dominant wife was the **butt** of jokes: described as a nag or a battleaxe in popular comedy; a quiet husband was regarded as henpecked or 'noodled' and 'boys' were given licence to 'be boys': their faults forgiven. Little girls on the other hand, who made themselves visible were criticised for being 'show-offs', 'precocious' or 'forward' or reproved as 'a right little madam'. There seemed to be nowhere outside these traditional relationships and identifications and indeed no reason why we should look beyond the norms of the nuclear family.¹⁴ Our family seemed to fit the ideal and we lived out the relations traditionally assigned to us. Those who appeared in some way different assured our normality. We were not like the large family of children with no father who lived at the end of the street who we talked of as 'gypsies'. Nor did we look or live like the West Indian or Irish people in our street. These seemed to be mainly single, **noisy** men and their girlfriends who all lived together in untidy rented rooms. My grandmother and other relatives lived nearby, but not with us. It seemed natural to me that old people lived alone and had to be visited. I can see now how the world around me confirmed my image of a family as a father, mother, older son and younger daughter as right and proper.

What shattered my childish image of my family - and became statistically unusual - was that in the mid 1950s my mother left the family home and my brother went to live with my grandmother.¹⁵ I entered my teenage years living alone with my father.

Yet the image of normative family relations continued to be culturally mirrored back to me, so I grew up thinking that we were an anomaly; that my father and I lived an odd, almost deviant relation. I read about divorce and 'broken homes', but no other parents I knew had been divorced, and in any case, it was usually the father who was absent. There were no models or cultural precedents available for me as examples of how to live a father-daughter relationship.¹⁶

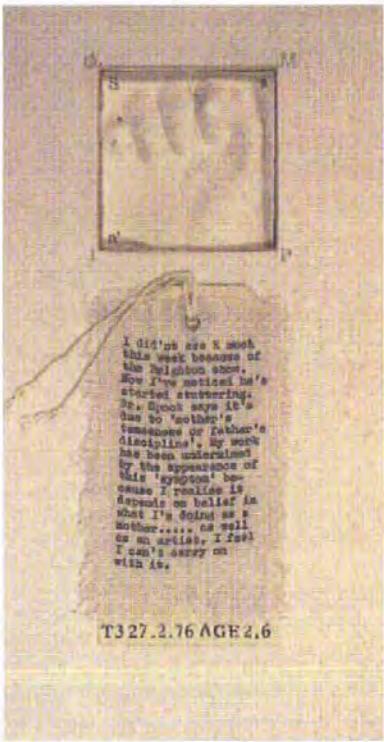
predisposing research

Perhaps it was the experience of growing up with my father that predisposed me to take an interest in father-daughter relationships: it was that relationship that triggered off this research. I wonder now if this interest began, without my realising it, as an attempt to re-visit - and through practice - reconcile myself to past painful events. Much of the artwork I have done since I was a very young child has been concerned with print making. Because my father was a printer, printing suggested itself to me as a practice through which to do the research. Printing has an emotional resonance then that it may not have for other people. I am not suggesting that my experience or position in the family determined my work, or that I had no choice, but that experience, especially if it is emotionally felt, renders us cognitively susceptible: predisposed to a driven curiosity in certain fields of investigation, having an interested perspective on retelling the past, and motivated desires in formally and aesthetically shaping the future. This 'structural mapping' or 'predisposing' aspect created in family relations is a major concern of the thesis.

In constructing the research I have also been strongly influenced by my engagement with feminist art practice in the 1970s, in particular the work of Mary Kelly. [*Illus. 2*] I first encountered her *Post-Partum Document* in the context of feminism, when I was, like Kelly, caring for an infant son.¹⁷ It appealed to me

because of its use of printed images and text, its non-sentimental graphic appearance, its intermediate practices across images and objects, and its negotiation of rigorous conceptual art with the gossipy discourses of family and baby care. I had

found no correspondences with my intensely powerful and conflicting emotions of motherhood with traditional art and its depictions of mother and child. Nor were concerns with the feminine, the personal and the intimate allowable in conceptual art of the 1970s. Kelly had intentionally 'hooked' her audiences through a normative narrative as a mother in the dyadic relation in childcare and I immediately related to the conflicts and paradoxes that were inherent in the work. *Post Partum Document* legitimised my experience, concretised my feelings and articulated questions and contradictions in aesthetic forms and in conventions of art with which I was familiar.



Illus. 2. 1973-1976. Mary Kelly. *Post Partum Document*. detail from installation.

The work led further into discussions of the processes by which the relations of desire between mother, father and child are constituted in relations of power and through practice. Kelly was the only artist/theorist I had encountered who, through her discussions on fetishism and the construction of relations of subjectivity, had begun to address the family as site of the regulation of desire in art.¹⁸ It was the breadth of the work, the aesthetic management and the realization of links between everyday, intimate relations of feeling, care, political practice and art that made me want to take it as a starting point for this research. It introduced a theoretical basis and a methodology with which to proceed.

At the beginning of this chapter I introduced myself as growing up in normative dyadic relations to my mother, my father and my brother; relations that formed my immediate family. I had too, a sense of wider family relations that included 'blood' relations: a grandmother, cousins and an aunt, and 'in-laws' who lived nearby.¹⁹ This kind of family was not so often represented in popular advertising as a norm; I learned its terminology through sociological and anthropological discourse in the 1960s of the time, which referred to these as 'kin' or as my 'extended family'.²⁰ My neighbour whom I called 'Auntie' and people such as godparents were known as 'fictive kin'. But the extended family seemed nostalgic then, an old-fashioned concept: the nuclear family in those post-war days was represented as progressive and more 'modern'.

Like many young people who grew up through late 1960s radical politics, feminism and new psychological discourses on family welfare and therapy, I had begun to question and reject 'the family', particularly the nuclear family, as the source of repression, the paradigm of patriarchal and capitalist relations, or in its extended mode as an outmoded institution, something to be escaped *from*.²¹ At that historical moment in Britain there was still a belief in forward moving progress, achieved through education and a better standard of living achieved through smaller, nuclear families. Perhaps too, because of what I perceived to be a 'failure' of my own family I wanted to forget and move forward. My past family experience could not provide a model that would in any way help me to project or shape my future. The family - and any family-like relationships based on kin - I believed would be oppressive, conforming, stifling of personal growth and individual freedom. To be creative it seemed to me, one had to free oneself from the immediate past, from patterns of conventional thought and the normative ties that family life inevitably suggested.

My hunch that the relations of the family were reiterated in art led me to the possibility that **transposing** these conservative, patriarchal, outmoded, backward-looking family-like relations onto art, must recreate a limited concept of 'art'. Family-like relationships in art would suggest a privileging of men, a refusal to accommodate 'other' identities - women and those outside normative relations - as equal, as well as inhibiting change and the acceptance of fundamentally different practices and new genres. I began the research disposed to reject family-like relations, having an image of the twentieth century, normative nuclear family in mind. I expected to show that family organisation and relationships - in terms of patriarchal power, male dominance, motherly care and sibling rivalries - whilst they may (or may not) be appropriate in families, have no part to play in institutional relationships outside the family. I believed that family-like relationships are particularly restricting or reactionary when transposed to the relationships of art. I perceived young male artists predisposed to behave like younger sons in relations of sibling rivalry, competing to inherit the mantle of Great Art from their fine art **masters**, their professional fathers. I imagined young female artists as rebellious daughters, always **marginalised**, struggling to gain access to a system they had no part in constructing. I read of powerful women in the art world fulfilling maternal roles, taking on the housewifely tasks of curating, collecting and nurturing young artists as gallerists, teachers and fundraisers.²² Through an investigation of the influence of family-like relationships, it soon became apparent that they are a common analogical source for conceptualising the dynamics of many other relationships in non-familial contexts, explicitly promoted (and critiqued) in areas of education, of business organisation and management, of industrial relations and technology.²³ Although these analogic associations seemed to have some correspondence to the lived realities I saw around me, further research and

reflection - and investigation into my changing experience of family relations - led me to temper these assumptions of direct and unmediated relations between family identities and artistic identities. Whilst family relationships might predispose certain familial tendencies, so many other factors intervene complicating any idea of simple transposition.

The Scope of the Thesis

The family in its different global manifestations is such an all-pervasive cultural metaphor that it is difficult to avoid encounters with it in language and in everyday life. This being so, I began to realise that I had taken on a vastly more complex project than would be possible to manage in so short a work. So, the examples from which I draw speculative conclusions come from one family relationship - between daughter and father - in one family at particular moments. In this text I privilege three moments of change both in the history of my family and the contexts in which my family shaped itself. The first is the period of my girlhood in the 1950s, the second is the time when I became a mother in the early 1970s and the third is my family relationships as they are lived today.

Given also that fine art is a vastly complex field of heterogeneous practices, I realised that talking in general terms about 'art' would be unmanageable. I have therefore confined my comparisons to the specific field of practice in art represented by print making. The speculative conclusions I draw from the example of printing practice as art, I suggest can be extrapolated in the contexts of other art practices. What I have produced can only be an introduction to some areas in art that appear to relate in ways that are like those of some family relations.

I began this research with an unsubstantiated conviction that my own artworks have been formed in and limited by an adherence to practices that seemed to bear a

resemblance to family relationships, and I had a hunch that all artworks might show some similar dependence on familial analogies. Yet, I will not only be looking at art, like Kelly's, that deals overtly with representing family identities or family



Illus. 3. 1998. Santiago Sierra. Remunerated Actions. documentation detail.

relationships.

For example: I encountered Santiago Sierra's work, *Remunerated Actions* (a line tattooed across the back of migrant workers) in the context of a new genre of *Relational Art*, at a time when I was working on this thesis.²⁴

[*Illus 3*] Sierra's site-specific events and performances, like those of many contemporary artists, are often mediated through printed documentation.²⁵ And although his work is not explicitly concerned with the family, it seemed in many ways to exemplify the concerns of this research. His artworks revealed systems of organisation and desire at work in global patriarchal power. He made explicit the **bodily** organization and management of gender, family, immigration and labour, and mobilised these powers in his artwork in relations of gender/desire/race and class. Through his depiction of the components of the art-making process, and his **inscriptions** on the bodies of men, Sierra implicates his own place as a privileged 'eldest son' inheriting a powerful Western tradition in art, as an artist within the relations he sets up. His 'brothers' the abjected migrant workers are the 'less fortunate'. We as art's audiences, who encounter the work, recognise and respond to the plight of the disinherited and impoverished 'younger sons' and family myths add their veracity. We are positioned - although somewhat more self-knowingly and

critically - in analogous power relations. As a woman I am drawn into the look of the bodies of boys in ambivalent ways: as a sister I can identify with their abjection in the face of power and their reluctant collusion with the dominant male artist, but I can also enjoy, in my latent jealousy of the brother, their suffering at the hands of the father/artist. As a mother I am torn by sympathy for them as humiliated young men but yet again, am reminded of the maternal role of keeping truculent sons and naughty boys under control. Then, as a woman I am erotically interested in looking at those young male bodies. But it has to be remembered that there are other ways of looking: as English, as a worker, as an artist myself that may take me beyond and contradict family concerns. Sierra produces in the audience conflicting and uncomfortable emotions that seem to me to derive much of their emotional complexity and force as 'truth' from our own complex relationships and power positions in the family. These associations may not be conscious nor can such an art work be reduced to family-like relationships, but familiar associations add richness and emotional depth to the staged event.

I had initially envisaged that implicating family relations in any aspect of art-making or looking at art to be *simply* stereotyping, oppressive or reactionary, but experiencing and thinking about such works such as Sierra's suggests to me that, although fine art mobilises conventional family identities and oedipally organised desires, it does so complexly. Family relationships can be manipulated to engage the audience question their function and power within the artwork's relationships.²⁶

Notes on the Writing Strategies

The writing in the thesis is analogous to the processes involved in the production of a realistic digital print: it does not reveal the marks of labour that went into its making. To write coherently - as to produce seamless optically real print - means that

much has to be concealed. Investigation into the sources of information, the technological processes and the breadth of **issues** that make up the labour of research has had to be hidden so that the main argument - or as in a print - the main image can be clearly read. Creating a story is a process of editing and translation and has been a way for me to narrativise my own experience and make it part of the way I explain myself to myself. One of the problems of re-calling memories is their obvious inaccuracy and inadequacy as a basis for research. I remember what I read, what I thought and what I did and what others did in the past, but these recollections whilst 'true' for me - in that I have acted out for many years the beliefs they represent - on closer observation I find to be objectively 'false'. I misunderstood much of what I read, I have forgotten or selectively remembered significant bits, and have brought my own interests to bear, which has skewed my reasoning. I have had to revise my memories, sometimes painfully, when confronted with more convincing and well established accounts. Yet this process is never complete: everything I write is in a sense, drawn from memories in this way and can never exactly replicate what was said. I became **absorbed** in the research but then, like the absorbed saturation of spreading ink, I cannot **separate** out what is memory from actual experience. I cannot remember how I came to know what I believe, what ideas I have received or from whom. Thinking and writing in this way, absorbing ideas and then **overlaying** and concealing them through selective interpretations, and misreadings, makes it difficult to know where my speculative notions have come from, where the carefully considered arguments of others end and where my own thoughts begin again. I have tried hard to recall and understand what I have read and seen of others' work, and to give full due to both the name and the spirit of the authors, by indicating specifically wherever possible in the conventions of **footnotes** and bibliography, and in an

additional **glossary**, the combined memories, sources, influences and experiences which have become part of the work of the thesis.

I would like to draw attention to two crucially interrelated issues which appeared in early drafts but I have not developed having to draw a line around what I could cope with in so short a piece of work. The first is concerned with the nature of subjectivity and performativity and the role that art plays in creative becomings of the self, and the possibility that subjectivities are continually being formed in familial relations through engagement with art.²⁷ The second, which is linked to the first, concerns the totally reflexive nature of the way that the family not only shapes the relations of art but is always itself being shaped and potentially changed *by* those relations. Rather than defining or explaining my understanding of these processes, their workings are implied in the practice of writing and in how the art-making is explained. Inferences about how I understand the creative nature of self-becoming and the reflexive nature of art, subjectivity, family can be extrapolated to some extent, from the text and the images.

Analogy as a Tool of Research

*This star is like a digit,
This tree is like a tomb,
This sun is like a mollusc
Picasso, that's whom.*²⁸

I intend to use analogy as a tool for this research, which means that I will be taking 'the family' and its typical **characters**, looking at how they dynamically and emotionally relate to each other, and comparing these to identities and relationships in the various fields of art. I shall not just be looking at the relationships between people and between different art forms and genres represented by print making, but

at relations between objects, and how and whether artistic concepts are structured in family-like relations.

Clearly, if I were to compare the family and print making in any scientific sense I would find few common properties: they are completely different domains of experience. In saying that relationships in the family 'shape' the relations of art there needs to be some understanding of what is understood by 'family' and how the **transference** takes place: to explain how and why 'the family' imposes itself on a completely unrelated set of practices such as 'art'? I suggest that these associative links are made through analogy.

Plato had said that analogy is "the most beautiful bond".²⁹ In Greek *analogon* is the relation of proportion or similarity that exists between two or more apparently dissimilar things; it represents a mediating bridge that can link polar opposites, and is instantiated in mimetic, metaphoric and metonymic practices that create associations between dissimilars whilst at the same time recognising and maintaining a sense of their polar identities. Analogy was born of a desire to communicate those things that are difficult to describe rationally or scientifically. It comes into its own with the communication of emotionally laden or sensory experience, where accurate description is not enough. And analogy, as cognitive science is now discovering, finds its most distilled and subtle practices in the visual arts. Analogy-making is regarded in cognitive science to be a central component, if not *the* core, of cognition itself.³⁰ Barbara Maria Stafford, in a recent study of analogy-making in cognition and in the arts, has described the process of looking for likeness in unlike things as a fundamentally human attempt to create meaning in the gap that lies across polar differences. She suggest and describes how 'the arts are singularly suited to provide explanatory power for the nature and function of the analogical procedure.'³¹

Analogies are not only employed as rhetorical flourish to add colour or to embellish language, but are necessarily embedded in everyday speech to instantiate the abstract, and the non-visible.³² Analogy-making is understood as acts of mind in which cognition identifies with already known, often tangible forms and structures.³³ For instance, the term **impressive** calls on a shared past and an experience of a heavy weight bearing down, **squashing**, making a corresponding mark of its own image onto an inert body as with a **die**. This experience suggests some oppression, pain or physical deformation of that body. It evokes fear but is also creative: it produces a new object: a print, or **blind** embossing. I used the force of hand and body to **press** the ink into the paper in print making; my father worked with huge metal presses at work, and as a father he analogically 'made an impression' on me, with all that the word implies active in my mind and body. *Impression* is associated with **relief** printing, but as a word has a resonance for me, an associated smell and feel that it may not have for others in quite the same way so it can never be a precise definition as different people bring to it their own associations. Many terms such as *impression* lose the conscious links they once had with printing: a heavy press is on the whole redundant technology, but the word/emotion/experience of impressing remains, detached from its **origins** and accruing other associations when it is combined with other analogical terms and in other contexts. Analogy-making is not inevitably an unconscious practice: it is not difficult to **trace** back the origins of the word, to re-vivify and experience the emotions, tactile experiences again through practice.

The English language is saturated with the forgotten practices of its historical technologies: thought is saturated in the fabric of dyeing, or cast in the **stereotypes**

of metal or inscribed in the incisive material of clay. Even research is instantiated in excavatory practices: digging in different terrains, uncovering and dismantling buried material. There is no way of talking about abstract thoughts without recourse to analogical practices of shared experience in a bodily practice or a technological medium. In making things through practice, one simple choice of a material, a simple medium or colour in a simple configuration can release a **flood** of words and associations, emotions and bodily feeling that reminds us of an experience long forgotten which would require pages of written description to explain.

Until recently the term *analogy* was not recognised as having any sensory, emotional or expressive potential, it was more often used in explanatory and predictive purposes to illuminate the meaning of one object or abstract entity by reference to another in a scientific context.³⁴ Analogy includes associated linguistic tropes and figures of speech, most commonly *metaphor* where one thing is conceived as associated with or resembling another, and *metonymy* where one thing is associated with another by contiguity. This suggests that the relations of metaphor are more distant; they link opposite entities in the imagination. Metonymic relations seem closer, related by touch, vision and presence. These are specific kinds of analogies that are more often used in literature and the arts having explicit associations in expressive and affective contexts. When I employ the term *analogy* it will be from the perspective of contemporary cognitive science which addresses its function as a cognitive process: as 'dynamic, emergent and context-sensitive', but which incorporates its affective and expressive embeddedness in the variations of metaphorical and metonymic practice in the arts.³⁵

The human experiences of the family, its characters and their relationships inevitably provide common **ground** that can be deployed to link unlike entities. The

family - however organised - is a shared or 'root' metaphor in any culture because everyone has lived experience of familial relations.³⁶ It is also a powerful source of analogy-making because it is the seat of infantile, repressed and forgotten dynamic and vivid emotions and experiences that all humans share in relations with other family members. The family however, has been assumed as unchanging. Root metaphors drawn from it are so familiar, so all pervasive, so embedded in thought and language that we are usually not aware that a metaphor is being employed. But family structures - as I intend to demonstrate from experience and research - are different; they change over time and are changing fundamentally. The human ability to intervene in genetic structure, to potentially produce human clones, to create life outside the womb, to re-assign gender, although they may be rare procedures in practice, are widely publicised and have imaginative resonance far beyond their actual practice. They are perhaps de-stabilising belief in the normative family and in the naturalness and inevitability of the biological, genetic or 'blood' relation. So, whilst I will explicitly use analogies drawn from my family experience to speculate on their similarity to relations in art, I also aim to test them against arguments drawn from contemporary theory and research on family change.

analogies and contradictions in the arts

Demonstrating that one system is related in the same way as another - showing that the relations in the family are like the relations of art by resemblance - would not by itself be a sufficient research method to produce an argument on which to base any policy or social practice in the arts. Analogies often have the **stamp** of unthinking gut reaction, of prejudice, stereotype and **cliché** or of false reasoning. Analogy-making is 'unscientific' and untruthful, the preferred mode of mythmakers and astrologers. It is different from mimetic practices of copying, or visual imitation, yet

both as practices imply the existence of an original, or one that went before that is shaping current practice. In mimetic practices, the relation is much closer: the original is seen. In analogy-making, the similarity is often conceptual or abstract, linked through words or sensory association.

Many contemporary art practices and their accompanying theories have denigrated analogical practices in art.³⁷ The high Modernist tenets of art for instance, exemplified in Greenberg's influential essay 'Modernist Painting', had rejected vestiges of narrative or realism and deplored explicitly mimetic practices of illusion such as **copying**, tracing, parody or pastiche: 'making a likeness' had no part to play in American modernist aesthetics.³⁸ Modernist art's originality, its uniqueness and the artist's individuality became established in art history's canon as the minimal criteria for 'art' to be considered 'great'.³⁹ Both analogy and mimetic practices are employed in art: even minimalist and conceptual art can refer in analogical ways to other, similar realities, whatever the intentions of the artist. A single line, drawn in a firm and incisive manner may suggest an edge or limit, a border or boundary. A large rectangle of a dark colour may convey the impression of weight or an oppressive burden. Abstract non-representational forms, depending on their context and juxtaposition can evoke specific emotional responses. Analogical associations may indeed reiterate latent associations that are in conflict with the artwork's overt abstract intention.

Analogies can produce disturbing, illogical contradictions and different levels of response in the same artwork. Their use can confer immanent, messy and complicated life, energy and emotion in ways that are non consciously appreciated. The viewer may 'enjoy' a painting at an immediate, emotional associative level; yet disapprove intellectually of the overt subject matter. For example, the analogical

image of a woman as like a violin or guitar, suggested in so many post-impressionist paintings can still be enjoyed today. [Illus 4] The analogy may extend, fill out, colour or limit the way women or violins are imagined, and suggest similar curved forms, a passive, beautiful, responsive body and an instrumental relation of that body to the



Illus. 4. 1912. Pablo Picasso. Violin. oil on canvas.

artist. But its use assumed a male audience and heterosexual attraction for its full emotional impact.⁴⁰ Perhaps at the beginning of the twentieth century there was more social consensus about women's subordinate position but today the analogy tends to appear silly and clichéd. We perhaps enjoy the painting today more as a

painting and tend to see the violin/guitar as a socially specific cultural artefact or artistic symbol. All analogies, particularly those based in changing cultural forms have a limited lifespan and scope of reference. There are for instance, many more ways in which a woman is *not* like a violin, and these may be hidden in the use of this particular analogy. If the analogy were to be reactivated and used as any kind of evidence on which to base relationships with women or with which to identify as a woman, then it would fall short when confronted with real women's bodies and the realities of women in lived relations today.

past predispositions, present originality

Through modernist teachings on art such as those of Greenberg, and through an art education based in the values of American modernism, I became familiar with the idea that Great Art is always an advance on what had gone before. When a student

at art school in the late 1960s I strove towards the creation of something new in painting without quite knowing why or how.⁴¹ At that time, students were not encouraged to read: there were no lectures in art history, sociology or aesthetics. We were placed alongside other students in large open painting or sculpture studios where, it was assumed, all we needed to know about painting could be learned by the practice of painting itself and by studying first hand, the work of other artists in visits to galleries and museums. I quickly suppressed the practices I had enjoyed as a child: making letter forms, patterning, 'colouring-in', and mimetic forms of copying, tracing and realistic drawings of people. Although it was never made explicit, these were all taboo practices in modernist tenets of painting.⁴²

In recent years, and in the rejection of modernist painting's narrow specificities, practices of copying, repetition, pastiche, quotation and the referencing of other discourses such as philosophy, linguistics, aesthetics and art history are explicitly recognised as part of art-making strategy. Indeed, as the philosopher Lacoue-Labarthe argued, mimetic practices have always been the basis of representation: that we can only know how to be in the world and to represent the world through borrowing or copying from something that already exists, something therefore that is always in the past.⁴³ The 'abstract' artworks that we as students made were highly derivative, but we struggled on, believing that original art would emerge in our individual relationship with the canvas and engagement with the paint itself.⁴⁴ Copying and imitation was part of our practice, but it was not acknowledged that this was so. Arguments for the necessity of mimesis, replication, imitation in creativity are not always easy to negotiate within traditions of Western art that have privileged originality and uniqueness as a sign of greatness. But even new artworks have some precedents. We are only able to appreciate, to see and understand new art because

we have some shared, perhaps non-explicit, pre-understanding.

Cognitive science, and aesthetic theories today suggests that creative practice emerges from combinations of what is familiar, or well established in common thought, which is then acted upon, modified by contemporary phenomena and practice. Analogy-making often requires that something new or unthought-of be likened to something that already exists: that is in the past. This notion of creativity as emerging from older modalities of thought is itself not new. The cognitive scientist, Stevan Harnad reflects on Pasteur's dictum 'Chance favours the prepared spirit':

...by "preparation" Pasteur did not mean being born with the "creative" trait. He meant that existing knowledge and skills relevant to the creative "leap" first had to be sufficiently mastered before a "bolt from the blue" was likely. Paradoxically, his suggestion is that the only formula for creativity is the most uncreative one imaginable, which is to learn what is already known. Only then are you likely to have enough of the requisite raw materials for an original contribution, and only then would you even be in a position to recognize something worthwhile and original for what it really was.⁴⁵

And there is some evidence from cognitive science that patterns of thought or belief, held in an individual's mind are capable of being copied to other intellectual domains, systems or individual memories as *memes*.⁴⁶ This suggests that what we learn through experiencing art can be imposed onto other areas of life. Memetics is the cognitive science that studies the replication, spread and evolution of memes, which work through analogy-making; and analogy-making in the arts is providing rich sources of material practice for showing how ideas, thoughts and beliefs can be spread.⁴⁷ This suggests that creativity does not always come about as the result of sustained and linear modes of reasoned argument, but in complex configurations, through associations and by combining, overlaying or 'bricolaging' or patchworking, registering thought to correspond to existing and known patterns of thinking and experience.⁴⁸

Analogies often work through the recalling and re-activating of shared but forgotten memories and emotionally laden traumatic events. Many of the most intense, unresolved and inaccessible experiences we have are those experienced in the infant's relationship with her/his parents. Appreciating and enjoying art through immediate response to analogic figures and materials may temporarily infantilise us, bring us back to the same feelings and the first use of an object in assuaging the fear and loss of separation from the first relation: the relation of the infant to the mother's body.⁴⁹

childhood practice in analogic tropes and figures

My daughter Connie, when small, confronted with any two objects of different sizes always referred to the larger as 'the daddy one' and the smaller as 'the baby one'. Her first recourse in a new situation was to compare its relationship to one she already knew. She compared the two objects to a relation representing the biggest



Illus. 5. 2003. Letratone Sample. Grains and Sands. enlarged

difference she had experienced: that between herself as smallest in the family and her father, the biggest.

[illus 5] It gave her pleasure, I imagine, to recognise that she and he had a family resemblance but also that she was a different person in other respects. It could have been an early attempt to concretise the growing separation of herself as a girl from her mother; a little

safe 'leap' which rehearsed and realised her growing up.

Analogy-making is a fundamental childhood practice and produces experiences that can be alluded to in later encounters with abstract forms: a common memory can be elicited through any similar juxtaposition of scale.⁵⁰ In encountering any artwork that is large scale, one can perhaps similarly position oneself for a moment,



Illus. 6. 2003. Pen Dalton. Ladders in the Studio. 2 ladders with projected half tone

reconnecting with pleasurable and safe early experiences with the father, feeling again what it was like to be 'the baby one'. [Illus. 6]

At about three years old, Connie played a more complex game of arranging the family's shoes in the hallway according to size, intoning as she re-arranged them: "Baby's shoes, Joseph's shoes, Mummy's shoes, Daddy's shoes – ..." always ending up with the biggest boots and a final triumphant shout: "... and Policeman's shoes!!" In playing this game, she performatively re-enacted a

place for herself as youngest and last in the family; she imposed an aesthetic structure that concretised her relationship to others. The adoption of the chant about the shoes in the hallway, gathered together complex relations of the nuclear family to each other and to the outside world. Power - which includes gender and age hierarchy - was reiterated in one simple linear narrative. At the same time, in creating the metaphorical trope, she animated the objects and created a human-like relation between them, producing an external work with meaning with which to



Illus. 7. 2007. British Gas advertisement. detail.

communicate.⁵¹ The aesthetic practice gave order to otherwise random experience, and in the pleasurable somatic experience of singing and re-arranging, she performatively incorporated it in her bodily relationships with other

people by using objects. She organised her world within the available formal aesthetic material at hand: the shoes, the chant and the linear pattern. Daddy was re-established at the summit of our familial structure, which itself was positioned in relation to the (invisible) presence of the policeman's boot: the Law.⁵² The illustrated figure of 'the shoes in the hall' is a common cultural metaphor today, used in advertising and popular culture as a shortcut, a metaphor that reiterates the nuclear family. [Illus. 7]

imposing familial figures

Mature artworks employ a vast array of complex analogies, binary relations criss-crossing and working with and against each other in tensions and identifications. They can trigger off immediate chain reactions of experience and feeling. Works such as described in the simple analogy above, usually have some concrete materialisation of an idea or concept embedded in a structured image or a model, and its underlying relations of organisation may (or may not) be in direct **contrast** to its overt content. The narrative of the 'shoes in the hall' is an aesthetic construction that carries a recognisable but often implicit message. Such complex implicit relations in an aesthetic form are known as *figures*.⁵³ Figures recall emotions and sensation, memories and concepts through similarities of relations, sensate form and structure. They are "what render discourse describable by making it appear in discernable forms" and they have the effect of concretising those relations for the viewer.⁵⁴

I imagine the way that analogical figures work in art to be something like the practice of *imposition* in printing.⁵⁵ [Illus. 8] In designing a complex print such as a folded pamphlet or simple book, the positioning of the different colour layers, and the sequence of reading need to be worked out well in advance and the printing bled to the edges for trimming. The positioned images or text when printed on the sheet of



Illus. 8. 2005. Pen Dalton. *Bleeding Imposition. 1.* digital imposing sheet.

paper do not appear to make sense, they seem random and there are unaccountable gaps; some images are **inverted**, **reversed** or are printed on the back of the page. It is only when the paper is finally **scored**, cut or folded that the sequence and reading is intelligible. All the formal elements are present, the organisation of the pamphlet is already there but the imposition shapes the order that directs the final

reading. [Illus 9] In the same way, I suggest, aesthetic figures hypostatise abstract concepts and can order the reading of the image in a way that conceals the relations to which they owe their power of attraction: the analogical roots of their normative desires. The visible content of the figure, the semantics, can be anything - boots, stones or ladders. It is the relationships in the latent structure that read as a figure.

A work of art, an abstract rendering of two massive spheres or blocks of colour for instance, may owe its power of emotion to the forgotten imposition of family relations that are conventionally concealed, and their normalising function rendered invisible. The family is a construct: a form of social organization, a configuration of relationships that lends its efficient structures to other yet unformed practices. Cognitive scientists refer to similar aesthetic figures as 'structural maps' or as 'structural priming', and suggest that they influence and provide a vehicle for new thoughts and within which to frame new creative constructs.⁵⁶ Family figures as strongly felt and concretised intuitions



Illus. 9. 2005. Pen Dalton. *Bleeding Imposition 2.*

can work as unthinking habits, as ideologies, as schema and even as prejudices. The artworks that embody familial figures, act as maps by which we are procedurally inclined to model other aspects of the unknown world. Intuition it seems is never entirely innocent; it arises from prior experience and is already non-consciously or unconsciously structured in ways that are likely to impose themselves on future thinking. Intuition I guess, is what we know without consciously being aware that we know it and it should be possible to trace back and work out how our present intuitions have been formed. Practice and lived experience is mostly carried out intuitively, without conscious or rational thought but which can, when reflected upon in an informed way, lead back through processes of association which, if not conscious, have some analogically linking layers of thought. Comparing the past to the present can contradict and problematise past experience and present practice. I imagine the practice of writing and making to work as a process of finding out what my intuitions have been, to bring to consciousness what I already intuitively know, comparing it and testing it against what I learn through research and experience. This applies to large gaps in time between the way that older cultures are transposed on the new, but it also applies to immediate experiencing where an existing entity can be brought to mind through direct association, iterated through a medium and be imposed on the as yet unsaid. This process of looking back and making analogies with the present enables me to consolidate my thoughts and to question them in the light of present experiencing in order to shape future actions as yet unstructured, formless and unimagined.

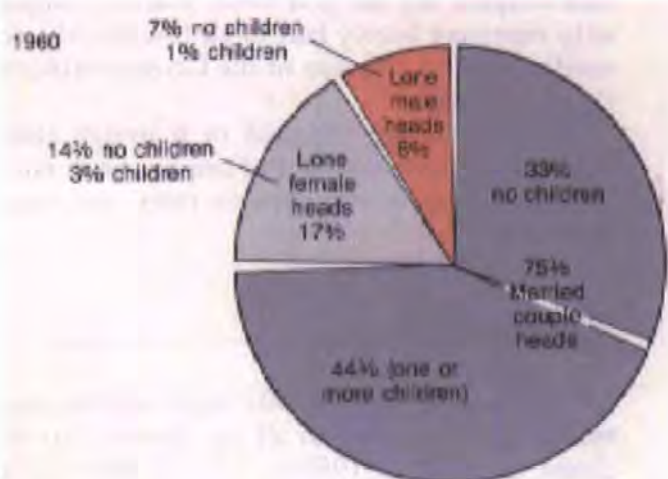
Summary of Chapter One

In Chapter One I state that it is my intention to reflect on my own family, past and present, to look at its changing identities and relationships and to see if there are any

structural or relational changes in my family which appear to be in some respect like those of relationships and identities in art. The intuition I had when embarking on the research were that family-like relations are **saturated** in the arts and that the imposition of familial relationships on practices that have nothing to do with the family are insidiously damaging to art's capacity to embrace other identities and new practices.

I state that the methodology I will use will be the making of analogies, that is, stating how and in what respects definitions of and practice in 'the family' are like definitions of and practices in 'art', and then reflecting on any analogical link to see if it throws light on art in particular. I describe what analogy is and how it works, particularly in its practice in early childhood with objects and in cognition. I describe the concept of 'family' as a root analogy: that is, it is a concept formed and deeply embedded in the traumatic events of childhood, in the forgotten and rejected past and in everyday life that we do not realise we are making family associations with it all the time. The existence of family analogies whilst saturated in language and practice, as the glossary suggests, is everywhere but it is rarely made visible or discussed in the arts. It is through analogy's metaphoric and metonymy's mimetic practices and shorthand figures, employing mediums that the past, often concerning family relationships, is brought into and shapes the present. In stating 'the background' of the research, I am attempting to recall and make explicit the kind of past familial events and experiences that shape my present practice in art and in the research itself.

- ¹. I am using the term *art* (printed as art) to mean fine art and its expanded fields in art-making and viewing and in academic, historical, institutional and educational discourse. The apostrophe is added (as in arts') to refer to the plural possessive. When referring to the other arts, such as dance, music, literature it will be prefaced by *the*. When referring to art as a defining term it will be printed as 'art'.
- ² Gillis, J. R. (2000) 'Our virtual families: towards a cultural understanding of modern family life' re-printed as *Working Paper 28*, University of Leeds, Centre for Research on Family, Kinship and Childhood, 2003. p.3. Accessed online 02.08.07. available as hard copy.
www.marial.emory.edu/pdfs/Gillispaper.PDF
- ³. For a description of and statistics relating to the normative family see Carling, A. Duncan, S. and Edwards, R. (eds.) (2002) *Analysing Families: Morality and Rationality in Policy and Practice*. Routledge: London; Williams, F. and the Economic and Social Research Group (ESRC) on Care, Values and the Future of Welfare (CAVA) (2004) *Rethinking Families: A Five Year Study on Care, Values and the Future of Welfare at the University of Leeds*. Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. London; Gittins, D. (1993) *The Family in Question: Changing Households and Familiar Ideologies*. Macmillan. Forrest, C. M. (2001) 'Familial poverty, family allowances, and the normative family structure in Britain, 1917-1945, in *Journal of Family History*. 26:4.pp. 508-528.
- ⁴. Williams, *Rethinking Families*, op. cit. p.18.
- ⁵. See Forrest, *Familial Poverty*, op. cit. and McBroom, W. Ellestad, J. and Harris, C. (2003) *An Empirical Investigation of the Normative Family*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, Atlanta Hilton Hotel, Atlanta, GA, Aug 16, accessed Online <.PDF>. 19.12.07. http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p106624_index.html.
- ⁶ Gillis, J. R. (2000) 'Our virtual families: towards a cultural understanding of modern family life' re-printed as *Working Paper 2*, *The Emory Center for Myth and Ritual in American Life*. Rutgers University, Dept of History.02.08.07
- ⁷. Gillis, J. (2003) 'Childhood and family time: a changing historical relationship' in Jensen, A-M. and McKee, L. (eds.) (2003) *Children and the Changing Family: Between Transformation and Negotiation*. Routledge Falmer: London.
- ⁸. For description of the power of the customs and norms of patriarchy in everyday life see Seccombe, W. (1992) *A Millennium of Family Change: Feudalism to Capitalism in Northwestern Europe*. Verso: London; Dalton, P. (2001) 'Introduction', in *The Gendering of Art Education: Modernism, Art Education and Critical Feminism*. Open University Press: Milton Keynes; Hakim, C. (2002) *Models of the Family in Modern Societies: Ideals and Realities*. Ashgate: Aldershot.
- ⁹. See Jensen and McKee, op. cit. *Introduction: Theorizing childhood and family change*.
- ¹⁰ Dickinson, J. (1986) *Family, Economy & State: The Social Reproduction Process Under Capitalism*. Routledge: London and New York and Grassby, R. (2001) *Kinship and Capitalism: Marriage, Family and Business in the English Speaking World, 1580-1740*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge UK.



11.

It can be seen that single parents as fathers in the 1960s represented 1%. Source: civitas.org.uk

See also for traditional role of fathers, Warin, J. Solomon, Y. Lewis, C. and Langford, W. (1999) *Fathers, Work and Family Life*. Family Policy Studies Centre in association with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation: London. See also role of London printers as fathers in 1950s-1970s: Cockburn, C. (1986) *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change*. Pluto: London.

12. For the extent to which identity is assumed through familial practice, see Duncan, S. and Edwards, R. (1999) *Lone Mothers, Paid Work and General Moral Rationalities*. Macmillan: Basingstoke. Subjectivity and identity are in part, formed in the reciprocal relations of the family as was thoroughly demonstrated in Mary Kelly's art installation and documentation and its surrounding debates. See (1983) *Mary Kelly: Post Partum Document*. RKP: London.

13. Grand narratives exemplified in the story of Oedipus as employed by Freud as analogy for normal neurotic family relations and also the Christian story of Jesus, have provided imposing models for normative family relations. Both are powerful patriarchal cultural myths that reiterate primogeniture, the law of the father and the invisibility and marginalisation of girl children.

I have also used stock catalogues as a source of illustration. These catalogues contain thousands of images of popular and familiar themes used mainly by advertisers. They have sections on 'family' and these 'ideal' images of families, whilst they are beginning to include non-white and non heterosexual family relations, overwhelmingly appear as normative and nuclear in organisation. As they are likely, for economic reasons, to carry the most popularly used images they are an indication of prevailing ideas of the family image. See for instance: www.fotosearch.co.uk

14. For imperatives for children to be normally gendered, see Frosh, S. Phoenix, A. and Pattman, R. (2002) *Young Masculinities: Understanding Boys in Contemporary Society*. Palgrave: Basingstoke.

15. It was in the 1950s that divorce began to be more visible in family life. See family values of the time in Young, M. and Wilmott, P. (1957) *Family and Kinship in East London*. RKP: London. New research has begun to collect experiences of divorce from a child's perspective; See Smart, C. Neale B and Wade, A. (2001) *The Changing Experience of Childhood: Families and Divorce*. Polity Press: Cambridge; Cockett, M. and Tripp, J. (1994) *The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children*. University of Exeter Press: Exeter, and Neale, B. Wade, A. and Smart, C. (1998) "I just get on with it": children's experiences of family life following parental separation or divorce, *Working Paper 1*. University of Leeds, Centre for Research on the Family, Kinship and Childhood.

16. See the difficulty for a child to imagine how to negotiate the daughter-father relationship in Alanen, L. and Mayall, B. (2001) *Conceptualising Child-Adult Relations*. Routledge: London.

17. Kelly, M. (1983) *Mary Kelly: Post Partum Document*. RKP: London and New York. Kelly's PPD was produced over a period of four years and in different stages. It appeared as an installation combining

objects and printed, inscribed and facsimiled texts with a written commentary.

^{18.} Iverson, M. Crimp, D. and Bhaba, H. (1997) *Mary Kelly*. Phaidon: London. Kelly, M. (1996) *Imaging Desire*. MIT Press. See also review of Kelly's *oeuvre* in Mastai, J. (1997) *Social Process/Collaborative Action*. Charles H. Scott Gallery. Vancouver.

^{19.} Before the discovery of the genetic link from parent to child, a notion of blood relations prevailed. Having the same blood group is of course no evidence of any biological relation, 'blood' is an imaginary relation: a term loosely used as analogy for the biological relation. Moreover, work in genetics shows that genetic relations can be traced to different cultures and mixed in other racial groups, so undermines the notion of family as kin or 'blood'. I shall use the term *Kinship* as it is most commonly defined, as a system of belief about the nature of family relations linked by a) 'blood' (genetics) and/or b) law (marriage or adoption).

^{20.} The first book I read that referred to extended family structure in relation to notions of kinship was Young and Willmott. *Family and Kinship*, op. cit.

^{21.} This rejection of 'family' was part of a socialist questioning in the mid-twentieth century through revisiting texts such as Engel's critique of the patriarchal family as implicated in capitalism: see Engels, F. (1972) *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*. Lawrence and Wishart: London, and feminist critiques of the family as a patriarchal institution and site of extreme neuroses. See for instance Coward, R. (1976) 'Psychoanalysis and patriarchal structures' in Coward, R. Lipshitz, S. and Cowie, E. (1976) *Papers on Patriarchy*. Women's Publishing Collective: London. See also Laing, R. D. (1969) *The Divided Self: An Existential Study of Sanity and Madness*. Taylor & Francis: London.

^{22.} See Dalton, P. (1999) 'Oedipal dramas in art education' in *Journal of Art and Design Education*, (JADE)18: 3. See also McGregor, E. (1995) 'The situation of women curators' in Deepwell, K. (ed) (1995) *New Feminist Art Criticism*. Manchester University Press: Manchester.

^{23.} See Cockburn. *Brothers*, op. cit., Dalton. JADE, op.cit. and Tierney, M. (1995) 'Negotiating a software career: informal work practices and 'the lads' in a software installation' in Grint, K. and Gill, R. (eds.) *The Gender Technology Relation*. Taylor and Francis: London; Hirsch, M. (1989) 'The mother/daughter plot: narrative, psychoanalysis and feminism' in Jipson, J. Munro, P. Victor, S. Froude-Jones, K. and Freed-Rowland, G. (eds.) (1995) *Repositioning Feminism and Education*. Bergin and Garvey: New York; Jipson, J. (1995) 'Teacher-mother: an imposition of identity' in Jipson, J. et al. *ibid*; Adler, S. Laney, J. Packer, M. (eds.) (1993) *Managing Women*. Open University Press: Buckinghamshire; Noddings, N. (1984) 'Caring: a feminist approach to ethics and moral education', *ibid*. Jipson, J. (1995). Grugulis, I. (2002) 'Emotion and aesthetics for work and labour: the pleasures and pains of the changing nature of work'. *Working Papers in Business and Management*. University of Salford: Salford.

^{24.} Ikon Gallery, Birmingham. (2002) Sierra paid standard or minimum wages to refugees, illegal workers, prostitutes and homeless people to perform set tasks of his own devising. Repetitive, obtrusive, and often pointless, *remunerated actions* stand as metaphors for the imposing forces of global and patriarchal desire/power and the inevitable collusion of the artist and art's audiences. For Relational art's definitional terms see Bishop, C. (2004) 'Antagonism and relational aesthetics' in *October*, 110, pp. 51-79 and in Bourriaud, N. (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Les Presses du Reel: Paris.

^{25.} Video, photography and tv have developed as media technologies and as mediums in light from printing. They share a recursive history in printing processes. However, I will not be explicitly incorporating the differences of these media/mediums in this research.

^{26.} Desires organised in oedipal relations are those that criss cross binary relations between the mother, father and child (son) Freud employed the figure of the story of Oedipus to dramatise the underlying nature of desire and power in these relationships. In the story the son Oedipus murders his father and marries his mother. He used the Oedipal story as an analogy to conceptualise relationships of desire in the infant: as primarily desiring the mother and being antagonistic to the father.

27. For discussions of performativity see Austin, J. L. (1975) *How To Do Things With Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*. Oxford University Press: Oxford. Butler, J. (1997) *Excitable Speech*. Routledge: New York. I hope what I understand by performativity will be present in the thesis, but I indicate it briefly thus: Derived from Austin's notion of illocutionary speech, in which speech brings about what it utters, the subject 'becomes' constituted as such through acts. In humanist conceptions of the subject, persons are imagined as possessing attributes: reason, gender, race and class, for instance which are regarded as inherent qualities that develop. Art is regarded as an expression of those inner selves. A notion of the *performative* suggests that there is no coherent self that pre-exists an artwork or an utterance, but that those attributes emerge in the processes of producing the art or the utterance. Butler, in the context of explaining gender as performance states: "There is no gender identity behind the 'expressions' of gender; that identity is performatively constituted by the very expressions that are said to be its results." (1990) *Gender Trouble*. Routledge: New York. p.25. An implication of this is that the materials and forms, of which the traffic of an utterance is constituted, create part of the self as it goes along and only in relations with other people. Subjectivity is always then, being produced; is always emerging in processes of 'becoming' through experience and practice. I have derived this understanding of performativity also from Phelan, P. (1993) *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. Routledge: London and New York, and Buchanan, I. and Colebrook, C. (eds.) (2000) *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*. Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.
28. Vitrac, R. (1930) 'Humerage to Picasso' cited in Ades, D. and Baker, S. (2006) *Undercover Surrealism: George Bataille and DOCUMENTS*. Trans. D. Ades, Hayward Gallery/MIT Press: London & Cambridge, Mass. p.223.
29. Plato Timaeus 31c, cited in Stafford, B. (2001) *Visual Analogy: Consciousness as the Art of Connecting*, MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass.
30. Hofstadter, D. (2001) 'Epilogue: Analogy as the core of cognition' in Gentner, D. Holyoak, K. and Kokinov, B. (eds.) (2001) *The Analogical Mind: Perspectives from Cognitive Science*. MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass. pp.499-538. And Kokinov, B. (1998) 'Analogy is like cognition: dynamic, emergent, and context sensitive' accessed online 6.11.06. <http://www.nbu.bg/cogs/personal/kokinov/challeng.pd>; Dept. of Cognitive Science, New Bulgarian University.
31. Stafford, *Visual Analogy*. op. cit. p.3.
32. Gentner, D. Bowdle, B. Wolff, P. and Boronat, C. (2001) 'Metaphor is like analogy' in Gentner. *The Analogical Mind*, op. cit. p.199-253.
33. Bock, K. (1986) 'Syntactic persistence in language production' in *Cognitive Psychology*, 18, pp.355-387.
34. Thagard, P. and Shelley, C. (2001) 'Emotional analogies and analogical inference' in Gentner. *The Analogical Mind*, op. cit. p.335-362.
35. Dunbar, K. (2001) 'The analogical paradox' in Gentner, *The Analogical Mind*, op. cit. pp.313-334, and Kokinov, 'Analogy is like cognition'. *ibid.* pp.335-356.
36. Root metaphor theory was developed by Pepper, S. C. in (1942) *World Hypotheses*. University of California: Berkeley. A root metaphor is often so embedded within a language or culture that it is not realized as being a metaphor.
37. The contemporary neglect of discussions of analogy is discussed in Halliwell, S. (2002) *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*. Princeton University Press: Princeton, and Stafford. *Visual Analogy*. op. cit.
38. Greenberg, C. (1961) 'Modernist painting' in *Art & Literature*, 4 Spring 1965, pp.193-201. Reprinted in Harrison, C. and Wood, P. (eds.) (1992) *Art in Theory: 1900-1990, An Anthology of Changing Ideas*. Blackwell: Oxford & Cambridge USA. I am not of course referring to critical modernism of avant garde European art in the early-mid twentieth century; see Burgin, V. (1986) 'Modernism and the work of art' in *The End of Art Theory: Criticism and Modernity* where the difference between American 'Romantic

Modernism and European Critical Modernism are discussed. Burgin recounts how American Modernism emerged as the dominant art historical genre of painting and sculpture in the Twentieth Century.

39. The relation of modernism to mimesis is discussed in Halliwell, S. (2002) *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

40. Thanks to my husband for reminding me that "Many a good tune is played on an old fiddle".

41. The art school was Goldsmiths College in London. Not all art schools had the same curriculum, but Goldsmiths was and still is, a leading institution for the teaching of art. I draw my experience from that institution as exemplar of art education at that time.

42. For instance: in my first year, I painted a picture of a black woman with a baby from a drawing I had made from observation from my bedroom window. This was greeted with severe criticism; I was told: "Paint something in your experience". I quickly switched to abstract expressionism that I sensed was more in keeping with what real artists did.

43. Lacoue-Labarthe, P. (2003) 'Oedipus as figure' in *Radical Philosophy*, 118; March/April. pp.42-56.

44. See Boden, M. (1994) *The Creative Mind*. Abacus: London, and Turkle, S. and Papert, S. (1990) 'Epistemological pluralism: styles and voices within the computer culture' in *Signs*, Autumn. pp.128-157. They contrast older models of creativity requiring an analytic, progressive mode of reasoning to contemporary models of creativity as combinatory or modes of 'bricolage'. There is something to be said for this mode of teaching and of learning about art, but it is not something central to the thesis.

45. Hamad, S. (2005) 'Creativity, Method or Magic'. <http://www.cogsci.ecs.soton.ac.uk/~hamad/> accessed online. 09.08.06

46. The term *meme* coined in 1976 by Richard Dawkins, refers to a unit of cultural information transferable from one mind to another. Examples of memes are tunes, catch phrases, clothes fashions and ways of making pots or of building arches. A meme is understood to propagate itself as a unit of cultural evolution and diffusion - analogous in many ways to the behaviour of the gene (the unit of genetic information).

47. See Blackmore, S. (1998) *The Meme Machine*. Oxford University Press. Oxford; Halliwell. *The Aesthetics of Mimesis*, op. cit, and Jaros, M. (2003) 'Onto-poetic applications of mathematical analogy in the arts and literature' in *Consciousness, Literature and the Arts*. 4:2. July.

48. Turkle and Papert. 'Epistemological pluralism' op. cit. pp.128-157.

49. This calls on the work of Winnicott, D. W. (1957) *The Child, The Family and the Outside World*. London: Tavistock and Klein, M. (1959) 'Our adult world and its roots in infancy', in Klein, M. (1993) *Collected works, vol.iii, Envy, Gratitude and Other Works*. Karnac Books: London. See also Dalton Dalton, P. (2003) 'Losing it' in *Losing It*. Exhibition catalogue of screen based/video work in Fenton Gallery, Cork Eire.

50. The human capacity for making objects 'stand-in' for what is lost or missing: creating meaning and emotional relations between objects has been traced to early childhood experience and the creation of the 'transitional object'. See Winnicott, D. W. (1971) *Playing and Reality*, Tavistock Publications: London, and Burgoyne, B. and Sullivan, M. (1999) *The Klein-Lacan Dialogues*. Other Press: New York.

51. See also Glossary Appendix A.

52. Bourdieu, P. and Passeron, J-C. (1970) *Reproduction: in Education, Society and Culture*. Trans. R. Nice. Sage: London. In this text, Bourdieu speaks of the hidden and ultimate threat of violence in the Law. He suggests that the presence of real fathers as socially powerful affirms the symbolic image of father as dominant figure of the symbolic law of the family.

Nb. When referring to the social 'Law of the land' I shall employ a capital L.

⁵³. Much of what follows is drawn from my interpretation of Ricoeur, P. (1978) *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language*. Trans, R. Czerny. Routledge: London.

⁵⁴. Ricoeur. *ibid*, p.52.

⁵⁵. This sheet when folded forms the fortune telling game played most often by girls where they select a colour, a number and then the fortune of their future marriage partner is revealed on opening the numbered flap. Clearly, the options are implicitly normative, imposed and limited.

⁵⁶. Bock, K. (1986) 'Syntactic persistence in language production' in *Cognitive Psychology*, 18, pp.355-387.

CHAPTER TWO: BINARY RELATIONS, VIRTUAL AND REAL

*I remember how hard your hand felt in mine,
On my wedding day
So much has happened to me
That I don't understand
All I remember is being five years old, following behind you,
Tracing your footsteps in the sand
Trying to walk like a man.¹*

Introduction

When starting on this research, I understood 'family' as the Western 'Holy Family', or the oedipal family. I had a sense of family handed down to me from cultural myth,



Illus. 10. 2006. Holy Family. stock image.

verified by its similarity to the biological family.² The discursive practices of religion and Freudian psychoanalysis throughout the twentieth century were built on the imposed figure of the biological family, a triangular figure: consisting of a father, a mother and a child, the child normally assumed to be a son.³ [Illus. 10] Relationships of the family were, as I understood them, made up of conventional dyadic relations between each of these three key figures: mother and son, father and mother, mother and son, father and son; each dyadic relation

having different kinds and qualities of love, care, power and desire. I had understood

these different kinds and qualities of binary relations as having a bearing on the relations of art. A first step in understanding the nature of family relations, and through analogy, the relations of art might be made possible, I thought, through a closer examination of the dynamics of one of these binary, dyadic relations.

What became a problem for me - as what proved to be a fundamental concern of feminist thinking - was where the daughter, where I fitted in. The mythic notion of family was so powerful in my mind that actual experience hardly altered my ideal of what a family is. There was a slippage in representation between the total absence of the daughter as figure in the Holy Family and her presence in the modern nuclear family, which is usually represented as being **composed** of mother, father, boy and girl. The figure of the girl has been sometimes absent, sometimes present. Feminist scholars have investigated the absence of the girl in the grand narratives of philosophy, psychoanalysis and cultural representation, as well as a neglect of the kind and quality of relations that the daughter implies.⁴ Yet in other discourses of the family, the daughter or young woman is clearly there. Girls, of course, exist and indeed the bodies of young women are visible everywhere, in the arts, in pornography and in advertising. What becomes evident on closer examination is the concentration in culture on the fate of the nubile young woman: nubile as in sexually mature or 'ready for marriage'. My concern here is with the figure of daughter in relation to the father and to consider what the less visible image of the little girl, the pre-nubile daughter might signify in family relations. By using materials that I consider analogous to the identity of little girl and father I can begin to play with formal relationships and speculate what this 'little girl' as a figure might mean for art.

normative relations of father and daughter

Illustration 11 shows a printed **reproduction** of a monochrome photograph of a



Illus. 11. 1952. Me, Dad and Billy at Butlins. family photograph

man and two children. The semiotic context is one many people would recognise: a professionally produced photograph of a working class man on holiday with his children in the 1950s. He is dark featured, and the high contrast of the old black and white print makes him seem even darker. It is a picture of me with my father and my brother. It is the only photograph I have of my father with me as a child and I decided to investigate it to see if it would reveal something about father/daughter

relations. In my imagination, the binary relation of

father/daughter seemed to be analogous to other hierarchical differences and oppositions: between dominant theory and subordinated practice, between similarly related text and image, mark and **substrate**, object and background. Finding out about one kind of relationship might give me clues to how other binaries are related.

The father figure plays an important part in this writing and in making art for public view. I recall another printed artwork I had made a few years previously using a photograph of another father: *The Laocoön*. [Illus 12] I thought perhaps that including the art historical figure of Laocoön would legitimise and add gravitas to my project. Artists have always cited precedents for their practice in the established canon of art history: this recalling of 'the names of the fathers' from a respected and accepted past primes audiences to regard new and innovative ideas as familiar, as genuine and having a respectable intellectual and artistic lineage rather than being marginal. 'To be 'in the margins' implied obscurity and idiosyncrasy. Greenberg, for instance, although an iconoclastic modernist, emphasised that "Modernism has never meant



Illus. 12. 42-20BC. Laocoön and His Sons. holiday snapshot 1993

anything like a break with the past” and inserted his version of modernism into established art history by acknowledging its inheritance from the old masters “...Ucello, Piero, El Greco” and so on.⁵ Felix Gonzales-Torres quite explicitly linked himself and his practice to the ‘old masters’ of minimalism and conceptualism: “I respect my elders, ...” he says.⁶ I thought that comparing my real father with a symbolic father from a

major discourses of art might reveal contradictions and similarities that I could explore. It was a significant strategic move for me - as a ‘marginal’ feminist whose work had always been outside the canon - to explicitly associate my practice with my father and main body of debate that the Laocoön image implies.

the paternal index



Illus. 13. 2001. Pen Dalton. Printer's Fist. lino print.

When I began the research, I was conscious of printing, particularly using older technologies, as a fundamentally **indexical** practice. [Illus 13] I had chosen relief printing as a direct technology; the same process my father used in the newspaper industry and the same as the lino printing I had done as a child at school. It was a technology that linked me to the past, to my father and to physical memories of his body at work.

An indexical sign is one that is connected in some material way to a master original; the plate actually leaves an **imprint** of itself on a surface.⁷ Indexical work can make what is absent, conceptually and emotionally present through its material trace. An index is stronger, however, than a trace: it points the way, it is asserted

from above, leaving its own shape and substance on the substrate. This indexical process could, I imagined stand for the unmediated way my father had left his impression on me and how, by analogy, the past is inscribed on the present. The



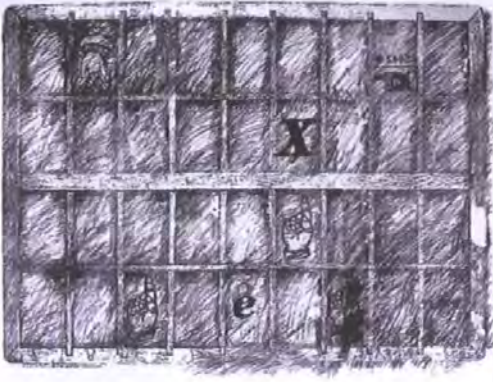
Illus. 14. 2000. Pen Dalton. Thumprint. transfer and screen print on Japanese roll paper.

mimetic practices of printing could reveal, I thought, by their similar relation, something of the practices of faithfully copying, absorbing, mimicking, **resisting**, parodying and imitating. These had been the same tactics through which I had realised my relation to, and conceptualised my growing up, with my father. [Illus 14]

After leaving art school in the late 1960s ignorant and unread, I vigorously **refused** the only fine art practice I had been offered: American modernist abstract painting.

Although I enjoyed such painting, I could not then understand its point. The more overtly radical and critical practices of early twentieth century European modernism and contemporary conceptual art were at that time unknown to me.⁸ It was not until the early 1970s in the context of political and feminist activism outside art colleges, that I began to discover different versions of modernist art, to those I had been taught: early experiments in typography,

and through Surrealism, art's links with language and linguistics. I also delved into the radical history of printing and became involved in producing small publications, pamphlets, magazines, posters and cartoons. My main point of reference in contemporary art practice in Britain was the documentary artwork of this era that often reproduced image and text in black and white, evocative of newspapers and



Illus. 15. 2001. Pen Dalton. Case Study, relief and transfer print with oil based inks on Not paper.

reportage. Such practice privileged realist film, prints, photographs and **facsimiles** produced as evidence and as signs of authenticity.

Documentary practice often used text, and eschewed rhetoric, colour and what were implicitly regarded as the seductions of stylistic interpretation. It privileged instead the

indexical sign, the actual mark or impression, which was regarded as the carrier of some kind of truth or evidence.⁹ [Illus. 15] To begin with, I was wedded to a documentary approach in this research. I was not intending to rely on the materials to convey any meaning, seeking to avoid what I implicitly regarded as unnecessary and unreliable interventions between my memories and a transparent depiction in images and text of those memories I wanted to represent.

the substrate

I worked in **screen**-printing. At first, I limited myself to simple binary processes in screen printing that reiterated many of those of relief printing. I used two materials in contrasting tones: glossy oil-based black ink and a white matt paper substrate; analogous to the dominant and subordinate of binary relations between the impressive mark from above on the fixed substrate below. I consciously adopted the black printed image to represent what is powerful, explicit, and visible: the father, while the white paper upon which the image is printed would stand for the less significant recipient of the impression: the daughter. In traditional printing, the paper is often held down, by metal **grippers** or teeth. This seemed analogous to the similar restraining processes by which girls are conventionally 'kept down' in the family. These simple binary materials and practices seemed sufficient to investigate the

single polar identities of father and daughter, **positive** and **negative**.

I chose newsprint as a substrate initially, because it was the material my father had used at work and the same material on which I had first learned to write and to make images. I always had plenty of newsprint at home as a child, supplied by my father, and I still have the (literally indexical) callous on my finger where I gripped the hard pencil and wrote my first words on its slippery surface. My earliest paintings were produced on newsprint at primary school. At art school, newsprint was available on large-scale **web** rolls: a cheap, expendable material, used for preparatory work, or for quick drawings in charcoal usually destroyed afterwards. Newsprint was the stuff of the daily newspaper and wrapping fish and chips, associated with the expendable, the cheap and nasty and with painful attempts to write.

I returned to newsprint for the first part of this research but disliked its resistant surface. It would only accommodate thick paste-like inks. It refused and deflected any subtle mark and seemed to have an affinity with intense crude blacks. Fluid inks bleed on it and like skin, if left in the sun it becomes brown over time; solar printed **ghosts** and shadows appear when newsprint is left lying about. Its dubious white turns closer to the black ink, confusing the readable image. I regarded these aspects of newsprint as drawbacks, producing wrong readings, undermining not only the clarity and permanence of my ideas but the clear representation of binary opposition and difference I wished to demonstrate. Moreover, newsprint's capacity to change and its unreliability as a support began to suggest the interdependent, frail, unstable nature of the father/daughter relationship, rather than the simple power relation I had in mind. Its **fugitive** and friable qualities suggested the difficulty of holding on to a past unchanging and intact.

Working with and reflecting on materials was beginning to make me question the

way I had framed my argument in the normative assumption that binary relations are only about simple difference, dominance and hierarchy.

But these thoughts came to me only over time. I abandoned newsprint at the first stage and began to look for a more controllable substrate that would carry the indexical paternal image clearly and reiterate the relations of dominant father and subordinate daughter. I discovered after trial and error, a very expensive Japanese **tissue** paper called *Tengujo*. It is a paper - I later found out - used extensively in archives and libraries in the repair of old prints, books and manuscripts. Its role is to preserve the past. I used it towards the end to mend the torn and unstable work on newsprint I had rejected in the early stages of the work. It is so thin that when several printed layers of *Tengujo* are adhered with thin glue to a ground such as canvas, the paper itself seems to dissolve, to disappear, to efface itself.

As thin, self effacing, white and absorbent it could stand in general terms for the position of the little girl in the family: as minor, overlooked, delicate, impressionable. As I worked with *Tengujo*, other reasons why it had appealed to me became apparent. Handling it reminded me of the delicate sheets of white skin I carefully peeled off my **sunburned shoulders** after days on the beach as a child, perhaps on that very holiday when the photograph was taken. Like skin of a young girl, *Tengujo* is delicately **transparent** when wet and slightly veined. It is also rough and warm textured like the best white cardigan, knitted by my mother, I have on in the photograph.

Looking back at my determination to use a dominant ink and subordinate substrate, I can see my aim was to indexically mimic the normative image I had of dominant father and subordinate daughter relations. Newsprint had not lent itself to my concept, so rather than paying attention to its resistances and mute appeals I

chose another that would be more amenable to my abstract ideal. All through the different relations of the work - in the relation between the materials and myself, the relation between the image and the substrate, the relation between the artwork and the audience - I had been attempting to reproduce fictive, normative family relations: the dominant father and the subordinate daughter and in doing so, was performatively reiterating those relations. I reflected later that I had given insufficient consideration to the *Tengujo* or to how it might change the meaning of the indexical image. I had been intent on forging and shaping the substrate: manipulating it to act as a silent vehicle to support and convey a transparent image representing the concept in my mind of a dominant, all-powerful father and myself fixed in a position of subjection. It occurred to me that I had adopted a similar relation to my imagined audience: my object had been to create an impression, perhaps to make others feel or recognise the authenticity or truth of what was being said. I wanted to maintain the clarity and perfection of the image: a facsimile of a dominant father, supported by the art-historical citation and authority of *The Laocoön*. It was only when I began to pay closer attention to what was actually going on in practice and to recall what my lived relation to my father had experientially been that I began to see I was repeating imposed and normalising conventions. I began to recognise too, that my practice in printing was shaped in relations of dominance and subordination that were similar to those I imagined in family relations.

Printing as Research

The associations of newsprint had begun to intervene between my abstract idea of binary relations and how those relations are actually lived. The experience of printing itself was muddying up the clarity of contrast. Hand screen-printing is dirty and physically **exhausting** work, particularly using gloss, oil-based inks; but it is

mentally relaxing (which is one of its pleasures). Doing hard physical work allowed my mind to wander. I found myself thinking in time to the movements I made, repeating words softly to myself as I breathed out in the effort of pulling the prints off the **bed** in rhythmic repetitions. As I handled the materials and actually manipulated the words, images and forms, they seemed to be shaping how I could think through their processes and relations. I noticed that the rhythms and emphases of my bodily actions and the to and fro movements, were imitated in the repetitions of my thoughts. However, when I made a mistake and had to repeat a movement, I found I also repeated the thoughts. The other processes - of mixing inks, of **washing up** and flooding the screen, rubbing away ghosts with redolent **solvents**, discarding wastage - were sensate practices that had associations in my bodily memories and which intervened in the sequential printing process. Thoughts other than those of normative binary power relations began to creep in, as **offsets** and misprints disturbed the clarity of the image, messing it up. **Moirés** caught my eye and



*Illus. 16. 2003. Pen Dalton. **Laocoön's Head**. screenprint on Tengujo on canvas*

connections and memories flooded my mind dissolving the all-powerful impression of the indexical figure. As I printed images of Laocoön and **flung the bastards** to the ground, his agonised expression took on an even more **distressed** aspect as his **slurred** and damaged **face**, his **beard** smeared with **hickeys, smooches** and **tacky kisses**, trodden underfoot, torn, mis-read and bleeding, stared up at me from the floor.

[Illus. 16] The musings I had while I laboured were unrestrained and intuitive, but not I think, random or unorganised. But these fleeting thoughts could not be captured or used as evidence or **proof**: they could not be reflected upon because to abort the printing, to stop and think would dry the ink and ruin the prints, and destroy the clarity of my ideas. It is part of the work of writing up this research to try and remember, to capture these fugitive thoughts about printing and binary relations in the family that **emerged** in this constant repetitive inner dialogue with the practices of printing.

printing's dispersed histories

Printing covers a great many different discursive fields: it is involved in the domestic, with wall paper and textiles; with fashion and the printing of colour, pattern and text onto clothes, bags and shoes. It is used in industry to print with metal inks on steel, on the sides of lorries, on hoardings, placards and street signs. Chemicals and drugs are reactively printed onto substrates that can be stuck onto and absorbed by the body. Inks are impregnated with scents, can be printed onto edible substrates. Acids can be printed onto substrates to create decorative patterns and perforations. Photography, film, computer generated imagery - most of the images that are seen - will be remediated through one or more processes that share the binary histories of printing. There are accounts and descriptions of textile printing, fine art print making, graphic reproduction, **digital** printing and so on, each lodged in different institutions, each field of practice having its own text books, manuals and value systems, its own professional identities and loyalties and systems of training and education. These fields of practice are discrete: world of the printer of text and that of the fine art printmaker, the textile printer and the industrial printer have diverged. Yet in definitions of 'printing' these different fields are related in the sense that they have inherent 'properties' of 'print': looked as 'mediums' they share similar processes,

similar materials, technological developments, and binary protocols.¹⁰

As I grew up, I encountered many of these different practices, some at an age when I had not learned to discriminate. My discussions about print making recall the memories and associations of the printing work that my father and I both did in different social, gendered and historical contexts, but also the work I did in textile design in art school, in domestic work in upholstery and decorating and in the print workshops in the 1970s when I worked in the graphic design of printed materials. Although 'print' might seem a narrow **medium** specific example in relation to the arts, a review of printmaking in all its wider forms and contexts can begin to reveal the historical, class and gender differences of printing and how the differences separating fine art and commercial printing came about and are maintained. It can expose an interest in the complex relations of the technical grounds of printing, its archaic patriarchal gendered conventions, its present contexts and applications, its new technologies, materials and processes and its global applications and its family-like modes of organisation, hierarchy and production.

There is, as far as I can tell, no existing discourse or research that examines relations between these different fields of printing. There is, however, associated with the history of printing, a body of scholarly work that discusses changes in printing and print technology in relation to changing cultures and subjectivity.¹¹ Changes in modes of communication - from oral to handwriting, from writing to block printing, and from fixed to moveable type associated with the Gutenberg press, have been implicated in what have been seen as historical shifts in perception and subjectivity. I have drawn on the insights that these studies offer, although most of them have been concerned with the printing of text.

My investigation in practice is mainly concerned with print making in the context of

the image in fine art. This includes the printing of text but is mainly discussed with reference to its visual and sensory effects. For the following two chapters, I have drawn on two major bodies of work which are concerned with text and image together: the writing of William Ivins Jr. a print curator and historian working in the first half of the Twentieth Century - his seminal works although very much part of the technological developments of that time, are still stimulating contemporary research - and the writing of Joanna Drucker.¹² Drucker has identified the debates in the relation between image and text, between printing and writing, between fine art and linguistics as being at the heart of twentieth century debate on modernism and modernist art.¹³

I had been aware that narrowing this research to a medium: printing inks and substrates, carried with it some modernist residue: that the term *medium specificity* with which I have defined my area of practice and research might be regarded as limiting its range of reference. One way of avoiding this, while at the same time privileging printing practices and emphasising their saturation in everyday life, has been to adopt Rosalind Krauss' notion of *recursivity* in relation to mediums and media.¹⁴ Approaching a medium such as print *recursively* would be to acknowledge their matter: their mediums and the latent layering of technical, historical and conventional relationships of their emergence in different practices. A recursive approach takes into account the non-specific elements that have produced those mediums' unwritten, non-explicit rules of engagement, their relations and the nature of their organisation. A modernist definition of printmaking concerned itself with the specificities of the mediums and the search for the original and the unique. A recursive understanding of print making practice would include the printing of text, image and pattern, book printing, advertising, digital printing, wallpaper, textiles and the newspaper and magazine industry. Each medium has its own organisational

structure and rules of procedure and practice, "some of the elements of which will produce the rules that generate the structure itself".¹⁵

printing's analogy with thinking

Printing as I have suggested, has an anacritic resonance for me; it is not being offered as an exemplary practice nor privileged for any capacity it might have to render a wide range of emotional and human experience.¹⁶ It is employed in this research as an investigative tool and an aid to thinking about the research theme. But printing's analogies can be extended to imagine other domains of experience beyond my personal proclivities. I had a hunch when I began the research, that the processes of printing were very close, almost indexical of thinking itself. With reference to Jakobson's linguistic exposition on discriminating and combinatory practices, it occurred to me that printing procedurally mimicked the processes of cognition.¹⁷ Binary and hierarchical relations of difference are essential for fundamental activity in language and speech. As Jakobson said:

The binary opposition is a child's first logical operation. Both opposites arise simultaneously and force the infant to choose one and to suppress the other of the two alternatives.¹⁸

Discrimination and re-combination in hierarchical relations likewise operate all through the different stages of making a printed image. It occurred to me that tracing back the procedures of making a printed image might throw some light on thinking itself. The vast number of the protocols, sequential steps and technical processes that have to be made to turn an idea into a printed image, are documented. It seemed possible, by recursively revealing the layers that have been incorporated in digital printing operations, to trace the cognitive processes and the analogic role of mediums that are at work between thought and image.

Historically, printing processes and the systems of dissemination of the word and image have been at the cutting edge of changing technologies. Modern developments towards digital printing have been targeted towards the creation of a transparent image - to render exact copies of optical realism - as cheaply and as responsively as possible. There has always been a need for skills to be taught and updated for new generations of printers. So, there exists constantly revised and improved records, illustrations, manuals, online explanations and computer functions describing how mimetic practice should be done in the most pragmatic terms. There are exact recipes and prescriptions for making and matching millions of colours, tones, degrees of opacity and texture to correspond optically to objects in reality. There are tangible mediums that have been chemically devised in mathematically regulated relations to each other that can be summoned for use over and again. In painting, this recalling of the vast store of colours, tones, opacities and so on, is done intuitively. The innumerable decisions, judgements, selections, analogies that are made in just one painting would make any documentation or analysis of its processes an intervention, an interruption and contradictory to the very processes of painting itself. But because each step of printing has to be consciously staged, organised and decided and exactly repeatable, precise values are necessary, the processes of printing can be available for scrutiny in a way that no other medium allows. A recursive history of all this labour and work is, I think, analogous to uncovering the complex processes of creative work and labour that lie between the thought or the imaginative idea, and the printed image in circulation in the world of symbols and signs.¹⁹ These records could be, in effect, a history of the processes by which thoughts and imaginings are speedily turned into shareable representations. It is easier and more visible I believe, by recursively visiting the discourses of printing, to dismantle the

processes that lie in the gap between the thought and the image. Such a process enables us to understand something about the way analogies work in practice, and how unrelated organisations and identities such as those in the family are imposed impressed and reproduced in how we imagine the arts to be organised.

Summary and Speculative Thoughts on Chapter Two

In Chapter Two I explain that the relationships in families are imagined as all being different and fundamentally binary. The family has been imagined in two major forms: as the Holy Family, a triangular figure of a father, mother and son, and the modern square economic nuclear family that includes a daughter figure. In both ideal forms, the father is the dominant figure but the daughter is in-between: she is both inside the imagined family yet also imagined as outside, sometimes included, sometimes not. It is difficult to have a concrete image of what the little girl could culturally signify. I state that I intend in the research to focus on the polar identities of the greatest and the least power in the family set-up: between the father and the daughter figure to understand, in analogical terms, what the figure of the little girl might convey in art.

I introduce printing as a particularly appropriate investigative tool because it is essentially a mimetic practice, because it is essentially binary, having dominant and subordinate entities, and because its processes and protocols are well documented. A recursive study of the relations of printing, could I suggest, work as analogy for the kinds of relationships that exist between two people in similarly structured dominant and subordinate relations.

Finding that I was using words, like *impression* and *reproduction* in my relation with my father first gave me a clue that there is some similarity between human and art's relations. I go on to describe how I explore the medium of print looking for more

links between my family relations and the relations of art and go on to show how practice with analogic materials can open up thoughts and reflections on the nature of binary relations in the family. I argue that acts of analogy which are not always conscious and which prime and predispose experience, and the copying of outward appearance in mimetic practice are basic to creating 'becoming' a person, creating a sense of self, in relation to another, particularly a parent figure. Similarly, I suggest, art is essentially founded in similar non conscious structuring and visual mimetic practices.

However, working with materials began to suggest a by-passing of the rational, verbal and linguistic association; I began to suspect that materials and processes themselves, through bodily acts that are often tiring and hard, allow direct sensory access to past, to release 'locked up' and suppressed feelings and allow emotions to flood into my being that contradicted rational thought. The metaphoric practices of analogy created greater wealth of associations, whilst those closer relations of metonymic mimesis did not allow so many other associations to creep in. As I proceeded with the practice, I began to see that the work and the materials were interrupting and destabilising the clarity of my earlier image, which had been a virtual binary model of impressive dominance and passive subordination. It suggested to me that practice - using tools, mediums and the body - can prefigure critical thinking: that practice with 'stuff' disturbs 'abstract theory', in this case my virtual notion of what a family ought to be. As I built the glossary, and seeing how many ancient and human technological practices - textiles, building, pottery and more recently, computer technology - are woven or saturated inextricably into everyday concepts in language, and how many of these terms are familial, it became increasingly evident to me that my experience in a nuclear family, and my established practices had

predisposed and to some extent were still limiting my ways of thinking. Family relations had prompted the research, and enabled me to make links I would otherwise not have made, but my imaginary sense of proper family relations was also imposing its normative patterns on how I was proceeding.

Endnotes to Chapter Two

1. Lyric from *Tunnel of Love*. Album. Bruce Springsteen. 1987
2. Juliet Mitchell first drew my attention to the notion of the imaginative 'Holy Family' of biology, replayed in Freudian family scenarios. See Mitchell, J. (1974) *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*. Penguin; Harmondsworth. Concluding chapter, 'The holy family and feminism'.
3. I have referred to this privileging of the boy at length, particularly in relation to the discourses of psychology and education. See Dalton, P. (2001) *The Gendering of Art Education: Modernism, Identity and Critical Feminism*. Open University Press: Milton Keynes.
4. See the absence of representations of girls/young women theorised in Braidotti, R. (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*, trans. E. Guild, Polity: Cambridge; Irigaray, L. (1974) *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. C. Porter. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York and Mulvey, L. 'The Oedipus myth: beyond the riddles of the sphinx' in Mulvey, L. (ed) (1989) *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Macmillan: London.
5. Greenberg. *Modernist Painting*, op.cit., p.760.
6. Elger, D. (1997) *Felix Gonzalez-Torres. Vols. I Text. & II Catalogue Raisonné*. Cantz Verlag. Vol.I, pp.78-79.
7. My understanding of indexical work has been shaped through reading Krauss, R. (1996) 'Notes on the index: part 1 and part 2', in *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. MIT Press: Cambridge. Mass. pp.196-220, and Mitchell, W.J.T. (1986) 'Pictures and paragraphs: Nelson Goodman and the grammar of difference, in *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago University Press: Chicago. pp.53-74.
8. Griselda Pollock wrote of this moment in fine art education in the early 1970s when there was a gap between the art school values of modernism and those of feminist and political art practice. See Pollock, G. (1986) 'Art, Art School and Culture', *Block*, 11. p.8-18:
9. I am referring to artists such as Conrad Atkinson and Margaret Harrison, for whom colour was not a major formal concern. Their work and work of other artists in the genre can be seen documented in Wye, D. (1988) *Committed to Print: Social and Political Themes in Recent American Printed Art*. Museum of Modern Art: New York and Nairne, S. (1987) *State of the Art: Ideas and Images in the 1980s*. Chatto and Windus: London and Nairne, S. and Tisdall, C. (eds.) (1981) *Conrad Atkinson: Picturing the System*. Pluto Press/ ICA: London.
10. These definitions have been taken from non-printing sources such as dictionaries, thesauruses and popular categorisation such as Wikipedia.
11. Ong, W. J. (1988) *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word*. Methuen: New York; McLuhan, M. (1962) *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Routledge: New York and (1995) *Understanding Media*. Routledge: New York. Walter Ong speculated on the changes in consciousness brought about by the shift from orality to literacy, and Marshall McLuhan examined the effects of the revolutionary change from fixed relief printing to moveable type. In (1980) *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge and (1990) *The Printing Revolution in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, Elizabeth Eisenstein challenged some of the assertions made by Ong and McLuhan, and questioned the power of printing as a direct agent of change. Ong and McLuhan, however, recorded, amongst other things how offset lithography and mass printing distribution processes allowed a more flexible interplay between words and images, which allowed what Mitchell has called 'the pictorial turn'; Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994) *Picture Theory*. Chicago University Press. More recently there has been discussion and speculation on the effects of the continuous tone and virtual forms of text and image

making alongside digital printing processes in relation to subjectivity. This research is being carried out, notably at the Centre for Fine Art Print Research at the University of the West of England in Bristol.

12. Ivins, W. M. Jr. (1953/1979) *Prints and Visual Communication*. Cambridge: Mass. and Ivins, W. M. Jr. (1943/1988) *How Prints Look*. John Murray: Boston, Mass. and Drucker, J. (1994) *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art. 1909-1923*. Chicago University Press: Chicago and Drucker, J. (1998) *Figuring the Word*. Granary Books: New York

13. Drucker. *The Visible Word*, op. cit. Chapter One

14. Krauss, R. (1999) "A Voyage on the North Sea": *Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, Thames & Hudson: London. p. 8. Krauss contrasts Greenberg's definition of medium with a notion of a 'medium as aggregative, as a complex structure of interlocking and interdependent technical supports and layered conventions'. A medium makes itself up as it goes along but it keeps referring back in time in a feedback relation to the conditions of its own formation structured by what has gone before and what it does in the present.

15. Krauss. *Ibid*, p.7.

16. *Anaclitic* a psychoanalytic term referring to emotional dependence on others, particularly mother or parent figures in the past.

17. Jakobson, R. and Halle, M. (1971) *Fundamentals of Language*. Mouton: Paris. p.72. 'The twofold character of language'.

18. Jakobson and Halle. *Ibid*, p.60.

19. The term labour is primarily used here for mental and bodily effort, whilst work or a work is used to imply a creative material production: of mass produced objects, or of images, of art or of the self. Labour is involved in work and in producing a work, but it does not always produce a work. The two cannot I think, be quite separate.

CHAPTER THREE: PRINTING AS A REGULATING PRACTICE

Rodchenko was the son of a props manager at a theatre club and a washerwoman, and his life thus began in the black and the white – the darkened auditorium where his father rounded up the props, his mother's gleaming laundry – that shaped his oeuvre.¹

*The letters proceed from these black keys, and these black keys proceed
From my alphabetical fingers, ordering parts,*

*Parts, bits, cogs, the shining multiples.
I am dying as I sit. I lose a dimension.²*

Introduction

It was becoming increasingly evident to me that my understanding of the relationships of the family and of printing had been conventional: that I had been attempting without realising it, to meet received and normative ideas. Reflecting on the printing I have done all my life leads me to suppose that I am somewhat predisposed to approach new artworks - in whatever mediums - and new events and relationships, in ways that stem from my experience with printing's formal demands and its discriminating and oppositional practices. This chapter documents my gradual awareness and how it was brought about through reflections on print making. In it, I investigate the extent to which recalling lived experience and working with materials and new technologies disturbed my normative abstract ideals. In the next section I

focus attention on my experience of printing as it changed, providing an example - a kind of 'case study' - to demonstrate how, in my case, print making practice shifted my thinking about my relationship with my father toward less conventional relationships.

childhood play

When I was a child, my father brought home from work lead type, oil based inks and newsprint for me to play with. Although they were intractable materials, I gradually learned to handle them. In terms of modernist 'media specificity', the prints



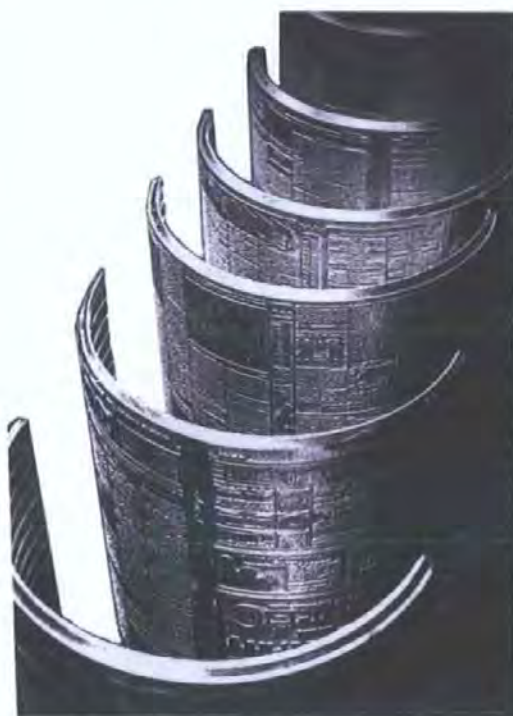
Illus. 17.2003. Pen Dalton. Little xx's. rubber stamp prints

I made were crafted in the same binary black and white relief processes as those my father had used in the newspaper industry in the 1950s, but the context was entirely different. For me it was play. I was not concerned with clarity, with

making words or meaning, or reading text. [Illus 17]

Playing meant I was not limited to reason, to columns, to manipulating heavy presses or working to the regular tempo of machines. I particularly liked the balance and symmetry of the abstract 'l's', 'O's and 'X's to make patterns and faces; the 'monotype sorts' and text ornaments, the stars, arabesques; the little hand with its lacy cuff: the printer's fist. I preferred ornate **fonts** with unnecessary additions that made them seem human: their curvy **bits**, their little hats and feet, the surprising patterns made by empty spaces, margins, holes and blanks. Ignorant of the proper way to print, I was not impressed by the impositions, rearranged the order of things and broke the rules of text and grammar through play. From the start, printing was associated in my mind with my father and the overcoming of difficulty with pleasure and play.

With its impressive and reproductive potential, printing had always seemed to reiterate our relationship. In my mind, printing and men became inextricably linked. The type itself was described in masculine terms and in a masculine authoritative order: it had a hard male body, with a **neck**, shoulders, a face and feet. When I later took up typography 'properly' positioning the type in upper and lower cases spoke of divisions of class and gender. The wooden cases were like the rigid divisions and hierarchical order of a society; the correct places and positions for the different typefaces had to be learned by heart until their proper distribution became habits of the body. Any mingling or mis-placement of the letters caused endless trouble. The



*Illus. 18. 1927. Rodchenko **Plates**. Detail from photo-story.*

capital letters at the beginning of the sentence seemed like the tall father overlooking the order of the rest of the family and I came to envisage the place of the little girl as the small dot at the end. For me when a child, such sorting, ordering, arranging and separating into different categories had been in itself, a pleasure. As I sorted, and re-arranged I reiterated these familial relations in their correct order. The rhythms of printing, its active to-and-fro movement, its investment in faithful reproduction and the signed legitimate

limited editions seemed to mimic masculine dramas of heterosexual relations and primogeniture.

From my subordinate viewpoint in the family as the youngest girl, I observed and experienced the power of printers as fathers. My Uncle, a shop steward, was an

'FOC': Father of the Chapel. I did not know what this archaic term meant but the men seemed to have God on their side.³ The power I imagined my father had in the family was doubly inscribed for, as Pierre Bourdieu had argued, where symbolic power of familial authority is repeated in the social position of men in work, then that power is increased.⁴ This doubling and tripling of paternal authority, real and imagined, was impressed on me like the mechanical daily run of the printing presses, for not only was my dad the **head** of the family and brought home money, but it was he who actually cast the solid lead words, and printed them in the newspapers I saw everywhere in the London streets. [Illus. 18] The symbolic authority of the father was present at every turn, through a hierarchy of materials we both used and through the way that spaces and objects were negotiated at a micro and macro level.

Paternal power existed not only in our personal relationship but also in the construction of the *mise en scenes* I inhabited on a day-to-day basis. It was through my father that I was introduced to the social world of work. Rather than leave me alone on Sundays, he often took me to the huge *Sunday Times* building in King's

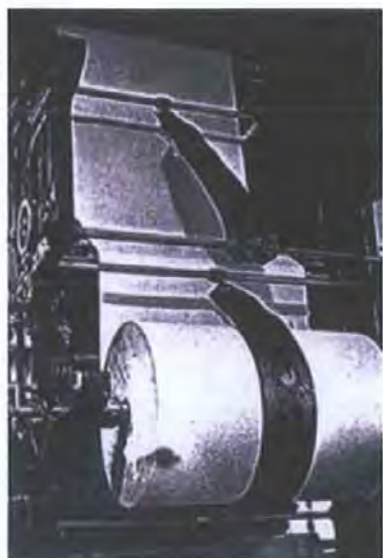


Illus. 19. 2004. Papier Maché Flong. online catalogue image.

Cross, when he worked sometimes as caretaker. I was probably not supposed to be there, but he allowed me the run of the building that for me was a huge treat. He showed me the foundry in the basement where the metal casts of newspaper text were made. The basement housed the furnaces, the moulds, beer crates and in dark corners, the beds where operatives slept between shifts.

The ceiling was low and it was dark and dirty. It was where my father was mainly employed producing flongs from the **matrixes** to mould the molten lead into words and sentences. [Illus. 19] Above the basement, on the

ground level above were the vast web presses, as big as houses, holding huge rolls of newsprint. [Illus. 20] Further up the stairs were compositors' floors and the linotype machines. On the tables were *formes*, cases of back-to-front text with next week's news all ready in place, with spaces waiting for the headlines to be inserted. Up the stairs on the first floor were the vast sub-editors' offices strewn with papers. I sat at the huge desks, twirled on the revolving chairs, played with the typewriters and nosed in all the drawers where I was punished for my curiosity by the humiliating discovery of pornographic pictures of splayed and naked women, ruder than the ones on the wall. They were associated in my mind with the embarrassing strange men, who on the empty tube trains on my way to Kings Cross showed me their **cocks**. Further upstairs, the windows became cleaner, the ceilings higher. It was lighter, spacious and less smelly. My father told me this was where the draughtsmen and designers worked and it was my favourite place. Half-finished cartoons, drawings and pictures had been left **lying** about. Unfamiliar graphic drawing tools, unusual (then) seductive black felt-tips, draughtsman's boards and a smoother, whiter kind of paper littered the



Illus. 20. 1927. Rodchenko. Web Press. detail from photostory

floor - but I was not allowed to touch. Up above were the boring offices of finance and administration which had nothing to do with my father or me, to finally the top floor and the boardrooms. Here the floors were carpeted, the walls oak panelled, they smelled sweeter and there were sofas, flowers and oil paintings. The doors were locked but my father had a key and let me peep inside.

As I ran up and down the building, in and out of those spaces, I must have absorbed some

identification with the social realities of class, power and gender at work in relation to the economic importance and relative positions of images and text that echoed my place in the family. I embodied these relations through my senses and the physical effort required climbing the stairs to reach the top. My body experienced the hierarchies of the building, the increasing light, the different smells, sounds, atmospheres, the furniture and the blush-making pictures, the different materials and their associated pleasures and limits. Like the regulating of Connie's shoes in the hall, I performatively realised my place in the order of things in sensory practice in alien, exciting and slightly frightening spaces, which I can recall and reiterate through printing practice I do today. In negotiating the objects, the materials, the fascinating atmosphere of a workplace from which I, as female, was formally excluded I learned a position in the world that echoed my position in the family which, if anywhere, was outside, or destined to exist mute and naked on the walls or as a secret hidden in the drawers.

When I later became involved in feminist art - working in community print workshops, reading about gender relations and print history - I began to modify my thoughts in relation to my memories.⁵ The memories were the same but I began to interpret them differently. Cynthia Cockburn in her sympathetic and wide ranging study of *The Print*, described its patriarchal culture, paternal relations and its construction of masculine identities in the 1950s. She wrote, citing the experiences of printers:

Apprenticeship and chapel life remained a patriarchal affair. Openings in print were still jealously guarded, and a boy was better placed if he had family connections... the relations were quite literally patriarchal in the sense that they involved a hierarchy among the men, conferring authority on the older ones... apprenticeship in the print industry was 'like induction to a rather select club, it makes you part of an elite'.... a manhood ritual still. '... It tested and teased you, made you angry, and you emerged fighting, confident of belonging somewhere.'⁶

She adds,

...the exclusion of girls from apprenticeship, women from print, did not need to occur through closing a gate or through formal banning. It would have been an odd family that was willing to see a daughter enter so male oriented a life.⁷

As I learned more I was less impressed. I became consciously aware why none of my female relatives had been in The Print. I learned how the printing industry had explicitly re-established patriarchal, family-like relations in the workplace, and how its hierarchical modes of management and labour organisation had positioned women in low paid tasks. Printing jobs had been passed between male relatives and the history of industrial scale printing records a gradual exclusion of women, foreigners and 'others' from its craft practices and its workforce.

I begin to speculate on the possibility that the paternal relations I experienced and repeatedly encountered in the family, at school and in the workplace, had predisposed me to approach the world and accept a position as subordinate in similar relations without question. It occurred to me that my sense of my self as a girl had been partially shaped through the formal practices and relations of printing. It was only when I began to re-search my past and find out about printing itself through reading, discussion and through actual practice, doing the same things my father had done, that I began to revise my memories and question the regulating orthodoxies of printing and my fidelity to them. I began to wonder if it is the constant repetition of experience in familial, binary and relational practices, rather than the workings of any unconscious symbolic law that imposes its normative relations most powerfully on subjectivity.⁸

relief printing and the labour of binary division

All printing, whether analogue or digital, is structured in sequential binary

procedures. Relief printing, which was characteristic of most printed material up to the early 1970s, employed raised and reversed metal type or cast and reversed type-high image plates, inserted among the text. Traditionally, the printed plates for the illustrations were aligned, **registered** and subordinated to meet the intelligibility of the dominant text - as they have been in this document.

Before mechanical photoengraving, and the casting of lead, a printer had to physically gouge a word or image from a matrixical material.⁹ Discarding the material cut away as waste. [Illus. 21] In etching, lithography or woodcut, an image must first be



Illus. 21. 1996. Cornelia Parker. The Negative of Words. silver residue.

separated into positive and negative areas. The printer has the choice of assigning only a positive or a negative effect and then the positive must be firmly impressed on the paper with the help of force of the body or some mechanical pressure from above. The act of separation into hierarchical printing and non-printing areas is slow and requires mental concentration, visual acuity and hard physical labour, using the body's effort enhanced by laboriously learned skills. Traditional printers work

with the honed tools of incising, cutting and gouging; burning with acids or casting with heavy, dangerous and precarious molten lead.¹⁰ The difference between the part of the print that makes the mark, and that that leaves no impression is created through forced division and decisive effort.

Printing has not been known for its subtleties of expression, as a choice of medium it is not conducive to evoking shades of meaning. With paint as a medium, it is possible to simulate the effects of vague, subtle and in-between tones with smooth

gradations of colour, or by lighter handling, the flicking of a brush in blurred washes or delicate transparencies. If printers need to represent a formless entity, such as a cloud, or constantly changing vapour, they must simplify, reduce and do consciously what the painter does intuitively: discriminate which bits of the cloud to mark and which to omit in a process of translation which inevitably leaves out the almost imperceptible 'in-between' formal elements. [Illus. 22] They have to create ways to reconcile and recombine the divisions of difference once established to evoke what has been missing or violently cut away. Even so, with the most skilled of typesetters,



Illus. 22. 16thC. Dürer. Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, detail. engraving.

the effort can be seen, the marks of the tool and the body are always visible. It is up to the printer to suggest what might be missing, so that the viewer can optically recombine opposing elements in the gestalt of viewing, cognitively 'filling in' without being aware that anything is missing.

The reading of a printed image is often a misreading: it is fetishistic in that something seamless or 'whole' is produced which hides the violence required in the process of cutting away. A protocol of looking is established in reading prints that mobilises our visual capacity to bracket out the past effort and pain of labour, and gloss over what is hard, messy, distasteful or unnecessary for immediate intelligibility.¹¹

The experience of these processes of making and looking may have subsequent effects on thinking. On encountering a real cloud, the carver of the matrix will be disposed to look for what possibilities there are for rendering vague forms in binary terms. I do this myself. When I encounter an object I intend to print, I mentally divide it into positive and negative areas of visual information, imagining beforehand what I

will carve away as an absence of colour, and what I will leave as a positive mark. This experience of the bodily practices of discrimination may create a predisposition to see things and people 'in black and white' rather than being sensitive to what lies between: to omit to see the formlessness of actual experience. Printing and its material processes, I speculate, concretises thought and imposes a way of thinking that is transposed to other non-visual, non-art relations, overlooking the potential shades of difference and complexities of real relations; creating binary difference where none would otherwise exist.

black and white

It is interesting to speculate on the extremes of difference in social and family relations as I remember them in the mid twentieth century when most pictures I saw were reproduced in black and white. My memories of life in the first decades after the war seem to come back to me in black and white, recollected through archives of tv, films and old photographs. Life then seemed similarly polarised. Gender roles were discrete. As a girl in the 1950s I was expected to act, dress and behave in a manner appropriate to my age and sex. Any crossing of normative boundaries - such as 'showing off', wearing trousers or having short hair - was not easily tolerated. Differences were rigidly maintained through habits of teasing, ridicule and censure. Because my father did not behave like a dominant man, and looked after his daughter, I was made aware that relatives and neighbours looked on him as 'soft': not a proper man. And although the existence of 'intermediate' or gay, lesbian and transgendered identities were known, they were not culturally visible, nor did we look for these potentials in ourselves. There was little possibility of acting outside or beyond normative nuclear family identities. The nuances of in-between identities were available, but not represented as part of a normal family or as desirable options.

All nuanced and alternative relations were concealed in the ideal image of the normative family. It is tempting to speculate that the same gestalt tendency to perceptually overlook what lies between opposites - active in the social relations of that time - had something to do with the prevailing formal relations of printing. That representation in binary forms normalised modes of viewing that predisposed a tendency to see things in black and white.

Working in practices of creating polar entities from an undifferentiated matrix triggered off thoughts about similar process of binary discrimination when a child first emerges from the feminine matrix: the womb. The same word *matrix* is used suggesting an analogous relation of the basic print differentiation to birth, or creation. An undifferentiated child is immediately assigned a gender: a place as a 'he' or 'she' that performatively names them as having a hierarchical relation of power in the world. As with a carved matrix, the child's identity may not fall between a positive and a negative social sign. Not being assigned a gender would render a child unthinkable and even those children whose biological sex is not clear are declared as one or the other, sometimes mistakenly. Binary separation of 'figure' and 'ground' is essential for relief printing; sexual difference is essential for biological reproduction, and it may be necessary for enculturing an infant. But I am led to wonder if differentiating gendered practices are necessary thereafter and how far into adulthood it is necessary to maintain binary protocols. And how far do these binaries need to be hierarchical? Practice in printing, echoing that of linguistics, indicates that fundamental and hierarchical binary distinctions are necessary in the early stages for cultural intelligibility. However, once a print has been made, and once a child enters the world of sociality and signs, there are a great many more interesting events that intervene between the single positive/negative binaries of the black and the white.

Through analogy, I am led to question the extremes of male and female in a similar way. It seems that any de-differentiation or emphasis on in-between states of representation might collapse binary oppositions, threaten conceptual alternatives, and disturb the foundations of the way we have learned to think about difference.

Laocoön as a Differentiating Figure

The idea that art can predispose and regulate thought and that it can impose conventional binary relations is not my own, nor is it new. One of the arts' legitimising arguments has been that it can promote cultural values and conventional virtues. Some artwork - particularly that which is public, monumental or often repeated - becomes recognised as culturally significant, a regularising figure.¹² What I briefly recount in the next section are some debates in art history and aesthetics surrounding the classical figure of *The Laocoön* statuary group and its standing as a figure of difference. Through these debates, *The Laocoön* has served as an example of how art can shape thought, in particular, how it reiterates the importance of difference.

In the Roman statuary group, *The Laocoön* - of which there are many copies and no existing original - a bearded man is depicted in a contorted posture with an agonised expression. It refers to a Greek myth in which Laocoön, the father unsuccessfully defends himself and his sons against monstrous and grotesque sea serpents, who are commonly interpreted as signs of disorder and horror. Gotthold Lessing described the writhing figure of Laocoön in his famous essay of 1766 as "a beautiful body" stoic and silent in the face of extreme bodily pain.¹³ He argued that powerful art such as *The Laocoön* can positively shape and regulate human perceptions and he promoted the establishment of similar public statues for their civilizing effects, saying, "When beautiful men fashioned beautiful statues, these in their turn affected them, and the State had beautiful statues in part to thank for

beautiful citizens".¹⁴ Lessing's essay was not explicitly concerned with fathers and sons; his main purpose in selecting the statue was to provide an example of the clear depiction of an object in space, representing difference. The statuary's solid forms and clear outlines seen against a background were employed by Lessing as analogy for maintaining proper perceptual and formal distinctions between the cultural fields of poetry and painting. [Illus.23]¹⁵



Illus. 23. 1820. William Blake. *Laocoön*. engraving

Lessing's influential text has been invoked as "an oracle" and "occupies a central place in the canons of rival traditions" in the history of art criticism.¹⁶ His arguments have since been extrapolated by other cultural theorists as analogy for conceptualising other binary relations: between the literary and the plastic arts, between men and women, right and wrong, image and text.¹⁷ As W. J. T. Mitchell has closely argued, and as Yves Alain Bois re-iterated, *The*

Laocoön figure itself has come to denote difference as a reigning principle in arts criticism.¹⁸ Greenberg's filial reference to Lessing in *Towards a Newer Laocoön* brought the debate into the modern world, extending the analogy to refer to the necessity for clear distinctions, differentiation and demarcations between different registers of perception and the importance of the specific properties of different mediums.¹⁹ Modernist tenets, clarified by Greenberg, produced a principle based on the representing premise that there can be no vision at all without the separation of bounded objects "emerging as apart from, in contrast to, the ambience or ground within which they appear."²⁰

It is not unreasonable to suggest then, given the notion of structural priming and the human tendency to transpose from one familiar form to another, that the

contrasting figure of object and background constantly reiterated in art, and black on white printing technologies might make some impression on the viewer; might predispose a tendency to organise other relations in similarly simple binary hierarchies.

the subversion of syntax

When a printed image is magnified or enlarged, it is seen to be made up of lines, dots or some other regular formal pattern. The figure of *The Laocoön* is made from



Illus. 24. 1784. Laocoön. German. engraving. detail

the same patterning as the ground against which it is depicted. [illus 24] The print historian William Ivins noted this in his study of many printed reproductions of it that have been made since the fifteenth century using different printing technologies. He argued that it is not only the overt semantic messages of visible background and foreground that regulate perception (in this case the narrative figure of Laocoön and his

sons) but also the underlying syntax: the language of the medium itself. Ivins was writing in the early 1950s up to which time many printed reproductions were in black and white and the syntax of print could just about be seen by the naked eye.²¹

Syntax is formed in the way that different engravers resolved the problem of depicting what lies between the polarities of positive mark and negative space by the creation of half-tones. Different syntactical designs of stipples, hatching, parallel lines and so on, were created in response to the possibilities of the matrixical material.

Each material whether it be wood, metal or their equivalents in stone or stencil, combined with the tool for cutting and the skill, strength and imaginative powers of the engraver, produced its own characteristic pattern of marks. Up to the beginning of

the twentieth century, half-tone patterns were all different making the evidence of interpretation much clearer. Early artist printmakers devised their own solutions for bridging black and white, sometimes with brilliant effects, catching at the nuances and idiosyncrasies of information and meaning which added character to the final print.



Illus. 25. 1774. William Hogarth. The Rake's Progress. detail of engraving.

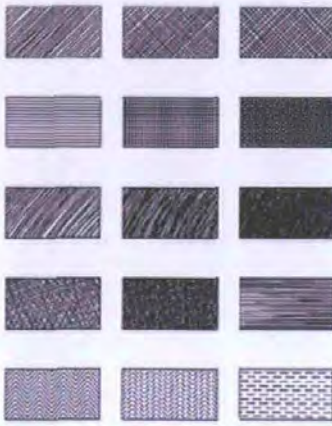
[*Illus. 25*] There are now millions of half-tone patterns available for printing, embedded in computer programmes. However, just as there were no available terms to describe the in-between of

genders, there are no technical terms, definitions or specific names given to distinguish the patterns, grades and tones and the creative **resolutions** of difference between positive and negative entities. They have been informally and generically described at different times as 'screens' or 'grids' as systems of lines, cross hatching.

[*Illus 26*] Even the modern dot system is variously called **rasters**, **Benday dots** or dot screens. Without specific terms, it is difficult appreciate the vast range of what lies in-between, or discuss the different ways that the in-between tones and their different qualities strike our imaginations, which tends to make the in-between less available to conscious thought or to perception.

Ivins studied the in-between of printing, using the analogy of *nets*, he declared that 'words and visual images catch only the things or qualities they are adequately meshed for'.²² A net is only one specific description, but is analogously a catching device as well as being a **continuous** surface. It suggests how all sorts of similar things are caught together, held by the same force, yet it only catches certain categories of things. The analogue image of each net pattern produced by the different technologies of printing - cut by a knife, a gouge or **punch** according to Ivins

Hatching and Cross Hatching Examples



Illus. 26. 1963. Hatching and cross hatching tones, detail from Cannon and Wallis, p. 37

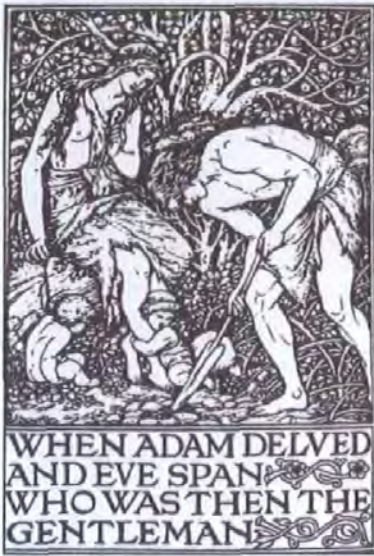
- work as ideology in that they allow certain information to slip through and structure binaries with different priorities. The skilled recorder of the observable world – as painter, sculptor, matrix cutter - learns to see within the conventions of the prevailing technology available and its syntactical binary conventions, and the audience learns to read in the same binary conventions.²³ Each kind of object represented by a syntactical net can only be adequately and

meaningfully caught by the inflected codes and

patterns of its medium. It is difficult for instance, for a medieval woodcut to convey the subtle smoothness of flesh, or for etching to capture the clarity or precision of a machine. The clear lines of engraving are rarely successful in conveying emotion. Etching on the other hand is able capture accidental noise, marks of the hand producing smooches and raised burrs often used for emotional effect. Ivins drew analogies between each material and the tenor of its processes, with different moments of Western cultural history, suggesting that the syntactical designs of each period reiterated its preoccupations and values. Each specific pattern caught the potentials for the shades and qualities of thought that predominated at the time.

Medieval relief printing for instance, required bodily labour in the heavy work of carving. The half-tones of fifteenth century woodcutting are not generally subtle, even in the hands of Dürer. Information was conveyed in black and white, analogous to a culture, perhaps, that had clear distinctions between right and wrong, heaven and hell, male and female and the imposition of the one law of a monotheistic, paternal god. It could be supposed that what lay between positive assertion of religion through

the word of god, and its faithful obedience to that law, did not leave much room for social or personal manoeuvre; there were few half-tone solutions required. The nineteenth century revival of block printing saw a corresponding patriarchal



Illus. 27. 19thC. Edward Burne-Jones. Bookplate, woodcut.

emphasis on the idea of the dignity of labour, of manual work. Such impressions may have - at the height of industrialisation - tacitly added their imposing regulatory protocols on economically gendered divisions of labour. [*Illus. 27*]

Printing with metal plates, in early techniques based on metal and silver engraving, co-existed with the old woodcutting processes, and one could speculate that a more expensive and elite, polished and more abstract mode of expression would have been possible.

Engraving developed to a high pitch of clarity and visual accuracy in the 17th and 18thC Enlightenment which is analogous to an ideological shift from the virtues of manual to mental effort. Ivins described the binary syntax of engraving as analogous to the geometer's 'net of rationality', likening it to a "conventional tyranny", "that catches all the so-called rational points and lines in space but completely misses the infinitely more numerous and interesting irrational points and lines ...".²⁴ It has been suggested that Diderot's *Encyclopédie*, which had pushed what were at the time the latest engraving, printing and publishing technologies to the limit, set precedents for the transmission of knowledge in rationally organised ways.²⁵

Copper used extensively in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, is a relatively easy and soft material to engrave with a fine stylus. It can be easily smoothed and polished to a shine. Its burrs, noise, hickeys or smooches can be rubbed away. With

accurate observational drawing technique, copperplate printing was able to convey an accurate optical likeness of things. It lent itself to the recording and documenting of fine detail and could more effectively realise the emotional tenor of the enlightened ideal of the abstract intellect: authoritative, dry, precise, elegant and clear.



Illus. 28. 1783. Printed cotton. copper engraving.

At the same time, copper engraving was also being extensively developed in the textile industry. [illus.28] Large, complex, detailed and elaborate patterns could be printed on textiles and on wallpaper. Engraving on soft metal allowed the proliferation of baroque flourishes, decoration in imaginative and fantastical invention. Such decoration often appeared in the borders and margins of otherwise 'rational' and scientific engraved printed images and text.

In the early twentieth century, Max Ernst was to re-work some of these fine copper engravings of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. [illus.29] He cut them out, removed them from their original semantic contexts and recombined them as surreal and disturbing images, exposing the obsessive nature of their detail and the emotional tenor of their hand-made syntactical marks.



Illus. 29. 1922. Max Ernst. Collage.

the introduction of common dot syntax

In the late nineteenth century however, it was metal engraving's capacity for creating accurately repeatable images that was exploited in commercial printing. Hand engraving was expensive, unreliable and idiosyncratic.

A regular, machine-made and impersonal syntax conveyed more accurately the instrumental aspects of the empirical mind. All text and images all became caught in the same nets of controlled, quantifiable, regularised, miniaturised and mechanised

patterns of dots. Since the mid-twentieth century, the repeated dot has become the mathematically precise universal syntax for mass printing, the medium through which

the visual aspects of the modern world have primarily been realised, the vehicle of modern perception and consciousness. [Illus 30]



Illus. 30. 1986. Pen Dalton. Connie. dot screened photograph.

By the early twentieth century, a division had emerged between artist printmakers and commercial printers. Ivins was writing in between the 1940s and 1950s up to which time practically all printing of text and images had been produced with black ink on white paper, and the syntactical patterns of printing were visible to the naked eye. Artists continued with the slower, hand crafted but now economically redundant processes of etching, engraving and stone lithography.

These techniques persisted as craft practices, taught in institutions of fine art and small presses where the subtlety and noise of printing and the artist's autographic mark could be maintained. In mass printing, the syntactical language of the print began to be erased as it distracted from the seamless surface of the optical real. Machines, ink and substrate technologies were developed towards greater cleanliness and smoothness, to provide faster and more accurate processes employing imperceptible half-tones in the mathematically precise and miniaturised raster dot. It became an aim of technological development to expunge syntactical noise and any inadvertent marks of the body that might interfere with the clear illusion

of optical reality. As the syntax disappeared from view, the character and nuances of hand produced artist/engraver's skills were no longer contributing their varieties of interpretation to the everyday readability of printed matter. The viewer looked *through* the print. Emotion, feeling analogously represented by rhetorical noise and errors, was concealed so perception is inclined to stop at the surface semantic content. Like the everyday use of language, printing in this sense became transparent and its enjoyment partially fetishistic.

print makers and syntax

Inferences can be drawn on the relation between printing's formal potentials and the historic and socio-political role of the printer as a radical figure. Simple printing of black on white may suggest a simplistic relation between opposing elements but working on this relationship with materials soon begins to complicate and subvert the conventions. Printers must always be aware of the subordinate substrate and full due must be given to both positive and negative effects in the final combination. Working in reverse, thinking about substrates means they must take the 'other' point of view. Printers and print makers, as they work on wood, stone, a photographic plate or metal matrix must have the ability to hold in their mind's eye the potentials of the negative.

Printers, as historically the most literate of the working-class, have often been at

the forefront of political radicalism, popular culture and labour organisation for working rights. They have often sided with the oppressed, have become associated with labour rights, illegal publicity, the small-press, as authors and they have been the disseminators



Illus. 31. c1911. Posada. Day of the Dead. Popular Mexican Lithograph.

of the fly poster and fanzine. Surrealism, Fluxus and conceptual art have made use of this radical history and the popular, ubiquitous and language-related nature of printing. Reflections on and challenges to the changing relations of painting and printing, between image and text have formed part of the critical history of modernism. In modernist art, mimetic printing practices using imitation, copying, quoting, pastiche, parody, irony have been revived as precursors of post modern practice.²⁶ Through critical practice in print making, contemporary artists have been able to juxtapose syntax, combine different fields of printing practice which in the specificities of its medium as reproductive and repetitive challenges definitions of the originality of the work of art and the elitist practices of traditional painting. Historically, the printed work of artists including Blake, Hogarth, Posada [illus 31] and Goya, and the work of modernist artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol and Roy

Lichtenstein, has been drawn into critical questionings of the privileging of oil painting and the democratising of art.²⁷ Contemporary artists: Nancy Spero, Bracha Lichtenberg Ettinger and Fiona Banner are contemporary artists drawing on metaphors of printing practice using repetition, tracing, layering, relief techniques in illuminating theories of the subject. [illus 32]

Illus. 32. 1989-90. Bracha Lichtenberg-Ettinger. Mamalanguê-Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism. one of three elements

Part of my studio practice at this stage, involved a closer engagement with the syntax of printed half-tones, to try and identify and distinguish different ideological patterns, taking them out of their semantic context and rearranging them in abstract patterns in relation to each other.

A vast array of half tone patterns was available to me from old prints, from newspapers, books and magazines, and thousands of others could be easily accessed from graphic computer software. The variations were unlimited, and the different levels of viscosity, saturation, **impregnation** and overlaying of inks on substrates produced different results. It soon became apparent that just by playing with the range of formal solutions that lie between black and white - by enlargement and remediation, reversing, inverting, layering, mirroring half-tone marks, and nets - produced a burgeoning of unlimited potential meanings and possibilities, detached from overt semantic or narrative content. Many of these suggested new relationships and different mediums and genres that went beyond my thesis and perhaps will form part of new artworks. [Appendix B 1]

artists and the recursive practices of print making



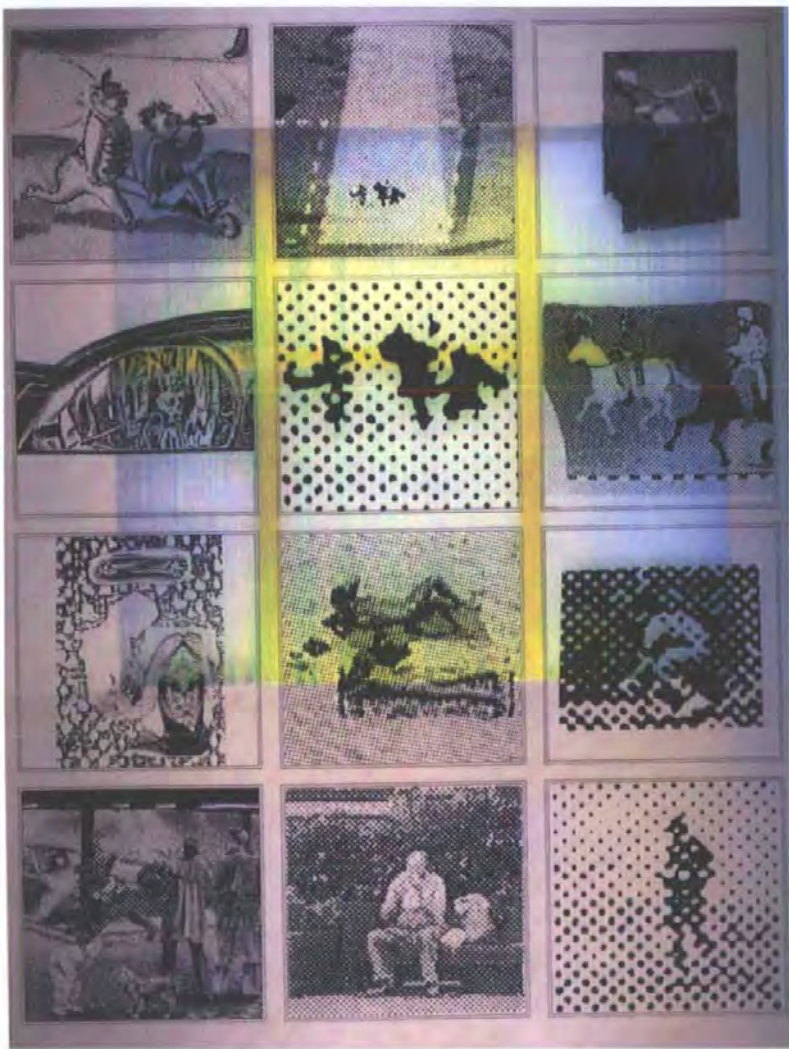
Illus. 33. 1961. Roy Lichtenstein. Brushstroke. acrylic stencil painting

Modernist artists such as Rauschenberg and Lichtenstein have both re-vivified the raster dot from images in mass printed ephemera, enlarging, repeating, misregistering, both in his own way, reminding the viewer of the production of printing and the fact that the dot syntax and materiality of the processes of printing are constructed and add their meaning. Rauschenberg's work has a metaphorical

relation to the world, whilst Lichtenstein's 'brushmark' series are more mimetically linked to actual brush marks in his copying of their visual appearance. [Illus. 33]

More recently, Sigmar Polke has returned to earlier modes of syntactical half-tone devices. He makes bastard, non-standard sized prints, recombining the different grids, cross hatchings, meshes and nets of historically inflected half tones, exploiting

their idiosyncrasies and differences through an emphasis of their marks in enlarged paintings. He has demonstrated how, even the cool and apparently transparent medium of contemporary printing, if closely observed and enlarged, has its own syntax, and carries an almost hysterical obsession with repetition, an excess of rationality that spills over into the surreal and the emotional. In the artwork *History of Everything* he remediated the syntax of printed material, heightening the fact of its constructedness and the presence of the materiality of the bodies of the



Illus. 34. 2002, Sigmar Polke. History of Everything. painting on canvas.

artist-printer and traces of the machines at work on optical reality. [*Illus. 34*] He reverses, overlays, inverts, mirrors, copies, parodies, distorts and skews and fully

displays prints which reveal the different relations that can exist between the positive and negative marks. Polke in enlarging and mimetically copying the highlights mistakes, slurs and smears that have crept in through the processes of printing suggests that even the regulated, measured and rational rasters of mechanical printing – in which he sees an analogy with the modern world – are



Illus. 35. 2000. Sigmar Polke. Hickey. oil painting on canvas

subject to failure, and to emotion: to the claims of the body and the environment. [Illus 35] These *bricolages* suggest by analogy a social breakdown of modernity's imposed identities and the resistances of the body to inscribing regulatory imposition.

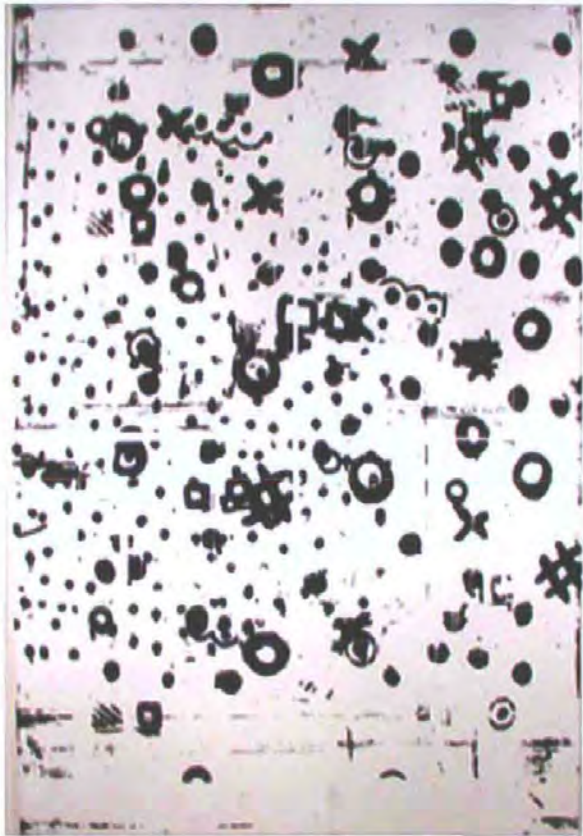
Polke's screen-printed canvases, he suggests, work as complex metaphors of the co-existing systems and structures of society and reveal art and its marks of the raster as part of the coded processes of signification:

The screen dot pattern for me is a system, a principle, a method, a structure. It dissects, disperses, organizes and makes everything the same ... Looking at it in this light, I think that the screen dot pattern I have used reveals a highly specific view, a general situation and interpretation: namely the structure of my own time, the structure of a social order, a culture standardised, divided, apportioned, assigned, grouped, specialized.²⁸

Polke does not, on the whole work with contemporary digital half-tones - he captures that moment in twentieth century history when syntax was idiosyncratic, **rough typed** and visible, still full of character and meaning. However, it seems to me that Polke's work continues in conventional binary relations in that he privileges the mark over the substrate: he plays with the syntax of printing but we are not made aware of the poetics of the materials, the nuances of space and matter and the interaction of mark and substrate. There is in his most celebrated works an overriding concern with

semantic content and with narrative.

Christopher Wool, on the other hand, is a contemporary artist who exploits and highlights the mediums and processes of printing, allowing them to do the work. His prints are relief prints and primarily indexical, they show traces left by tools or



Illus. 36. 1998. Christopher Wool. Untitled. Enamel on panel.

machines or the nature of the printing process itself. [Illus. 36] Polke looks for the monumental, the unique and the original in his remediations: his subject matter is often heroic and peppered with masculine pleasures of cowboys and naked women. Wool's references also absorb the popular, the ubiquitous and the accidental but he privileges the less-often seen. He uses domestic interior decorating techniques,

quoting wallpaper and textile patterns. The viewer is drawn into the mute and poetic effects of the materials. The work appears tougher and less compromising to narrative or to easy identifications with normative relations that threaten some of Polke's major works. In Wool's prints, there is little concession to explicit emotion as we are confronted with what ought to be the banality and facile ease of printing. Yet its stark and visible syntax, its hyperbolic and obsessive patterns seem elemental and disturbing in that he messes up simple binary oppositions. What he does *ought* to be easy, he should not print so 'badly', yet he brings to the fore the noise, ghosts and traces the 'in-between' normally elided in printing of fetishistic realism and the imposed attempts at exact imitation in the limited edition.

I am seduced by printed artworks such as Wool's that reveal their labour, and refer to the insistence and yet the failure of binary separation, existing at the edge of comprehension, the edge of what might be considered art. Perhaps it reminds me of my messy childhood prints and my relation to my father. Seeing art works that do not attempt to conceal the mess and noise absolves me of the guilt of dirty hands and dirty frocks and recreates the emotional connotations of the hickeys and the smooches. And perhaps it recalls the time before I was required to keep things clean and separate, before I learned to differentiate.

Summary of Chapter Three

In This chapter I have described how, as a child, I associated printing with the paternal figure and recount how printing possibly shaped my approach to the world and my position as a daughter. Older forms of printing are established as fundamentally laborious, impressive and imposing of binary protocols. I describe how research into printing, reading and reflecting on past events and experience, and playful practice with half-tones, begins to undo these impositions of the past, and

suggest new forms of relations for the future. The past is not resisted or negated, but it becomes less impressive. I describe how through experience, practice and reflections on that practice, I come to interpret the binary relations of the past from a differently informed perspective that disturbed my previously normative assumptions.

I continued to work with the different syntactical devices of printing, adding layer on layer, using transparent and barely perceptible inks, different resistant and difficult substrates and I looked at other artists work that seemed to be concerned with the same strategies. As I reflected on these experiences, it became apparent that there is a vast terrain that lies 'in-between' entities that have no name, no proper place. This terrain begins to appear as a more fertile area of investigation. As the binary entities dissolved, rearranged themselves, were reassembled and recombined they appeared in different emergent inchoate relations. The artworks began to articulate other incipient non-normal, non-legitimate relationships not yet visible as coherent figures. Playing with the syntax that lies behind, between and across the printed image begins to formulate new entities from the mass of possibilities.

Endnotes to Chapter Three

- ¹ Wullschlager, J. (2008) 'New world, new perspectives.' *Financial Times*. Feb 9/10. (exhibition review)
- ² Plath, S. (1962) 'Three Women' in Hughes, T.(ed) (1981) *Sylvia Plath: Collected Poems*. p.177
- ³ The unions were known as 'Chapels' and union executives FOCs: 'Fathers of the Chapel.'
- ⁴ See Bordieu, P. and Passeron, J-C. (1970) *Reproduction: in Education, Society and Culture*. Trans. R. Nice. Sage: London.
- ⁵ See Cockburn, C. (1986) *Brothers: Male Dominance and Technological Change*. Pluto: London, which linked issues of gender, class and printing and documented the formal exclusion of women at the time, from most well paid work in the printing industry.
- ⁶ Cockburn. *Brothers*, ibid. p.45-46.
- ⁷ Cockburn. *Brothers*, ibid. p.19.
- ⁸ The law of the father is a notion originating in the early writings of Freud - later developed by Jacques Lacan - in which he told of the unconscious prohibition of incest, and desire for the mother. According to Freud, subjectivity is structured through the non-conscious acting out of this law and the desires it represses. He recounted the story of Oedipus in which the law of the father is dramatised in acts of incest, parricide, self punishment as analogy for the normal neurotic relations of family life. The law of the father is mainly lived through patriarchal practices. It is important however, as Lacan made clear, that distinctions are made between real fathers and the symbolic father.
- ⁹ The proper term is matricidal but as it may be confused or associated with killing the mother I have taken the option of using the version 'matrixical' used in popular texts on cyberfeminism.
- ¹⁰ Lithography is a significant exception in that it did not require force to divide the positive and negative. It was invented to print musical notation and became popular with artists and poster-makers in the nineteenth century because of the relative fluidity, ease and sensitivity with which the brushmark could be reproduced. It required however, lengthy and careful processing. I have omitted it from my discussions: most of the issues that arise from screen printing are similar to those in lithography.
- ¹¹ I discuss this in more detail in Chapter Six.
- ¹² There are many definitions of *figure*. I shall be mainly using it in the sense of a unitary percept having structure and coherence that stands out against a ground. In language, a *figure* of speech does not say exactly what it means, it can as metaphor stand for something else, or like metonymy be like something else. Figures can act as a shorthand, and generally conceal more than they say. See Glossary, Appendix A.
- ¹³ Lessing, G. (1766) *Lacoon; An Essay Upon the Limits of Poetry and Painting*. trans. E. Frothingham. Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York.
- nb. The spelling of Laocoön is different in different contexts: sometimes as here with Lessing and Greenberg: Laocoon, sometimes Laokoon, and at other times Laocoön. I have generally chosen Laocoön as the anglicised version of Greek pronunciation.
- ¹⁴ Lessing. *Lacoon*, ibid. p.4.
- ¹⁵ Blake was in fact opposed to the prevailing classic culture of his time.

16. Babbitt, R. (1910) *The New Laocoon*. Houghton Mifflin: Boston, & Wimsatt, W. K. (1970) 'Laocoon: an oracle reconsulted' in *The Day of the Leopards*. Yale University Press: Newhaven.
17. A few of the many developments and critiques of Lessing's ideas can be seen in Greenberg, C. (1940) 'Toward a newer Laocoon' in *Partisan Review*, 7 July-August, reprinted in Harrison, C. and Wood, P. (eds.) (1992) *Art in Theory: 1900-1990*. pp.554-559; Wellbery, D. (1984) *Lessing's Laocoon: Semiotics and the Age of Reason*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge; Mitchell, W.J.T. (1994) *Picture Theory*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, and Bois, Y.-A. and Krauss, R. E. (eds.) (1997) *Formless: A Users Guide*. Zone Books: New York.
18. Bois and Krauss. *Formless*, ibid. pp.151-181.
19. Greenberg. *Towards a Newer Laocoon*. op. cit. pp.554-559.
20. Krauss, R. (1993) *The Optical Unconscious*. MIT/October: New York. p.14.
21. Ivins, Wm. Jr. (1953/1979) *Prints and Visual Communication*. Routledge Kegan & Paul: London.
22. Ivins. *Prints*. ibid. p.53 and p.70.
23. These speculations on syntax of printing draw on Ivins' *Prints and Visual Communication*, but they go beyond what he asserted.
24. Ivins. *Prints*, op. cit. p.70.
25. Pannabecker, J. R. (1992) 'Printing technology in the *Encyclopédie*: constructing systematic knowledge' in *Journal of Industrial Teacher Education*, 29: 4. Summer, pp.73-91. Pannabecker, J.R. (1994) 'Diderot, the mechanical arts, and the *Encyclopédie*: in search of the heritage of technology education' in *Journal of Technology Education*, 6: 1. Fall, pp.65-72.
26. For an account of the history of relations between image and text in a modern and postmodern context see Drucker, J. (1998) *Figuring the Word*. Granary Books: New York. I am thinking of artists such as Robert Rauschenberg, and Pop artists such as Richard Hamilton, Roy Lichtenstein, Andy Warhol, the Fluxus artists and today, Shepard Fairey, all of whom have been directly engaged with print media.
27. Wye, D. (1988) *Committed to Print: Social and Political Themes in Recent American Printed Art*. MoMA publication: New York. For specific discussions of the relation between printing, writing and art see Mitchell, W.T.J. (1994) 'Textual pictures: visible language: Blake's art of writing' in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, and Rauschenberg, R. and Schimmel, P. (eds.) (2006) *Robert Rauschenberg: Combines*. Steidl Publishing: New York.
28. Polke, S. (2000) cited in Hentschelin, M. Becker, J. & Von de Osten, C. (eds.) *Sigmar Polke: The Edited Works, 1963-2000*. Catalogue Raisonné, p.363.

CHAPTER FOUR: MODIFYING EXPERIENCE

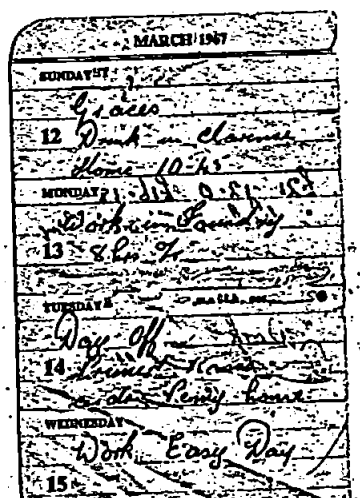
*My hand delights to trace unusual things,
And deviates from the known and common way;
Nor will in fading silks compose
Faintly the inimitable rose.¹*

Introduction

When I began the research, I intended to demonstrate how experience imposes itself formally on the empty canvas of the present. I argued that the structures and relations of what we already know, such as relations in familial contexts, creatively shape, but can also limit the way new experience is encountered and practised.

In this chapter, I recount how I chose materials for their analogous relation to binary family relationships with the intention of showing that the transposition of family relations - however benign - to non-familial relations such as art-making, might produce work that is conventional and old fashioned. But as I played with the relationship, I began to suspect that the transposition of the normative relations of the family to the relations of art might not be so destructive of creativity as I first imagined. Through practice, which included seeing and thinking about other artists' work in traditional materials, such as that of Polke and Wool, it became evident that there are many ways to negotiate a single binary relation and that binary relations need not be considered as closed and ineluctable impositions. This chapter deals with revision and change; changes brought about in my thinking through practice, and change in my family life. By the end of Chapter Three I had begun to suspect that normative binary relations are vastly varied and that the substrate - the subordinate entity in binary relations - has some effect on altering or destabilising the dominant impressing sign, figure or mark.

I began making artworks by handling and working in practice with the words my



Illus. 37. 1967/2001. A page from my Father's diary.

father wrote in his diary, in a process that seemed in many ways analogous to academic research. I looked at his writing from different angles, taking different points of view; I penetrated its depths; I traced its outlines and aimed to reveal latent meanings through attention to rhetorical detail and I read between the lines. [Illus 37] The same process was employed with images of other artists' work and popular figures of non-stereotypical fathers. In this chapter, I recount my reflections on this practice and

I document recollections that arose in association with it about father/daughter relationships. My memories are probably inaccurate; the way I saw things in the 1970s is not the same as I see them now. In this sense, working with experience as practice is different from research in that the conclusions drawn can only be speculative. Such ideas need to be put to the test of experience and regarded in the light of well developed theory.

my father's words

On leaving the hospital where my father died, I was handed a brown paper bag containing his few intimate possessions: his long service medal for work in The Print; the familiar tobacco tin containing his last roll-up, and a diary.

My father had been a reserved man who concealed his emotions. He never embraced, kissed or even touched me after I passed the age of ten or so and he was not given to displays of affection, anger, enthusiasm or excitement. Yet I did not feel 'deprived'; I believed most fathers were like that. It was common in those times amongst the people I lived with to 'mind your own business', 'keep yourself to

yourself' and operate on a basis of 'least said, soonest mended.' Because he had little to say and because I was dependent on him, I learned to know my father by attending to non-verbal signals to anticipate his wants. He punished and reproached me through the look in his brown eyes, and showed his love for me through the things he made. While he worked, I enjoyed tidying the shed, sorting and arranging the various screws, nails and fixings in their proper compartments. I watched his hands as he transformed the wood, by the action of the tools, into the doll's house, the needlework box, the small chair all designed and made especially for me. The processes, the smells of varnish, the paraffin stove, the wood shavings and his cigarettes in the quiet intimacy of making have domestic and benignly paternal associations. Objects became important; they had a resonance over and above their function, perhaps because they replaced overt affection and attention. We communicated in what Basil Bernstein in the 1960s had called 'restricted codes' of dialogue, typical apparently, of working-class relationships: things were not explained, we never had conversations, I was never asked questions and was expected to do as I was told.² To understand and communicate I had to listen for the inarticulate and unspoken, to watch him, to read his manner and facial expressions and attend to his gait, the unsteadiness of his hands and the tone of his voice. I learned how to respond and react, and I believe I initially transferred that somewhat passive approach to my art working.

I pored over the diary, reading between the lines, looking for some last thoughts about his illness, his approaching death or his feelings for me. But his diary was not of the Proust or Virginia Woolf ilk. It was the kind that opened 'a page to a week': small with the dates of seven days printed on each page and five closely spaced faint blue lines allowed each day for writing. On these lines he had briefly entered days

worked, overtime paid, betting accounts, the names of horses and the days when he had pruned his beloved roses. Occasionally I saw my name *Penny* written on red-letter days, presumably when a visit was expected.



Illus. 38. 2002. Pen Dalton. Untitled. screenprint. oil based ink on transparent film.

Working as an artist in practice, it seemed appropriate to get closer to his thoughts by physically handling the words. I wanted to do the same things he had done, to make what he made and to empathise and

feel perhaps something of what he had felt and I could do this I imagined, by faithful and exact copying. His diary entries had been in blue biro. I began by copying them as exactly as I could although it was virtually impossible to find exactly the same paper and biro that he had used. Nor could I reproduce exactly the faded ink, the



Illus. 39. 2002. Pen Dalton. Untitled. Light projection over canvas and picture frame.

yellowing pages, or the exact embossing and ghosts of writing on the other side of the pages, the palimpsest of layers half hidden beneath. My efforts always looked new. When I tried to facsimile, to faithfully reproduce or copy accurately, other formal aspects always intervened.

I then re-mediated his words using printing processes, still keeping to the semantic truth of the message. I used the same materials he had used at work: stiff black inks and newsprint. I repeated with my body the same movements he had made and worked my hands in the same way. I thought I could, metaphorically, get close by enlarging the words, which I did in analogue form with painting, with light in an overhead projector, digitally with a

camera, a photocopier, computer and printing machine. [Illus. 38 & 39] I then took the

words further; I reduced, scanned, traced, photographed and photocopied the handwritten sentences, remediating them on transparent and white papers through different reproductive black mediums: photocopy ink, black ink in cassettes from the digital printing process, process black, transparent and gloss oil based screen printing inks, artists pigments and writing inks.



Illus. 40. 2003. Pen Dalton. Untitled. Screenprinted Tengujo layered onto canvas with enlarged syntax patterns.

Finally, in the work with the diary, I

made artworks ignoring the semantic logic of the sentence. I printed on transparent paper, cut and tore up the words, overlaid one on top of another and re-arranged and sorted them into patterns, ignoring the rules and registers of writing, grammar and conventional printing. [Illus 40]

As the words were transformed into large unreadable images the materiality of the writing, the ground and the substrate became prominent: What seemed to be smooth outlines of the loops and curves of handwriting, when enlarged appeared as nervous, jagged and less assured. The solid gloss black ink revealed tears, gaps and holes and the edges of the writing were furry and soft. The noise of the processes of reproduction - the dragging of the ink on the photocopier, the mark of the mesh of the screen, the slight tremor in the light of the projection, reminding me of the tremor of his hands - had all left their material slurs, drags and noise making reading and comprehension difficult. The unintentional embossing produced from the pressure of



Illus. 41. 2003. Pen Dalton. *Untitled*,
screenprinted Tengujo pasted over wall and
canvas.

his hand on the page and the reversed writing from the back of the thin paper of the diary were emphasised through magnification; they cut across and blended with the accidental marks that I made. It became difficult to tell which were his marks and which were mine. The formal relationships were changing. [Illus 41]

The mark and the substrates had been drawn closer together through the enlargements and the mediating processes, but any 'truth' about our relationship seemed to be distorted in the mechanical process of finding it. This seemed analogous to the

efforts of memory, obscured by layers of subsequent experience, by current interest. But an understanding of the relation to my father might change too, by my working with it: more associations, clues, hints, are released and revealed, as it were, by attending to the rhetorical and syntactical aspects of printing. New possibilities in the form of artworks appeared like bridges across the formal gaps of word and substrate, which seem like the gaps in time, gender and death that separated my father and myself.

Figures of Fathers and Daughters

Feminist theory and cultural practice has, on the whole, overlooked the relation between the polar identities of father and daughter. As feminist artists in the 1970s, we were more concerned with privileging our mothers, with historical matriarchal symbolism and with what we understood as the values of the maternal.³ Along with many other feminist artists of the time, the work I did was focused on my relationship with my mother. I researched notions of patriarchy, the maternal semiotic and

féminine écriture in French psychoanalytic theory. I arrived at the work of Jaques Lacan and Julia Kristeva in particular, through footnotes to Mary Kelly's *Post Partum Document*.⁴ Their reworking of Freudian psychoanalytic theory, and the familial position of the infant in relation to language, and their privileging of the mother figure, gave some theoretical credence to my musings about family relationships in practice. Kristeva and Luce Irigaray had both brought the symbolic role of the daughter to the fore, which disturbed the triangular psychoanalytic scenario of the Holy Family, and both had related their critical writings on patriarchy and language to art. But their work seemed (to me at the time) only to offer a choice for daughters as marginal: hysteric and mad or conservatively bound to repeat what their mothers had done.⁵

There were very few images or examples of binary difference between the older



Illus. 42. 2000. Pen Dalton. *Printer's Fist*. relief and transfer with printed collage on newsprint. approx.

man and the young girl before feminist interventions of the 1970s, that did not position fathers in the normative dominant, punitive and desiring role as symbolic representative of social power and symbolic law.⁶ [Illus 42]

Identifying myself as a feminist and a socialist, it was difficult to **justify** any interest in father figures or admit to any desire to be like, or to

reconcile relations with what that image symbolised.

The relation of the most and the least powerful in the family: between the father and daughter had been presented much as I did in Chapter Two, as a stereotypical relation of dominance and subordination with both identities subject to patriarchal law with little room for manoeuvre. This relation of power, whilst entirely recognisable and having social veracity was nearly always represented - as I perceive it to be in Louise



Illus. 43. 1974. Louise Bourgeois. The Destruction of the Father. Mixed mediums.

Bourgeois' work - as fixed by the law of the Holy Family, without offering futural hopes of change. Her work emphasises her past as a daughter whose fate was to become a mother figure, allowed power only in the dark, symbolic and spiritual realm, spider-like, from the margins of mysticism as 'wise woman' or crone.⁷ [Illus. 43] The daughter's function is reduced to that of reproduction: bound to repeat.

There is always a danger in such work, by representing the father as inevitably powerful and oppressive and by taking a subversive place as daughter or as wise old woman, which means always speaking from that positioned identity, instead of being able to move between identities. It reiterates the relations of paternal symbolic authority. Identifying as an artist with the feminine as subversive requires a dominant other against which the identity of the feminine is defined: it can be a "reverse discourse that uncritically mimics the strategy of the oppressor instead of offering a different set of terms".⁸

Feminist (or post-feminist) artists have continued to engage in issues of the power/ gender relations of art, in the attempt to subvert or question normative relations and hierarchies of viewing without assuming a subordinate position. I have been dubious about the explicit strategies of artists such as Jemima Stehli who take on the role of sexual subject consciously to problematise gendered viewing positions, but whose work - overpowered by normative cultural conventions of images of women in fetishistic erotic and fashion photography - seems to reiterate those relations. It seems to me that the semantic relations as well as those of the syntax of glossy

studio photography, not only revives familial lines of heterosexual normalcy, but 'woman' is reduced again to that of 'young nubile woman'; other female bodies such



Illus. 44. 1999. Jemima Stehli. Strip no 4, Curator 11. one of a photographic series.

as the girl child, the old, the maternal, marginally gendered, disabled, foreign are elided, rendered invisible. [Illus. 44] Bourgeois' work, while it reiterates the law of the father, does at least suggest there is another focus of power in marginal family figures of old women and little girls. In Stehli's work, the image of the artist herself is reflected back as totally incorporated in the normative familial position and colluding as nubile and willing in relations of patriarchal desire.

As the work in practice with binary relations has suggested, there are many kinds of relationships that can be found within and across the normative father/daughter scenario. By using different material signifiers, different positions, layers and scale, contrasts and tone, normative relations can be twisted, undermined, distorted, reversed and inverted. Andres Serrano's photograph seen here, for instance, whilst representing a familial scenario, seems more troubling to normalising family ideals.



Illus. 45. 1997. Andres Serrano. Photograph from series, History of Sex

[Illus. 45] Although this example works within the conventions of the older father and nubile daughter of the Roman Charity theme, it triggers off other possibilities for

relating young women and old men.⁹ The young woman, although not a child, does not appear as marriageable or nubile, with her short hair, alert musculature and frank intelligent gaze. She seems an unlikely candidate for passive exchange. The old man does not seem dominant and is positioned in a subordinate, dependent relation at the bottom of the frame. The photograph makes subtle shifts of the signifiers of gaze, of pose, of hair, and landscape that while couched in a normative family narrative, denote a range of unfamiliar and possibly different power and gender relations.

But I found very few images in art that could be imagined meeting a young girls' desire or fantasy; indeed, I hardly knew what a young girl's desire might be outside normative oedipal conventions. In Freudian dynamics of the normative family, the little girl - whose relations mirror that of the boy's attachment to the mother - is said to have unconscious desires for the father, and this may or may not be so.¹⁰ But stress on the unconscious desires of infancy seem to have provided paedophilic justifications for the powerlessness of adult men against the enticements of powerful little girls.¹¹ This fantasy cannot be borne out in lived adult power relations and where little girls lack social power. But without an authentic voice of the girl or figures made by girls, it is difficult to imagine what the lived and everyday relations of a girl's desire might be.

On looking at images of older men with little girls, most seemed to be mediated through the conventions of oedipal-like desire for the father. They are often made by male artists who one suspects may be driven by their own need for girls to desire them, as objects of their own fantasies. The most established themes in art history of fathers with daughters are represented in the biblical scene of Lot's relationship with his daughters and the *Roman Charity* genre of Cimon and Pero where, in both cases



*Illus. 46. 1630. Peter Paul Rubens. **Simon and Pero**. oil painting.*

adult daughters initiate incestuous relations with innocent fathers. [Illus. 46] Any accusations of the illegal and incestuous nature of these images are mitigated as being depictions of the lust for power of young women (who have relationships with older men) or women's vast generosity and capacity for sacrifice.¹² In more recent times, the desire of the male artist for the erotic potential of

the pre-nubile little girl is more explicitly represented in the prurient images of Balthus and in Lolita narratives suggesting that little girls are equally responsible in the seduction of older men. [Illus. 47]



*Illus. 47. 1938. Balthus. **Therese Revant**. Oil on canvas.*

Yet even the image of the little girl as sexual and seductive can, if the signifying context is altered, subvert familial normalcy. I became interested in the work of artists concerned with representations of young women and girls: in particular, the paintings of Paula Rego. [Illus. 48] She plays with family stereotypes in which the relations seem normative, but through the *mise en scene* of the images, the little girls seem

ambiguous in their relation to the father: they sometimes appear in little gangs, or with animals as magical companion, they appear sexually active but yet mocking and derisive of the older man's power. Similarly, in the stories and novels of Angela Carter, little girls are represented as sexual, but their desire is not always for a powerful father figure, or penetrative sex, but undermining control and power with the

sexual female body in fun and pleasure, realised through the distancing relations of



Illus. 48. 1987. Paula Rego. *Family*. acrylic on canvas backed paper.

the stage, in entertainment, the circus, burlesque, the theatre.¹³ Rego's and Carter's return to fairy stories and their reinterpretation suggested to me that even within normative relations the figure of the girl can be imagined as representing other relations that go beyond oedipal narratives.

rearranging relationships

After working on the diary, I continued with images that were clearly within normative family relationships. I chose stereotypical family characters analogous to my father and myself. I had been brought up in a traditional family and was interested to explore, through these family characters, how far the father-daughter polarity could be stretched or opened up to alter the nature of its relationship. How far, for instance, could the daughter attain power and assert a different tenor to the relationship? My



Illus. 49. 2007. Pen Dalton. *Skewed Laocoön*. enhanced digital copy.

intention was - as with the diary - to work *with* these images, rather than formally analysing them or applying linguistic modes of semiotic analysis or deconstruction. This time I would concentrate on the substrate, the voice of the daughter rather than the paternal indexical mark.

As I have suggested, the choice of materials and formal strategies I use have analogic associations. My first strategy was to adopt metaphorical tropes explicitly revealing their tenor: the material vehicle of the metaphor. I could convey my faithful imitation and obedience by making facsimiles as shadows or tracings. I could show my adherence to

normative family relations by producing a visual likeness, a copy that did not deviate from the original. But I could also show my negative feelings to my father through practices that enhance opposition such as resist, reversal, inversion. [Illus. 49] I could



Illus. 50. 2004. Pen Dalton. The Invert Laocoön, Reversed, digital file copy.

show the particular qualities of resistance through irony or burlesque by adhering to the rules of printing protocols whilst vastly extending the range of materials to the point where images become incomprehensible. The past, present and future of the relationships I describe could be analogically enhanced through layering and posterising. Our

emotional distances could be described through formal devices of space, of contrast, slurring, skewing or distortion. [Illus 50] Our relative importance and power in the family could be imagined as different through work on scale and tonal values.

Reconciliation, attachment and the tenor of the positive emotional feelings that passed between us could be conveyed through practices of rendering the positive in-between of polar entities: privileging half-toning and the blending and merging of inks.

playing with Minnie the Minx

The droll character of *Minnie the Minx* from the *Dandy* comic of my childhood was a first introduction to resistance, to opposition and a little girl who was active. Her antics had been boldly printed and repeated week after week on cheap newsprint.¹⁴ I liked the way the pictures in comic were clear, unambiguous and outlined in black. [Illus 52] Certain patterned elements, the striped socks and jumper, the pom-pom on her round black beret were repeated as patterns on the page. Minnie was the only image of a girl I could recall, who had the power to torment and harass her dad. In

one typical picture sequence, the narrative ends with Minnie covering her dad with worms in a mischievous act that reprises the snakes so troublesome to Laocoön. [Illus 51] The last frame in the comic strip usually showed Minnie being punished; spanked by her father with a huge phallic slipper; but it was only a slipper, a soft, flabby and ridiculously hairy thing. The look on her face prepared the reader for next week's naughtiness. [Illus 53]



Illus. 52. 2003. Pen Dalton. *Minnie Pattern*. printed Tengujo backed with canvas



Illus. 51. 1982. *Minnie and Worms*. copy from Dandy comic frame



Illus. 53. 1987. *Spanking Minnie*. copy from Dandy comic frame

I used the fragile *Tengujo* on which to print Minnie and like her, the paper began



Illus. 54. 1952/2004. Dad and Me. family photograph detail

to assert irritating and insidious ways. It began to be difficult, intractable awkward and would not lie still; its flimsiness made it hard to control and I had to resort to aggressive means to grip it in its place. As I worked, I discovered it was not as fragile as first appeared. It was unusually strong and stable, and surprisingly hard to tear. After ruminating on the paper's resistant qualities, I returned to the photograph of my father and myself.¹⁵

Looking again at the little girl who was me, I am disposed to see that she could not be described as subordinate or overlooked. [Illus. 54] She appears confident as she rests her hand on her father's knee.

He on the other hand inclines himself to her with a look of pride. Examining the photograph more closely, he does not appear dominant at all. I notice and can remember things I did not see before. The little girl is not quite clean, not quite so innocent: those socks look a little grimy, she has been up to something. I remembered that although I might have been structurally subordinate in the normative family, positioned as marginal little girl, and physically thin, small and pale, I was tougher than I appeared. I then recalled, somewhat uncomfortably, that I had been known in my family through a series of nicknames: 'Awkward Annie', 'Contrary Mary',

'Pernickety Jane' and 'Misery Moo'. Obviously, I was not always tractable or receptive in provoking these ironic epithets. And, as I printed the images of Minnie, washed up with the solvents and looked at my black ingrained fingernails and the mess I had made, and recalled how I was told off for always dirtying my frocks. Making a mess was, perhaps, a little act of resistance.

My father too was often grubby. He was not always as well dressed and neat as he appeared in the photograph. One of his tasks in the printing industry had been to



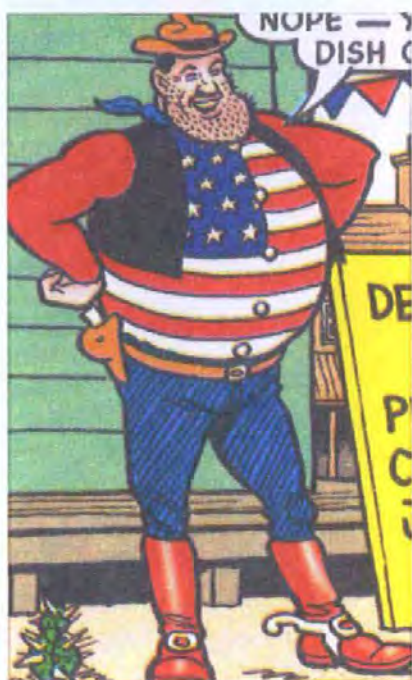
Illus. 55. 2005. Pen Dalton. The Last Rollup. scanner print detail from wall installation

work nights and strip down the printing presses with powerful solvents, after they had finished the run. It was hot and tiring work and all the men drank heavily on the job. My father's clothes, his body and hair - even after a bath - were steeped in ink and chemicals. He came home in the morning smelling unpleasantly to me, of beer, tobacco, ink and metal: what I came to associate with a working man's smell. The ink, alcohol, the nicotine, the lead and the solvents, and the stress involved in altered rhythms of sleeping had been incorporated into

his body and his early death. [Illus. 55] Attending to the full sensory experience of the materials we both used, rather than to just our visual appearance in the black and white photographs, triggered different memories that contradicted the first accessible, easy analogies, it evoked bodily feelings, and sometimes led back to painful and disturbing, thoughts and memories.

Desperate Dan

The often repeated image of *Desperate Dan* from the *Beano* emerged in contrast



Illus. 56. 1962/2004. *Desperate Dan*. detail from *Beano* comic.



Illus. 57. 2004. Pen Dalton. *Dan's Mighty Chin*. enhanced digital copy.

to *Minnie the Minx* as what could be thought of as a little girl's desire for an always present and benign father. [Illus. 56] Massive and fat, like Father Christmas he was, like my Dad, the bringer of gifts, treats and presents - of *Smarties*, *Liquorice Allsorts* and *Britvic* pineapple juice from the pub. Dan had been a childhood figure, safely unerotic, with a tiny shooter. He was the main protagonist in the stories, dominant because of his size and huge appetites, but also gentle and protective; he never punished children, or threatened with the slipper. He hung out with them in the streets and like them, was afraid of policemen. He was gullible, simple and playful. But he was also brave and never knew his own strength. He defended and befriended children. With his fat belly, he was feminine, almost maternal but clearly a man by virtue of his mighty chin and iron stubble. [Illus. 57] He was a cowboy without a horse, a hero; strong but without visible musculature. He was timid and manipulable in the company of women, scolded by his

ancient Granny, led by the nose by his best friend, a feisty little girl with golden curls.

The practical processes in the studio of copying Dan's stubbled chin, the enlarging of the Laocoön image and its syntactical nets, and the screening of a



Illus. 58. 2005. Pen Dalton. Dan's Beard: Rough Male Kiss. sand, stencilled ink on canvas. detail

photograph of Connie all produced different kinds of dot patterns. As I enlarged the dots of printing, they created an eidetic Hollywood close-up memory of the bristle on my dad's chin as he playfully rastered my cheek when, as a small child, he said goodnight. Dots came to stand for the in-between of the positive and the negative and the stubbled chin became a sign of the difference between us, between his black speckled rough cheek and my pink smooth one, but a sign mediated by a kiss.

Stubble is not a patriarchal beard, but the chin of a mature man. Dan's/dad's chin signified the essence of power, strength, trust and paternal safety and responsibility, a man's care and a man's body, different from a mother's and from a little girl's. It meant power without dominance, fear or violence. Dan had a power that could be appealed to and operate in the interests of children. Desperate Dan represented the experience of our real dads who loved us and who, child-like, played with us, who stood up for us against the neighbours and fought our early battles.

As I printed, the thin skin-like paper was roughed up by the black ink dots, as the bristling smooches had raised pointillist pimples on my own cheeks. [*Illus. 58*] The association of the domestic masculinity of dark kisses triggered other associations of rough types and politically incorrect characters of fantasy in films played by men with stubble: Clarke Gable, James Mason, Bruce Springsteen and George Clooney.

The arts are beginning to provide imposing figures that undermine the traditional Judaeo-Christian and oedipal authority of the repressive and punitive patriarch and the lines of desire that structure normative family relations. As I progressed with this



Illus. 59. 2001. Stephen Tynan. Underpants, from a series of photographs.

research, primed by thoughts of other fathers, I began to see new images of fathers, which at first I had not noticed - or had not regarded as ideal father figures. I had been pre-disposed to see fathers as dominant and punitive, so perhaps was not ready to engage with any other kind, which might complicate my normative view of the family. Steven Tynan's photographs of himself as a father, playing on the

same level as his children seemed to represent other kinds of fathers. [Illus. 59] Tynan is known as a professional and accomplished photographer but in his series of photographs *Underpants*, he lets go of skill and mastery and the authoritative gaze, and exhibits snapshot-like images - as shown here where he seems metonymically



Illus. 60. 1997. Matthew Barney. Cremaster 5. production still.

related: solid as a rock – unglamorous and always there as a subject of the care he has for his children and like a child himself. Even in Matthew Barney's *Cremaster* videos, I was disposed to see what appeared as a generative father figure: [Illus 60] a father as the source of sex and eroticism, rather than a controlling, violent sexual figure; sex is personified in a figure of magic, play, pleasure and joy. The spermatic fluid in *Cremaster* is depicted through analogies

of delight, associated with a beautiful spurt of generative and fertile fluid, as shiny

blue ribbons, and not - as in the case of the artworks of Rebecca Warren and Sarah Lucas - a nasty stuff aggressively ejaculated on the faces of women.¹⁶ There is an increasing variety of father figures in contemporary art, which could act to prime or predispose an audience to see fathers differently. The person of *Divine*, for instance, a gay transvestite singer and entertainer, has maternal inscriptions all over his fat male body, and celebrates an identity as a vulgar, working-class 'mum'. He moves about in a grotesque parody of an older woman and then exhorts us all to 'walk like a man'. Grayson Perry is a well-known transvestite artist. He outdoes his daughter in fluffy, sparkly and decorative practices of girliness, yet maintains a role as heterosexual father in the nuclear family. [Illus 61] Although many fathers continue to live out the role of father in a traditional nuclear family structure, they ironically adhere to the laws of normative relations whilst exceeding their intentions.

Changes in the Relations and Contexts of Printing

The perception of the role of men as fathers, and in some cases the actual role of fathers is changing. At the same time, the formal relations of printing today can no longer be perceived as binary. Printing continues to be a fundamentally binary process, but the material and the context in which it is practised is different. There may be some loss of authority in the analogy of the black printed mark on the passive white substrate; paper now is often coloured: printing ink and substrate may both be black or both be white, yet the semantic message can remain intelligible through contrast of texture. Desperate Dan as a figure of subversion may not seem so powerful printed in sparkly ink on a pink surface. [Illus. 62] And now that printing is so easy to reproduce by quicker digital



*Illus. 61. 2003. The Perry Family.
Tate archive photograph.*



Illus. 62. 2007. Pen Dalton. *Pink Dan*. digitally enhanced file copy.

systems, and its arcane techniques transparent and democratically available; and now that the printed book and image are so relatively cheap and ubiquitous, their authority as analogies in regulating binary imperatives is dispersed.

Reflection on my indexical practice in black and white led me to think I was relying too much on repeating the past techniques and desiring normative familial relations. The materials I had selected, while

they were resonant for me, might be limited for anyone else. Younger women had never read *Desperate Dan*; he and *Minnie the Minx* did not mean much to my daughter. Old analogue technologies and practices, I discovered, were not appreciated, indeed, they divided me from contemporary audiences, as do changes in the world in which my prints are seen. Analogue relief printing is a largely redundant technology. The Brylcreemed gloss of black oil-based ink and their manly odours are no longer common masculine associations in printing. [illus. 63]



Illus. 63. 1955/2004. Pen Dalton. *Brylcreem Man*. enhanced copy from *DIY* magazine.

Working men are just as likely to smell of cologne. As I get older, and if my preferred analogue practice stays the same, I can no longer rely on commonalities of experience with contemporary audiences or with Connie in the future. The interest in my work becomes academic, historical.

bridging the past

Sara Baumholtz lives in Hawaii and wants to stay in close touch with her daughter in Pennsylvania. So Ms Baumholtz, by inclination an "analogue", became a "digital

A sense of continuity and projection into the future seems necessary to conceptualise change and futurity. It appears to me now that the work of this research began with an anacletic tie to a past normative relationship in the family, I had no image of the future that was as strong as the image I had of the past. I began to recognise, in my initial preference for analogue print making, a likeness to Jim Mooney's description of obsessive and ambivalent artists who are unable to let go of the practice of painting, "trapped by their failed work of mourning" in the face of younger and more fertile new mediums. Mooney says:

We are bonded, by something like the bonds of love, to a practice which refuses to relinquish its hold. The painter is held in thrall by this interminable libidinous fixation¹⁸

The familial desire we have for 'others' who are our children, our students or the young in general, pulls us forward: they embody the future. To communicate with them I had to take on new practices, learn different technologies and accept new kinds of relationships that began to shift my old patterns of thinking. I had to become a 'digital immigrant' and like all immigrants had to learn not just a new language, but also a new way of being. Although I need to mourn my father and my practice, and return to the past to discover how past events have been imposed on me, what I recognise now is how the past is always drawn into the present by interaction with the actual theatre of improvisation with contemporary events.

Some artists regard links with the past as regrettably inevitable; Duchamp disparagingly observed:

Let's say you use a tube of paint; you didn't make it. You bought it and used it as a readymade... Man can never expect to start from scratch; he must start from readymade things like even his own mother and

But the imposing patterns and experiences of the past are part of us and if recursively examined, can act as a kind of springboard: a strong ground from which to make a leap into an as yet undifferentiated and uncreated future. Analogy-making whether on a micro or a macro level is a kind of leap of the imagination. What is created happens when we are, metaphorically speaking, 'in the air': between the past and the present. It is the nature of the link, the in-between neither the past nor the imagined future, that is the creative experiencing. Felix Gonzales-Torres turned Duchamp's disparagement around in a positive recognition that the past of modernist theory and practice, which he likens to his paternal forebears, provides the necessary place from which to leap into a future unknown:

I think more than anything else I'm just an extension of certain practices, minimalism or conceptualism, ... I don't like this idea of having to undermine your ancestors, of ridiculing them ... and I think that this attitude that you have to murder your father in order to start something is bullshit. We are part of this culture ... so whatever I do is already something that has entered my brain from some other source and is then synthesised into something new. I do not have an anxiety about originality, I really don't.²⁰

To move forward requires that the past be recognised and valued, but re-formed to meet an unknown, aim-less, imagined future: re-thought in relation to synchronic contemporary possibilities offered by new technologies, materials and knowledges. The imagined and unknown future is what the daughter, the little girl, came to represent for me in this research. I had been a daughter for my father, and Connie as her father's and my daughter began to take on the aspect of a figure that is predisposed by the past but has potential for imagining a future. When she was born, I gave her the name 'Constance' but all the variations associated with the word came to stand in this research for more than her positioned identity as daughter. As

Constance, a girl can imitate, be faithful and remain like her mother or father; as conning, she can learn and be knowing. An Irish form of endearment, used by my Grandmother, Connie means feminine, sweet and loving. But as contra or a con trick she can be resistant, oppositional, as well as a total fraud. In vulgar French, Spanish and Jamaican dialect con is an obscene word for a woman's genitalia. By drawing attention to the potentials of the word Constance rather than the person of a particular age or sex or to my daughter, I employ it and the little girl, as a figure of futural potential, giving shape to a projection of practice into an unknown future, but a future to which we are always in an ethical relation of self interest and care for the other.

The Impossibility of the Copy

Gonzales Torres is not afraid of repeating the past, because perhaps he is aware that it can never be repeated exactly even when we aim to mimic or copy. Ivins' concern with making 'exactly repeatable images' raised issues of the fertility and yet the irreducibility of reproductive processes.²¹ An original is always in the past. Attempts to copy an original can be likened to the attempt to bring the past into the present in exactly the same way, to repeat. But recollecting the past intact is impossible because the same context cannot be reproduced. As I discovered when copying my father's diaries, too much 'stuff', intervenes between an original and any attempt to reproduce an original exactly. Every time a Laocoön statue is shown, or printed again the conditions will be different. Different paper, different light or a different technological process will add other layers of interpretation. Ghosts and traces appear in the process of copying that interrupts the possibility of the exact copy. Something new is always created that has its own identity, but which is believed to owe its being to an original. But, as in the case of the Laocoön statue, there is never an original. The Roman copy in the Vatican Museum is known to be

one of a series of a lost Greek original, and Lessing himself worked from a printed engraving and never saw any three dimensional statuary. In repeating the Laocoön image as it has been copied at different times, Ivins makes clear that copies, even the most faithful of facsimiles employing the same technology and materials as the original, will always appear different because of parallax viewing positions, different

framing devices, **metamerism**, syntactical differences in representation and differences in historic and social contexts. Finally, he argues that seeing copies even if they are faithful imitations, is a different experience for different people. Different viewers from other cultural contexts may have something else on their mind, or be shocked when looking at Greek statues, naked men or



Illus. 64. 1803. Henry Fuseli. Woman Encountering Laocoön. satirical drawing.

serpents. [Illus. 64] The sameness of the limited edition relies on perceptible, measurable difference inherent in the object, the printed matter itself. But if context, time and subjectivity are taken into consideration, nothing can be exactly the same.

Trying to remember the past, even the very recent past, including what we have just read or just heard, will always be productive of another work; memory is in this sense, creative. A new generation of prints can never be exactly the same as the original. Mistakes will occur, dust will stick, noise will intervene. Original things will be remembered through the particular tenor of thought, imagination and language of the present. There are always remediating screens between an original and its copy in re-searching the past that is creative.

creative acts of (mis)recognition

Revisiting my early thoughts on encountering the Laocoön I remember how I came across it in the Vatican Museum unexpectedly. Although I had been vaguely

aware of having read Greenberg's *Toward a Newer Laocoon* in the 1960s I initially included it as an academic figure for research simply because it was a rare image of a father. It conjured up thoughts of my bearded husband and his constant argumentative struggles with our son, which also occasionally ended in wrestling. It reminded me too of my father and struck me as a pathetically archaic image: a patriarchal father, heroically but vainly guarding the boundaries of reason and masculinity, dying and taking his inheritance with him. It recalled his vain desire to have my brother follow him into the already redundant hot-metal print industry in the 1970s. I later had a hunch that it might have some bearing on my discussion of printing after seeing reproductions of the Laocoön figure in Ivins' book, *Prints and Visual Communication*. My experience as a woman initially primed me to see Laocoön and his story 'wrongly': I illegitimately viewed it through my experience of the feminine and as a feminist - as part of a patriarchal plot, as possibly erotic - in ways that disturbed its heroic message and its regulating demands for difference. *The Laocoön* then had a multiple role in this work: it was an image of a father figure, it had featured in a seminal book on printing and it gave my research a classical lineage.

Yet even while Lessing was advocating the regulatory effects of great art through his essay on *The Laocoön*, he anticipated that others might be disposed to view it differently. He let slip that such images might have a subsidiary and contradictory message, but obviously did not give those interpretations any legitimate credence. Musing on the effects of the statue he launched on what W.J.T. Mitchell described as "a remarkable digression". Mitchell recounts how Lessing observed that 'honest Roman women' had missed the regulatory message of the Laocoön and had looked at the statuary in different ways: they were paying more attention to the snake.²²

... they had by day feasted their eyes on the god, and the bewildering

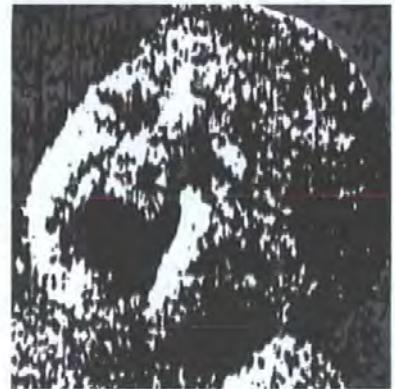
dream called up the image of the reptile ... there must certainly be a reason why the adulterous phantasy was never anything but a serpent.²³



Illus. 65. 2003. Pen Dalton. Lac with Hat. digital collage

What he raises in his comment is the possibility that not everyone - particularly the aesthetically uneducated, or I suggest, those cognitively predisposed to look for their own interests - is caught or convinced by the regulating principles of Laocoön's primary message of difference: that different genders, different contexts and situations mean that the same image is understood differently.

Other associations will creep in to disturb and make ridiculous the primary message. [Illus. 65 & 66] Constant repetition in aesthetics, however, ensures that there is a proper way to 'see' the Laocoön, which implies that anyone who sees it differently is lacking proper artistic sensibility.

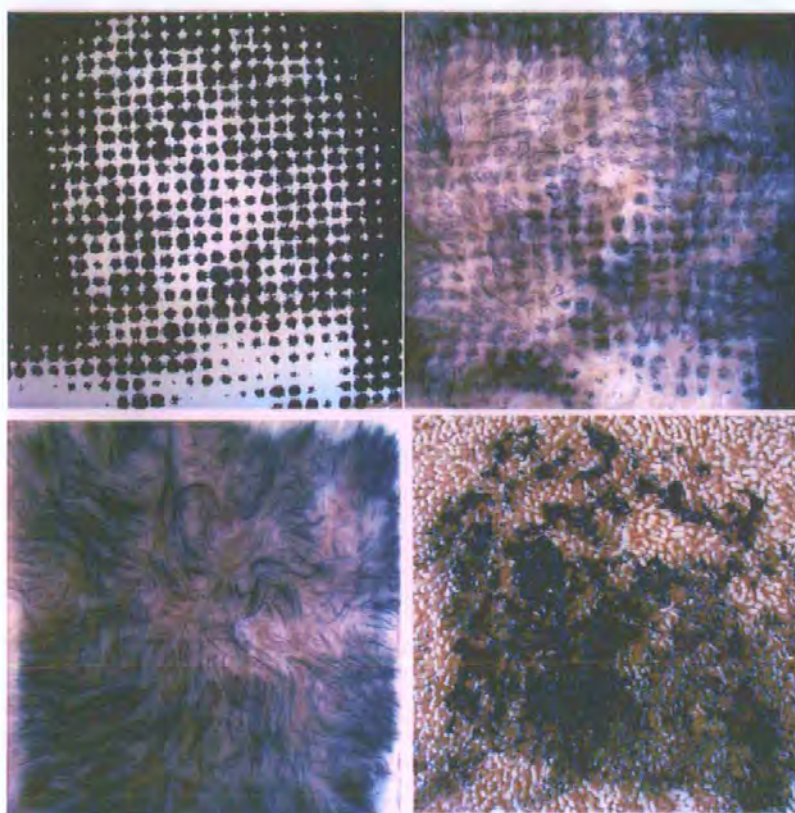


Repetition can go too far. It has the effect of overstating, of hyperbolising to the extent that one is led to wonder if it doth protest too much. It burlesques itself. We are led to ask why has the Laocoön become such a prominent figure in art history and criticism? Why the constant reiteration of the necessity for difference? If a father were sure of his authority, if it were natural it would not have to be acted out so dramatically and so often.

To address these questions, I extended Ivins' experiments in practice, and began to reproduce different printed versions of the head of Laocoön, just as Ivins had done, but using contemporary techniques and materials to see if new technologies would

Illus. 66. 1973/2004. Pen Dalton. Little Girl. acrylic painting on canvas

provide new associations and add new interpretations. [Illus 67] I remediated the printed Laocoön's head in contemporary syntactical forms and screen-printed them in gloss black ink on unsympathetic and resistant substrates. The effect of rough and

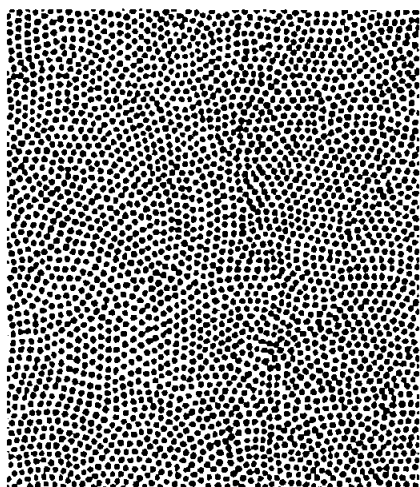


Illus. 67. 2005. Pen Dalton. Confused Laocoöns. Screenprints in gloss on resistant substrates.

more assertive white substrates diffused the authority of the imposing image: in some cases the image dissolved, desiccated and bled, altogether destroyed. The intervention of different viewing positions and practice using illegitimate substrates and demanding the work be accepted as 'art' has the

effect of exposing the existing definitions of 'art' as being interested, narrow and exclusive.

The experience of working with the image of Laocoön and the difficulty of making an exact copy led me to exert greater technical control by limiting the scale and complexity of the image. I began to make a series of identical prints copying the simple repetitive dot pattern of tone, which I copied from a mechanical half-tone sheet, from which images such as The Laocoön are made. [Illus.68] The dots also recalled the stubble on my father's chin. Instead of printing with black, I deviated to



*Illus. 68. 1992. From Grains and Sands.
Letratone stock halftone pattern.*

red ink - the colour of my childhood pimples. Even this small shift brought about quite a significant change in the relations of ink and substrate which, in turn produced a burgeoning of new thought relations. When the dots were simulated a perceptual effect of an optical pink appeared; red behaved differently from black, it has a tendency to **spread**. The dots seemed to be organising themselves into repeated, curved groups. Something in perception itself - the moiré effect - was intervening. Regular individual marks were coalescing into new patterns. Vision itself was altering the form and regularity of my ideals.

Printing in different conditions to those in which the original copy was made also affected how the prints turned out. I had a small workshop and printed with the windows open to counter the effects of the smell of solvents. The proper way to print accurately onto thin paper is to bind it temporarily to a stronger support, but I did not do this; partly from laziness - it is a tedious process - but also in a spirit of curiosity to see what would happen if the paper was left to its own devices. As I worked with the small sheets of *Tengujo*, they lifted, blown by the draught from the windows, and sailed around the workshop disturbed by the slightest movement of my body, sticking to each other, offsetting their reversed traces of red dots on the walls and floor and picking up fluff. The heat was making the ink dry in the screen. Either the ink would dry too soon and **scum** the screen, leaving a white mark where a red one should have been, or else my hand or a spill of ink would mark the white space with red where the white should be. I grew tired and gave up control, the paper would not stay put for accurate registration, but having invested time money and energy into the

preparation, and having a hunch something else might happen, I doggedly finished the print run, letting the screen block as it would. At first, I regarded all this as disappointing failure; the result of inadequate preparation. My original plan to produce a technically **perfect** sheet of distinct dots was **foiled**, but rather than waste resources I hastily pasted the finished and damaged prints onto a sheet of board that I had prepared earlier for painting. Then something quite different appeared on the surface of the board that had nothing to do with printing, my original idea or with fathers. What I saw shifted off into a different register, another genre: painting or landscape, which over-rode the associations of the dots, the binaries of father daughter, positive and negative. [Illus. 69] More moirés began to appear. The clear and well printed dots, when overlaid produced unexpected optical effects. The materials themselves and my own perception quickly led off into more diverse (and often more interesting) events with associations that went beyond my immediate thesis, to which I would have to return later.



Illus. 69. 2003. Pen Dalton. **Red Landscape**. screenprinted Tengujo with canvas backing.

Copying exactly requires a great deal of repressive activity, excising and discarding the signs of interventions of place, hand and body: a self-limiting narrowing of the vision and potential to achieve the ongoing existence of an original in its pure state. One of the modes of printing that has been traditionally accepted as a fine art is the limited edition: a number of copies identical to an

original master. If I had copied the master, nothing new would have emerged. In editioned printing, rhetorical marks and traces, the evidence of the body of the maker, are economically planned to be discarded as inevitable wastage, abject material to be walked over. Small hickies, slurs, fingerprints or tears, decrease value. A print that is not signed and numbered as a legitimate copy has traditionally had an ambiguous status as fine art. Yet it is in non-legitimate practice, allowing the materials to work and breaking the rules that new art works are more likely to be created.

modifying experience

Play with materials, breaking the rules, making mistakes, paying attention to stuff, the in-between effects and accepting the surprising moirés, suggests the vulnerability and redundancy of paternal metaphor and regulatory hierarchical binary difference. The collapse of ink into substrate and vice versa suggested how easily and with what little effort the father could lose paternal identity and dissolve into his opposite. The father as imposing dominant mark and an imaginary ideal could not stay in his place as an opposite nor could his image be identically copied; it kept merging into the background. The new relationships and associations that were formed became more interesting and insistent than the simple binaries. The difference in the materials, the intervening effects of space, time, environment and all the 'stuff' that lay between an abstract notion and its representation in a medium disrupted the possibility of an exact copy, faithful to the original and the mistakes and deviances began to be more interesting than representing an ideal and clear image of my existing thoughts. To be an identity for me to copy, my father would have had to maintain proper definitive boundaries as a father: be a proper father. Yet, even if he had fulfilled the role of an imposing father, I could never copy him exactly because my body - my size, my sex and my chin - were different. Any attempt to imitate him would be read as 'cheek', as

parody, burlesque or drag.

The image of my father was beginning to lose its strength and opposition. When I moved in close to the dot-screened copy of myself and him at the seaside, I could see no clear edge or boundary between us: we were both caught within the same inscribing net of half tone dots. The dot screen covered everything: foreground background, dads and daughters. Half-tone dots and the visual appearance of syntax diffused linear boundaries and breached formal limits of figure and ground and polar difference.

It is *work* that keeps the dominant father figure in his place. The difficulties and hard labour involved in keeping the binaries of positive mark and negative space apart suggested to me, that establishing difference is an initial act of effort, of violence to the undifferentiated nature of the matrix. And then difference must be continually repeated and maintained and that is continual labour. Binary oppositions and clarity of identity could only be kept going by the application of suppressive effort, of technique and the mastering, reproduction and repetition of received processes and the application of proper procedures. Any slight variation or deviation from the original or the rule of the norm, introduces unexpected and contradictory results that confound absolute control and destabilise difference.

the redundancy of normative relations

The period between 1955 and the mid 1960s - a time coincidental with the time I lived with my father - saw the gradual end of hot metal printing processes in London culminating in the early 1980s in strikes at Wapping and Rupert Murdoch's introduction of photo composition to Fleet street. As I looked back and revised my memories, I can see that my father had never been a stereotypical father, nor had been powerful except in my childish imagination. Although he made words in a very

material sense, he had no say in their meaning. I came to realise that writing words is a more powerful activity than making them in lead, and that the lead itself turned out to be poison. For my father at the end of the 1960s there was less work in the hot metal printing industry, he did not re-train and was made redundant twice, continuing to work as a casual labourer, a 'natty', spending more time at home, doing the washing, cleaning and shopping.²⁴ He became even quieter, spending more time in the pub. These events scored across and cancelled out traditional family inscriptions of authoritative father and docile daughter. Our relationship was changing, not I suggest, because of natural development or oedipal imperatives, but from experiencing and relation to the world outside-in.

I began to realise myself in my lived relation to him, with a growing sense of the changing world we both inhabited, to which we were both subject, but which was beginning to work in my favour. As I grew up in the 1960s I had been subject to the influences of the post World War II welfare state, educated through a modern, capitalist version of Enlightenment concepts of freedom, equality and opportunities for all. I benefited from the earlier struggles of the women's movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in achieving free education, and the extension of enlightened notions to include women. Few books or films in popular culture had girls as the main protagonists, so I read boys adventure stories, watched boys' films of heroes and competed with boys academically. Moreover, since there are no limits to gender in fantasy, I dreamed boys' dreams of success, competition, achievement, bravery and sexual pleasure. Humanist discourses of agency, progress and self-determination were in full force in the thriving post-war economy. There were more options available - for a very few working-class girls in the West - than those of the traditional family patterns of marriage, childbirth and childcare.²⁵

Had I been totally subject to my female biology and the unmediated impositions of normative family imperatives, I would have repeated my mother's lot, married and, like many women, had a pregnancy every other year. However, I was able to have some choice offered by the intervention of the imaginative exercise of ambition, reason, and the modern technology of birth control. Social inscriptions instantiated in the Laws and technologies that enlightened capital made in the mid-twentieth century primarily designed for men and their economic ambitions were embodied in recombined - deconstructed feminist - desires and pleasures, redeployed and incorporated in contexts that parodied their regulating intentions and criss-crossed in multiple layers, the gender and power codes of family life and paternal authority.

Even in normative families, fathers did not always conform to idealised paternal roles. The real dads I knew and grew up with were more or less caring and loving to their children. Working-class men in particular tried to assert power in the family, but they usually 'failed' and their efforts began to appear bullying and ridiculous as the welfare state and women's earning power partially usurped their roles. And, like many fathers, mine loved - preferred even - his little girl. He always indulged me. When I was small, he would let me win at games, make up his face with lipstick and put his hair in curlers. I was his Achilles heel, his weakness, and I manipulated him to achieve my wants. He had little authority over me, and as I grew up, he became proud of my grammar school pertness, my difference from him. He grumbled that my education seemed to be going on forever, but left me to my own devices, was, I think, secretly proud. The smallness, vulnerability and dependence of mine called on his protection, and his enjoyment of my manipulations as a little girl made me feel my strength, it opened up my feelings of power and possibilities for usurping his. My/the father's refusal/inability to be a real dominant father, his failures to perform as a father

allowed daughters/little girl, with all that she represents, to emerge as something new. Through the girl's call to the unspoken unarticulated feminine in the father - through her silly, irrational, playful, annoying demands - and by his attending to the nuances of rhythm and pattern of her desire, the law of the father remains, but can be dissipated, rendered ineffective. In the analogy of the father/daughter relation, the dominant power does not always gain the response that the law requires. As Judith Butler put it: "...there might be produced the refusal of the law in the form of the parodic inhabiting of conformity that subtly calls into question the legitimacy of the command (*dumb insolence*) - a repetition of the law into hyperbole, (*laddettism*) - a rearticulating of the law against the authority of the one who delivers it." (*barefaced cheek*). (my parentheses)²⁶ The little girl can render the father's power impotent by exploiting his love for her in performative interdependence with him. Illegitimately and passively, he lets her do what she wants: it is his revenge against a law to which he himself is subject and which he knows as a con. She can have (or be) it all for herself as well as a medium for him. The daughter is not subordinated because the call by which the law seeks to produce a lawful subject produces a set of consequences that exceed and confound what appears to be the disciplining intention motivating the law. The father can allow the daughter to be a daughter in an ethical relation that recognises her alterity and in doing so, reveal the naked interests of the binary relations of power in maintaining difference.²⁷

These complex twists in binary relations lead me to consider the analogous possibility that even artworks that are apparently normative in their obvious relations of semantic content - traditional and even 'sexist' themes such as those found in Stelhi's, or Balthus' paintings or the *Roman Charity* genre, that I find so repellent - if looked at closely, and in different contexts, by 'other' viewers, in other times and with

an interested attention to their materials and syntactical forms, can be seen to have other potentials exceeding their intentions. That is, there is nothing inherently 'sexist' *in* such images. The problems that arise in sexist artworks, or artworks that reiterate normative values are, similarly, those of an aesthetic and ethical nature. If a definition of 'art' is adopted that includes context and claims an ethical relation to audience as a defining aspect of 'art' - as is the case in definitions of *relational art* - then it is their status as 'art' that must be considered. The question that then can be addressed is: Does this work meet the ethical and aesthetic relations required of an art work?²⁸ If images claiming to be works of art fall into the categories of fashion or paedophilic pornography then they are subject to legal and moral judgements beyond the supporting discourses of art.

Summary and Speculative Conclusions to Chapter Four

Working in direct sensory contact with the same materials my father had used, and in materials and forms that corresponded analogically to male and female, dominant and subordinate, enabled me to play with relationships without being deeply affected by them. For the artist, it is possible to return to earlier roles, to revisit traumatic scenes in analogic play and experimentation and suggest different endings. Art-making is a kind of improvisation for when the next real life event comes along: in the next relationship, the next experience of love and loss, of domination and subordination. I find that I am disposed to organise my emotions in similar relations to those I have rehearsed safely in art-making. In working with materials I can slip in and out of relationships of form, colour and materials, perspectives and positions which give insights and clues, through their analogies, into human relations. But in art-making I can go further, beyond the material, moral and legal restraints of everyday relationships. With materials, I would not need to exploit the feelings of

others or require the resources and theatre of lived relations or the fear of uncontrollable emotions. I can rehearse and enact potential futures and try out illicit relations, break rules and go to the margins of the intelligible without fear of the consequences. Art-making is a special kind of precise and intense lived experience that means that when I come to enact real relations with objects or people or materials, I would be have some analogous experience of how to 'do' relations with a sense of what might happen if they were creatively or destructively exceeded.

Endnotes to Chapter Four

- ¹ Anne Finch, in Fairer, D. And Gerrard, C. (2004) *Eighteenth-Century Poetry: An Annotated Anthology* Malden, USA; Oxford and Carlton, Australia: Blackwell, pp. 22-26.
- ² Bernstein, B. (1974) *Class, Codes and Control*. Vol. 1. 'Towards a theoretical study of language'. Routledge: London.
- ³ See Parker, R and Pollock, G (1984) *Framing Feminism*. Routledge: London. See also Sjöö, M. and Mor, B. (1991) *The Great Cosmic Mother: Rediscovering the Religion of the Earth*. Harper: San Francisco; Cottingham, L. (2001) *The Art of Mary Beth Edelson*. Seven Cycles: US.
- ⁴ At the time I read (although not all in these editions) Lacan, J. (1949) 'The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I as revealed in psychoanalytic experience' in Rice, P. and Waugh, P. (eds.) (1989) *Modern Literary Theory*. Arnold: London; Kristeva, J. (1969) *About Chinese Women*. Marion Boyars: London, and (1982) *Desire in Language: a Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*; Columbia University Press; Irigaray, L. (1985) *This Sex Which Is Not One*. Trans. C. Porter, and C. Burke, Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York; Cixous, H. (1986) *The Newly Born Woman*. University of Minnesota Press; Gottner-Abendroth, H. Krause, M. and Krause, M. T. (1991) *The Dancing Goddess: Principles of a Matriarchal Aesthetic*. Beacon Press: US.
- ⁵ I realise that this is a crude summary of French feminist theory, but my intention is to give a picture of what I read at the time. I approached this research in the belief that up until recently, scholars in the field of subjectivity have been inclined to look for psychoanalytic explanations before and instead of addressing more obvious (and politically inconvenient) social explanations. I have concentrated on practice and on actual lived social experience, of family relations. So, except where explicitly stated, and where social explanations fail, I have not delved into theories of the unconscious. However, having read such work in the past, and because psychoanalytic theory is fundamentally concerned with family relationships and is saturated in modern thought about subjectivity, this research is inevitably steeped in Freudian psychoanalytic ideas of which I have tried to be aware.
- ⁶ The little girl's desire for the father deserves attention as it problematises the notion of the father as all powerful as well as rethinking the little girl as a sexual being. One theorist who addresses the girl's desire in an oedipal framework is Gallop, J. (1982) *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York. I draw on her insights in looking at the binary father/daughter relation in this context.
- ⁷ Bourgeois' own work and life contradicts this to some extent, but her work does not hold out much potential for power in the social or intellectual realm for the daughter or the older woman.
- ⁸ Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge: New York. p.13.
- ⁹ Roman Charity theme in fine art history (or *Carità Romana*) is the story of a daughter Pero, who secretly breastfeeds her father, Cimon, after he is incarcerated and sentenced to death by starvation. She is found out by a jailer, but her act of selflessness impresses officials and wins her father's release.

- ¹⁰ This is another area of debate that it would not be appropriate to enter here. But early Freudian explanations of the desire of the little girl for the father was based on the reverse of the extensively theorised relation of the boy to the mother and father. It was only later that Freud modified his account of the girl's progress through the Oedipal stage, by saying that both boys and girl's initial attachment is to the mother figure. Nonetheless, it seems to me that looking at images of little girls, the earlier notion of the desire for the father is still resonant in people's minds. It may (or may not) have some justification in the early dynamics of infancy. See also Irigaray, L. (1977/1985) *This Sex That is Not One*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York. See also reflections on Freudian refusal to recognise the daughter in Gallop, J. (1980) 'Impertinent questions: Irigaray, Sade, Lacan, in *SubStance*, 9: 1, 26. pp.57-67 and Braidotti, R. (1991) *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*, trans. E. Guild, Polity: Cambridge.
- ¹¹ It is a justification of the behaviour of paedophiles, and a complication in the treatment of girls who have been raped by much older men, that girls may have complex desires and may collude in sexual activity with older men. See Gallop. *Daughter's Seduction*, *ibid.*; See also 'The father's seduction' in Garner, E. (ed) (1985) *The (M)other Tongue*, Cornell University Press: Ithaca, New York; Willbern, D. (1988) 'Filia Oedipi' in Boose, L. and Flowers, B. (eds.) (1989) *Daughters and Fathers*, Johns Hopkins University Press. Both refer to and analyse Freud's notion of the daughter's desire for the father.
- ¹² In the Biblical story, Lot was made drunk and raped by his daughters, who believing they were the last people on earth thought it their duty to bear children to continue the race. This story has spawned many a salacious fantasy. See Polhemus, R. (2004) *Lot's Daughters: Sex, Redemption, and Women's Quest for Authority*. Stanford University Press: Stanford.
- ¹³ Carter, A. (1986) *Nights at The Circus*. Penguin. Harmondsworth, and with Neil Jordan (1984) the film: 'Company of Wolves' based on a version of the Red-Riding Hood story, written for and about little girls. (It was given an adult-only film rating so could not be seen by young girls).
- ¹⁴ Droll: "Amusing in a quaint or odd manner" *Chambers Concise Dictionary*. "Intentionally facetious, amusing, comical. Unintentionally amusing; queer, quaint, odd, funny." *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*. "Derisive imitation; ironically bombastic; mock heroic or mock pathetic". "Amusingly odd or whimsically comical" (Online dictionary)
- ¹⁵ I have obviously cropped my brother from this photograph and the text should have made clear why a sister might want to do this.
- ¹⁶ The artist Rebecca Warren was photographed having 'spunk' ejaculated into her face and Sarah Lucas wore a T shirt with the words: 'Have you wanked over me yet?'
- ¹⁷ Cited in Kluth, A. (October 30th 2004) 'Hearing voices' in *The Economist*, Special Issue: a Survey of Information Technology. p.20-21.
- ¹⁸ Mooney, J. (2004) 'Painting, poignancy and ethics' in MacLeod, K. Berdon, C. and Holdridge, L. (eds.) *Thinking Through Art: Innovations in Art and Design*. Routledge: London p.139 -142.
- ¹⁹ Duchamp, M. cited in Bois, Y-A.(1982) 'Painting: the task of mourning', in Bois et al, *Endgame: Reference and Simulation in Recent Painting and Sculpture*. MIT/ICA: Boston and London. p.32.
- ²⁰ Gonzalez-Torres, F. and Storr, R. (1995) 'Felix Gonzalez-Torres: Être un espion' (an interview) in: *Art Press*, January, cited in Elger, D. (1997) *Felix Gonzalez-Torres. I Text. II Catalogue Raisonné*. Cantz Verlag. pp.78-79.
- ²¹ Ivins, W. M. Jr. (1979) *Prints and Visual Communication*. Cambridge: Mass.
- ²² Mitchell, W.J.T. (1986) *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology*. Chicago University Press: Chicago. p.108.
- ²³ Lessing, G. (1766) *Laocoön; An Essay Upon the Limits of Poetry and Painting*. trans. E. Frothingham Farrar, Straus and Giroux: New York. p.11.
- ²⁴ 'Natty' is the derogatory term used for those men who did manual work and belonged to the

NATSOPA union (National Society for Operative Printers, Graphical and Media Personnel). The more prestigious union was SOGAT. (Society of Graphical and Allied Trades

²⁵. Steedman C. (1977) 'Writing the self: the end of the scholarship girl' in J. McGuigan (ed.) *Cultural Methodologies*. London: Sage. pp.106-126. Steedman wrote of the particular subjectivity of English Grammar school girls at this moment, and their contributions to culture of modernism and the feminist movement of the 1970s.

²⁶. Butler, J. (1994) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. Routledge: New York. p.122.

²⁷. Butler, J. (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. Routledge: New York. p.138.

²⁸ The concept of art as 'relational' derives from the the notion that to define 'art' requires that it has certain identifiable properties. This relational model of 'art' is often contrasted with the *family resemblances* as an analogy for 'art' which suggests that 'art' cannot be defined and only has family resemblances. Relational art can be seen in a body of recent art practices that include 'context' and a notion of 'the ethical' as essential properties of art. In effect the *Relational* (theoretical) and the *Family Resemblances* (anti-theoretical) models for defining art are beginning to look very similar. See Kaufman, D. A. (2007) 'Family resemblances, relationalism, and the meaning of 'Art'' *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 47: 3, July. pp.280-297.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMPLEX FAMILY FIGURES

The relationship between norms and transgressions is – at least from a cognitive point of view – asymmetrical. No norm can predict the full range of its transgressions; transgressions and anomalies, on the contrary, always imply the norm and therefore urge us to take it into account as well. This is why a research strategy based on blurred edges, mistakes, and anomalies seems to me potentially much more rewarding.¹

Introduction

In the last chapters, I reflected on one dyadic relationship: that between my father and myself, and the work I did in hand printing with analogously related materials. I documented how the practice changed my concept of the nature of the single binary relationship, how it opened up a vast territory of conflicting, contradictory and complex relations existing between two polar entities. Such reflection has been important in demonstrating the thesis: that art-making is shaped in relations that can be compared to those of family relationships.

However, I began to think that - although necessary as a starting point - the investigation was too backward-looking: I was continuing to practice within that single binary relation, and the influence of my father and what the father figure represents, was continuing to influence my present work and thinking. I thought that I should attempt to conceptualise a sense of the present as well as some projection of a future.

The binary relationship moreover, did not seem a sufficient model on which to base a concept of family relationships or of art; families are also complex, social entities and art is made up of complex social practices. I needed to think of some way of representing the social dimension of 'the family' to the non-familial world in

which it exists that might also open up different ways of thinking about the relation of contemporary art to the non-familial contexts in which it is sited. I needed to find the border that separates 'family' from 'non-family'.

My aim at this point was to create a single figure, using contemporary print technologies, that would represent 'the family.' This figure would stand out against a spatial background: a substrate, which would represent 'the social world'. I planned to construct an abstract figure/ground image, based on the relationships I had discussed in the sections in Chapter Three on *The Laocoön*. Although this would be another binary relation I planned to incorporate layering techniques, printing one transparent colour and shape on top of another which would be a way of compressing all the complex emotional relations of the family, as I understand it, into a single visual entity.

The process would be the reverse of the method I had established in Chapter Four, with reference to my father's diaries. In that process, I 'looked into' an existing image of a written word to open up possible associative meanings. In this Chapter, I would be attempting to *create* an image using selected materials. Using a single figure to represent 'the family' meant it could be formally manipulated. Making it into an object meant I could grasp its structure, make it larger and more complex, move it around, butt one family up against another, create a distance between families. I could then document how these different formal arrangements interact with the substrate/background. For instance, the figure might have a firm boundary separating it from non-art contexts, or it may blend at its edges into having commonalities with other non-art forms; it may have an open and vague structure in which figure and its contextual background merge: where everyone is in a sense 'family' or by analogy, where everything can be considered art. It would then be

possible to use the same formal relations as analogy for art beginning to open up similar questions: Does the definition we have of 'art' have firm boundaries? How can definitions of 'art' be inclusive, yet still maintain their integrity as art? If the relations of art are structured like family relations, in what analogous ways can the category defined as 'art' relate to the non-art contexts in which it is formed?

It seemed to me that in making such a figure I would be applying a mode of *condensation* similar to that which Freud had described in his explanation of dream working: making an image that might contain many other latent or non-conscious associations.² A condensed figure can only suggest, and then only partially, some aspects of family relationships. But *aiming* to make such a figure, *working* at it, looking beyond its surface, then reflecting on the processes that shaped it, seemed to be worthwhile, in that the process of making itself might suggest ways of thinking that I had not first considered.

The next Chapter is a retrospective narrative account of this search. It reconstructs in a linear, causal form events that were anything but organised. *Appendix B1* contains printed images that were produced during this search.

printing as a fetishistic practice

I broke away from analogue relief and screen printing.³ Working with newer technology and more complex processes of full colour digital printing seemed better suited to convey the complexity of relationships in the contemporary family. I had already discovered that introducing even slight adjustments with new materials and with different technologies could reorganise existing thoughts through different mediums and make available different analogical associations that might stimulate different ways of approaching familiar ideas; that digital printing would suggest new

formal relationships that could then be compared to those in families. Although the apparatus of domestic printing technologies I use has been organised in ways that privilege fetishistic practice and a fetishistic gaze, and making digital prints had never appealed to me as art practice, such printing is the most widely used form of printing available to most of the population in the West. For that reason alone, it seemed worthwhile investigating.

I am a digital immigrant. I grew up imagining a printer to be a big paternal man in a dirty bib & brace, with ink under his fingernails, smelling of solvents, beer and tobacco. That body has now gone.⁴ Much of the labour of printing has been transferred into the printing machines. The painful processes of carving, discrimination and differentiation, ingenuity, skill, mess, odour are concealed in the interiority of machines. A printer now sits on my desk, compact, clean and controllable, a poor substitute. I feel disloyal to my father and to my hard won skills. It is too easy to forget the recursive labour of generations of bodies and minds that have added their work to inform the calibrations of the machine.

My printing machine can do as much, if not more, than those old printers did and simulate much of what I did on relief printing in ways that, to most people, makes no difference. I now have the capacity to make large numbers of prints in full realistic colour. The inks are encased and I never need to worry about mixing to the right consistency. Hue, opacity, saturation and tone can be achieved in measurable proportions by pressing buttons on my keyboard. I no longer fear breathing in poisonous fumes and can avoid preparation, dirtying my hands and washing up with solvents.

The Seduction of The Print

Digital printing 's fetishistic predispositions can reflect back an image of the world that seems perfect, in ideal forms that otherwise can only be dreamt of or imagined.



Illus. 70. 2007. John Russell. Ocean. billboard sized digital artwork.

Such idealised digital imagery lends itself to the creation of the hyperreal and surreal or those that realise imaginative utopian fantasy in fiction. [Illus. 70]

The technological development of printing: the machines, the substrates and the inks have primarily been directed towards the achievement of optical realism: producing images that correspond to reality as seen by the eye. It is found predominantly in popular, commercial, ephemeral and marginal art genres, and finds widespread application in less more critically acclaimed forms of violent pornography



*Illus. 71. 2007. Herospy. comic image
www.Herospy.com*

and images of aggression or bodily pain. [Illus. 71]

Images can be produced that are close to reality, yet avoid the associated emotional and physical pain that such depicted events, if real would inevitably occasion. But while prints produced solely by digital technology incorporate many of the skills, techniques and processes of art-making it remains marginal as 'art'.

The processes involved in producing a digital print have been designed to iron out irregularities, smooth over roughness, erase any texture. *Smooches* and *hickies* are events of the past. Even simple domestic prints convey a sense of perfection and I am now



Illus. 72. 2005. Continuous Tone. stock image

equipped to transpose my abstract images on to paper with little physical effort. Printed images appear to correspond transparently to the way images appear 'in our heads', like projections directed straight from imagination and our dreams without any intervention of the human hand or manipulation of matter.

This smooth and seamless effect in printing has been achieved through miniaturising and regularising the syntax of print into regular dot patterns that fall below visual perception. With this continuous dot surface, it becomes possible to produce the gradual shading from dark to light, or change of hue from one to another without a perceptible join. [Illus. 72] *Chiaroscuro* as it is called, has been a virtuoso - sometimes meretricious - skill of the painter of realism and surrealism. It requires great concentration and is difficult to maintain over large areas, as visible brush marks must



Illus. 73. 1602. Giovanni Baglione. Sacred Love. oil painting

be erased, which is rarely possible. [Illus. 73] A **continuous tone** of *chiaroscuro* could be achieved in photography, but photography can only record the changes in appearance caught in the film. In printing, continuous tones can be created cheaply and quickly, in large areas, and overlaid in heightened colour to suggest forms that can not be photographed nor exist in reality.

It is not only the perfected content of the realistic

print that catches our eye, but the formal qualities and contexts of the print itself that have evolved to meet the demands and desires of looking. Mechanical continuous tone printing combines the perceptual gestalt that overlooks visual gaps, inconsistencies and omissions with printing techniques that create optical spread. These perceptual and physiological predispositions work with a way of looking that is predisposed to ignore difference, discontinuity and indeterminacy. Perception and desire, combined with the apparatus of printing, conspire to create webs of illusion, a seamless blend, a sense that there is no point of rupture or resistance between two opposing binary elements, an uninterrupted shading from positive to negative, from one opposing entity to another without any tension, perceptible break or unevenness. Continuous tone creates a skin-like **opaque** surface implying there is something concealed beneath. It is fetishistic in that the recursive labour, the work and effort of creating binary discrimination, that still exists in the continuous tone, is concealed

It has been pointed out that the development of continuous tone printing in the



Illus. 74. 2007. Fantasy Car. stock image

late nineteenth and early twentieth century grew alongside capitalist expansion and was financed as a technology for inventing and selling fantasies in the growing fields of advertising, photo-journalism, commercial photography and pornography. It has been implicated too in the rise of professional

modelling, dancing and acting as careers for women and in the subsequent desires of women to conform to bodily perfection that the fetishistic print enhances.⁵ [Illus.74]

the print as fetish object

The desire to conceal difference and to forget pain that predisposes us to this

'fetishistic gaze' - to see only smoothness and perfection is said to trace back to anxieties that are associated with early family relationships.⁶ In its content, in advertising, in the depiction of clothes, food, bodies, furniture the print is implicated in fetishistic desires, and the print itself can be regarded as a fetishistic object.

In *Post Partum Document* Mary Kelly demonstrated how to some extent we all fetishise desire and how infantile desire apparently 'underlies all art work'. It relates back to that 'child's first experience of the mother's body as this array of sound and colour ... being perhaps the founding moment of something like a metaphorical relation'. Kelly explicitly relates fetishistic desire to the work of the artist, who constantly - obsessively sometimes - makes objects: sometimes similar objects again and again.⁷ In recounting the weaning process of her son, Kelly graphically exemplified the anxiety behind the fetish, of recalling the emotions we felt on the separation of ourselves from the mother's body of somatic pleasure. Drawing on the

work of Klein and Winnicott in their studies of early childhood, she suggests that we all create or invent objects, or collude with illusions, that console and help conceal pain, trauma or overwhelming emotions. The most common fetish is the phallus. The which has become the sign that stands for the gender differentiation that, in terms of infantile chronology, seals the earlier event of the separation from the mother's body.⁸

Any object or thing can become a sexual fetish, but the fetish object is most successful when it looks like the thing it both refers to and conceals. A penis-like image is the ideal fetish object, an ideal analogy for the masculine situation, because reflects



Illus. 75. 1929. Tamara de Lempicka. *Musician*. oil on canvas.



Illus. 76. 1966. Allen Jones. Wet Seal. screenprint.

back the illusion of a coherent identity as different from the mother as woman. But a penis is also subject to failure - detumescence. The difference is that the artwork can minimise failure by repetition, by manual manipulation or by providing a strong external structure. In a famous polemic on the work of the artist/printmaker Allen Jones in 1973 Laura Mulvey defined graphically

the characteristics of the sexual fetish.⁹ It has, she suggested, the formal properties of an ideal erect penis: upright, smooth, hard, turgid, pneumatic, long and cylindrical. [Illus. 75 & 76] Fetishistic art often makes use of clear outlines, structural elements of composition, strong chiaroscuro modelling effects and a clear delineation of the figure from the ground. It often employs dark tones, with brilliant, contrasting and translucent effects of light that seem dramatic and theatrical. They often have the resonant and emotionally charged qualities of condensed dream images. The figure is depicted in such a way as to make it seem manifestly present, the objects seem



Illus. 77. 17th C. Laocoön. wax model

graspable, tangibly there with no blemish, point of entry, or threat of collapse. Perhaps that is why the image of the Laocoön has attracted so much attention from male critics and why it is so often repeated. Even though Laocoön has a muscular and turgid body, he is always depicted on the point of collapse and engulfment. But the materials that constitute his body: the shiny syntax of the print, the marble and the glossy wax maintain his erect form as a statue. [Illus. 77]

To achieve these effects and create fetishistic illusions, substrates are created to be smooth, shiny and brilliantly white, allowing the light from the paper to shine through. The surface of the final print is often given a protective layer of glaze, varnish or laminate making it like an impenetrable skin, a congealed invisible barrier that has the quality of being taut, stretched as if it were holding down something beneath. In such digitally printed surfaces there appear to be no points of entry, no vulnerabilities, no weakness or blemishes to attract attention. Nothing catches the eye and disturbs the illusion. Such surfaces reflect ambient light, and seem to bounce vision back like a mirror. They resist intervention and closer observation, deflecting our gaze away from the differentiated interiority of the printed mark.

Fetishistic artworks, dress and objects also have this skin-like and flexibly smooth surface: rubber, leather, satin and shine are the analogic materials that take the place of flesh. Fetishistic images show flesh everywhere unyielding and impenetrable. While it looks 'sexy', there is no trace of the generative mess of sex or reproduction: no drips, mucous, snots, semen or stickiness. A perfected image of fetishistic desire is repeated - in an imaginary that denies the fecund body fertility and reproduction; the mother who represents the fear of dissolution - in the obsessive renderings of non-fertile, non productive women formed to resemble a penis.

[*Illus. 78*] The continuous tone print resembles the fetish in that it both draws attention to what is feared through its formal resemblances, yet hides through the distraction and seduction of its



Illus. 78. 2007. Lara Croft, fantasy sci fi character

surfaces.

the bachelor machines



Illus. 79. 1915-23. Marcel Duchamp. The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass). Oil, varnish, lead foil, lead wire, and dust on two glass panels.

It is this capacity of photography, film and digital media to produce the perfect illusory image that has led to analogies being made, from early twentieth century precedents with the cultural figure of the *bachelor*.¹⁰ The mediums or 'apparatus' through which the majority of images are produced - the binary electronic signals, the computer, the scanner, the printing machine, the ink, and the smooth white substrate paper - and the visual apparatus of the viewer - the electronic signals, neurons, colour receptive cells and plasma - are not regarded as making any contribution to the look

of the final print.¹¹ The machines and the body of the viewer are imagined as stable, consistent, inert, neutral pathways through which visual images pass unimpeded. Yet, it is only this apparatus that *can* produce the material fetishistic image.

The modernist imagination that has privileged this intellectual, abstract, virtual and insubstantial world has been referred to as a 'bachelor imagination'. Through the perfectibility of machines, and the glossy techniques of continuous tone printing that emerge from them, women are primarily represented in the bachelor imaginary as smooth and hard, sterile, erotic and sexually available, without the capacity to engender love, to give birth - be an artist in her own right. As Mary Kelly wrote of Duchamp's eponymous bachelor artwork: [*Illus. 79*]

...Duchamp left his Bride suspended in her moment of erotic ecstasy and, needless to say, did not anticipate that she might get pregnant, give birth and reflect on her situation in the form of a monumental work of art.¹²

In traditional family terms, a bachelor is a young man before marriage.¹³ He is depicted as a man who is sexual, but who tries to avoid sex's intimate, dragging emotional ties and its reproductive consequences: he does not have legitimate offspring. The machines through which the modern world has been represented are bachelor in that they produce an image that is like a mental download, from thought transposed directly into information, and then to light. Bachelor machines have no by-product, no spin-off. They produce no mess, no generative material. [Illus. 80] The fetishistic mental imaginary is reduced to information, enters, goes through and comes out of the machine to be repeated over and over again in prints. Feminist theorists have stressed how the mother's body in particular, with its associations of soft, real, fat, fecund fertile flesh, milk and generative blood become associated with



Illus. 80. 1919. Francis Picabia. Portrait of a Young American Girl, photographic print.

the drag of matter, slowing down this process.

The consequences of fertilization and female generation are imagined as 'messing up' the clarity of the workings of the fetishistic bachelor machines. Women's bodies are either fetishised, or remain behind, linked to the matter of older analogue processes. [Illus. 81] Either way they do not themselves create.

Whilst it is possible to understand how a vivid family figure such as the bachelor is an apt analogy for certain kinds of virtual art-making -

conceptual art, film, video, computer generated imagery - the constant reiteration of such gendered and familial associations create in my mind the idea that 'technology' and abstraction are 'masculine' and can only be, or are best practiced by young men.



Illus. 81. 1933. Man Ray. *Erotique Voilée*. photographic print

Such an imaginary concept creates resistances, perhaps like the resistance I had on adapting to digital art-making. Perhaps I imagined - being an older woman, that digital technology was not for the likes of me.

Being associated with the term *immigrant* reminded me of new immigrants like the single men I see in the streets who, I imagine, are far from home, without families having undergone a sudden change of domicile

and affections. If I adopt the hard status of the bachelor and the immigrant I feel I must root myself up from my past, start again, learn a new language, new skills. It does not take into account my past experience, my existing skills, my emotional ties to the past, my acquired knowledges and relationships. Referring to practices as bachelor can be temporarily useful in that it helps us to conceptualise something about the nature and limitations of such practices in the past, indeed it is useful shorthand for naming a collective of virtual, technological art-making processes. But using family analogies like this is also itself limiting and can create negative associations, it closes the imagination and predisposes an inclination to ignore or to imagine technology or digital processes as inappropriate areas of research for the human sciences. In assuming the bachelor analogies without question, no thought is given to the effects of matter. In the logic of the bachelor there is no matter to consider, so the thought that it might contribute something to the image is not

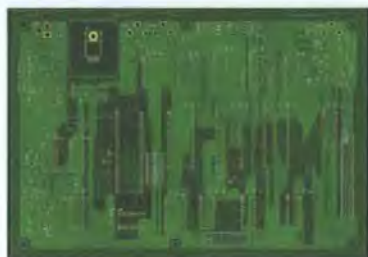
In analogous terms, digital practices of printing are implicated in childhood tastes and preferences, and the re-visiting of infantile desires and fears. My observations of digital arts leave me unsatisfied, they leave me cold. After first attracting, my eye as it were, slides off bored, uninterested in spite of the often dramatic and erotic content. They are too familiar: digital prints are everywhere and they play off against each other. At first their content and the smooth surfaces seemed amazing, shocking and fascinating but those feelings soon palled with over use. They are too ubiquitous, too popular and seem only to be able to convey the grosser, more commonly held, childish and hackneyed emotions.

Although digital printing was developed in the pursuit of the optical real, and in bachelor imaginaries, its technology cannot be responsible for the quality or limits of the imaginations of the artists who make use of it. Moreover, much of our dreaming is illicit, politically incorrect, pornographic or otherwise socially reprehensible, and this is what predominantly seduces in the public domain. These fundamental and infantile originated areas of human desire need to be explored. But the technology can be used otherwise: to create transcendent, fantastical, utopian and beautiful possibilities as seemingly direct representations of ideal or different potentials.

Although at first I was resistant to digital processes, I begin to appreciate them as a tool in art-making, particularly in the early stages. Formal relationships can be very quickly worked out: colour, scale, layering, perspective and so on can be mobilised without the investment in skills and the expense of material resources such as those found in slower means of preparatory exploration like drawing or painting. Initial processes can be carried out with light on the screen, seemingly untrammelled by the constraints of the material world. There is no drag or resistance and for a while I can forget the material and let my imagination soar, invent and transcend earth bound

forms and materials. I know I will have to negotiate a relation between the virtual and the material at some point, but not yet.

Printing continues to be a fertile analogy, situated as it is on the edge of a



*Illus. 82. Motherboard. online image
www.tablix.org.*

definition of 'art' and at the same time, saturated in the social world, at every level. It is being used by artists today in a way that appears to be richly embedded in matter. Substrates are symbiotically created to rise up to meet the inks in chemical reactions that cause them to swell, information is made material in the

printed motherboards of computers where substrate and metal screen-printed circuits work together to enable the flow of information. [Illus. 82] As I work there is little resistance or apparent contribution from the machines, indeed the digital rendering is embodied in the fabric of the medium. There is no real 'flight' or escape from the drag of binaries and matter of digital printing because these are always the vehicle, the medium of that flight.



Illus. 83 1998. David LaChapelle. Our House. detail, fashion/art gicleé print

Artists can create with textured, glittering, translucent, flocked paints then reduce these material effects to information, which can be stored, sent to printers, downloaded and printed again in images that to most people are identical to the original. To tell the difference between a print and its original requires an expert. Being richly textured, such work no longer *appears* childishly fetishistic; it does not have the characteristic signs and fears of the phallic fetish. Yet,

I am inclined to think that digitally originated printing, even when it is fully textured and mediated through paint, still has a fetishistic and concealing function. The photographs of David LaSalle for instance are joyful and rich medleys of playful ironic images mocking the phallus and privileging the power of women. But every surface is reduced to a phallic shine and texture. [Illus. 83] The canvases of Jeff Koons are hand painted with traditional oil paint but the complete image on the canvas is produced digitally before being painstakingly copied onto the support. Koons does not apply the paint in layers, there is no depth, no colour sits underneath and contributes its effects to the top layers. Layers do not additively interact or allow earlier versions to show through. He does not manipulate the paint while it is wet or stand back and respond to what is going on the canvas, adjusting as he goes.

Unlike masters from Cezanne to De Kooning to Marden, for Koons there is no jockeying of compositional elements once paint hits the canvas, no intuitive layering of colors, only an insistently methodical filling-in.¹⁴

The paintings have a print-like surface quality with one colour butting up against the next. I do not want to disparage this as a process; Koons' emphasis and skill is in manipulating the differently textured qualities of surface paint. He is able to convey all the potential for imaginative fantasy with *the appearance* of layered textures of splashed and dripping paint with glittering embroidered and jewelled surfaces of matter, gloss and rough texture all adding to a material surface richness that is infinitely seductive. [Illus. 84] The supports (substrates) he uses, even in his three dimensional work, are always neutrally smooth and usually white. They are chosen to subordinate themselves, to show off the colour, the texture and the images. Koons is known for depicting female flesh and showing himself in colourful digital sexual arousal, and for carefully colouring-in the enlarged drips, brushstrokes and even



*Illus. 84. 2003. Jeff Koons. **Geisha**. oil painting*

the digital image. But his own messy, vulnerable and soft body is absent: his painting is often carried out by assistants, emphasising the irrelevance of his own responses and minimising the intervention of gestural or accidental elements. He creates his images with powerful digital processes and reduced to information they

seem to flow through his absent self, directly onto the canvas, enhanced but not challenged by matter. The dominant mark, fetishistically implicated in the phallic women of advertising pornography and consumption, prevails. It is enchanting, for a while to be transported by these Hollywood screen surfaces. When I stare closely at the huge canvases, I often see what is not obvious at first: the outlines of the splayed legs of a naked woman revealing the vagina, but those images quickly disappear, even before we can begin to allow other associations to creep in, morphed into another seductive image of ice cream, a car or a comic character. There is no invitation to dwell on the matrixical source. The canvases rebuff speculation and deflect thought, and are spectacular, playful colourful and seductive.

If I were to imagine these paintings in binary familial terms, the fetishistic surface effectively incorporates and conceals the daughter-as-substrate. I have a feeling of antagonism even as I admire them, that I am being duped, my emotions manipulated by simulacra. It is the father figure of my analogue imagination, re-asserting itself, incorporating all the playful elements of the little girl, impressing itself on the substrate not allowing it to peep through or breathe. The paintings draw attention to their surfaces as matter, but it is even more impossible to see or get through the tough skin

of its vast areas of continuous tone and understand how they were made, their history or what could be the nature or contribution of the substrate that lies beneath the heavy weight of imposed and ultimately conventional markings.

Changing Family Relations

In order to make a layered and more complex figure to stand for the relation of the family to the social world, I needed to gather more ideas of what a family is, and in particular, what real families are like in lived relationships. The triangular form of the Holy Family with God at the apex and its absence of a girl figure would not do, neither would a four square representation of the nuclear family encompass all the complex relations of a family. Such images may have satisfied my childish preference for clear outlines in illustrations in comics and story books that went with my early desire for ideal families and happy endings. I needed a figure that could show the full rich emotional relations of families that are always enacted in everyday life. My family had been changing, its relationships were unclear, uncontrollable and were affected by what was going on in the world. And, although it was becoming more interesting, it was hard to imagine or grasp as an entity; it had no shape or form that I could communicate to others. There was no shared social concept of what a family is. Yet it was difficult to imagine a complex entity that while incorporating all the different aspects of family life and relationships, would have aesthetic coherence.

my new family

When I grew up, I entered into new family relations similar to those I had left as a child. I became part of another nuclear family. By 1973 I was a mother with a husband, an son and a younger daughter. But changes were going on around us.¹⁵ The early 1970s was a time of global upheaval and economic shifts. In Britain, there

were constant signs of social disruption, not least in the relations of class, race and gender. Profound changes were taking place in the lives of my friends and family. Divorce was becoming common and many of my friends and family were cohabiting with new partners. Two of my friends, both mothers with children in what I thought had been normative families, went to live with female partners. I made new friends, from different ethnic groups and discovered I had family members in different parts of the world. My father's influence at the centre of my life diminished after he died in 1970.

In 1973 my mother came to live near us, bringing with her a second family. She had returned to England from New Zealand where she had lived for sixteen years. I hardly knew her and felt little connection or loyalty to her. Her name was different and she had a cohabiting partner, father to five children I whom had never met.¹⁶

There was some discussion amongst my very traditional kinship family as to whether she and her family should be made welcome. Some members of our family resented her and kept their distance, others cautiously invited her in. There were obviously unresolved feelings and emotional tensions to be negotiated. My mother in leaving us, her first family, had crossed the line of acceptable maternal behaviour. Would she be forgiven? Her new family did not know us. How did they feel? Did they, in any case, want a relationship with us? I had a new and interesting relation with my mother's partner; now that my father was dead, how would I relate to him? How would I act towards them? How much support would be prepared to give, especially to my half-brother who was severely disabled. The children were very young, 'innocent' and strangers to the country. Would we exclude them from some family gatherings out of loyalty to my father and to save embarrassment to my father's kin? Would I introduce my new relations to my friends as sisters? Or as half-sisters

or step sisters, thus inviting questions about the past. Would I relate to them at all or should I ignore them? Then there were the practical questions of accommodation. They had no work, no homes and little money at first; how would they live? How far would we go to help them? The implicit rules and boundaries of normative family relationships did not provide any acceptable answers. There seemed to be few precedents at that time, for how to deal with these practical and emotional issues or negotiate these 'other' extra familial relationships. We did not know how to relate to my mother's new family and yet keep the integrity of our existing family.

It was in informal family discussions - sitting around kitchen tables, with my, usually female, relatives; my grandmother, feminist friends and neighbours who all had a say in the matter - that we discussed 'what to do'. In this heightened emotional context out came stories of hitherto unknown relations and stories of illegitimacy and divorce; rape, abortions, adoptions, children given away, uncles who weren't uncles, secret gay relationships and mixed race cousins. There were painfully recounted events of abuse, abandonment, poverty, prison, child deaths, suicide, madness and murder. These stories inclined me to see my mother's 'transgressions' in a new light. At that time, I became involved in feminist study groups and I learned that such family events were in fact common, that my experiences - which I shared with other women in consciousness raising groups - were not all unusual.¹⁷ Every family and most women of that generation it seemed, had similar tales to tell. Historically we were not atypical: these things had always been going on, hidden by shame and repressed through conventions, maintaining an illusion of the coherent nuclear family.

The early 1970s was a time of *practical* critique of the nuclear family, of questioning normative male/female relations and experimenting with different forms of family organisation and child care. When considering my mother and her family, all

this new knowledge informed our behaviour in complex and intuitive ways. My ideal of a family shifted from an image of a closed structure that while it was strong, stable and well defined did not allow for the interesting vicissitudes of life or the addition of people who were different, new interests and new attachments. The nuclear family felt exclusive and indeed, I was beginning to feel embarrassed to have such a seemingly boring and predictable set of relationships. 'Alternative' family relationships seemed more open to possibilities, more lively as I met more people and felt freer to make different kinds of relationships.'

Instead of relying on convention or the traditions of kinship or our original family positions, we had to negotiate relations anew, and in so doing, renegotiate our concept of the family. We responded to my mother's family in relationships that were more like friendship. They were not friends, but neither were they conventional family: new kinds of relations based on both patterns emerged between us. To begin with we had no agreed concept of what 'a family' is or ought to be, but a concept was came into being as we talked about 'family' mobilised through our feelings, beliefs and opinions. We put into play our sense of what we felt was the right thing to do in the circumstances. In negotiating these relationships and calling on other terms than those of kinship, we were drawing on ethical considerations of what we believed was fair to everyone, taking into account everyone's desires, rights and responsibilities. It was of course a long drawn out and difficult process and one that is still being shaped as we get older and as new partners and new children come along.

It was around this time that I began personally to reconsider my relation to the family, to marriage and motherhood. Without abandoning my relationships I discarded the conventional signs of those relationships. I reverted to my birth name, became involved in the campaign to instate the title 'Ms' for women; I removed my

engagement and wedding rings and worked in Children's Rights and Free School education. For a time we, as a family, lived with another family and shared childcare. We began to re-configure our family and consider our relationships in ethical terms, rather than those of conventional kinship.

ethical relations

Ethics is a long established area of philosophical thought that has been concerned with moral conduct: how ideas about right and wrong are lived and negotiated in practice. Families it has been argued, have always had an ethical dimension in that they have always had a dimension of:

... attentiveness to others' situations, accommodating one's own needs to those of others, adaptability to others' changing identities, and being non-judgmental enable people to find ways of coping...¹⁸

An ethical relation is a relation in practice, it is about what people actually do and how relations are actually lived; in context and with the available symbolic and material tools on hand. In social policy there has been a shift away from definitions of the family as a normative ideal towards attempts to understand and define the family as practice. Contemporary research in the family is accepting that people live in ethical relationships that often override kinship loyalties. Social policy practice is being framed by a notion of what families actually do rather than attempting to define what they are. And, instead of only observing and collecting statistical data, they taking into account different experiential versions from different family members, including children.¹⁹

Having an ethical relation does not mean imposing what one thinks is best on another according to one's own desires or self-same identification with, absorbing or merging with an other 'I'. My father's relation to me was ethical in that, although he

was bigger and more powerful, he attended to my desires and interests and allowed me to flourish. An ethical relationship implies a relation that recognises that the other is another 'I' who has rights has their own desires, but who might have a different nature, different values, mode of being or aesthetic bodily form. Even in the most intensely patriarchal and unequal polarity, in a normative family relation such as that between husband and wife, father and daughter, between the old and very young, an ethical relation can be established that can override kinship relations. Ethical relations are not the same as those of equality, nor are they about reciprocity: getting something back in equal measure. Ethical family relations, when lived between growing and changing identities become what they are only in relation with others who are different and in a way that supports the family which both need to maintain in order that they can continue to function as identities.²⁰ An ethical relation between two identities allows something to emerge in-between that is new to the relationship, and to both entities. For us, without naming it as such and without consciously deciding to do so, we shifted from believing that family relations should be those of kinship to an understanding that family relations, whilst they could include those of kin could extend into other kinds and qualities of relations.

Traditional Families: Traditional Art, Ethical Families: Ethical Art.

Writing out and reflecting on these events in the context of ethical relations, led me to consider that there might be some value in comparing the shifts I experienced in my ideal family of the 1970s with the shifts that were taking place in my practice in the 2000s; shifts from normative family relations to ethical relations and from purely analogue to digital printing processes.²¹ Once again, I noticed a similarity in the emotional tenor of the words I had used to describe the reluctant acceptance of my

new family relations - 'resistance' 'transgression', 'acceptance', 'rejection' - with those I was using in my reluctant acceptance of digital printing as a new medium. My first thought had been that my new relations were not 'family' and similarly, that digital printing is not 'art'. My mother had broken the laws of kinship, she had left her first family home and had re-appeared, unmarried with three illegitimate children. In normative terms, she had forfeited her right to be a mother in any terms other than kin. Digital printing is similarly transgressive, implicated in the vulgar and the popular. It has many close relations of appearance with art but is not fully sanctioned as an art form. Both my mother's family and digital printing had been in a sense, forced on me by circumstances. The changes I made in thinking about the family and in thinking about digital printing were surrounded by changes taking place in the world around me. My concept of family shifted from being normative, closed and conventional to accepting of a broader definition that made me more accepting of and interested in different kinds of relationships.

I considered the way 'art' had been defined in the *Family Resemblances* analogy in philosophical aesthetics. According to the proponents of a this analogy, all the entities that are described as 'art' - performance, oil painting, embroidery, installation, sculpture and cinema for instance - cannot be defined as possessing common properties, but have resemblances that are like those of a family. This notion has been questioned because it supposes that 'art' in order to be defined as 'art' must have some similarity of appearance.

A family may be composed of many different unlike identities. These identities may be totally different in terms of race, sexuality, bodily form, genetic origins culture or class yet they can be conceived of as belonging to the same family through both legal and customary relationships based on tradition or ethical considerations. Family

resemblances are resemblances of relationship as well as appearance.

Philosophical arguments for the acceptance of new artworks into the definition of 'art' have been presented in much the same way and addressing the same ethical questions as those that we discussed around our kitchen table - although of course in much more sophisticated ways – about whether to accept my transgressive mother and her illegitimate children into the existing family.²² Like discussions on whether or not to include such and such a practice as 'art', these were not individual decisions made by one person, or even consciously considered but emerged in practice. We considered issues such as: Will the new family members 'fit in' without disrupting the existing family too much? Where would they fit in the hierarchy and established positions of relationships? And what about older people and old loyalties? Would the inclusion of new family members upset them too much?

My task was to create, through analogous materials, an abstract figure of family relations that would demonstrate, by its formal arrangement, both the kinship, law-like and the ethical, negotiated relations that are characteristic of my own and other contemporary family relationships.²³ Reading and researching the *Family Resemblances* analogy in philosophical aesthetics gave me a clue as to how to proceed.

an abstract family figure

I considered taking conventional family portraits returning to photographs like that of my father, my brother and I that I had used in Chapter Two. But such a family portrait privileged the relationships of each family member to the other and then, only those who could be gathered together at the same time in the same place. Our family was like many others, spread in different countries. Even though I could

(theoretically) re-arrange the family syntax by changes in form and position, including different signifiers of gender and race, the family portrait would still privilege internal



*Illus. 85. 1991. Imitation nuclear family?
from Weston, p. 54.*

relations that reiterate normative relations within a family. [Illus. 85] I considered next the arboreal image of the family tree, but such an image became over complex and incoherent when family members were added that were not kin-related: the tree began to look like a jungle – formless, incoherent - when divorces, same-sex relations, multiple grandparents, numerous children, with different fathers were incorporated. Again, a family tree is a better analogy for the normative relations of kinship.

The figure that finally emerged was one based on composite family portraits printed by Francis Galton in the late nineteenth century.²⁴ He had found a way of showing more than one generation of family members together by superimposing transparencies of one individual portrait on top of the other, producing a layered, composite image. The image was made up from portraits of similar but different people, each portrait contributing to the final combinatory image. It was this layering of prints, with each different but similar print combining with the others, that first caught Wittgenstein's attention in devising a similar layered, combinatory definition for 'language', a definition that was transposed to a similar mode of defining 'art'.²⁵

I planned to make similar composite figures using digital technologies of layering. This way it would be possible, in theory, to include many generations and other differently organised family relationships all in one composite digital print. Such a layering process would allow all different entities in relationships to be seen. I

intended to create an abstract form instead of a portrait. An abstract form I thought, would allow wider associations with relationships beyond the family. Using an abstract figure might also allow more significance to the substrate: the background 'context'. What follows then, is a reconstructed account of the steps I took to make a family figure from Galton's prints.²⁶

I discovered, on reading a recent account of Galton's prints by Carlo Ginzburg, that Galton's prints had been a major influence in shaping intellectual thought throughout the nineteenth century in the fields of linguistics, aesthetics, religion, anthropology and the study of genetics.²⁷ Galton's *Composites* had helped Freud to clarify his thoughts on *condensation* in dream work.²⁸

Ginzburg pointed out that those who had been influenced by Galton's experiments were not necessarily interested in what Galton *said*, nor were they concerned with his dubious aims for improving social control. 'On the contrary' Ginzburg observed, 'the composite portraits made them *think*.'²⁹ He regarded the composite portraits as predisposing figures, working as complex analogies activating associations that helped to conceptualise new and complex intellectual ideas in the twentieth century.³⁰

In the same way, in this context, I am less interested in what Galton's aims were or what he said about his images. My main concern is with the composite portraits as *prints*, how they were made and what their making might offer to my practice in making a abstract and contemporary family figure that will enable me to handle concepts in the contemporary relations of art.³¹

Galton's composite portraits

Galton was working in what were then, new processes of continuous tone

photography, but his own innovations were in printing. It was the results he had produced by superimposing several negatives and printed them that had inspired nineteenth century thinkers. Galton had been trying to find out if there were common visual signs by which categories of people could be recognised. He addressed the question: is there a Jewish 'type' or criminal or working class types, recognisable by visual commonalities of the face. In superimposing one transparent image on top of another, the features that appeared most often in individuals were most strongly marked whilst those that were less frequent were either absorbed, incorporated in the portrait, or appeared as blurred marks around the edges. The resulting image always showed what looked like a portrait of another person, one that had the characteristics of them all, but was not like any one in particular. It produced an ideal average that did not exist in reality, a 'normalising' picture, a stereotype that could represent a whole group of disparate people.³²

Galton used the same process to print portraits of different members of the same kinship family. [Illus. 86, 87, 88] By superimposing more images, he was able to compress several generations into one. These images conveyed both a sense of the past and of a sense of internal family relationships.



Illus. 86. 1897. Francis Galton. Composite of female members of family.

When I looked at Galton's actual black and white prints where they are now housed - over a hundred years after they were made - what struck me was how 'unscientific' they are.³³ The images had faded unevenly over time, which indicated that different strengths of fixative had been used on different portraits, so that the darker photographs would have made more



*Illus. 87. 1897. Francis Galton. **Male Family Members.** composite photographic print*

impression than the paler ones in the final composite. [Illus. 89.] It appears to me that some portraits have been reversed.³⁴ He had pre-selected family



*Illus. 88. 1897. Francis Galton. **Female and Male Family Members.** composite photographic print*

members before they were combined: only kinship relations appeared; babies and the very old were excluded. Only a certain static face-forward position and expression was entertained. Galton arbitrarily adjusted scale. Children's heads were enlarged slightly to correspond to the size of the adults. He manipulated the family to produce a clear family likeness.³⁵ It seems that aesthetic considerations came into play.

Individual irregularities, blemishes and visual idiosyncrasies do not show up on composite portraits. What we see is the predominance of generic and shared likenesses: with common features predominating. Galton observed that the closer in kin the family members the more distinct was the outline of the final composite face and, in his opinion, the better looking and assured was the family likeness. Kinship relations produced a composite image that is clear, strong, high contrast with well defined borders, standing out from the background.

Where he superimposed images of non kin related people, the resulting portrait image is blurred all over. All the images produced some blurring



*Illus. 89. 1897. Francis Galton. **Family Portraits and Composite** photographic print.*

around the edge, but those families not related by kinship had most, they were less distinct, had wider areas of indeterminacy that are a mixture of both background and figure.³⁶

choosing family members

I decided to make some experiments, based on these composites, using existing material forms that already exist in relationships analogous to those of a family: fonts. Each font design is referred to as a family and carries a family name: *Times*, *Lucida*, *New York*, *Bazooka*, *Brushstroke*, *Calligrapher* and so on. Like a family, each has its own separate history and its own similar shared characteristics. All fonts have their origins in type families, and like them, have the same internal relations. All type families have the same members: an 'o', a 'p' or a 'z' and subordinate members such as apostrophes, commas, dashes, full stops.

I chose to work with the smallest, most abstract and seemingly least important

orthographic symbol in the family: the full stop, the black dot that sits on top of the little 'i' and that appears at the end of the sentence. [Illus. 90] It was the symbol of least significance that I had earlier related to the position of myself as the little girl. I should have known that being small would be no guarantee of simplicity, or lack of power; that working with something as basic as a dot would lead to an ever expanding realm of other associations. The black dot immediately reminded me of the analogue printing of dot screens



Illus. 90. 2005. Pen Dalton. Unrelated Dots. from six virtual font families.

in Chapter Four, the dots of stubble of my father's chin, and the dots that make up the syntax of continuous tone digital printing. And although tiny, insignificant and apparently meaningless alone, the dot as full-stop has the power to bring to a standstill the forward moving energy of the sentence. The dot at the end of the sentence is in the same position as the unmarried daughter in normative family relations: both are at the end of the line. Dots are built up from a matrix of smaller square **pixels**. Dots can be virtual, typed, handwritten or painted. They all have the common feature of being perceived as circular, but they are not all round. Made larger, they took on aspects of minimalist shapes similar to those in abstract art, like those of Rothko, with blurred edges and intensely worked interior surfaces. Projected to a vast size, a wider coloured border always appeared around the edge; what looked like halos or auras and which took on sublime aspects of the sun and its solar flares. [Illus. 91] Made small again, the dot was like a biological entity, a cell or a binary pulse of presence and absence in bits. The screens of dots when repeated created immaterial moirés that floated above surfaces. Far from being simple or insignificant, the dot seemed to represent the fundamental building blocks common to all material representation. It soon became apparent that the black dot on the white background is my own particular fetish. I have always had a penchant for the dot pattern, so I was prepared, on resistances as well as intention had been to make a enlarged dot, then to document in the same way as I had experiments in the relief



Illus. 91. 2005. Pen Dalton. Solar Flares. digital print of combined virtual dots. digital file

investigating it to find pleasures. My figure using an the entire processes approached the binary printing described in

Chapters Three and Four.

I can only compare the task of empirically documenting the process of printing and overlaying a dot figure to that of trying to record every step in thinking itself. Digital printing is so fast and responsive that I found myself thinking *through* and *with* printing: there seemed to be no translation going on, no separation between the thinking and the event it produced. Finding the words to explain or document, only created greater distortion and interference between idea and image. Describing the huge number of choices available and steps taken in between the image on the screen and the same image printed on paper had begun to read like a technical manual. The descriptions I wrote of those experiments began to seem ugly, repetitive, formally clumsy, the language obscure and tedious. There is a point at which one fails to communicate, where an audience 'switches off'. Only a sense of what was proper for art pulled me back

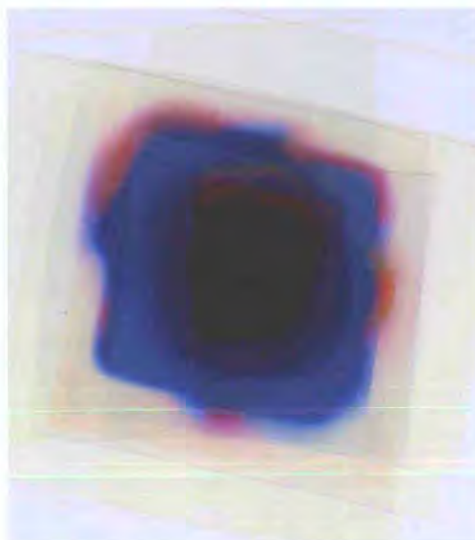
So, taking a vaguely idealistic leaf from Galton's book and bearing in mind that, in spite of his unsystematic and dubious experimental methods, he produced images

that made people think, I kept conscious systematisation of the process to a minimum and while aiming to be accurate, where accuracy went beyond ordinary reason, resorted to aesthetic judgements. I made notes long after the event and then re-created a narrative of what I think happened. What follows is a summary of that process. *Appendix B 2* contains a collection of prints that were produced during the process.

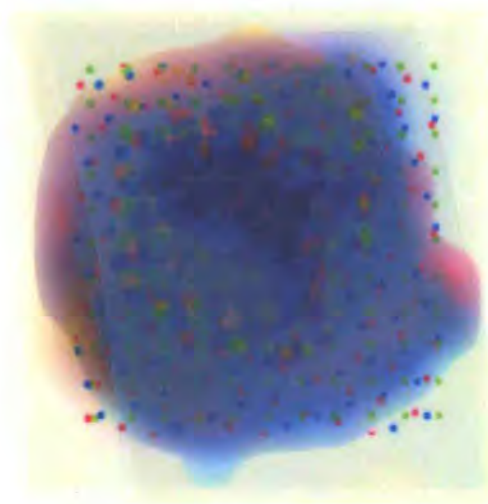
Illus. 92. 2006. Pen Dalton. 1: Normative Times Family. composite made from layers of translucent printed dots. digital file

All the dot images had to be enlarged by about x 5000 so the results could be clearly seen.³⁷ It was in the enlarging process that the contribution of ambient materials and technologies first became apparent, contradicting any idea of bachelor transparency. Blurs appeared mainly around the edges. These were caused, I finally concluded, by a number of physical interventions: by refraction of light in the camera or copier; by squash in the printed dot unseen by the naked eye; by uneven absorption of the ink into its substrate; and by the effects of optical spread.

I copied, enlarged and superimposed black dots from three different sources: 1: from a printed page of the same stereotype. [Illus 92] 2: from virtual dots from different print font types; [Illus 93] and 3: Unrelated dots taken from different sources. [Illus 94]



Illus. 93. 2006. Pen Dalton. 2: Ethical Full Stop Family. composite made from virtual print fonts. digital file copy.



Illus. 94. 2006. Pen Dalton. 3: Unrelated Strangers. composite made from handmade, virtual and printed type dots. digital file copy

The result was that all the layered prints had intense, coloured dark centres or 'cores' with varying degrees of brighter and lighter coloured blur around the edges. The composite images from the first group produced composite images with a strong dark, almost black circular core and clearly defined but narrow blurred edges mainly caused by the halo effect of refracted light. The

second combinatory print produced a core image that is well defined, clear and strong, but with varying degrees of 'fuzz', shimmer and instability at the edges, mainly caused I think, by the squash of the ink and the different absorption of papers and the third produced images that were much more blurred and varied at core and at the edges, with a core that was distinct but not large or strong and an edge that was loose, large and where the different layers could clearly be identified.

All the images I produced were different, indeed, I found it difficult to repeat any one dot image, so many variables were implicated. But they all had similar characteristic dark 'cores' and more or less blurred lines or borders around the edge. I was satisfied that the combinatory images I had produced could, in a somewhat reductive way, stand for 'the family'. The centre core, roundish dark, intense with a lot 'going on' inside seemed to serve as analogy for the essential and common properties of a family: some kinship genetic relations, some consistent structure that goes on into the future and is always the same. The blur at the edges was always showed up the different characteristic of the fonts and the noise from the paper. The blur was sometimes narrow and striped, or smoky and indistinct, sometimes flaring out, sometimes hugging the core, sometimes dancing off on its own and joining other borders where they widened from other spots in new patterns. See Appendix B2. The blurred border represented the point at which the core met the background, combining with the substrate or the surrounding marginal space 'outside'. for varied examples] As a family figure, the area at the borders seemed analogous to those visible ethical relationships that are not common to all the families; a family's anomalies, idiosyncrasies showing the points of interaction with non-familial entities.



*Illus. 95. 2007. Pen Dalton. **Lucida's Ghost**, enlarged margin of printed full stop from *Lucida family*.digital file copy*

The total figure of the blurred dot suggested a notion of 'family' that is combinatory; that does away with the either/or of the normative versus ethical family. The core circle represented the norm that was common to them all, incorporating some ethical-like relations and the blurred edges seemed to take into account the ethical transgressions and anomalies.

creativity in the borders

I was led to reflect on what kinds of people analogously exist on these ethical, blurred borders of families.

My step and half-sisters are borderline in relation to our nuclear, kinship family. They have formed their relationships in patterns that have extended the borders even further. One step-sister has married a mixed race Maori and they live with their children in New Zealand; another half-sister cohabits with a Jamaican; another lives in Australia. The next generation of my nuclear family is not repeating any normative pattern. These relationships are typical of those in urban areas. My son's long term partner is Bajun but they do not live together. Her close kin are located in Barbados, New York, London and Miami. His ex-partner has become one of my friends and she says I am a 'mother figure' to her. She has family but they live in Harlem New York and London. The Aunt who brought her up and to whom she is closest, lives in Bristol. Families once defined by kin and the fact that they lived together in the same house are increasingly - because of work or emigration - living apart. Families today live as much through imaginary relationships. They are regarded as 'close' but rarely

see each other, communicating on the phone or by email. We all relate to people we rarely see but who hold a place in our thoughts. Our family live as typical families today live, in different countries, with diasporic relations, in different cultures, visiting and being visited; with marriage partners, partners, ex-partners and children who are uncles to older nephews. Generations and kinship can no longer be conceptualised in the same patterns. Ethical relations stretch beyond contiguity and family relations now are often imaginary.

It is not only within families where things appear to be changing, but also in the spatial areas between families, at their very peripheral edges. I recently moved from a rural area of England where most people in the village maintained nuclear family fictions. I have since moved to London, where I am surrounded by people who seem to relate in different ways. Once again, as in my childhood, there are many single men visible in the streets. Then they were West Indian, Irish and Italian, now they come from many different parts of the world. I read that over 50% of the people in the area in which I live are immigrants.

Indigenous people, new arrivals and others mingle first on common ground, in the streets, markets and in shared entrances, going shopping in 'ethnic' shops, eating other cuisines, wearing foreign styled clothes, dancing in queer clubs. These peripheral contacts turn into relationships: become neighbours, friendships, cohabitations or interracial, intercultural partnerships. It is in these familiarly borderline areas that the integration of ethically related/kinship families begins to bring in others, to redefine its boundaries, to blur at its edges. Different traditions, different languages and cultural practices are not just 'tolerated' but are entered into in relations that are at first made through mutual self interest, but become those of friendship and family

Making a discernable figure produced a core with varying kinds of edges and spaces around it. Aesthetically, these different kinds of borders and blurred edges appeared more beautiful than the 'core' they surrounded. I was thus led by an aesthetic attraction to the edges both in material terms but also to question what borders stand for as analogy: the different people and the unusual art practices that exist in similar relations outside and at the edge of family relationships, in relationships that were beginning to have real associations with my own.

Looking up a dictionary definition of 'family' tells us something about what a family is. But a better concept of the family for instance, could be seen as an imaginary construct made up of accumulative layers of many interpretations and images. A sense of what 'Family' is began to emerge as a combinatory image made up of layers of different versions. From representations of the Holy Family, images from advertising's stock catalogues, memories and lived experience of our own families, information from social policy and living through welfare systems, through novels, soap operas and newspapers, from academic research, history, anthropology and dictionary definitions. While we aim, ethically, to be true and faithful to everyone's version of what 'family' is the resulting composite would no doubt contain contradictions, inaccuracies, falsehoods and mistakes. But it would also represent opinions and contributions from many different interested sources. It would contain a core of beliefs that are common and also represent practices with areas around the different kinds of borders that are the exceptions.

I noticed that these composites and the dot families I had produced created formal areas that looked similar to the *sfumato* technique in painting. In *sfumato*, objects appear to have a hazy or soft edge, it is difficult to discern exactly where the painted object ends, and the background begins. In many respects,



Illus. 96. 2000. Oliver Held. Laughing of Munster. Composite digital image of 50 laughing women and 50 laughing men. still from video

sfumato looks like *chiaroscuro*, has some of the blending characteristics of the continuous tone. In effect, *chiaroscuro* can be compared to a diachronic relation - a blending from positive to negative across a surface - while *sfumato* relates more to synchronic, historical relations in time, suggesting history and depth. *Chiaroscuro* is achieved in one layer while the *sfumato* effect is produced by building up with many layers of translucent colour all of which can be seen together. Fetishistic printing, with its tiny dot screens, can meretriciously imitate *sfumato*, but on closer observation those effects are produced by the more economical and superficial continuous tone of *chiaroscuro*. It is only when we look closely at the actual painted surface of a painting that *sfumato* can be seen. All printed reproductions, however sophisticated, reduce *sfumato* to a single layer of continuous tone.

To create the *sfumato* effect - a cloud or nimbus like diffusion - paint, or printed translucent layers are



Illus. 97. 2005. Jim Campbell. Illuminated Average. no 1. lightbox composite print of full length Hitchcock film: Psycho.

applied superimposed in a manner that reduces anomalies and irregularities. Each



Illus. 98. 1503-6. Leonardo da Vinci. *Mona Lisa*. detail. Oil painting on panel.

layer contributes its effects and can be seen, but no single version predominates. Hard and definitively drawn lines are softened, rendered less dominant and assertive. A sense of indeterminacy and unsureness prevails. Impressions of traces of the past, surrounding auras and other ghostly presences are suggested. Leonardo da Vinci, who is credited with first applying the word to painting, described it as painting "without lines or

borders, in the manner of smoke"³⁸

It has been regarded as an effect that produces visual paradox and uncertainty, that adds to the fascination of paintings such as the *Mona Lisa* which is held up as the prime example of the technique. It has been credited as what gives the face of *Mona Lisa* its continued fascination as indefinable, mysterious and sexually ambiguous.³⁹ The ambiguity that sfumato creates has been analogously connected to Leonardo's own status living outside the norms of family and social life as a homosexual and as an artist.⁴⁰ It is only recently and with contemporary and powerful technologies of observation that the secret of sfumato has been uncovered.⁴¹

After making the composites I began to look for similar layered figures in contemporary artist's work. [Illus. 96 & 97] The technical potentials that digital printing has introduced allows different formal relationships to occur. Time based combinatory prints, with their associations of ambiguous sfumato and layered palimpsests, when examined closely suggest many contributions have been made from of other times and other voices. Such images can lead back, not only to

relations within families but relations of ambiguity at the family's edges, and through analogy, the blurred areas of indeterminacy that surround any definitions.

Summary Comments to Chapter Five

Relationships in the family seem to act as precursors to the enactment of other, non human relationships, enabling us to have some sense of what to do and how to act when new experiences are thrust upon us. They seem to be perceptible at every level of practice: from gross structural to minute and subtle relations. The technologies of contemporary digital printing have been devised to reflect back a realistic image of the world that has the effect of confirming, controlling and stabilising, but digital printing can be used in other ways that reveal other relationships. [illus. 98] The margins produced by overlaying transparencies of circular dot figures - which aesthetically appeared to me more interesting and more beautiful than the hard edged dots - prompted me to look further into the spatial area occupied by the borderline blurs, colours and shapes around the edges, and the analogical associations produced by the layering techniques that printing can do so well.

Endnotes to Chapter Five

¹ Ginzburg, C. (2004) 'Family resemblances and family trees: two cognitive metaphors' in *Critical Enquiry*, 30 Spring. pp. 537-556. p.556.

² Using the physical analogy of *condensing* ('to thicken' or 'reduce the volume of') Freud provided an image of how one figure in a dream can stand as a metaphor representing several latent, concealed or repressed emotions and associations. Freud, S. (1913/1931) *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Chapter Four: The Distortion of Dreams. Trans. James Strachey.e-book. www.abika.com.

³ This was at first, partly because I moved house and had no studio and could not manage the expense and resources required to make complexly textured prints in the time available.

⁴ Except of course, in fine art and craft print making.

⁵ Clayton-Phillips, D. (1996) *Art for Industry's Sake: Halftone Technology, Mass Photography and the Social Transformation of American Print Culture, 1880-1920*. A Dissertation Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Yale University in Candidacy for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy. <http://dphillips.web.wesleyan.edu/halftone/>

⁶ The notion of the fetishistic gaze has been developed from Freud's initial speculations on scopophilia: the sexual pleasure in looking. His ideas were taken into film theory by Christian Metz who suggested that people are predisposed to enjoy realism and the *mise en scene* of the cinema because it formally evokes associations with infantile scopophilic pleasures of voyeurism and fetishism. *Mise en scene* in this context refers to almost everything that goes into the composition of the shot, including the composition itself: framing, movement of the camera and characters, lighting, set design and the visual environment, even sound as it helps elaborate the composition. Metz C.(1982) *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. Macmillan: London.

⁷ Cited Mary Kelly (1989) 'Conversation with Griselda Pollock' in Iverson, M. Crimp, D. and Bhaba, H. (1997) *Mary Kelly*. Phaidon: London. p.133. .

⁸ Making an object a fetish enables people (more specifically artists) to recall, play with and 'handle' the anxieties produced by recollection of the mental trauma of the first loss of the mother's body. In the Kleinian scenario, objects function in play in the same way as the condensation and displacement of Freudian word chains: they function as symbols that can lead back to the unconscious. Aimless play, with other people, actually handling materials and symbols: 'toys', with an emphasis on repetition, and social interaction, helps the child cope with generalised anxieties and losses. In play with toys, with repetitive, even obsessive patterns of behaviour, there is a direct evocation of presence and absence and rehearsals with other people on how to act when loss strikes again. See Klein, M. (1930) 'The importance of symbol formation in the development of the ego' in Mitchell, J. (ed.) (1986) *The Selected Melanie Klein*. Penguin: Harmondsworth, and Winnicott, D. W. (1957) *The Child, The Family and the Outside World*. London: Tavistock.

⁹ Freud had observed the actions of the child in repetitive behaviour produced by anxieties of the mother's absence which he theorised in the 'fort da' game. See Freud, S (1910) *Beyond The Pleasure Principle* (Standard Edition) 18, pp.14, 15. Mulvey, drawing on the Freudian influenced work of Metz, argued that fetishistic looking, involved substituting the fear of differentiation, into an an object: that while it is like the object that represents fear is reassuring rather than fearful. This physical beauty, or seduction of the object is enhanced, transforming it into something satisfying in itself. Because of the

social power of men, fetishistic images have been produced for men and are predominantly phallic. However both men and women are implicated in fetishistic gaze that captivates both perceptually and emotionally. Mulvey, L. (1973) 'You don't know what's happening, do you Mr Jones?' in Mulvey, L. (ed) (1989) *Visual and Other Pleasures*. Macmillan: London. see also Steven Neale 1992, Geoff Ellis 1982, Macdonald 1995, Lapsley & Westlake 1988, 77-9).

¹⁰ The next section draws on the following texts that are among many that have developed the 'bachelor' analogy: Copjec, J. (1982) 'The anxiety of the influencing machine' in *October* 23, Winter, pp.43-59; Penley, C. (1985) 'Feminism, film theory and the bachelor machines' in *m/f*. 10, pp.39-60; Randolph, J. (1991) 'Influencing machines: the relationship between art and technology' in *Psychoanalysis and Synchronised Swimming and Other Writings on Art*. YYY Books: Toronto; Randolph, J. (1992) 'Technology and the preconscious' in *The City Within*. Banff Centre for Arts: Banff; Tehhaaf, N. (1992) 'Of monsters and men and other unsolved feminist mysteries: video technology and the feminine' *Parallélogramme*, 18: 3. pp.24-34; Tenhaaf, N. (1996) 'Mysteries of the bioapparatus' in Moser, op. cit. pp.51-71; Tuer, D. (1988) 'Video in Drag: trans sexing the feminine' in *Parallélogramme*, 12:3. Feb/March and Krauss, R. (2000) *Bachelors*. October/MIT: Cambridge, Mass..

¹¹ The notion of the 'apparatus' of seeing is described by Metz. *The Imaginary Signifier*. op. cit. Metz suggested that part of the seductive fascination of full colour Hollywood film, and I suggest printing, is its capacity to work with the physical process of vision shaped in infantile desires, which predispose us to regress to earlier, less differentiated modes of viewing. The 'apparatus' of printing: the rectangular shape, the enhanced colour, the glossy surface etc. acting like Christian Metz' mise en scene of the cinema infantilising the viewer.

¹² Kelly. Mary Kelly, op. cit. p.44

¹³ It also refers to an animal that does not breed.

¹⁴ Scott Rothkopf. (2004) 'Screen test: Scott Rothkopf on Jeff Koon's Olive Oyl'. (critical essay) *Artforum International*. October. p.2. Accessed online 29.02.08. <http://findarticles.com>. Also visit to Koons exhibition, Gagosian Gallery. June 2007.

¹⁵ At the time we were reading about The Irish Troubles, The Vietnam War, Cuban socialist experiments, Chinese Cultural Revolution, the oil crisis and student /worker activism in the West. I was also aware of art school upheavals in Paris and London (Hornsey).

¹⁶ He had been a widower with two daughters and then had two more daughters and a son with my mother.

¹⁷ Consciousness raising groups were informal gatherings of women who shared personal experiences and then related those experiences to a wider context of study of women's history and class politics.

¹⁸ Williams. *Rethinking Families*, op. cit. p.15.

¹⁹ Williams, *ibid*.

²⁰ The notion of autopoiesis from biology has been developed as an analogy in many different contexts. See Manturana, H. and Varela, F. (1980) *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*. D. Reidel: Dordrecht. I first came across it where it is discussed extensively in Hayles, N. K. (1999) *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics. Literature and Informatics*. Chicago University Press: Chicago

²¹ Ethical relationships are now being privileged as human relationships in cultural theory, see Bakhtin, M. M. (1919-29/1990) *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. trans. and ed. by M. Holquist and V. Liapunov. Texas University Press: Texas; Levinas, E. (2006) *Entre Nous: Thinking of the Other*. Trans. Smith, M. B. and Harshav, B. Continuum/Athlone Press. London and New York and Irigaray, L. (2002) *The Way of Love*. Continuum Books. New York. Ethical relations are also being discussed as part of the relational definition of 'art'. See Bourriaud, N. (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Les Presses du Reel: Paris. See also Dalton, P. (2006) 'Like' in Rogers, H. (ed) *Art Becomes You!* Article Press: Birmingham. Appendix C.

²² Wittgenstein developed a family resemblances analogy for defining 'language' which was then transposed to 'art'. See Weitz, M. (1956) 'The role of theory in aesthetics', in Coleman, F. (ed) (1968) *Aesthetics: Contemporary Studies in Aesthetics*. pp. 84-94. The analogy of art having family resemblances has formed a major strand in philosophical aesthetics, as an 'anti-theoretical' way of conceptualising 'art's relationships. Mandlebaum, M. (1965) 'Family resemblances and generalizations concerning the arts' in *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 2. pp. 219-228. See also Danto, A. (1992) *Beyond the Brillo Box: the Visual Arts in Post-Historical Perspective*. Farrar, Strauss, Giroux: New York. It fell out of favour during the last few decades, but recently has been revived. See Kaufman, D. A. (2007) 'Family resemblances, relationalism, and the meaning of 'Art'' *British Journal of Aesthetics*, 47: 3, July. pp.280-297. for current state of debate in defining 'art'.

²³ A note on the technology used: Although printing can now simulate most other effects, it is time consuming, requires complex resources and is hugely expensive. I have limited myself to domestic printing processes: a scanner, laptop and conventional image making software, and a seven colour A3 printing machine at home. These relatively cheap image making and printing technologies have been devised to privilege the image, and simulate realism: most often used domestically for printing family photographs. Only a limited range of smooth substrates can go through the printing machine, and then, already trimmed to the conventional A4 size. This has meant less 'contribution' from the substrate than I would have liked. The experiments therefore represent early stages of art-making, and would, ideally be transposed to larger screen printed artworks and painting and modified to meet the requirements of vastly different substrates and materials. The results are thus inconclusive both as experiments and as artworks, but lead to conjecture and speculation.

²⁴ Galton, F. (1878) *Composite Portraits*. Harrison and Sons: London. University of London Archive. He describes and illustrates his method of stereoscopic photography and printing combinatory portraits.

²⁵ Weitz, M. (1956) 'The role of theory in aesthetics' in Bender, J.W. and Blocker, H.G. (eds.) (1993) *Contemporary Philosophy of Art: Readings in Analytic Aesthetics*. Prentice-Hall: New Jersey.

²⁶ Galton's images are often referred to as 'photographs', but I shall refer to them as prints. It is important to make the distinction because the processes of printing and the materials of printing: the recursive elements of layers, chemicals and the choice and contribution of substrates, are often omitted in discussions of photography. They are significant factors in this context, and I think, in the context of debates in *Family Resemblances* analogy for 'art'.

²⁷ Ginzburg, C. (2004) 'Family resemblances and family trees: two cognitive metaphors', in *Critical Enquiry*, 30 (Spring. pp. 537-556).

²⁸ Freud said: 'For the purposes of dream-condensation I may construct a composite person in yet another fashion, by combining the actual features of two or more persons in a single dream-image. ... I have not united features peculiar to the one person with the features of the other, thereby abridging by certain features the memory-picture of each; but I have adopted the method employed by Galton in producing family portraits; namely, I have superimposed the two images, so that the common features stand out in stronger relief, while those which do not coincide neutralise one another and become indistinct. And the condensation-work of dreams becomes most palpable when it takes words and names as its objects. Generally speaking, words are often treated in dreams as things, and therefore undergo the same combinations as the ideas of things. The results of such dreams are comical and bizarre word-formations.' p.129. Freud, S. (1913/1931) *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Chapter Four: The Distortion of Dreams. Trans. James Strachey e-book. www.abika.com.

²⁹ Ginzburg. *Family Resemblances*, op. cit. p.554.

³⁰ Ginzburg assumed the notion that metaphors shape thinking, but not simply or directly. They 'interact with empirical evidence, with social and biographical circumstances, with all kinds of aims and constraints – aesthetic, moral and political.' He takes the German notion of *figuren* from music as form that bypasses words. Ginzburg. *Family Resemblances*, ibid. p.537.

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- ³¹ This is not to say that the effects and applications of Galton's aims in the social world should not be critiqued, as indeed they have been. But It seems likely to me that one of the reasons why Wittgenstein's ideas and the family resemblances analogy went out of favour in the mid twentieth century was that it became tainted with associations of racism, genetic purity and horrific social manipulation.
- ³² A stereotype includes individual idiosyncracies. See stereotype in glossary
- ³³ Ginzburg described them as 'a blend of statistical averages and vague idealism.' Ginzburg, *Family Resemblances*, op. cit. p.546. Prints are held in the The Galton Collection Archive. University College, University of London.
- ³⁴ The light on the side of the face is not consistent with the lighting on the portraits. This may be an archiving error (the prints were sent to me on a disc from the archive) but if so it is an example of how 'mistakes' do come between an original and the copy.
- ³⁵ On a recent visit to an exhibition at the Wellcome Institute, a display that repeated Galton's experiments digitally was set up to provide a composite image of the 'average' gallery goer. Participants were divided by gender and asked to remove glasses and keep still. The 'best' results they claimed, would be achieved when people did not wear make-up or smile. 01.02.08.
- ³⁶ Ginzburg's article pays attention to Wittgenstein's interest in the blurred edges of the composites and the fact that Wittgenstein shifted his notion of Family Resemblances to take them into account. Wittgenstein reports how his notion of the family, and thus 'language' became looser and more ethically related. See Ginzburg, *Family Resemblances*. op. cit. p.538.
- ³⁷ Most of these are stored as virtual file images and only appear in context. They do not have any existence except in context.
- ³⁸ Cited from Website <http://www.reviewpainting.com/sfumato.htm>. Accessed 16.01.07.
- ³⁹ Ruhemann, H. (1961) 'Leonardo's use of sfumato' in *British Journal of Aesthetics*. 1:4. pp.231-237.
- ⁴⁰ See Saslow, J. (1991) 'Homosexuality in Renaissance behaviour, identity and artistic expression' in Vincus, M. Chauncy and G. Duberman, M (eds.) *Hidden From History: Reclaiming a Gay and Lesbian Past*. Penguin: London.
- ⁴¹ See work of the National Research Council, Canada. <http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/>

CHAPTER SIX: LAYERS, THRESHOLDS AND MARGINS

For, look at it in one way; all actions men put a bit of thought into are ideas – say, sowing seed, or making a canoe, or baking clay: and such ideas as these work themselves into life and go on growing within it, but they can't grow apart from the material that set them to work and makes a medium for them.¹

Introduction

In this chapter I will be looking closely at the area that surround the core of the dot to examine its blurred edges in more detail. It is common to apply the same spatial and topographical terms that refer to the formal properties of artworks - terms such as 'borders', 'margins', 'edges', 'limits' and so on - to social relationships and when defining marginal art. In this chapter, I will be considering those spatial and topographical relations as analogous to those of the ethical family. Then, speculating on these analogous terms and looking into the material textures and qualities of margins printed on a page, I aim to test the limits of how a family can be conceptualised, and the limits of analogy-making in likening the family to art.

margins

I began this chapter intending to reflect on the kind of place margins occupy. At first, I had a dual concept of two places: the core and the surrounding margin. The origin of the word 'margin' is spatial and material. It refers to an adjacent relation of two planes, notably land. It can also surround a planar shape, as in the margins of a page, or surround a disc or circle making a halo effect, so it is usually two dimensional. The word and concept 'margin' has become so embedded in language

that its origin in dirt, in earth has been long overlooked. *Margin* has lost its contact with matter. I wanted in some way to return to the materiality of the margins, recognising it as a viable place to 'hang out'.

The relation between the centre and the margins has served as analogy for conceptualising the social relations of 'art'. An image of art having an established mainstream or core of traditional values such as gallery art, or a notion of mainstream art history, has been established alongside and in different relations with other arts that are considered marginal. The story of twentieth century Western art is a story of marginal practices – such as the work of Louise Bourgeois and other feminist artists - that were at one time rejected from major galleries and cultural criticism but have now achieved mainstream status. In this sense, however, the margins are regarded as areas of creativity: what was once marginal can become 'accepted' and incorporated into mainstream values.

My own work printing posters in the early 1970s was considered 'marginal'. At that time, any prints containing text were not considered 'art' and were automatically excluded from Arts Council funding.² In choosing to make printed posters, pamphlets and cartoons, I had positioned myself as marginal artist. With other feminist artists at that time I discussed whether as women, making art concerned with political and feminist issues, we should remain 'in the margins', free and creative (and powerless) or whether we should aim for mainstream status, which, through incorporation we believed would absorb and neutralise our radical message. We assumed topographical analogies of the marginal in relation to our own position as artists, without ever considering of course, what marginal means. We employed a conceptual metaphor that, if I think about it now, relegated us to a static position as earth either side of the borders of a fast moving main stream that carried on, lively,

bubbling, energising and regardless of us. The term *margin* in my experience also had associations with being *marginalised*: that is rejected, pushed unwillingly to a place outside. *Marginal* was not associated with a place of choice. Being marginal also meant that we shared a territory with other non-art genres: advertising, domestic arts, pornography, amateur art and popular art that had been marginalised, but for different reasons. There were formal and aesthetic aspects of these non-art genres that we shared and believed should be considered 'art', but there were others marginal even to our concerns. We internalised this as a choice: to remain in the mud of the margins, unrecognised, ignored or to join the flowing mainstream and be corrupted. But it was not a real choice: we really had no economic power or status that would enable us to move anywhere.

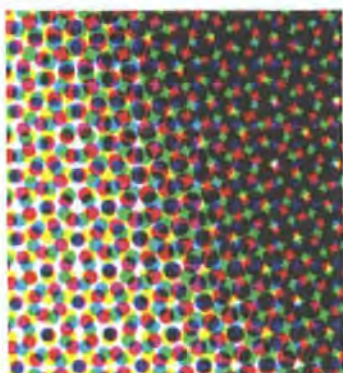
The image of a 'margin' - as terrain - seemed to contain many possible ways of relating to the core. The dot experiments had thrown up vastly different kinds of borders radiating out from the centre. Some were wide and fuzzy, others clearly defined, some border effects could be also seen within the core, whilst others were slim, dark and intense.

The observation that there were many qualities and kinds of margins and my experience of there being different degrees of marginality in the arts seemed to be linked to reading I had done in the early 1970s of different rites of passage that all societies go through and the different rituals and states that categorise differently marginalised peoples. The margin as a concept was beginning to open up and reveal different potentials. I revisited these texts notably those of Van Gennep and Mary Douglas and came across writings that are more recent on 'the liminal' by Victor Turner.³ Turner has attempted to categorise several different degrees of marginality in anthropological terms, suggesting differences between those who are close and

cross into the borders of a society, those who are marginal and have effects and are affected by the main social body and those who are permanently outside always in the margins. For the purposes of this discussion however, I am engaging with Turner's notion of the area that is the threshold between the mainstream and its marginal areas: the liminal.

the liminal

In spatial terms, a *limen* is the narrow area imagined as separating the margins 'outside' from the core inside. *Liminal* represents a threshold where one area changes and is a passage into another, where the edge of a figure meets the



Illus. 99. 2007. Pen Dalton. Liminal Area. digital file copy.

background [Illus. 99 & 100] In psychological terms, it is a term used to indicate the state below which sounds cease to be heard, where information is meaningless. In anthropological terms, it represents rites of passage such as menstruation, marriage and childbirth where women move from one set of relationships and one social status to another. It is often a time surrounded with ritual and bodily change. The limen seemed a rich analogy for

describing the nature of the relationship between the core and the surrounding blur of the dot family composite.

The notion of limen comes from the term 'threshold' and so implies a movement, a temporary passing-through. Borders, thresholds and in-between spaces have been defined as dangerous places, and people have been murdered in the tensions of border incidents.⁴ People while they are passing through do not fall into distinct categories and have often been regarded with fear and assigned unusual powers as

creative, threatening or associated with special powers of mysticism and the occult. But the liminal has also been regarded as the source of dreams, poetry and the imagination.⁵ Liminal individuals have nothing 'no status, no property, insignia, secular clothing, rank, kinship position'⁶

Mary Douglas in her seminal book *Purity and Danger*, based on the kinship studies of Claude Levi-Strauss, and more recently, the psychoanalytic insights of Barbara Lichtenberg--Ettinger have investigated the significance and the fears and potentials surrounding liminal states. Pregnancy is an example of times when the child exists as matrixical, as separate and yet

not separate from the mother. Childbirth is literally and symbolically a dangerous time as the child moves in the passage between the womb and the outside world.⁷ Such

symbolism and experience suggests the liminal as a movement, a state that cannot be sustained. It is an in-between place like the

gap that exists between binaries, the syntax between two entities or the leap required in making analogies. It is the liminal space that I have been trying to open up and which I have found unstable and elusive.

Nor is the fear of border areas a distant notion. In the 1980s at Greenham Common women quite literally camped along, lived close to the earth as marginal outsiders along the metal fences of a military airbase. Periodically and symbolically, they breached the liminal fence, entered forbidden territory and decorated it with hand-made artefacts of the domestic and the personal. They concretised and personified liminal activity, movement, risk. These women were variously described



Illus. 100. 2007. Pen Dalton. Liminal Flare. digital file copy.

in the tabloid press as witches, lesbians, fanatics, feminists, mad women and most scathingly as unfeminine: dirty, unkempt and ugly. They lived in mud and squalor, recalling the origins of the nature of the marginal space. The old mythic analogies came into play in the newspapers, mobilising deeply held anxieties of dissolution formulated as threats from those who attempt to cross boundaries and borderlines.

One can speculate using this analogy, on various degrees of liminality and marginalisation in the arts. There are those practices and genres that are at the borders and which I suggest are liminal. They have one foot in the established mainstream of definitions of 'art' and include those in transit such as popular arts of digital printmaking, embroidery, domestic crafts and fashion, some of which, such as Chris Ofili's work with fabrics, are entering mainstream galleries. Then there are those 'beyond the pale' that remain in the margins of what can be defined as art such as entertainment, comics, pantomime and burlesque. Although these genres of practice are further from the centre in spatial terms, there are now a few passages between mainstream arts and marginal arts at academic levels.⁸

For a practice to be received into the mainstream it has to be accepted, much as we accepted transgressive or new relationships into our traditional family. To be accepted it has to look like or resemble existing art in some way. In familial terms, this would be analogous to a genetic or 'blood' link. If forms of a new genre like burlesque are to be accepted as art, they must enhance those elements that conform to the same rules and have the same properties as established art. Burlesque would perhaps, have to be seen in art galleries or be written about in art magazines or develop its capacity to elicit subtle emotions before it is fully accepted as an art. On the other hand, marginal arts such as pantomime could maintain its own values and formal properties and prefer to remain outside a definition of art. Established art,

while not accepting other practices as art, can nonetheless have an ethical relation. Like ethically related families, it can maintain links of interest, affection and pleasure. It can keep open passages and connections with what is going on outside the borders of its own defined areas in popular and less clearly defined practices. Art can continually renew itself by cohabiting, mingling and openly engaging with marginal and transgressive practices. In this way, like a family, it can go on into the future, renew itself, and enable change and growth to happen by accepting new practices. Art is analogously shaped by and in relations that are like those of a family, and it is in discussing such marginal and core relations - employing family analogies - that philosophical aesthetics has debated the *family resemblances* metaphor for defining art.

Up to and before the political point of the late 1960s, however, margins and borders were mainly for me, problem areas encountered in the formal relationships of painting. As an art student, I had been told to pay particular attention to the edges of shapes, the point at which two planes meet and the edges of the painting itself. 'If you get the margins sorted out the rest will follow' suggested my tutor, and to some extent this was borne out in practice. Borders and joins in an abstract painting were understood as areas of tension, of change and material difficulty. They were worked at with more care and required more skill than the larger terrains of contained and looser colour. We painted around the corners along the edges of our canvases: the edge was, metaphorically speaking, the point which separated art from its surrounding social context, the area of non-art. It was a practice that engaged my interest. For a year or so, whilst not having any concept of 'liminal' in my mind, and without knowing what I was doing or why, I obsessively painted cracks, lines, edges and borders. Looking back these formal practices of modernist painting gave me a

sense of these liminal areas *matter*ing being constituted by, but more important than, what they contained, as well as being composed of matter. It is as matter – in this case printed matter – that I want in this chapter, to discuss the liminal.

the changing visibility of the daughter

The core/margin figure can also, in this context stand for the relation of the father/daughter. Representing as they do the most and the least powerful in family relations, they can suggest all that is between. The father figure represents what is established, the patriarchal law which is common as well as the Law and authority in real institutions. The girl is only a girl for a short time, is less significant in familial relations. She exists both within the family but also at its edges and potentially, between families.

... within her father's house, a daughter is set apart from the other three members as the only one who does not participate in extending its integrity into history.⁹

Before puberty, she is unrepresented in normative relations and therefore less associated with normative values. In anthropological and traditional kinship relations she only has 'potential' to become nubile, to become a woman to marry, to move away and join another family.¹⁰ She has no place in the oedipal story and her place, if she has a place, is analogous to the threshold of relations, as a temporary figure of transition and potential, but she is – literally sometimes at and before birth – expendable.

Although there are fewer visual images of fathers and daughters, the figure of the girl as unmarried in relation to the paternal law does seem to be an area of disturbance. Including the girl in terms of human agency and citizenship raises contradictions and creates resistances. One of the aspects of actual family life that

has been changing in recent years is the recognition in social policy of the child as a vocal family member.¹¹ She is being considered more as a citizen, with rights and responsibilities apart from those in the family and in relations other than those between her and her parents.¹² Social policymaking and the Law are now regularly taking into account the observations, needs and rights of children when making definitions of 'family'.¹³ Young children are more visible as independent agents, they have an economic role as consumers and their desires are bypassing parental control. There are technologies that allow children to speak directly to each other and people of choice on their own terms through relations on the internet. But the little girl's role is complex in the face of rights and responsibilities. As she becomes increasingly sexualised a younger age, she becomes incorporated into adult desiring relations.¹⁴

It has been suggested that the figure of little girl occupies a key position in culture and that investigating the father/daughter relationship the father might open up latent possibilities for family relationships as a rich source of analogy.¹⁵ She occupies a liminal position in, beyond and between families. She may not have a voice but she is always present, experiencing, watching and feeling, ready to take up a place and speak from that childish experience as liminal.

Turner states that the liminal is "...a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise".¹⁶ The little girl is the family repository of the threatened, the hardly-existing and the possible. Deleuze and Guattari have made use of this creative and unrepresented figure of the girl child as a primary example of the moving, in-between of the liminal:

The girl ... is an abstract line, or a line of flight. Thus girls do not belong to an age or group, sex, order or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts ages, sexes: they produce n

molecular sexes on the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through.... The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, ...¹⁷

Such associations - and they are only associations - while they have a sense of the unbelievable about them, have concretised for many women a place and a position that has, metaphorically speaking, switched the image of the daughter from being a negative figure: dependent, silly, weak and ineffectual to one of creative power, representing feeling, the inarticulate and the unspoken in-between of categories. Without representations of girls having a specific contribution, however metaphorical, it is difficult for young women as artists to imagine how they can act, given the powerful oedipal impositions of contemporary life. In asserting a girlish femininity, it is easy to fall into collusive practices such as those of Jemima Stehli. Or - having nothing to inherit, therefore nothing to lose - adopt the strategies of 'Girl power' or the 'laddette'. Such tactics could be applied to Tracey Emin or Sarah Lucas, who appear to behave like boys: being sexually promiscuous, troublesome, a nuisance and publicly claiming a legitimate inheritance in the art world. Projecting a more visible identity is a tactical way of disrupting the narratives of male inheritance and insisting on woman's equal rights to inheritance but the voice of the girl is incorporated and suppressed. Such tactics I suggest do not address the voice of the girl speaking from a temporary, difficult and dangerous place of her specific liminality.

Girlish Experience, Girlish Relations

In the 1970s, when Connie was a baby, we used to carry her around with us in the slings that were fashionable then. I often wore a dark brown fluffy jumper because she liked it so much, and she had a habit of carefully plucking at it with her thumb and forefinger, harvesting the fluff that stood out from the surface, and then

holding it close to her nose, rhythmically breathing it in and out of a nostril with a far away look of ecstasy on her face.¹⁸ In return my jumper was, at the end of the day, bejewelled with the encrusted sick and snots she deposited on me. In her father's arms, Connie would stroke his beard with the tip of forefinger and sometimes, in an orgy of bliss would hold fluff to her nose with one hand whilst stroking the beard with the other. More fastidious about his clothes, and besotted with his baby girl, her father would lick away the deposited food and mucous from her face which then transferred themselves to his beard. Like Mary Kelly's close observation of her baby's poo in the nappy, he did not regard such bodily fluids with disgust but as signs of a child's body, its communication and non verbal utterances. As she grew older, and as we ceased to carry her so much, she continued to pluck fluff from any surface she could find and stroked her favourite toy, a furry seal that she kept into adulthood. Fluff and fur were the transitional objects, but far from abandoning them to childhood, she still enjoys those qualities and colours in the different textures of her clothes.

Melanie Klein, and later Donald Winnicott developed Freud's notion of the fetish, taking beyond its privileged phallic organisation linked to pathology to an interpretation that while still linked to the same maternal origins, normalised it into the ordinary creative acts of all humans. Other kinds of fetishism are at work in the non-tangible artwork, artworks that do not produce objects such as performance. They work in a more diffuse sense, in continuing to directly recall, play with and 'handle' the anxieties of bodily separation and recollection of the mental trauma of the first loss of the mother's body, by-passing the phallic and relating to the source of differentiation, suggesting different, less hard and manipulable objects that are more akin to the mothers body. Connie's first imaginary investment in the creation of meanings was around brown fluff she collected, a little smoky bundle of dark material that she

learned to handle carefully so it never became hard, and could always be breathed in and out with the slight movement of air from her nose. Children have their transitional objects that they invest with meaning. These are often soft and sensory materials like blankets and fluffy animals that evoke the warmth, texture and softness of the mother's body. In the Kleinian scenario, objects function the same way as the condensation and displacement of Freudian word chains, in aimless play, fun and games with other people, actually handling materials and symbols: toys that are mediating tools that instantiate emotion and carry concepts. But unlike Freudian fetish, Kleinian play with objects is non-directed, non-goal oriented and not solely a symptom of the sexual drive.

We made annual trips to Uncle Roy's pantomime where he always played the Dame.¹⁹ Visiting Uncle Roy meant a tour behind the scenes after the show where we could see close up, the tacky effects of the stage flats and the ingenious mechanisms that created the various slapstick and magical illusions on stage.²⁰ Connie was used to seeing Uncle Roy in his dressing room in a sparkling frock and a woman's wig, and his co-performers putting on make-up and cross-dressing as fantastic characters and animals. She saw him in on the stage and on TV usually in popular - although marginal as far as 'art' is concerned - 'Hammer Horror Movies', in experimental plays or singing and dancing in musicals.²¹ At his home, she could try on his massive red glossy boots and play with his towering hats. She was captivated and wanted to be on the stage.

Uncle Roy's performances all occupy marginal territory. In theatre, he maintains the traditions of pantomime and burlesque. He lampoons politicians, sentimental mothers in soap operas, fundamentalist religion, violent fathers and high culture: anything seemingly sham or pretentious is a subject for parody, ridicule, grotesque

travesty or satire. Art is a popular victim of his mockery, yet he and his technicians employ the conventions of high art in parodying it. They use the same sophisticated techniques of mixed mediums, light effects, multiple video projections, mechanical installation and performance to create illusions and fantasies that are now common in galleries. His burlesque, however, is always affectionate: he adopts the role of a mother ('Mam'), scolding, bossing, remonstrating with his totally infantilised audience that he calls his 'Babbies and Bairns.' The audience collude in the performance, and for a while mothers and fathers become babes with the children. He always fails in female impersonation: his wig falls off revealing his bald man's head, his massive false breasts slip through, bounce on the floor or get stuck on his back; his working man's boots clump across the stage tripping over his trailing dresses. He parodies his own attempts at being a proper 'Mam.' The children and the children in us identify with the debunking humour of the pantomime. For Connie, the stage, the dressing up and gender switching was not just an illusion it had real dimensions and possibilities embodied in a real relationship, a close family member who is kin but who also has relations in places that do not fall within those of kinship or the normative family.

Marginal Relations

In my attempt to imagine beyond the imperatives of oedipal family relationships, and desire for the father I tried to remember the things that as a girl I had fantasised about and which my daughter and her friends enjoyed when they were small. Girls seem to like participatory practices, doing things together, performing, showing-off, dancing, mimicry, acting and dressing-up. They like the sensory mediums of gloss, fluff and glitter and collecting 'treasures' which are constantly sorted, re-organised and re-arranged in little boxes.²² They enjoy socially interactive games: playing

'mothers and fathers', 'doctors and nurses'. These pleasures can be identified in adult life in the non-legitimate, sexually pleasurable and playful discourses of body imagery, in self-adornment, fashion, makeup and dress, in ballroom dancing, pantomime, clubbing, burlesque and carnival.²³

In recent years, there has emerged a new genre, in the clubs and galleries of large towns, that lies between entertainment and art: 'neo burlesque.'²⁴ It is a conscious practice of imitation that refers back to its antecedents in the surreal and satirical cabaret of the inter-war years in Europe. Burlesque has traditionally been associated with working-class, popular and non-legitimate forms of circus, theatrical, pantomime and music-hall entertainment.²⁵ It is often performance that mimics, parodies and subverts. It provides a spectacle, makes a scene, entertains, teases, seduces, charms and amuses, employing erotic and bodily gesture and expression, but all at a distance from the stage, while at the same time derisively ridiculing and grotesquely mocking authority, pomposity, power and repressive family values. Burlesque in these forms, identifies with the children and especially appeals to the pleasures of the little girl. It defines the strategies of the powerless against the strong, the power of pleasure and the body against rigid oppression and abstract, mechanical authority. In its critical forms, it parodies traditional fine art, normative gender relations and family relationships in translucent and vibrantly coloured and textured materials that sparkle, shine and glitter. It seems to me that it is in these non-legitimate areas of pleasure, on the edge of art where a place exists for liminal girlish practices.

Connie now lives and works amongst a close group of people in varieties of burlesque, people of different races, ages, class, genders and occupations. The Group is made up of people who are usually thought of as living outside of families

and identities who, in normative relations are often thought of as peculiar, awkward, deviant, perverted, ridiculous or immoral and who are at best tolerated or touristically regarded as exotic. It also includes those on the fringes of art: in entertainment, dancing, burlesque, street theatre, club culture; arts that embody some aspect of performance. I have been invited to events, parties and performances of The Group and over the years, have become in a sense, attached to them all.²⁶ They accept me as I am; an older, conservatively dressed academic yet I feel comfortable with them. I have noticed among them a generous and uncritical support of any kind of identity, gender, class, race or age group. On becoming part of The Group most of them adopt a new name and sometimes a new persona, changing their outward appearance. New identities are created through consumption of existing artefacts, particularly in reference to the fluff, the glitter, the wigs, make-up and prosthetics of the theatre. They maintain each other's differences whilst demanding praise,



Illus. 101. 2002. Leigh Bowery.

compliments and enthusiastic support for their own.

Much time together is spent dressing up, entertaining, and adopting different identities, primarily for each other, influenced by characters such as Leigh Bowery and Matthew Barney in clubs and events where hybrid, silly, fetishistic and fabulous identities can be performed. [Illus. 101] Positive support is given for any attempt at a new appearance, a new project or a new artwork however wobbly or unsuccessful. Occasionally these activities are temporarily consolidated in a spontaneous and enthusiastic event: a 'show', an 'act', an exhibition, an installation or a party.

The Group appears to have many of the characteristics of the 'small group'

familiar to me from therapeutic contexts, from consciousness raising and which can be seen practised in maternal, 'child-centred' progressive pedagogy.²⁷ There are no leaders and The Group operates on unspoken 'ground rules' of politeness, attention, trust and loyalty.²⁸ They regard themselves as a kind of family that provides close relationships that cannot always be found in their family of birth. They have no shared 'family home' but inhabit an imaginative structure of permanent relations held together by the email address list; they communicate through text messages, phones, online, through emergent and constantly changing internet sites derived from *MySpace* and *YouTube* and through clubbing, parties and impromptu events. The emergence of such groups as alternatives to the conventional family have been noted by family researchers:

They provided a source of strength to, and were strengthened by, the HIV/AIDS crisis from the 1980s, and later support for gay and lesbian parenting. As such, these practices of support added to the repertoire of norms and values that have been available to both gay people and heterosexuals. Some small scale living experiments, not confined to any particular sexual group, have added to this repertoire in similar ways - the communes of the 1960s and 70s and subsequent alternative communities...²⁹

It has been suggested that it is people who have been traditionally regarded as outside kinship relations of the normative family who are pioneering alternatives of care in family groups, whose relationships are influencing straight partnerships: a 'queering' of even heterosexual relationships.³⁰

...where networks of friends/lovers/ex-lovers form the basis for care and support, emerged out of gay and lesbian communities, partly as a consequence of not being able to rely on the support of families of origin, but partly out of a belief in the possibility of choosing one's friends and family.³¹

Lesbian and gay parents struggled on the edges of the Law to redefine who can be a parent and in doing so have raised questions about the nature of marriage.³² Lesbian

and Gay relations, although liminal in kinship terms are now accepted in Law.

Relationships that were once marginal are now being absorbed or pressured into the rules, conditions and rituals similar to marriage through civil partnerships and living in what appear as normative relations. To be accepted as 'normal', in the interests of the children, or to qualify as a real 'family' some gay parented families have had to adopt an outward parodic image corresponding to nuclear family norms.

What differentiates The Group is they maintain relationships that are outside definitions of kinship family and beyond and outside polarisations of straight/gay, gay/lesbian. They understand themselves as family-like but avoid binary categorisations. There is an absence of collective past and future. There is little concept of The Group beyond their own lifetimes or for extending its values beyond the present into the next generation. 'Kids' are generally regarded with mock horror; few of them actively want children. There are no educational or institutional means - as there are for instance in cult religions or political groups - for education or indoctrination of the young; 'events' are for now and are immediate. Yet, they are a coherent and loyal group of equals, maintaining the same members over a period of more than six years, very conscious of themselves as a group bound together by the ties of friendship, love loyalty and trust and they go to great lengths to keep their relationships going.

The first time I saw them in the common ground of a theatre event, they appeared exotic, transgressive, desirable and I thought, brittle and hard. I was attracted by their glamour but felt somewhat intimidated by their confidence, poise and beauty. I thought of them as marginal in conventional terms and I assumed that these people had formed as a group defensively because they had some trauma in their lives, or that they were lacking, or had been rejected by their families and more mainstream

contexts. Some of The Group are also part of other groups even beyond the margins, they are on the 'scene': that is they engage in sexual practices that are on the edge of the acceptable - morally and physically - each fetish having its own grouping of loosely allied members, who relate in their own ways.³³

liminal relations

But as I got to know them, what I first saw simply as uncomplicated 'fetishism' I began to realise was often creative parody. Their outfits were on closer inspection tacky, but also using waste matter: packaging, remnants, jewellery findings, and the discarded or cheap detritus of fashion found in markets, vintage, second-hand and 'pound shops.'³⁴ [Illus. 102] They affectionately parody themselves and each other and are not concerned with attracting sexually. They pastiche the sexual intensity of the voyeur and the stripper by making their own bodies ridiculous. Even though some of them are in 'the scene', they parody the 'heavy' fetishism with its black rubber, po-faced, violent sex in a performance of affectionate burlesque.

The sexual fetish for many of them has become ironic, almost laughable, as they know it is possible to live with sexual de-differentiation. The image of the Freudian sexual fetish is now historic, tied to 'presence', ownership and commodification, privileged in the valorising of the collectible art object in the twentieth century.³⁵ The sexual totem, the phallus has lost its visual power to shock and subvert and has become absorbed in the everyday of fashion. It has shifted from being dangerous, fearful and deviant to merely naughty: a simulation of danger. Little girls and members of The Group dress up in fetish wear, but I now notice that sometimes the rubber is torn; sometimes the glue that holds the rubber together seeps through, and sometimes it is allowed to **wrinkle** at the knees, in a pastiche of its failure.



Illus. 102. Party Goer. Yer Mum and Ya Dad club.

The people I had simply categorised as 'hard' I realised were more complexly liminal, working between two worlds, a place in the margins and within established institutions. Monica, the professional dominatrix, campaigns and lectures on the legal rights and health and safety aspects of 'punishment'. She is highly conscious of the social relations of politics, power and trust and the psychoanalytic relations of sadism and masochism that are acted out in the mutually agreed relation between the dominatrix and her 'sub'. Monica does not want to be 'mainstream' but wants an ethical relation to be recognised between the mainstream Law and practices that are deemed beyond the pale. Maria helps others who are going through gender re-assignment and relationship problems. Through her own experience of humiliation and personal trauma, she is somewhat predisposed to understand gender transition in practice. At home, I discover she is also a Dad to her daughter. Hugo, a celibate man, with a relation to the fetish scene that we do not discuss, has a caring, gentle and active understanding of the plight of young women in the sex industry, having himself been subject to similar painful experiences. He is also an arable farmer with a stately home and has specific and ironic insight into the power of class and sex. They play, but they have 'day jobs', viable lives and a clear sense of the positions, from which they are able to act and be articulate. What once had been practices that were exclusively marginal were becoming ethically related. They are acting and speaking from a place that hitherto has been outside normality, but is now liminal in its relations with the Law and conventional relationships.

Looking at the Group in the terms described by Turner seems to place them in a liminal position in relation to the family, and its practices a liminal position in relation to art. Liminal states are depicted as narrow, as unstable and temporary. But it seems to me that these people and their practices are opening up a new territory, widening the area of the liminal as a possible place of permanence. They are not in this place because they have no option but because they perceive it the best place to be, the most pleasurable and ethical alternative to mass consumer culture and normative relationships.

Looking again at the reproduction of the Mona Lisa on the screen and enlarging the sfumatos reveals a surface that is all undulating and 'liminal', sfumato'd and layered.³⁶ The whole canvas represents territory of the indefinable, the in-between. Temporary passages and places of danger are becoming tenable places to be. They are places that in metaphoric and imaginative terms are feminine, personified as a little girl. Liminal practices and places are becoming more visible as more cultural attention is given to the values and qualities she represents.

Ethical Research

The interactions I had with The Group forced me - if I wanted to maintain my relationships with them - to approach my research in a different and ethical manner. In the politest possible way, I was made aware that no-one was impressed with my achievements, my job status, my social or family position, nor could I enquire into theirs. They do not want to talk about their past or their 'real' identities or their 'real' (original) families, and to ask them about theirs seemed rude and intrusive and harmful to our emergent relationship. My attempts to discover 'real' backgrounds or childhoods were deflected: they disarmed me with charm, amused me with jokes and

confused me with irony. They turn the tables, asking me questions about myself: an irresistible ploy. I had to 'let go', enter into their interests, and just enjoy myself, playing with them and immersing myself sensorily in the noise, movement, glitter and chatter that always seemed to accompany events when we were together. There was a great deal of gift-giving, of borrowing clothes, using objects and sharing events to create intimacies.

It may have been the (not unusual) childhood experience of passively watching my father, listening to words I could not understand, seeing him make things for me that enabled me to accept and enjoy this passive way of finding out about them. My relationship to them was similar to the relationships I had encountered in making art and understanding prints.

There is a particular quality of working with non-human objects that is akin to an ethical relation. There is a forgetfulness of self and an empathy with the subject and the materials on hand. The materials and the technical processes make their own demands and it is within their material capabilities and resistances that the artwork is formed. Artists who care for their work must attend to its particular qualities without merging and losing their own identity so much that they forget the reason they had for attending in the first place. Making artworks requires a suspension of aim-oriented thinking, and involves play-like absorption in a particular problem at hand, shaping the forms to meet the thoughts that the materials brought into being.

To 'look into' something requires that the body becomes closer, more like the entity being observed so that there is little space left between the observer and the thing being observed. It suggests that there is no room for intervention; that there is close concentration and an ignoring of distraction.

In my interactions in The group, we often find ourselves in dark spaces of the

Theatre, the party or the club. All else is drowned out by the immediate sensory pleasures of the event. In looking at art and in making artworks, this is done analogously by enlarging the object under view, or looking at it through a magnifying lens, both practices in which the body does not move but 'getting closer' is simulated. In making something bigger, we make ourselves seem smaller, we are like Christian Metz's cinema audiences, immobile, receptive, passive, infantilised. The geneticist Barbara McClintock described how 'looking into' something changes one's sense of physical relation to it, and transposes interest into something like intimacy or love. On looking through a microscope at genetic material she says:

I found that the more I worked with them, the bigger and bigger they got, and when I was really working with them, I wasn't outside, I was down there. I was part of the system. I was right down there with them, and everything got big ... it surprised me because I actually felt as if I were right down there and these were my friends.³⁷

As I look into the fundamental structures of prints and reiterate words and formal practices that are analogous to human relationships, I feel an emotional resonance or charge coming from the same processes with non-human objects.

Handling and working with materials, with ideas and with objects made by others, empathetically looking into their interests, allowing their smell, their handling qualities, their texture, their weight, their formal qualities to 'speak' requires a mental rest from analytic interrogation, critical observation and finding the words to name things. The body itself has to respond, to allow what Irigaray calls a "letting be", a kind of passivity for the emotional charge, a feeling to emerge that corresponds to a real relationship with another person.³⁸

Looking into Prints

Just as I had suspected there was more behind the fetishistic appearance of

members of the Group, so I thought

there might be something more

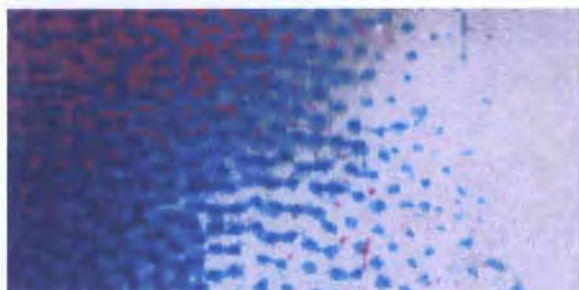
complex in a digital print. I used

projectors to throw a huge light image

on the wall, an image that could also

be projected over my own body, a

sfumato I could walk into and immerse



Illus. 103. 2005. Pen Dalton. Virtual Liminal Projection. written letter form digital file projected.

the wall and myself in colour. [Illus 103] As I plunged deeper, beyond the surface and came closer to the different inks, substrates and printing processes, I could enter the continuous tone that could be seen to have its idiosyncrasies and material messiness as the ink in the machine was squashed and dotted onto the surface of the substrates. See examples Appendix B3

Looking in at prints from the outside with magnifying technologies is like looking

through a microscope at cells or through a

telescope at pictures of the universe. The images

all emerge as coloured, but the colours are not

those of cellular material or 'black holes'. The

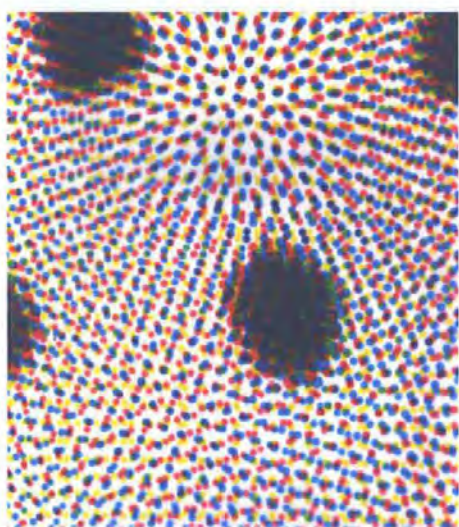
colours that are seen in depictions of the solar

system for instance, are produced aesthetically -

much I suspect as Galton's images were enhanced

- so that the ideas and forms can be seen more

clearly. The technologies of looking are responsible

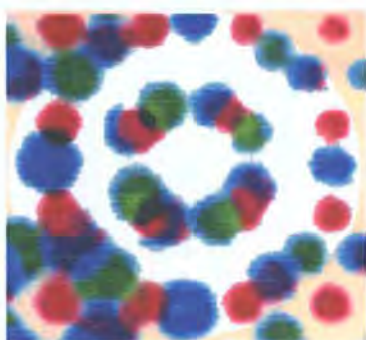


Illus. 104. 2007. Mis alliance. digital file from moiréd print.

for the way that the world is mediated.

There appears to be a great deal going on below the surface of a print. At first, there is a brilliant mass of unconnected dots, but then optical groups start to form. They collect and then separate again. As cells combine and recombine in new systems to create organs, the dots combine in various different constellations, these constellations sometimes 'jumped out' at me, seeming to hover above the surface. Smooth gradations of continuous tone can flip over suddenly, produce fuzzy and eye catching patterns. [Illus. 104] Eye catching groups of dots, new coalitions and irregular but sometimes pretty partnerships are formed in moirés. They confound surface meaning, destabilise seemingly solid figures, undermine realism

Considered as analogies for human relations the mistakes and the anomalies of moirés seem to offer potentials for concretising new patterns of relations that exist hidden under strict regimes and rigid registers. Given a slight twist of the screen,



*Illus. 105. 2007. Pen Dalton. **Printer's Rosette**, from the word 'roses' in my father's diary.*

these relationships can appear shimmering somewhere just above the surface, not real, but relying on material reality of the dots and the perceptual apparatus of seeing. They are examples of how an excess of Law-like, mathematical rationality can suddenly and catastrophically overturn into its opposite, or into new and intriguing unstable configurations that go beyond the

regulatory principles.

But there comes a point of magnification where the original binary pixel is reached; the original mark of differentiation that on its own is meaningless. It is not until the binary information becomes a pattern: a minimal rosette, and combines with other rosette moirés that meaning begins to emerge. [Illus. 105] Rosettes are 'proper'

moirés required for the perception of the continuous tone; they are to be found linking dots of pixels in all properly registered layers of digital printing. They first appear as pattern, and then combine to make syncopated pulses of movement and then efface themselves and disappear beneath the more significant figures on the surface. It is only when combined that they have any relevance, but on their own make too small a difference to matter. The fundamental relation of pixels and dots seems to belong to a past that we all share, and that is interesting in childlike pattern-making, only the bachelor imaginary of a technical researcher. It goes beyond what has mature or complex significance in embodying ideas that are more profound.

beyond the liminal

When I took part in The Group's events, my eye had always been drawn towards Helga, a person always covered in dots, my very own fetish. Her hats, shoes, shawls, bags, hair, face and feet were covered with sewn on buttons, sequins, beads and any other round miscellaneous bits. I never quite knew what she was meant to be or whom she was trying to imitate. She never fully resembled anything or anyone else. She never had the polish, glamour or sheen of finish and recognition of a complete and coherent identity, as did the other members of The Group. She is just dotty. She sometimes veers towards a soldier identity, or a bag lady identity, a child or a rabbit: she keeps us guessing, is deliberately 'wobbly', indeterminate, and positively fluffy. She is not interested in appearing attractive or sexy, Like Leigh Bowery who says

Gender doesn't come into it... it has nothing to do with gender or sexuality. I'm just something that's shuffling about. I don't use my appearance to attract others sexually, I look exactly like I want to.³⁹

She then parades her failure of complete identification, allowing the threads that



Illus. 106. 2008. Helga. Helga Collage. Mixed mediums.

hold the outfit, usually made of remnants and vintage textiles, to trail behind him. He is usually dressed in layers, with carefully cut holes and pretty dams to reveal those beneath. His stubble glistens through his makeup. His hats are askew and phenomenal. All the time, she walks around, fluid flirty and flighty, accosts people and asks 'What do you think?' "How do I look" and will instantly rearrange or whip off a garment in response to the reply or give it away and arrange it on someone

else. Her costumes never look quite right either as fashion or as art, but they provoke intrigue and amazement. [illus.106] He says that he actively aims for indeterminacy and as soon as he feels 'fixed' or spotted, he trails airily off, shedding layers and appearing again differently, lending us his discarded garments so we look more like him. His costumes, his identity, seem different even from the different,

He has reached the stage of identity that is like the meaningless floating rosettes and undifferentiated pixels seen through the microscope, pretty, coloured, charming, full of potential. He is like an infant - wilful, demanding, petulant, indefinable - in the body of a big man beyond definitions and coherence. His speech is stuttering, breathless, his sentences are unfinished and characterised by bursts of emotion. He is unable to articulate, he resorts to annoying sulks, sudden flounces and is unreliable: hugely talented in small events, he is never able to pull anything off or complete, or realise his fantastic projects. He is frightened of onions, cries easily and reveals all his layers of vulnerability with all the holes, diffused dots and connecting threads of her construction on show. Helga has no job in the real world and

maintains a lifestyle and position in The Group through the support and kindness of others. She is appreciated, loved and cared for and enabled to go on being who she is. Helga is the limit, and seems to me to represent a constant performative event in the margins, an outsider of identity.

I imagined at first that a Helgalian figure would serve as analogy for art: creative, full of potential, occupying diffuse, loose marginal territory of the social world, just able to survive, dependent, like a little girl is, on the love and responsibility of others. But she cannot exist on her own. Having considered Helga himself and the nature of the creativity she inspires what s/he represents did not seem an adequate analogy for the art as a social practice and a distinct entity. To be an identity she needs some sense of her place in the world, to organise material, shape, and produce an event, an artwork or make a difference. S/he must at some minimal level, succeed in communicating, and be able to connect with and mobilise the different desires of others, not just repeat her own needs.

The dependant, the feminine, the yet undefined implies and is associated with little girls. The margins and the people who live in, across and who pass through them, it seems to me, are becoming more visible, less threatening more desirable. Edges, limits and borders beyond normative relations, those analogous to kinship, seem to me to be necessary to establish an identity, so long as those borders are open, permeable and relations to 'others' are ethical. People and practices that are marginal are not wanting to become 'mainstream', but are happy to act, poorer perhaps, and less powerful, yet in contact with the Law and political agency. They seem desirable and attract people to them. Established arts can maintain an ethical relation to marginal practices yet keep a sense of what is proper and distinctive to 'art'. For, however receptive, creative, ready to take up new forms art is, it must also

keep an identity as art so it can on being art and do what art does best.

Concluding Reflections

In making analogies between family characters, family relationships and the relations of art I have been aware that I am only able to address some similarities and that an analogy is, after all, only an associative link. The links made cannot be wholly proven in any scientific sense that family relationships are like relations in art. They include an aesthetic dimension: a sense of rightness, of proportion, suitability of material, visual correspondence. Some aesthetic judgements come into play, even when doing scientific experiments. To reiterate what I said in Chapter One, of the analogy between *women* and *violins*: "There are for instance, many more ways in which a woman is *not* like a violin - and these may be hidden...."⁴⁰

What I can conclude about using analogy as a methodology is that in opening up the link itself; looking closely in at the common root shared by both entities: *the family* and *art*, allows shared and unspoken assumptions to be seen and judgements made. Analogy-making is often based on outdated realities, clichés and unexamined conventions. The layers of experience and association that make up an assumption can be traced back and prised apart. Some layers, some relationships, can be discarded. And as new ideas and new interests emerge, new layers related to contemporary realities can be added to make a differently related assumption, a new entity available for analogy-making. Opening up what lies between two entities of an analogic practice produces a different way of thinking about the nature of the two entities that are being compared. As I stated at the beginning "All analogies, particularly those based in changing cultural forms have a limited lifespan and scope of reference".⁴¹ The bachelor figure, for instance, is based in a familiar concept of the

unmarried man without legitimate children. The term does not have so much resonance as analogy in these days of gay partnerships, new immigrant identities, cohabitation and people choosing not to have children, or to adopt. Yet other family images: that of the daughter for instance, is sensitive, vibrant and troublesome in what is a current climate of rights for children, paedophilia and the sexualising of the little girl as consumer. And, because the relation of the daughter to the father is less heavily signified in normative family terms, because at present her identity as a cultural figure is weak, her position is available. The values and the nature and kind of the relations between the daughter as the least powerful and the father as most powerful could still be effectively employed as analogy to help conceptualise and concretise the way relationships can be negotiated between established institutions of power and emergent and marginal art practices. I will always have a father figure to refer to. But then, there are potentially so many ways to negotiate and reinvent this relationship. The fact that older men still exert pressure, dominate and exploit little girls is a given *social* relation. It indicates a misuse of power that needs to be addressed, I suggest, at a social and ethical, rather than a psychoanalytic, or childhood level. It does not and need not follow that the patriarchal relations of the family in early childhood should be repeated in adult social relations.

The figures of parents loom large as imposing forces in unconscious and conscious practices and it is difficult - impossible I suspect - to avoid family analogies and re-enacting the traumatic impressions of the past. But the past does not determine how and in what medium of social relations change can come about. As Mary Kelly stated:

... the child's first experience of the mother's body as this array of sound and colour, and the space the mother's word occupies there, being perhaps the founding moment of something like a metaphorical

relation. You can say this underlies all art work. [But] There's something just too fundamental about it to be very useful, I think. ... It's available to apply to absolutely everything. So I think I was more interested in saying, given this, what do you actually do with it? What specific use does the artist make of that kind of potential?...⁴² [My parenthesis]

The work I have done in the studio leads me to think that while the past may have a predisposing effect, and the law of the father as understood in normative family relations might be the fundamental ground on which we live, so much happens beyond that in actual lived relationships, in contexts and time, that these fundamental binaries, and fetishistic desires whilst always there and enticing to audiences, cease to matter so much in the relations of mature art. Sexually fetishistic characteristics in images brings us back to easy identifications and fundamentally shared, common relationships of infancy. It is at its most developed in comic books, in children's illustrations, in popular art, in pornography and advertising. These are practices that I think are rightly marginal as art forms and seem to be associated to earlier stages of art-making. In the child-like practices of play with materials, in the use of objects as transitional, and in the emergent, potentially creative yet never consolidated practices of Helga, there is another common appeal that brings us all back to childhood pleasure-without-consequences. In Helgalian marginal creativity, there seems to be a desire to continue with those pleasures into adulthood in a way that makes identity and coherent artworks difficult to maintain. There seems to be a vast source of creativity in these practices, yet they never reach conclusions, take a stand or align themselves to an issue.

What I conclude is that family relationships do shape the relations of art engaging audiences at an unconscious level, as playful, as child-like, emergent and preparatory. For an art work - and I am thinking of the work of Mary Kelly and

Santiago Sierra - to be mature and transformative in that it changes the viewer in some way, it certainly mobilises these preparatory, emergent, play-like, pleasurable and fetishistic familial desires, but it goes beyond unconscious childhood family relationships. Just as adult ethical relations are realised in social relations of place, of time, power, money within human organisations and institutions, and instantiated in contemporary mediums and media, so art if it is to be mature needs to be realised in conscious, adult and non familial concerns. Analogies made with family relations,

...do not exist in a void but interact with empirical evidence, with social and biological circumstances, with all kinds of aims and constraints - aesthetic, moral, and political.⁴³

The margins are areas of potential, they are sources of unusual affiliations, coalitions and solitary stars. They are on the edges of what is possible or imaginable. People and practices in the margins tell us how far we can go before we cease to be intelligible. It seems to me that it is only where those margins become liminal and touch and engage with core established ideas, rub up against them, have a dialogue, move in and out of them, that they become creative and make a difference.

As time went on, and as I grew up and made other, more important relationships, my father's influence waned or was contradicted by new experience. Through education and the women's movement - in practices of making art and in engaging with contemporary artworks - I have been able to reflect through the performative practice of different kinds of relationships with other people and with new materials and technologies which have acted as vehicles for new ways of thinking. I am able to consciously make choices and decisions that lead me away and override those imposed on me by the past. My past still colours and perhaps drives my present interests, but they are instantiated in the material forms of present social realities.

There are no escaping family analogies: I would be hard pressed to avoid using terms such as *familiar*, *inheritance* or *generation*. We emerge as human in familial relations and live through relations that are analogous to those experienced in the family in non familial contexts. But family relationships are not static or always the same for everyone. Family relations are moving from monolithic representations of normative ideals towards greater flexibility of relationships that are combinations of normative *and* ethical relations. So, although in many cases family terms like 'maternal', 'paternal' and 'oedipal' could be avoided in conscious critical language applied to mature relations of art, it might be useful to consider analogies of ethical family relationships as lived experience, as practice as more open and flexible analogies for the arts.

printing as a tool

Thinking about relationships through the practice and research in the medium of printing has been particularly helpful. My investigations into digital print technology while aesthetically unrewarding have convinced me that print is an area that can offer a great deal to the understanding of the nature of the traffic between two entities of an analogic relation. I have only scratched the surface of print's capabilities as an analogue of thinking. Printing engages with the most fundamental practices of image making and its basic binary processes are well documented. Its congruence with dreams, condensation and the practice of making the palimpsest suggests to me that it may have a role to play in instantiating concepts of thought and the unconscious in art practice. The processes by which thought and information become matter through analogical materials in printing processes could, I speculate, lead towards greater understanding of thinking itself.

A concern I had throughout the writing of this text has been the tense relation between telling the truth as I recalled things and the necessity to select, edit and create a coherent argument and narrative. While I have aimed to be true - to my father, to the texts I have read, the artwork I have written about and to the other people I have mentioned - I have been conscious, not just of absorbing but creating impressions. I have altered the sequencing of actual events, rearranged memories and documented associations produced in the art-making processes long after they occurred. I have emphasised certain elements of these events and condensed others, drawing aesthetic conclusions from empirical practices and sometimes, rearranging information aesthetically to make things clear to myself and to my reader.

In writing about my father for instance, what has emerged is an account from my point of view as a daughter, emphasising our family relationship. I have not revealed his own background as a child, his own thoughts and aspirations or talked of him as a social being in relation to his friends. I have written of him as my father from the point of view of myself as a girl, remembered in instances and certain key events that were important to me, filled out through descriptions of practice analogous to our relationship. I have *aimed* at honesty, aimed to be accurate and be faithful to him as the original, but what I have produced no doubt contains uncertain memories of things long ago, desires to repress or enhance certain facts, and unconscious biases of interest. Yet, there is a core of truth that the resulting composite image of him that has emerged. On re-reading what I have written, I do believe that the process of thinking intently, of gathering together different moments and events and overlaying them in a single document, has enabled me to produce a better and more aesthetically and emotionally satisfying likeness of my father and of our relationship

than any realistic image, empirical collection of data, or attempt at an exact copy would do.

recursive adjustments

I began by looking at the father/daughter relationship to see if such relationships in the family have any similarity to the relations of art. I assumed that family relationships and their structures and identities always pre-exist art; that family relationships and identities are imposed on those of art. I still think this is so. What has become untenable and what has changed is my concept of a causal account with family as the 'source' and art as the recipient entity, inflexibly stamped with family relations. As I began to inhabit and use, rather than simply 'apply', the concept of a *recursive* exploration to my thesis, the possibility of dividing family relationships from the concepts in which they are instantiated became more impossible to imagine. To apply George Eliot's words, spoken through a craftsman: look at it in one way; actions we put a bit of thought into are ideas - say, ideas about family relationships and making art, and ideas as these work themselves into life and go on growing within it, but they can't grow apart from the material that set them to work and makes a medium for them.⁴⁴

To understand the recursive processes of the relation between the family and art cannot be arrived at through any notion of a prior 'shaping' because both 'the family' and 'art' as concepts are products of their interrelated processes, always accumulating within relations with other non-familial processes and the mediums of their representation. A recursive approach takes into account subjectivity as itself produced as part of and not prior to enquiry. A recursive concept could be imagined as a composite image, made of different layers, coming from different interests at

different times, and have been mediated through materials and practices in different contexts. Concepts such as 'the family' and 'art' cannot be separated from the embedded and cumulative results of the mediums that set the concepts to work. Both the family and art are practices that analogically draw on each other's relationships in layered combinations of events such as experience, memory, stories, theory, empirical research, soap operas, statistics, dictionary definitions and academic research. All these events of subjectivity and practice are enacted in mediums that are combined and need to be investigated if the links between them are to be understood. The thesis, I think, in making links between the family and art, begins to open up such an investigation.

Endnotes to Chapter Six

¹ George Eliot (1876) from *Daniel Deronda*. Spoken by the character 'Goodwin the underlayer' in Chapter 42.

² This anomaly was brought to prominence with David Hockney's painting 'Boys Clinging to Cliff' which was both transgressive as art in that it contained writing and transgressive in its subject matter.

³ Douglas, M (1966/2000) *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. Routledge: London. M Van Gennep, A. (1909/1960) *The Rites of Passage*. Routledge & Kegan Paul: London. Turner, V. (1967) *Rites de Passage. The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, Cornell University Press. La Shure, C. (2005) What is Liminality? <http://www.liminality.org/about/whatisliminality/>

⁴ As was my nephew, Ben

⁵ See Bachelard, G. (1958/1992) *The Poetics of Space*. Trans. M. Jolas. Beacon Press: E. Sussex.

⁶ Turner, V. (1967) 'Betwixt and between: the liminal period' in *The Forest of Symbols*. Op. cit. p. 98.

⁷ For the psychoanalytic notion of the matrixical as undifferentiated material and potential see Lichtenberg-Ettinger, B. (1996) 'The with-in-visible screen' in De Zegher, C. (ed) (1996) *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of C20th Art. in, of and From the Feminine*. MIT Press: Cambridge, Mass. pp.89-113. She says: 'The matrix refers, to begin with, to a phantasy of nonprohibited prebirth incest of the subject-to-be with what I call the archaic-becoming-m/Other-to-be, which informs an aesthetic field of coemergence and cofading with the neither fused nor rejected, unrecognised other'. p.93. And she notes: 'The matrix here is not an interior passive receptacle, a general neutral origin, or a cultural general grid.' fn.p.111.

⁸ These practices however are beginning to achieve liminal status as 'art' particularly in areas of performance. Recent events in 2007 at the Hayward Gallery in London have included joint projects with the fetish club: The Torture Garden. A Burlesque event at The Victoria and Albert Museum's Theatre Museum was combined with academic lectures.

⁹ Boose, Lynda E. 'The father's house and the daughter in it: the structures of Western culture's daughter father relationship' In Boose, L. and Flowers, B. (1988) *Daughters and Fathers*. pp.19-74. Boose p. 20

¹⁰ The anthropological notion of exogamy. Woman as a sign of exchange between families originally theorised by Lévi-Strauss, C. (1949) *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*. Eyre and Spottiswode: London, and developed through the psychoanalytic writings of Freud and Lacan, was taken up by feminists in the 1970s, speculating on the apparently passive, non-productive structural role assigned to women. See Young, K. and Harris, O. (1976) 'The subordination of women in cross-cultural perspectives' in *Papers on Patriarchy*. pp.38-55. See also Rubin, G. (1975) 'The traffic in women: notes on the political economy of sex' in Reiter, R. (ed) *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. Monthly Review Press: New York. It received theoretic interest in the 1970s as a way of understanding the proliferation of images of women in painting and photography. John Berger proposed that the image of woman in painting was employed as a sign of exchange between a powerful classes of men, see Berger, J. 'Ways of seeing' in Berger, J. S. Blomberg, C. Fox, M. Dibb, R. and Hollis, J. (1972) *Ways of Seeing*. BBC/Penguin: London, and Cowie, E. (1978) 'Woman as sign' in *m/f*, no. 1. pp.49-64. A critique and review of structuralist feminist art criticism and debates on the position of woman as a sign of exchange in kinship relations can be seen in Pollock, G. (1990) 'Missing women: rethinking early

thoughts on 'images of women' in Squiers, C. (ed) *The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography*. Lawrence and Wishart: London.

¹¹ See Driscoll, C. (1999). 'Cyber-gurls, riot grrls, Spice Girls: girl culture, revenge and global capitalism' in *Australian Feminist Studies*, 14: 1 and Garner, A. (2005) *Families Like Mine: Children of Gay Parents Tell It Like It Is*. HarperCollins Publishers: London.

¹² See for example Woodrow, C. Press, F. (2007) '(Re)positioning the child in the policy/politics of early childhood' in *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 39: 3. pp.312-325, June, and Roche, J. (1999) 'Children: rights, participation, and citizenship' in *Childhood* 6: 4. pp.475-493.

¹³ Alanen, L. and Mayall, B. (2001) *Conceptualising Child-Adult Relations*. Routledge/Falmer: London; Cockett, M. and Tripp, J. (1994) *The Exeter Family Study: Family Breakdown and Its Impact on Children*. University of Exeter Press: Exeter; Gilles, V. Ribbens-McCarthy and Holland, J. (2001) *'Pulling Together, Pulling Apart': The Family Lives of Young People*. Family Policy Studies Centre/Joseph Rowntree: London; Moss, P. and Petrie, P. (2002) *From Children's Services to Children's Spaces: Public Policy, Children and Childhood*. Falmer: London.

¹⁴ Driscoll, C. (1997). 'The little girl, Deleuze and Guattari' in Genosko, G. (ed.) *Critical Assessments of Leading Philosophers*, (2000) Volume 3. Routledge: London and New York; Routledge. (Reprinted from *Antithesis*, 8: 2, 1997. Driscoll, C. (200) *Girls: Feminine Adolescence in Popular Culture and Cultural Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press: New York.

¹⁵ Willbern, D. (1988) 'Filia Oedipi' in Boose, L. and Flowers, B. (eds.) (1989) *Daughters and Fathers*, Johns Hopkins University Press.

¹⁶ Turner. *Forest of Symbols*, op. cit. p.97.

¹⁷ Deleuze, G. & Guattari, F. (2004) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. B. Massumi. Continuum Publishing Group: London and New York. p.305.

¹⁸ This apparently is not an uncommon practice in babies.

¹⁹ My brother-in-law is well documented as a pantomime dame, known for his development of traditional panto, however I do not wish to reveal his identity.

²⁰ Tacky means slightly sticky, also vulgar, shabby or shoddy. I have often heard it used to refer to the appearance of stage effects, costumes and make-up when seen close up.

²¹ *The Rocky Horror Show*, and was a regular 'extra' for the director Ken Russell.

²² There is a chain of shops now, *Claire's* that specifically caters for these tastes in little girls.

²³ Burlesque: the girl as sexual, using her body, humour, teasing, pleasure to diminish the power of the father by allowing his weakness for her to be acted out. See OED definition of burlesque: to turn into ridicule by grotesque parody.

²⁴ Also known as 'neo-burlesque'.

²⁵ Burlesque has come to be equated with 'stripping'. Nakedness and sexual teasing may be part of Burlesque but does not define its limits.

²⁶ There are I think issues concerned with 'invading' my daughters relationships and I have retained only an occasional contact with this group.

²⁷ See Dalton, P. (2001) 'Psychology and the subject of art education' in J. and J. Swift, *Disciplines, Fields and Change in Art Education*, Article Press: Birmingham. vol.3. pp. 83-96.

²⁸ Rogers, C. (1971) *Encounter Groups*. London: Allen Lane. Encounter groups were deliberately created to be like the relations in a family with a mother. An atmosphere of care, mutual trust, listening,

respecting each others opinions, allowing everyone to speak. The small group interactions, based on family relations were transposed to therapy and to some contexts of school teaching. Dalton, P. (2001) *The Gendering of Art Education: Modernism, Art Education and Critical Feminism*. Open University Press: Milton Keynes. nb Chapter Four.

²⁹ Williams. *Rethinking families*, op. cit p. 45. See also Roseneil, S. and Budgeon, S. (2004) 'Beyond the conventional family: intimacy, care and community in the 21st century' in *Current Sociology*, 52: 2 pp.135-59.

³⁰ Roseneil, S. (2000) 'Queer friendships and queer tendencies': towards an understanding of postmodern transformations of sexuality' *Sociological Research Online*, 5: 3.

³¹ Williams. *Rethinking Families*, op. cit. p.49.

³² See Hakim, C. (2002) *Models of the Family in Modern Societies: Ideals and Realities*. Ashgate: Aldershot; Jensen, A. and McKee, L. (eds.) (2003) *Children and the Changing Family: Between Transformation and Negotiation*. The Future of Childhood Series. Routledge/Falmer: London. Neale, B Flowerdew, J. and Smart, C. (2003 'Drifting towards shared residence?' *Family Law*. 33 pp.904-8.

³³ I have tried to get the terminology right but it is not an area I have been able to research directly so most of this section I rely on conversations, with the people I describe as well as with Connie and discussions with Henry Rogers who defines himself as a 'Bear'. See Rogers, H. and Williamson, A. (eds.) *Art Becomes You: Parody, Pastiche and the Politics of Art. Materiality in a Post-material Paradigm*. Article Press: Birmingham. 2006

³⁴ The notion of constructing marginal/core identities through consumer activities is discussed in Canaan, J; Hurd, J; Jones, S; and Willis, P. (1990) *Common Culture: Symbolic Work at Play in the Everyday Cultures of the Young*. Open University Press: Milton Keynes.

³⁵ For discussions of the fetish as commodity see Foster, H. (1986) 'The future of an illusion, or the contemporary artist as cargo cultist' in Bois, Y. A. (ed) (1987) *Endgame: Reference and Simulation in Recent Painting and Sculpture*. MIT/ICA: Boston and London

³⁶ I have seen the painting of the Mona Lisa but the conditions in which it is hung do not allow the possibility of getting closer to look into its surface. The reproductions and the notes from the National Research Council, Canada. <http://www.nrc-cnrc.gc.ca/> gave me a different level of access.

³⁷ McClintock, B, cited in Fox-Keller, E. (1983) *A Feeling For the Organism: The Life and Work of Barbara McClintock*. Henry Holt and Co.: New York. p.117.

³⁸ Irigaray, L. (2002) *The Way of Love*. Continuum Books: London. p.65.

³⁹ Leigh Bowery cited in Rogers H. (ed.) (2007) *The Art of Queering in Art*. Article Press: Birmingham, p. 30.

⁴⁰ Chapter One, page 40 of this document.

⁴¹ *ibid*.

⁴² Mary Kelly (1989) 'Conversation with Griselda Pollock' in Iverson, M. Crimp, D. and Bhaba, H. (1997) *Mary Kelly*. Phaidon: London. p.133.

⁴³ Here I am applying Ginzburg's words - concerning cognitive metaphors - to family analogies which is a more specific useage. Ginzburg. *Family Resemblances*. op. cit. p.537.

⁴⁴ George Eliot (1876) from *Daniel Deronda* Spoken by the character 'Goodwin the underlayer' in Chapter 42.

APPENDIX A: GLOSSARY OF PRINTING TERMS

Glossary of Printing Terms

In Barnard alone there were approximately 5,100 printing terms.

I have included in the glossary some words that derive from printing and have passed into everyday language, and family and bodily words that have passed into printing. I have also included printing terms used in the text that may not be familiar. I have not included terms derived from other art mediums: drawing or painting nor digital terms.

abort

1. *Printing*: To terminate a printing operation or procedure, before completed.
2. To give birth prematurely or before term; miscarry.
3. To cease growth before full development or maturation.

absorb, absorbent

1. To take (something) in through or as through pores or interstices.
2. To occupy the full attention, interest, or time of; engross.
3. To retain wholly, without reflection or transmission.
4. To take in; assimilate.
5. To learn; acquire.
6. To receive (an impulse) without echo or recoil.
7. To assume or pay for (a cost or costs).
8. *Printing: absorbent*: capable of absorption.

Traditional printing papers are very absorbent and are known as 'Not' papers, that is, they are not 'HP': hot pressed.

align

1. *Printing*: To arrange in a line or so as to be parallel.
2. To adjust to produce a proper relationship or orientation.
3. To ally (oneself, for example) with one side of an argument or cause.

4. To adhere to a prescribed course of action.
5. To move or be adjusted into proper relationship or orientation.

back, hardback

1. *Printing*: The other side of a sheet that has not been printed on.
2. The posterior portion of the trunk of the human body between the neck and the pelvis; the dorsum.
3. The part or area farthest from the front.
4. The reverse side, as of a coin.
5. *Printing, Hardback*: a case bound book with a separate stiff board cover.

bastard, bastards

1. *Printing*: Prints produced on non-standard size papers.
2. Born of unwed parents; illegitimate.
3. Not genuine; spurious.

beard

1. *Printing*: The raised slope on a piece of type between the shoulder or counter and the face. Also called *neck*.
2. The hair on a man's chin, cheeks, and throat.

bed

1. A piece of furniture for reclining and sleeping.
2. A small plot of cultivated or planted land.
3. *Printing*: The heavy table of a printing press in which the type form is placed.
4. A layer of sediments or rock, such as coal, that extends under a large area and has a distinct set of characteristics that distinguish it from other layers below and above it.

bit

1. *Printing*: a condensed form of the term binary digit. Eight bits equals one 'byte' which is the minimum unit of information required to make a pixel with matter (ink). Bytes are then multiplied in magnifying sequences of kilo-mega-giga-tera- peta- exa- and unimaginable yotta. [see byte]

2. A small amount.
3. To bite with the teeth.

bleed, blood

1. *Printing*: To be printed so as to go off the edge or edges of a page after trimming.
2. Spreading of the ink beyond the designated printed area.
3. To emit or lose blood.

blind

1. Sightless.
2. Difficult to comprehend or see; illegible.
3. Incompletely or illegibly addressed.
4. Hidden from sight.
5. *Printing*: *Blind embossing* is when the printing is carried out without ink, making an impression directly from pressure.

body

1. *Printing*: Solid metal of a piece of type carrying the printed surface.
2. *Printing*: The type used for the main text (not the headings)
3. The entire material or physical structure of an organism, especially of a human or animal.
4. A group of individuals regarded as an entity; an organization or corporation.

body colour

bound, bind.

1. *Printing*: The cover that holds together the pages of a book.
2. The action of one that binds.
3. Uncomfortably tight and confining.
4. Imposing or commanding adherence to a commitment, an obligation, or a duty.

bum (as in double bum)

1. *Printing*: To expose a plate or proof to two negatives to create a composite image.
2. A tramp; a vagrant.
3. The fleshy part of the body you sit on. (see also Butt)

burn

1. *Printing*: Exposing a printing plate to high intensity light or placing an image on a printing plate by light.
2. To irritate or inflame, as by chafing or sunburn.
3. To make extremely hot.

butt.

1. *Printing*: Printing so that the colours touch without overlapping.
2. The larger or thicker end of an object:
3. The buttocks; the rear end.
4. To hit or push against with the head or horns; ram.

byte (see bit)

1. *Printing*: To etch with acid.
2. To eat into; corrode.
3. To cut, grip, or tear with or as if with the teeth.
4. A secure grip or hold applied by a tool or machine upon a working surface.

case

1. *Printing*: A shallow compartmented tray for storing type or type matrices.
2. An instance of something; an occurrence; an example.
3. A set of circumstances or a state of affairs; a situation.
4. A question or problem; a matter.

character

1. *Printing*: A style of printing or writing.
2. The combination of qualities or features that distinguishes one person, group, or thing from another.
3. A distinguishing feature or attribute, as of an individual, group, or category.

child (as in 'parent-child hierarchy')

1. *Printing*: Denotes Relationship between concepts or elements that indicates subordination of one to the other as represented in a print listing or financial statement presentation.

cliché, (cliché verre)

1. *Printing*: A printing technique where the surface of a glass plate was covered with an opaque ground and the artist would draw onto this ground with a point, leaving the glass transparent where the lines were to print black.
2. A trite or overused expression or idea.
3. A person or character whose behavior is predictable or superficial.

copy

1. *Printing*: An imitation or reproduction of an original; a duplicate,
2. One specimen or example of a printed text or picture.
3. Material, such as a manuscript, that is to be set in type.
4. The words to be printed or spoken in an advertisement.
5. To follow as a model or pattern; imitate.

cock

1. *Printing*: *Cocked-up*: an initial letter that sticks up.
2. The position of the hammer of a firearm when ready for firing.
3. A tilting or jaunty turn upward.
4. to make a mistake
5. Cock: A male chicken.
6. The penis.

continuous

1. Uninterrupted in time, sequence, substance, or extent.
2. Attached together in repeated units
3. Mathematics Of or relating to a line or curve that extends without a break or irregularity

continuous tone printing

The continuous half-tone print is made up of a syntax of dots that can be regulated in measureable and mathematically precise relations to convey a vast range of in-between shades of colour in degrees of shade from dark to light in apparently unbroken and seamless surfaces. Today's Giclee technology which uses 10,000 dots per inch: can cope with 65,000 shades in between black and white and 16-17

million shades and hues of colour in continuous tones invisible to the naked eye. Combined with the optical rendering of linear and colour perspective, the continuous tone is able to represent optical realism: the world as it appears to the eye.

contrast

1. To set in opposition in order to show or emphasize differences
2. To show differences when compared.
3. Linguistics To evince a difference that can distinguish meaning:
4. One thing that is strikingly dissimilar to another.
5. The use of opposing elements, such as colors, forms, or lines, in proximity to produce an intensified effect in a work of art.
6. *Printing*: The difference in brightness between the light and dark areas of a picture.

composing

1. *Printing*: Typesetting.
2. The combining of distinct parts or elements to form a whole.
3. The manner in which such parts are combined or related.
4. To create or produce (a literary or musical piece).
5. To make (oneself) calm or tranquil.
6. To settle or adjust; reconcile.
7. To arrange aesthetically or artistically.
8. *Printing: Composite*: Combining two or more images on one or more pieces of film.
9. *Printing: compositor*: ("Comp") One that sets written material into type; a typesetter.

CMYK

Short for cyan, magenta, yellow and 'key' (black) also referred to as process colour. Ink is normally applied in the order of the acronym.

die

1. To cease living; become dead; expire.

2. To cease existing, especially by degrees; fade.
3. A small cube with 1 to 6 spots on the six faces; used in gambling to generate random numbers
4. A device used for shaping metal
5. *Printing: die stamp.* a block or die used to imprint a mark or design

digit (as in digital)

1. *Printing:* Printing reduced to binary information as coded numbers 1:0; on or off, black/white
2. A human finger or toe.
3. One of the ten Arabic number symbols, 0 through 9.

distress, (distressing)

1. To cause strain, anxiety, or suffering to. See Synonyms at trouble.
2. *Law* To hold the property of (a person) against the payment of debts.
3. *Printing:* To mar or otherwise treat (paper or fabric, for example) to give the appearance of an antique.

dot

1. *Printing:* The basic unit of composition for an image produced by a device that prints text or graphics on paper. (also known as *rasters* or Benday dots)
2. A tiny round mark made by or as if by a pointed instrument; a spot.
3. Such a mark used in orthography, as above an *i*.
4. From Old English *dott*, head of a boil.
5. A woman's marriage portion of which the annual income alone is under her husband's control (1871)

dot spread. Phenomenon of dots physically printing larger on paper than they are on negatives or plates. This happens because of the viscosity of ink and its ability to spread through the paper as it is soaked in. Dot gain varies with paper type. Uncoated (Not) paper stock like newsprint paper shows the most dot gain.

dot gain. A perceptual effect in which printed dots are perceived bigger than intended. Also known as The Yule-Nielsen effect, is a phenomenon caused by

absorption and scattering of light by the substrate. Light becomes diffused around dots, darkening its apparent tone. As a result, dots appear to be larger than their relative absorbance of light would suggest.

drop out

1. *Printing*: Visual elements that are present, but not seen by the viewer of the print.
2. One who has withdrawn from a given social group or environment.
3. A segment of magnetic tape on which expected information is absent.
4. The failure to read a bit of stored information.

enlarge

1. To make larger in scale; add to.
2. To give greater scope to; expand.
3. To become larger; grow.
4. To speak or write at greater length or in greater detail; elaborate

exhaustion

1. To wear out completely.
2. To drain of resources or properties; deplete
3. To use up completely.
4. To treat completely; cover thoroughly:
5. *Printing*: The amount of dye or ink that a substrate can absorb during the printing process.

face

1. The surface of the front of the head from the top of the forehead to the base of the chin and from ear to ear.
2. A person's countenance.
3. A contorted facial expression; a grimace
4. Outward appearance
5. *Printing*: An abbreviation for typeface referring to a type family in a given style
6. The printing edge of the type block

deface

1. To mar or spoil the appearance or surface of; disfigure.

2. To impair the usefulness, value, or influence of.
3. *Printing*: to destroy a plate so it cannot be printed again

facsimile

1. *Printing*: An exact copy or reproduction, as of a document.
2. A digitally produced copy made from information.
3. Of or used to produce exact reproductions, as of documents.

family

1. A fundamental social group in society typically consisting of one or two parents and their children.
2. Two or more people who share goals and values, have long-term commitments to one another, and reside usually in the same dwelling place.
3. All the members of a household under one roof.
4. A group of persons sharing common ancestry.
5. Lineage, especially distinguished lineage.
6. A locally independent organized crime unit, as of the Cosa Nostr
7. A group of like things; a class. (used specifically in linguistics, mathematics, biology and chemistry.)
8. *Printing*: describes type and the relations between different orthographic symbols having the same design characteristics, and usually given a name: the Helvetica family or the Times family for instance.

figure

1. *Printing*: An illustration printed from an engraved plate or block
2. a diagram or picture illustrating textual material; "the area covered can be seen from Figure 4"
3. a unitary percept having structure and coherence that is the object of attention and that stands out against a ground
4. language used in a figurative or nonliteral sense

flong, flung

1. *Printing* A compressed mass of paper sheets, forming a matrix or mold for stereotype plates.

2. The act of flinging.
3. A brief period of indulging one's impulses.
4. A brief sexual or romantic relationship.

flood.

1. An overflowing of water onto land that is normally dry.
2. A flood tide.
3. An abundant flow or outpouring
4. To haemorrhage, esp. during childbirth or excessive menstruation
5. *Printing:* To cover a printed page with ink, varnish, or plastic coating.
6. To cover a screen with solvent prior to cleaning.

foot, (footer, footnotes, feet)

1. Textual information, such as a title, date, or page number, positioned in the bottom margin of a page and usually repeated throughout a document.
2. Used for serif at the bottom of a letter.
3. *Printing:* The bottom of a type block
4. One that is an indicated number of feet in height or length. Often used in combination:
5. The organism at the bottom end of the leg.

foil.

1. To prevent from being successful; thwart.
2. To obscure or confuse
3. A repulse; a setback.
4. A thin, flexible leaf or sheet of metal: aluminum foil.
5. A thin layer of polished metal placed under a displayed gem to lend it brilliance.
6. *Printing:* A thin printed layer adhered to a support. Used in furniture and floors to simulate wood.

font

1. A specific size and style of type within a type family.
2. A basin for holding baptismal water in a church.
3. An abundant source; a fount.

4. *Printing*: A family of typeface having the same characters but are differently designed. Although different, they match each other in repeated elements. These font families can be made of different materials, wood, metal or be digitised.

form

1. The shape and structure of an object
2. The body or outward appearance of a person or an animal considered separately from the face or head; figure.
3. The essence of something.
4. The mode in which a thing exists, acts, or manifests itself; kind
5. The design, structure, or pattern of a work of art.
6. *Printing*: One side of a press sheet
7. *Forme*: Type assembled into pages and locked into a frame ready for printing.
8. *Format*. Size, shape, and overall style of a layout or printed piece

fugitive

1. Running away or fleeing, as from the Law. A refugee
2. *Printing*: Inks lasting only a short time, fading.
3. Difficult to comprehend or retain; elusive.
4. Given to change or disappearance; perishable.
5. Of temporary interest.
6. Tending to wander; vagabond.

generation

1. *Printing*: The stages of reproduction from original copy. A first generation reproduction yields the best quality.
2. All of the offspring that are at the same stage of descent from a common ancestor.

ghost

1. *Printing*: A faint printed image that appears on a printed sheet where it was not intended.
2. patches of dark on the paper caused by exposure to the light or traces of earlier prints appearing on the new.

ghost halftone. Halftone that has been screened to produce a very faint image

3. An incorporeal being.

gloss (glossary)

1. *Printing:* A surface shininess or luster.

2. A superficially or deceptively attractive appearance.

3. A brief explanatory note or translation of a difficult or technical expression usually inserted in the margin or between lines of a text or manuscript.

4. A collection of such notes; a glossary.

5. An extensive commentary, often accompanying a text or publication.

6. A purposefully misleading interpretation or explanation.

grip, gripper

1. A tight hold; a firm grasp

2. Intellectual hold; understanding.

3. *Printing:* A mechanical device that grasps and holds paper in position.

4. A part, such as a handle, that is designed to be grasped and held.

ground

1. The solid surface of the earth.

2. The floor of a body of water, especially the sea.

3. Soil; earth.

4. An area of land designated for a particular purpose. Often used in the plural

5. *Printing:* Background behind and contrasted to a figure.

6. *Printing:* Material used to make a background.

hairline

1. *Printing:* A very fine line on a typeface.

2. A style of type using such lines.

3. The outline of the growth of hair on the head, especially across the upper forehead and temples.

4. A very slender line.

head

1. The uppermost or forwardmost part of the body of a vertebrate, containing the brain and the eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and jaws.
2. To be in charge of; lead.
3. To be in the first or foremost position of.
4. To aim, point, or turn in a certain direction.
5. A projection, weight, or fixture at the end of an elongated object.
6. Vulgar Slang Oral sex
7. *Linguistics* The word in a construction that has the same grammatical function as the construction as a whole and that determines relationships of concord to other parts of the construction or sentence in which the construction occurs.
8. *Printing*: A headline or heading
9. The top of a book or page.

head stops. Adjustable posts on register unit of a press that properly position leading edge of a sheet.

hicky

1. *Printing*: Unintentional smear on a printed substrate.
2. A specific kind of mark on a print where a white gap is produced around a piece of (usually) dust or other foreign body.
3. Love-bites (or hickeys) are a temporary mark on the skin caused by sucking. (US)

impregnate

1. *Printing*: To fill throughout; saturate paper with ink.
2. To make pregnant; inseminate.
3. To fertilize (an ovum, for example).

Impose, imposition

1. *Printing*: To arrange (type or plates) on an imposing stone.

Imposition. Arrangement of pages on mechanicals or flats so they will appear in proper sequence after press sheets are folded and bound.

2. To establish or apply as compulsory.
3. To prevail by or as if by authority.

4. To obtrude or force (oneself, for example) on another or others.
5. *Printing*: The arrangement of printed matter to form a sequence of pages.

impress

1. *Printing*: To mark or stamp with or as if with pressure.
2. To produce or attempt to produce a vivid impression or image of.
3. To affect strongly, often favorably.
4. To apply with pressure; press.

impression

1. An effect, feeling, or image retained as a consequence of experience.
2. A vague notion, remembrance, or belief.
3. A humorous imitation of the voice and mannerisms of a famous person done by an entertainer.
4. *Printing*: A mark produced on a surface by pressure.
5. All the copies of a publication printed at one time from the same set of type.

imprint

1. To fix firmly, as in the mind.
2. *Printing*: A mark or pattern produced by imprinting.
3. A publisher's name, often with the date, address, and edition, printed at the bottom of a title page of a publication.
4. imprinting: A rapid learning process by which a newborn or very young animal establishes a behavior pattern of recognition and attraction to another animal of its own kind or to a substitute or an object identified as the parent.

index

1. *Printing*: A character used in printing to call attention to a particular paragraph or section. Also called a printer's fist or hand. ¶
2. Something that serves to guide, point out, or otherwise facilitate reference.
3. An alphabetized list of names, places, and subjects treated in a printed work, giving the page or pages on which each item is mentioned.
4. Something that reveals or indicates; a sign.
5. A list formerly published by Church authority, restricting or forbidding the reading

of certain books.

inscription

1. *Printing*: To write, print, carve, or engrave (words or letters) on or in a surface.
2. A legend, description, or record traced upon some hard substance for the sake of durability, as on a monument, building stone tablet, medal, coin or vase etc.
3. To enter (a name) on a list or in a register.
4. To sign one's name on.
5. To dedicate to someone.

invert

1. To turn inside out or upside down.
2. *Printing*. To reverse the position, order, or condition of.
3. To subject to inversion
4. One who takes on the gender role of the opposite sex.
5. A homosexual person.

issue

1. *Printing*: To be circulated or published.
2. To be born or be descended.
3. To go or come out.
4. To spring or proceed from a source, as ideas.
5. To terminate or result.

justify

1. *Printing*: To adjust the spacing within (lines in a document, for example), so that the lines end evenly at a straight margin.
2. To declare free of blame; absolve.
- 3 To demonstrate sufficient legal reason for (an action taken).
4. To demonstrate or prove to be just, right, or valid.

kiss

1. *Printing*: a very light printing impression.
2. To press or touch with the lips.

To *kiss die* cut. To cut a top layer, but not the backing layer, of self-adhesive paper.

laid

1. Set down according to a plan
2. *Printing*: Paper with a pattern of parallel lines at equal distances, giving a ribbed effect, simulating hand-made paper.

leg

1. *Printing*: A short column of type.
2. A limb.

limited edition

The practice of limiting the number of impressions of a print. (a seen in the late 19th century, it increases the value of the print because there are fewer printed.)

An artist number such as 6/20 indicates that the impression was the 6th out of 20 prints. When the edition is complete the plate or block is defaced.

margin

1. An edge and the area immediately adjacent to it; a border.
2. The blank space bordering the written or printed area on a page.
3. A limit in a condition or process, beyond or below which something is no longer possible or acceptable.

master

1. *Printing*: Original from which copies will be made.
2. One that has control over another or others.
3. The owner or keeper of an animal.
4. An employer.
5. The man who serves as the head of a household.

matrix matrices or matrixes

1. *Printing*: A mould used in stereotyping and designed to receive positive impressions of type or illustrations from which metal plates can be cast. Also called mat.
2. A situation or surrounding substance within which something else originates,

develops, or is contained.

3. *Printing*: A metal plate used for casting typefaces.

4. The womb.

5. Source or origin

moiré

1. Occurs when screen angles are wrongly overlaid, causing unwanted and distracting patterns in photographs and prints.

2. Undesirable pattern in halftones and screen tints made with improperly aligned screens

3. Fabric, such as silk or rayon, finished so as to have a wavy or rippled surface pattern.

4. A similar pattern produced on cloth by engraved rollers.

media

1. Plural of medium

2. An agency by which something is accomplished, conveyed, or transferred:.

3. The group of journalists and others who constitute the communications industry and profession.

4. A person thought to have the power to communicate with the spirits of the dead or with agents of another world or dimension. Also called *psychic*.

5. A specific kind of artistic technique or means of expression as determined by the materials used or the creative methods involved.

medium

1. The materials used in a specific technique.

2. Something, such as an intermediate course of action, that occupies a position or represents a condition midway between extremes.

3. An intervening substance through which something else is transmitted or carried on.

4. Occurring or being between two degrees, amounts, or quantities; intermediate.

merge (or blend)

1. When one tone or colour changes or appears to change to another with no

perceptible break or line.

2. To cause something to lose its own identity and become immersed in something else.

Also *emerge*

metamerism

1. *Printing*: A term used in colour printing to describe the problem of hues appearing to shift under different lighting conditions.

2. The condition when isomeric compounds which although of the same composition and molecular weight, have different chemical properties.

3. The effects of ambient light

neck

1. *Printing*: The raised slope on a piece of type between the shoulder or counter and the face. Also called *beard*

2. the part of the body joining the head to the torso

needle

1. *Printing*: A metal tool for inscribing and etching.

2. A tool for sewing or surgery.

3. To prick, pierce, or stitch with a small, slender, sharp-pointed implement.

4. To goad, provoke, or tease.

negative

1. *Printing*: A reversal of formal values: colour, tone etc.

2. Expressing, containing, or consisting of a negation, refusal, or denial.

3. Indicating opposition or resistance.

4. Lacking positive or constructive features, especially.

5. Unpleasant; disagreeable.

noise

1. *Printing*: The unintentional and meaningless marks made by the printer or the printing process.

2. In digital imaging, data or unidentifiable marks picked up in the course of

scanning or data transfer that do not correspond to the original.

3. Sound or a sound that is loud, unpleasant, unexpected, or undesired.

4. *Physics*. A disturbance, especially a random and persistent disturbance, that obscures or reduces the clarity of a signal.

5. *Computer Science*. Irrelevant or meaningless data.

offsett, offset.

1. Printing: An unintentional or faulty transfer of wet ink from a printed sheet to another surface in contact with it. Also called *setoff*.

2. Deliberate offset printing. (emerges the right way round).

3. An agent, element, or thing that balances, counteracts, or compensates for something else.

4. One thing set off or developed from something else.

5. A descendant of a race or family; an offshoot.

opaque.

1. Impenetrable by light; neither transparent nor translucent.

2. Not reflecting light; having no luster:

3. So obscure as to be unintelligible

4. Obtuse of mind; dense.

5. *Printing*. To cover flaws in negatives with paint or tape.

6. A quality of ink that covers what is beneath.

7. Characteristic of paper that helps prevent printing on one side from showing on the other.

original

1. *Printing*: Being the source or master from which a copy, reproduction, or translation is made

2. Preceding all others in time; first.

3. Not derived from something else; fresh and unusual.

4. Showing a marked departure from previous practice; new.

5. Productive of new things or new ideas; inventive.

orphan

1. *Printing*: A line of type beginning a new paragraph at the bottom of a column or page, (usually combined with widows).
2. A child whose parents are dead.
3. A child who has been deprived of parental care and has not been adopted.

overlay

1. The transparent cover sheet on artwork often used for instructions.
2. The accidental killing of a child by covering them with the body whilst sleeping.
3. The printing of one or more layers of print on top of each other.

parent

1. One who begets, gives birth to, or nurtures and raises a child; a father or mother.
2. An ancestor; a progenitor.
3. An organism that produces or generates offspring.
4. A guardian; a protector.
5. A parent company.
6. A source or cause; an origin

parent sheet.

1. *Printing*: sheet of paper 17 x 22 inches or larger

perfect

1. Lacking nothing essential to the whole; complete of its nature or kind.
2. Being without defect or blemish.
3. Thoroughly skilled or talented in a certain field or area; proficient.
4. Completely suited for a particular purpose or situation
5. Perfect bind. To bind sheets by trimming at the spine and gluing them to a paper cover

pica

1. Unit of measure in typesetting. One pica = 1/6 inch.
2. An abnormal craving or appetite for nonfood substances, such as dirt, paint, or clay as in pregnancy.

pixel.

1. The basic unit of the composition of an image on a television screen, computer monitor, or similar display
2. *Printing.* 'Pixel' is an abbreviation of 'picture element'. 8 bits make one byte which is the minimum amount of information to make a pixel. (see dot)

pleasing

1. *Printing:* Color printing that is good enough, even though it does not match original samples, scenes, or objects.
2. The act of one who pleases

PMT

1. Abbreviated name for photomechanical transfer. Often used to make position prints.
2. Abbreviation/euphemism for pre-menstrual tension.

point

1. For paper, a unit of thickness equaling 1/1000 inch.
2. *Printing:* for typesetting, a unit of height equaling 1/72 inch
3. To direct or aim.
- 4 To bring (something) to notice..
- 5 To indicate the position or direction of.
6. To sharpen (a pencil, for example); provide with a point.
7. To separate with decimal points.
8. To mark (text) with points; punctuate.
9. To direct attention or indicate position with or as if with the finger.

position (see imposition)

positive

1. Characterized by or displaying certainty, acceptance, or affirmation.
2. Measured or moving forward or in a direction of increase or progress.
3. Explicitly or openly expressed or laid down.
4. Admitting of no doubt; irrefutable.

5. Very sure; confident.
- 6 Concerned with practical rather than theoretical matters.
7. Composed of or characterized by the presence of particular qualities or attributes.
8. *Philosophy*. Of or relating to positivism. Of or relating to laws imposed by human authority rather than by nature or reason alone:
9. A photographic image in which the lights and darks appear as they do in nature.
10. The reverse of negative.

press (also for impress, impression, repression, oppression)

1. *Printing*: The art, method, or business of printing.
2. *Printing*: A device to exert force or pressure for printing.
3. To weigh heavily, as on the mind.
4. To iron clothes or other material.
5. To assemble closely and in large numbers; crowd.
6. To employ urgent persuasion or entreaty.

process

1. A series of actions, changes, or functions bringing about a result
 2. A series of operations performed in the making or treatment of a product
- process camera. Graphic arts camera used to photograph mechanicals and other camera-ready copy.

process colors. The colors needed for 4-color process printing: yellow, magenta, cyan, and black.

process inks. Inks in the four process colors.

process printing. Alternate term for 4-color process printing.

process red. Alternate term for Magenta.

progressives - color proofs taken at each stage of printing showing each color printed singly and then superimposed on the preceding color

proof

1. *Printing*: A trial sheet of printed material that is made to be checked and corrected. Also called proof sheet, often kept for future reference.
2. The evidence or argument that compels the mind to accept an assertion as true.

pull

1. *Printing*: The moment of producing or pulling a print or an impression from an inked plate.

2. Ability to draw or attract; appeal

punch

1. To hit with a sharp blow of the fist.

2. A tool for stamping a design on a surface.

3. A tool for making a countersink.

raster

1. The dots that make up the continuous tones of photographic plates for printing.

2. A scanning pattern of parallel lines that form the display of an image projected on a cathode-ray tube of a television set or display screen.

3. To rake.

Also known as Benday dots.

react, reactive

1. To act in response to or under the influence of a stimulus or prompting:

2. To act in opposition to a former condition or act.

3. To act reciprocally or in return.

4. An ink that forms a bond with an active substrate to produce a third material.

reflect

1. Directed back on itself.

2. Of or relating to a reflex.

3. Elicited automatically; spontaneous

4. *Printing: reflective*. Copy/substrate that is not transparent.

5. *Reflection*: Characterized by or given to meditation or contemplation; thoughtful.

6. Mirror image.

refuse

1. *Printing*: When an ink will not print on top of another.

2. Rejected or thrown aside as little value.

3. Garbage or rubbish.

reverse

1. The opposite of what is seen.

relief

1. The projection of figures or forms from a flat background, as in sculpture, or the apparent projection of such shapes in a painting or drawing.
2. Printing: The projection of a raised surface which is inked in the printing process.
3. The easing of a burden or distress, such as pain, anxiety, or oppression.
4. Something that alleviates pain or distress.

register

1. Printing: A state of proper alignment.
2. To set down names as in a list.

resist

1. *Printing*: A substance that can cover and protect a printed surface, when another print is made.
2. To strive to fend off or offset the actions, effects, or force.
3. To remain firm against the actions, effects, or force of; withstand.
4. To keep from giving in to or enjoying.

resolution/resolve

1. The state or quality of being resolute; firm determination.
2. A resolving to do something.
3. A course of action determined or decided on.
4. A formal statement of a decision or expression of opinion
5. The act or process of separating or reducing something into its constituent parts
6. *Printing*: The fineness of detail that can be distinguished in an image, as on a video display
7. The measurement used in typesetting to express quality of output.

RGB

1. Abbreviation for the primary colours, Red, Yellow/Green and Blue, the pigments of

which are chemically composed to correspond to spectral hues of prismatic light. They are not usually naturally found pigmented materials.

reproduction

1. **Printing:** The act of reproducing prints or the condition or process of being reproduced.
2. Something reproduced, especially in the faithfulness of its resemblance to the form and elements of the original.
3. The sexual or asexual process by which organisms generate new individuals of the same kind; procreation.

rosette

1. In the shape of a rose.
2. **Printing:** The pattern created when all four color halftone screens are placed at the correct angle.
3. **Printing:** A circular moiré, resembling a flower form, the fundamental structure of digital realism.

rough types

1. Specially created fonts used in design to recapture some of the older idiosyncrasies of hand cast type.
2. People who are not or who do not look smooth or sophisticated.

saturate

1. To imbue or impregnate thoroughly
2. To soak, fill, or load to capacity.
3. **Printing:** The amount of gray in a color. The higher the gray content, the lower the saturation
4. **Fully saturated.** Printer's term for rich color

score

1. **Printing:** A crease or slight cut put on paper to help it fold better.
2. A notch or incision, especially one that is made to keep a tally.
3. To achieve a purpose or advantage, especially to make a surprising gain or coup:

4. To succeed in seducing someone sexually.
5. To succeed in buying or obtaining an illicit drug.

separation

1. *Printing*: The act or process of separating an image into its constituent colours, in layers.
2. The condition of being separated.
3. The place at which a division or parting occurs.
4. An interval or space that separates; a gap

set

1. *Printing*: To arrange (type) into words and sentences preparatory to printing; compose.
2. Items in a specified position.
3. To put into a stable position.

screen

1. *Printing*: A glass plate marked off with crossing lines, placed before the lens of a camera when photographing for halftone reproduction.
2. *Screening*: A process of turning a continuous tone image into dots.
3. One that serves to protect, conceal, or divide
4. A coarse sieve used for sifting out fine particles, as of sand, gravel, or coal.
5. To conceal from view.
6. To show or project (a movie, for example) on a screen.

screen printing (also known as serigraphy)

1. *Printing*: A stencil method of printmaking in which a design is imposed on a screen of silk or other fine mesh, with blank areas coated with an impermeable substance, and ink is forced through the mesh onto the printing surface. Also called screen-printing, silk-screen process.
2. *Screenprint*. A print made by this method.

scum

1. *Printing*: traces of material, ink or solvents left in the screen that cause

blockages.

2. A filmy layer of extraneous or impure matter that forms on or rises to the surface of a liquid or body of water.
3. The refuse or dross of molten metals.
4. Refuse or worthless matter.
5. *Slang*. such as a person or an element of society, that is regarded as despicable or worthless.

slur

1. *Printing*: a smearing of the image, caused by paper slipping during the impression stage
2. Undesirable phenomenon of halftone dots becoming slightly elongated during printing.
3. To pronounce indistinctly.
4. To talk about disparagingly or insultingly

smooch

1. The mark made when ink is caught in burrs in metal that are raised by the tools, I came across the word in Ivins, *How Prints Look*, p. 75.
2. To kiss and caress in a romantic way.

solve

1. To find a solution to.
2. *Solvent, Printing*: Capable of dissolving another substance.

spread

1. To be extended or enlarged.
2. To become distributed or widely dispersed.
3. To increase in range of occurrence; become known or prevalent over a wide area.
4. To be exhibited, displayed, or visible in broad or full extent.
5. To become or admit of being distributed in a layer.
6. To become separated; be forced farther apart
7. *Printing*: Colour appears to go beyond its material boundaries and may combine at its edges with other colours. See dot spread.

squash

1. To compress with violence, out of natural shape or condition.
2. *Printing*: A squeeze out of the inks producing a raised edge beyond a character or a dot structure. (invisible to the naked eye, happens in digital printing seen only under extreme magnification)

shoulder

1. *Printing*: The flat surface on the body of type that extends beyond the letter or character
2. The area between the body and neck of a bottle or vase.
3. The top of the arm where it joins the neck.

stamp

1. *Printing*: An identifying or characterizing mark or impression
2. To thrust the foot forcibly downward.
3. An implement or device used to impress, cut out, or shape something to which it is applied.
4. A small piece of gummed paper sold by a government for attachment to an article that is to be mailed; a postage stamp.

stereotype

1. *Printing*: A metal printing plate cast from a matrix molded from a raised printing surface, such as type. Many typefaces may be cast from the same matrix but the results are never exactly the same. The effects of cooling, overspilling, wear all make a difference. When they are printed, effects of the slightly different pressure of printing, the colour and absorbency of the paper, and the traces left by the actions of the machine or body all produce variations.
2. A conventional, formulaic, and oversimplified conception, opinion, or image.
3. One that is regarded as embodying or conforming to a set image or type.

spine

1. The spinal column of a vertebrate
2. *Printing*: Binding edge of a signature or publication.

substrate

1. *Printing*: Any material on which a print is made, paper, wood, metal, glass, skin etc.
2. An underlying layer; a substratum.
3. Linguistics An indigenous language that contributes features to the language of an invading people who impose their language on the indigenous population.

tack

1. A course of action meant to minimize opposition to the attainment of a goal.
2. An approach, especially one of a series of changing approaches.
3. A large, loose stitch made as a temporary binding or as a marker.
4. Stickiness, as that of a newly painted surface.
5. *Printing*. Necessary quality of paper to stick temporarily.
6. Slang tacky - tastelessly showy.

text

1. The original words of something written or printed, as opposed to a paraphrase, translation, revision, or condensation.
2. The words of a speech appearing in print
3. *Printing*: Text paper. Grade of paper characterized by textured surfaces.

thumbnail

1. The nail of the thumb.
2. *Printing*: A reduced image of a graphic

tissue.

1. A fine, very thin fabric, such as gauze.
2. *Printing*: very thin paper like Tengujo, used for overlays and archival repair.
3. An interwoven or interrelated number of things; a web; a network
4. Biology: An aggregation of morphologically similar cells and associated intercellular matter acting together to perform one or more specific functions in the body.

tone

1. A sound of distinct pitch, quality, and duration; a note.
2. The interval of a major second in the diatonic scale; a whole step.
3. The quality or character of sound.
4. The characteristic quality or timbre of a particular instrument or voice
5. Tonal range. *Printing* or painting term for density range from visual dark to light.

trace

1. *Printing*: To copy by following lines seen through a sheet of transparent paper.
2. To make a design or series of markings on (a surface)
3. To follow the course or trail of
4. To ascertain the successive stages in the development or progress of.
5. To locate or discover by searching or researching evidence:
6. A visible mark, such as a footprint, made or left by the passage of a person, animal, or thing.

transfer

1. *Printing*: To convey a print from one surface to another.
2. To convey or cause to pass from one place, person, or thing to another.
3. *Law* To make over the possession or legal title of; convey.

transparent

1. *Printing*: A positive photographic slide on film allowing light to pass through.
2. Easily seen through or detected. Obvious.
3. Free from guile. candid or open
4. Having no intervening medium.

transpose

1. *Printing*: To reverse or transfer the order or place of; interchange.
2. To put into a different place or order.
3. *Mathematics* To move (a term) from one side of an algebraic equation to the other side, reversing its sign to maintain equality.
- 4 To render into another language.
5. To alter in form or nature; transform.

type

1. *Printing*: A small block of metal or wood bearing a raised letter or character on the upper end that leaves a printed impression when inked and pressed on paper.
2. *Printing*: Printed or typewritten characters.
3. A number of people or things having in common traits or characteristics that distinguish them as a group or class.
4. The general character or structure held in common by a number of people or things considered as a group or class.
5. A person or thing having the features of a group or class.
6. *Printing*: type family - a complete set of type suitable for printing text.

vignette

1. An image that does not have a definite border around it.
2. Halftone whose background gradually fades to white.
3. To soften the edges.
4. To describe in a brief way.

virtual

1. Existing or resulting in essence or effect though not in actual fact, form, or name.
2. Existing in the mind, especially as a product of the imagination.
3. *Digital printing*: Created, simulated, or carried on by means of a computer or computer network

wash up.

1. *Printing*: to clean ink from rollers, fountains, an other components of a press.
2. To clean up after eating

web

1. *Printing*: A kind of large press.
2. A large roll of printing paper.
3. The structural part of cloth.
4. A structure of delicate, threadlike filaments characteristically spun by spiders or certain insect larvae.
5. Something intricately contrived, especially something that ensnares or entangles

6. **www**: a network of information.

widow

1. *Printing*: a single word left on the last line of a paragraph which falls at the top of a page
2. a woman whose husband is dead.

wrinkles

1. Creases in paper
2. Uneven drying of ink
3. Lines in the skin due to ageing.

yotta

1. (symbol **Y**) is a SI prefix in the SI (system of units) denoting 10^{24} or 1 000 000 000 000 000 000 000 000. (Also mistakenly and imaginatively described as *Zotta*.)

Definitions edited from the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

Barnard, M. (ed) (2000) *Print and Production Manual*, BPIF Publishing: UK.

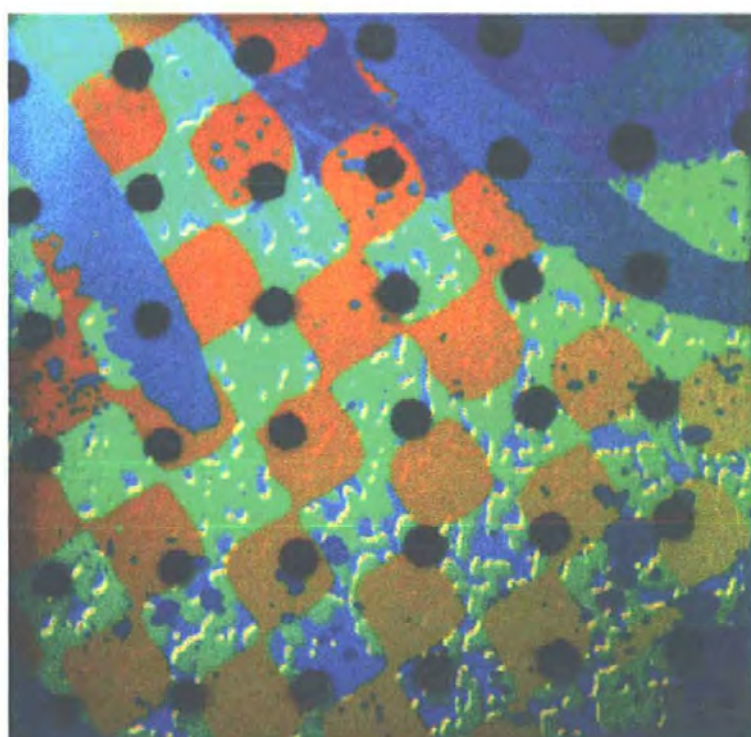
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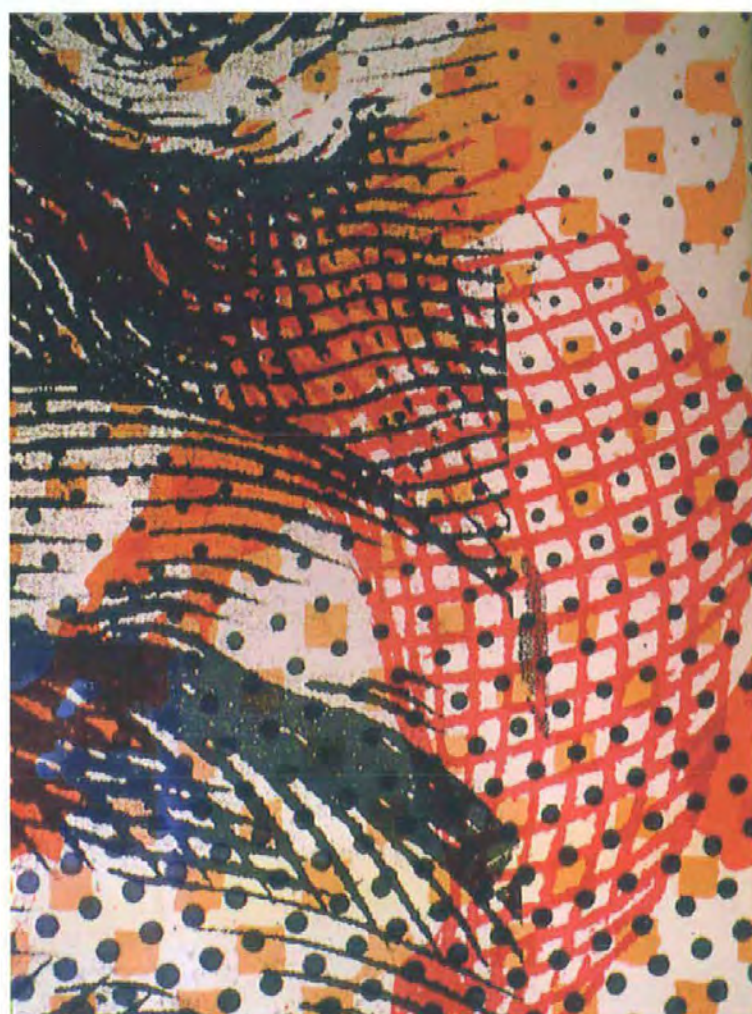
PrintUSA.com *Glossary of Printing Terms* online reference. 2006

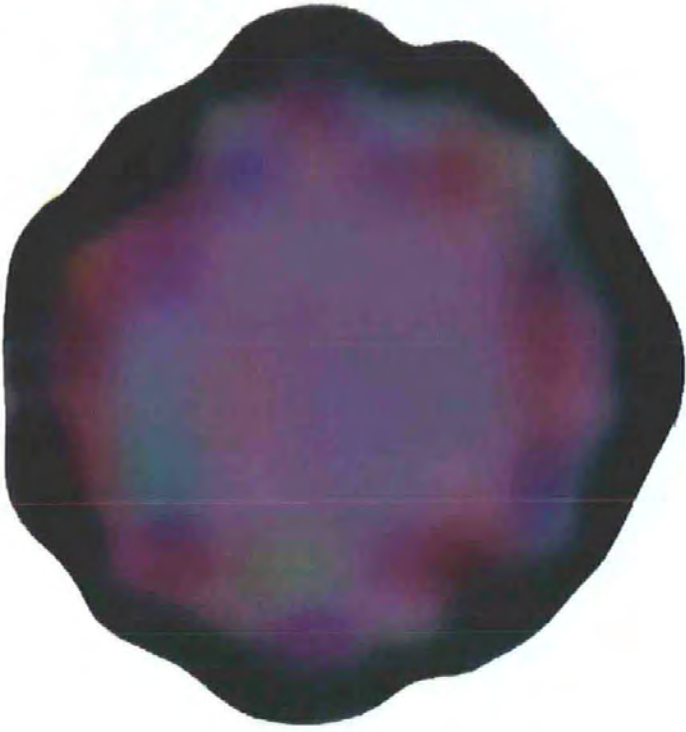
APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL ILLUSTRATIONS

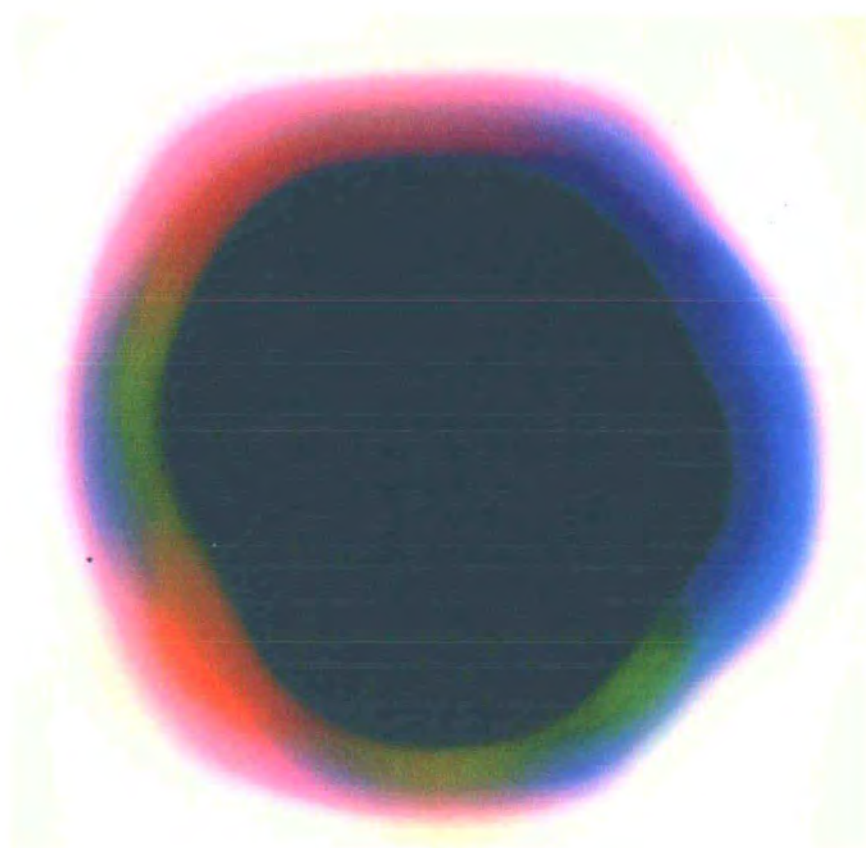






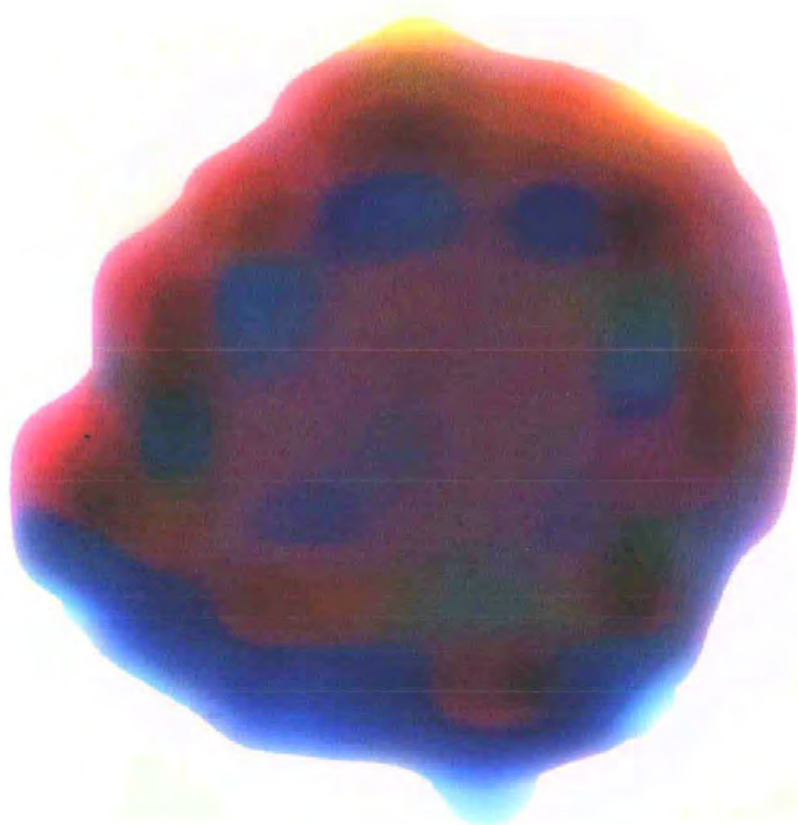






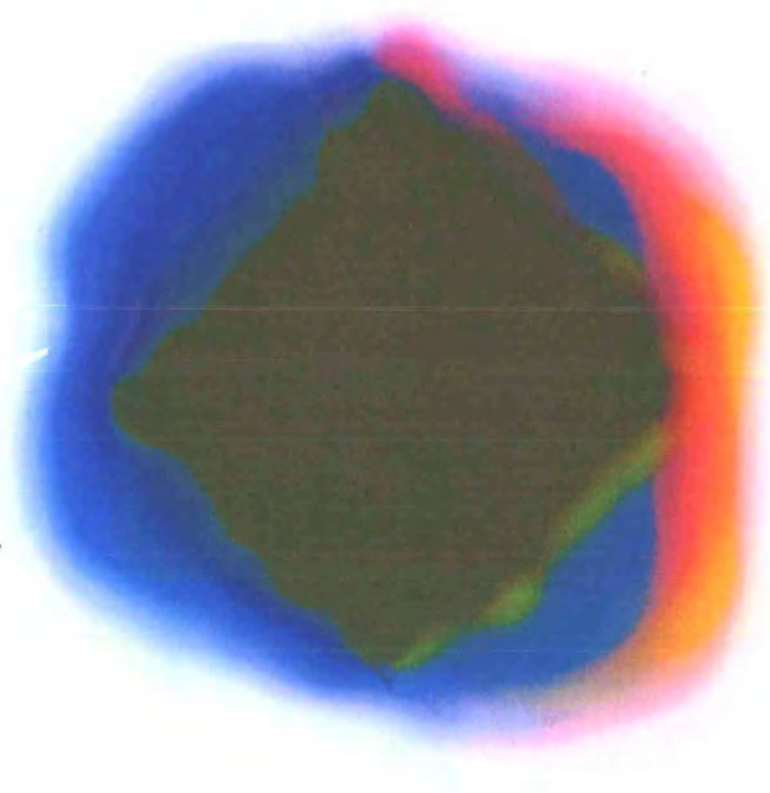
HAHNEMUHLE

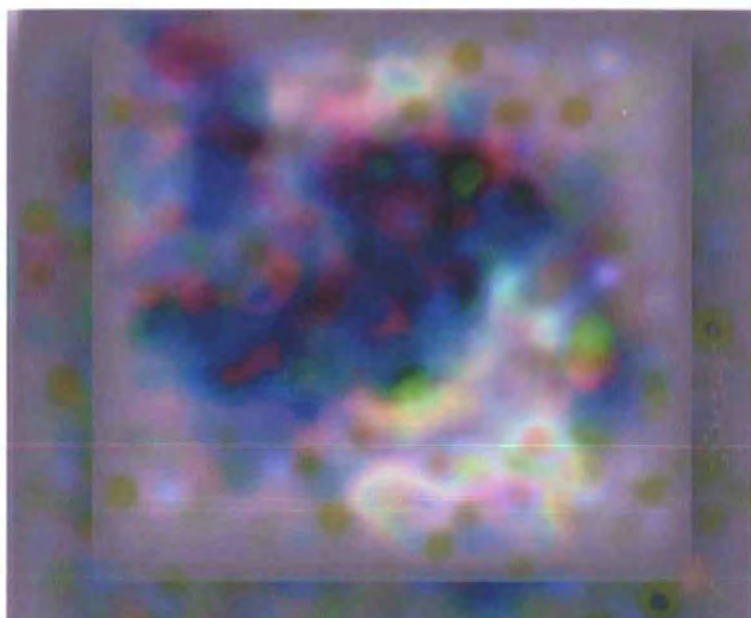
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printable on both sides

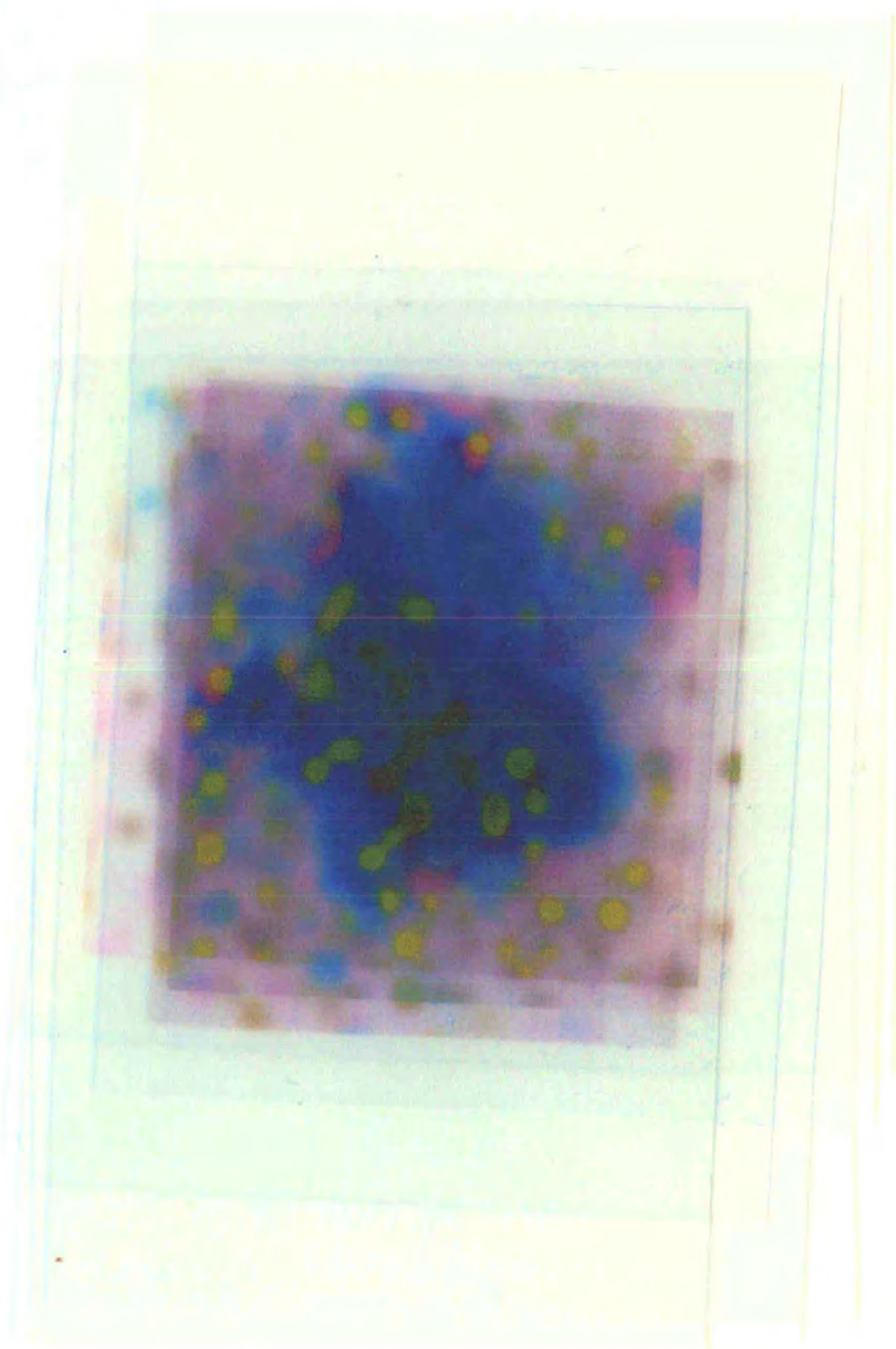


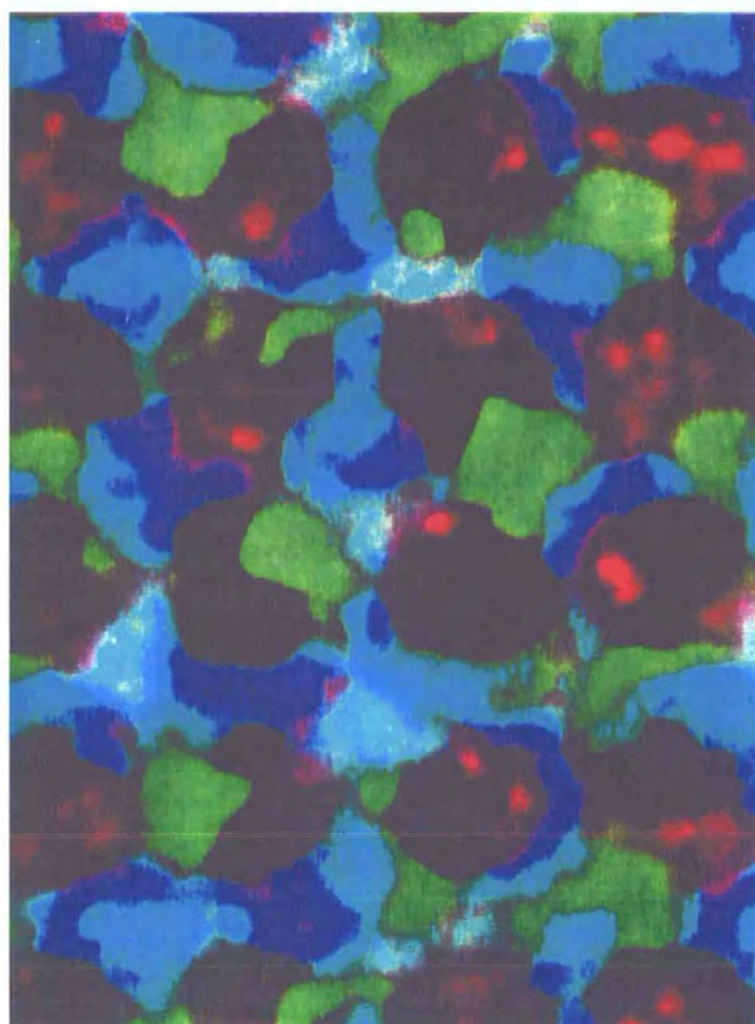
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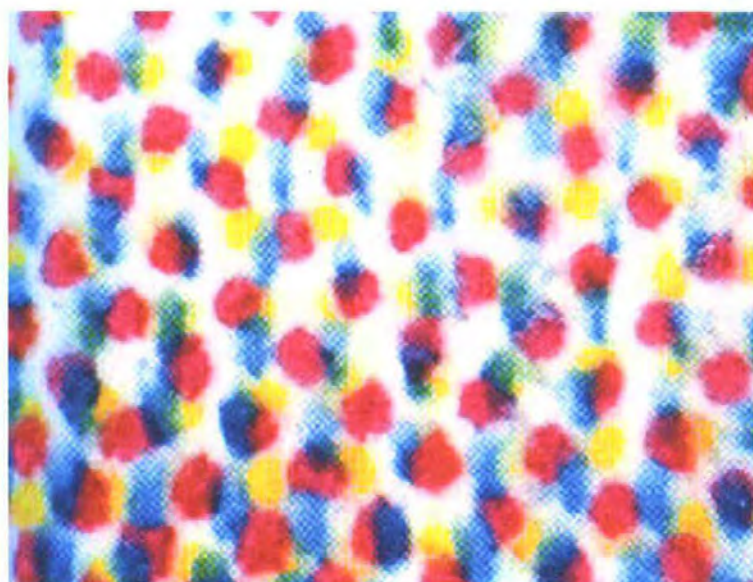
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print on other side

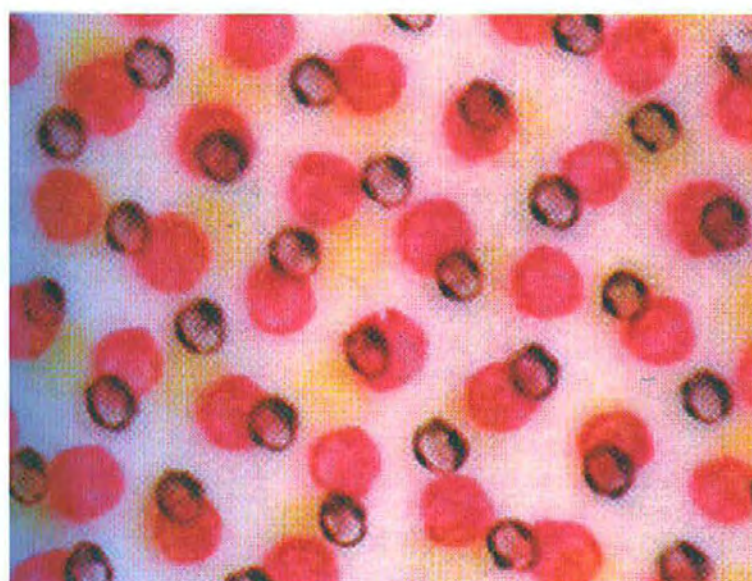












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APPENDIX C: PUBLICATIONS

Psychology and the Subject of Art Education

Pen Dalton

This paper takes two traditional discourses which have been identified at work in English art education since the early twentieth century: the conventional and the progressive models. It argues that they are discourses supported and legitimised by old paradigms of psychology that continue to produce notions of art and identities that are hierarchically and oppressively organised. Whilst not dismissing the continuing value of empirical psychology and some aspects of older models of art education, this paper suggests that the two discourses need to be re-assessed in the light of postmodern insights on subjectivity, vision and identity which challenge the stability of meanings and categories that exist in art education.

Introduction

To construct my argument I need to revisit art education in England as it was in the early twentieth century. To do this I am borrowing an established version outlined by David Thistlewood, who identified that at the end of the 1930s, two broad principles were at work, represented in standards set by two different professional bodies: The National Society of Art Masters (NSAM) and the Art Teachers Guild. (ATG) [1] Although Thistlewood does not make it explicit, the NSAM was, as its name suggests, an organisation of men, whilst the ATG was representative of those who taught in elementary education to young children, and who were predominantly women. [2]

The first and most prominent model represented by the NSAM – which following Thistlewood's terminology I shall refer to as the conventional model – consisted mainly of the teaching of drawing and design. Its standards had been built on established values based in classical art, which were later modernised: tied in with vocational rationales within the vigorous new discourses of manufacture and productivity. The conventional model was, as Thistlewood maintained, 'a specifically modern and industrially strategic art education'. [3]

The second model favoured a more progressive art education which drew its

ideological support from the Romantic tradition, and enlightened liberal notions of individual freedoms and equality. [4] Its legitimacy as a truly modern practice was achieved through the application of new scientific insights on the nature of the child. [5]

Both models can be understood as discursive. That is, according to Foucault's notion of discourse, they represent fields of knowledge and practice that produce meanings. In this case they produced two different clusters of meanings about art, about what constitutes the normal child, and how that child grows, sees and creates. It is within discursive practices – such as the conventional and progressive modes of art education – that identities are constructed. [6]

Discourse

Michel Foucault argued that discourses influence, affect and shape each other. As a new discourse emerges, it borrows and adds strength to its project by adopting the terminologies and practices of older more stable and well established discourses. [7] Kerry Freedman affirms: 'Groups are excluded or included through discursive practices and those with little power are given new legitimacy by adopting the powerful image of a "legitimate" discourse'. [8] Dominant historical discourses such as Romanticism, and the Classical in art education, have been adopted by progressive and conventional discourses, and are then interwoven and interact with more or less powerful new discourses from other fields such as psychology, technology, feminism, post-colonialism, and modernism to legitimise their presence and authority in the curriculum.

Conventional and progressive art education discourse

In the mid-late nineteenth century, conventional art pedagogy adopted the classical discourses already existing in art academies. It reproduced classical art's monosexual masculine cultural values and its themes of 'high art', which in the nineteenth century meant some sort of realistic depiction of landscape, portrait, history painting or still life. The classical tradition, as Mervyn Romans has pointed out, provided a national, middle class – and I would add masculine – standard for taste that was disseminated throughout the new discourses of emergent state art education. [9]

Conventional discourse in art education achieved legitimacy as a modern practice in its establishment of positivistic, scientific rationales and methodologies. It

privileged the idea of objective observation, the establishing of scientific methodologies of aims, objectives and outcomes, accuracy and analysis, and it adopted rigorous-looking diagrams of systems and stages of delivery.

However, conventional models have always had their critics. Progressive educators such as Froebel and Montessori in the early part of the twentieth century rejected the notions of drilling and training evident in conventional art education in favour of a Rousseauesque approach allowing for individualism and the 'natural' growth of the child '... not as a mind to be instructed and a body to be drilled, but a growing organism'. [10] Progressive art pedagogy seemed less coercive, it gave a more active role to the child. It valued exploration, enquiry, creativity and discovery encouraged and supported by a non-interventionist teacher.

Psychology and the two discourses

Up to the 1970s and still evident today, art education in schools has consisted of the complex interrelation of two clusters of practices centred around the two discourses: masculine 'scientific' conventional and feminine progressive, child-centred pedagogy.

In the early twentieth century the increasingly dominant social discourses of psychology provided art education with modern, scientifically verified accounts about the nature of art and perception. Science also produced 'facts' about the development of children's cognitive ability, about creativity and artistic development, upon which hierarchical and progressive systems of art pedagogy could be codified and structured. Scientific psychology did not just influence an otherwise 'neutral' art education, but was saturated into its fundamental structuring forms, values and meanings. [11]

Whilst much has to be done in the deconstructing of psychology's place in art education, all I aim to do here is outline two dominant modes of conventional and progressive art education, and the discourses of modernist psychology that have shaped and structured them, as well as providing a brief introduction to where post-modern alternatives can be found.

Psychology in conventional discourse

The conventional model of art education was a publicly accountable practice based in established knowledges about art. It always lent itself to centralised

systems: to the 'packaging' of knowledges which could be taught and assessed to meet nationally defined and predetermined standards.

How psychology has become embedded in conventional art education was described by Mary Rouse in 1973. [12] The work of Rouse and her colleagues has been highly influential in shaping contemporary conventional modes (Discipline Based) art education in North America as well as behavioural objectives for models of art education in Britain. The following points illustrate the connections.

Rouse lists for instance, how empirical tests produced evidences of children's 'graphic behaviour, aesthetic choice behaviour, perceptual development, perceptual behaviour, creative behaviour, cognitive and physical development'. [13] Controlled laboratory tests provided scientifically verified knowledges on which to sequence art education 'based on an analysis of which behaviours logically precede other more complex behaviours ...' [14] The evolutionary narrative that moved from simple to complex configurations, through progressive and sequential stages were easily adapted into stages of children's cognitive development: the traditional stages of drawing seemed conveniently to match and legitimise the hierarchical stages of development of children's thought processes, which is not surprising, since both were constructed within narratives of Darwinian evolution. [15] With scientifically established knowledges of a normal child and normal child development, art education could be further broken down into elements which corresponded to behavioural norms at different ages and stages of development. The process, as Rouse described it, was, 'First to specify six complete years of objectives, then translate these into individual years, then into individual learning periods, and finally into weeks and days.' [16]

Because conventional systems models rely on the delivery of a universally shared structure, format and developmental progression, they require shared aims, objectives, outcomes and co-ordinated and uniform standards of assessments, i.e., system models. Common methods require training and agreed values amongst its principal authors; teachers who are less well trained in art education and psychology require techniques for schematically delivering material and are given aids and exemplars in the form of text books, easily assimilated charts, diagrams, and procedures which establish norms and can be easily followed. This method it is claimed, allows for diversity and choice of 'content': each individual teacher can choose from many options to suit different ethnic, gendered, racial and cultural groups, providing they fit within the wider structural 'forms' of uniform aims, standards and assessment values. This is a 'diversity within unity' approach

which, it has been argued by the educational critic, Henry Giroux, finds its contemporary legitimising discourse in global corporate culture, and the management of organisations such as Coca-Cola and Benetton. [17] What is often forgotten and rarely taught – and therefore not available for critical interrogation – is that these contemporary categories, stages and systems are based in tests on behavioural and experimental psychology, such as those produced by Rouse and her colleagues, and were carried out in the first half of the twentieth century. Since that time behavioural approaches have been fundamentally problematized by critical psychologists. [18]

Psychoanalytic and therapeutic models of art pedagogy

In their critique of the behavioural emphasis of systems models, progressive art educators turned to modes of psychology which dealt with the less tangible questions of human behaviour: the origins of emotions, anxieties, of imagination, creative symbol formation and non-visible, otherwise unaccountable and unmeasurable behaviours. A 'new psychology' emerged largely based in versions of object-relation theories extrapolated from the Freudian inspired work of psychologists such as Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott. Their accounts of human development emphasised the significance of the imaginary, the use of objects and the importance of family relationships – particularly the child-mother relationship in children's healthy development. [19] New psychologies laid stress on the importance in early childhood, of establishing a safe, secure and non-threatening environment as a basis for helping children to develop as confident, creative and trusting people. Klein's work was popularised by educationalist Susan Isaacs and promoted in art education through the writings of Marion Milner and later in the mid-twentieth century by Carl Rogers. [20] Rogers had deployed Kleinian notions of trust in his therapeutic clinical experience of encounter groups. He suggested that 'psychological safety, psychological freedom, the acceptance of the individual as having unconditional worth; the absence of external evaluation; empathetic understanding; and the permission of complete freedom of symbolic expression are all preconditions to creativity.' [21] Art educator, Malcolm Ross, in the 1970s drew on the concepts of Winnicott and Klein's nurturing creativity and argued that the 'Good-enough' art teacher, both male and female in the secondary school, should provide an uncritical and supportive environment in the classroom that fosters creativity and trust. [22]

Some more recent 'feminist methodologies' in art education, such as those outlined by Dinah Dosser and Renée Sandell, have adopted the mantle

progressive education and have revived the psychoanalytical/psychological tradition, sometimes combining it with the liberatory discourses of radical pedagogy from theorists such as Paulo Friere and Antonio Gramsci. Small group work, therapeutic pedagogy, role-playing and performance, have been investigated as means of empowerment, as stimulating creativity, self awareness and growth. Therapeutic counselling skills, mothering and tutoring skills, it has been argued, have much in common. It has been suggested that they can be combined and deployed in art education to promote creativity, to break down traditional hierarchical and classificatory barriers of power and authority between teacher and the taught and between different art subjects. [23]

The advantage of feminist methodologies and more interpretative psychoanalytical approaches has allowed a more fluid and reflexive approach to understanding art and the child. They privilege non-productive play, dreams and fantasies in art making, the sharing of experience and activities, and they begin to provide explanations for the meaning-making function of objects in imaginative symbol formation.

The newer, child-centered traditions of feminist pedagogy are frequently presented in non-rigorous, non-academic practices of Romanticism; in painting, drawing natural forms, work in soft materials, and art centred on the (usually female) body and interdisciplinary subject matter and materials. Romantic formal practice in art requires less the techniques of realism, less skill in observation, accuracy or detail, and concentrate instead on the visible expression of inner emotion or personal development. They seem in many ways, to offer an alternative to the fragmentation, the coldness of the rigid and authoritarian systems of conventional approaches, as well as asserting a more individualist stance in relation to the encroachment of global and corporate values.

However, like the conventional model, the feminist/child-centered traditions of art education work within an evolutionary and humanist version of children's mental and creative development. Psychoanalytic psychologies for instance construct a narrative of healthy ego gradually evolving from complete narcissistic identification with the mother, to gradual experience of separation, and identification with the father, towards an interest in people and the outer world. The ultimate aim is the achieving of a stable and unified and clearly gendered identity. In this sense the 'master' plan is akin to that of conventional education.

Critiques of progressive pedagogy

More recently feminist critical psychologists, drawing on Lacanian psychoanalytic insights and revisiting the work of older forgotten psychologists such as Lev Vygotsky, have been critical of feminine progressive pedagogy, of maternalism in the classroom, and have condemned the use of therapeutic pedagogic practices. [24] Maternal pedagogy has been described as manipulative, employing covert moral imperatives of the discourses of feminism where the power relation between the teacher and the taught, subsumed under rhetorics of 'care' and 'love' hide real differences of power, and render authority inaccessible to criticism or change. It has been further argued that, although progressive discourses appear to advocate freedom, spontaneity and self-growth, they are in practice just as rigid, and coercive as conventional models. [25]

As Valerie Walkerdine has established, systems of scientific psychological classification, of difference and hierarchy have been so successfully internalised that teachers believe themselves to be acting spontaneously and freely but are actually acting out systems and structures planned elsewhere, about which they have little knowledge or control. [26]

It was in practices adopted by progressive teachers in the first decades of the twentieth century for instance, that some of the most rigid, formulaic and static systems of art teaching – still visible in art education today – were established. In progressive art education, the child was putatively free to choose their own activity and materials, but the classroom was so organised that only certain materials were made available; these were usually drawing and painting tools that were designed to fit pre-determined stages of development or manual ability. The paints were often only available in primary colours: the use of black or brown paint, synthetic materials, photographic material, gold or fluorescent paint were not considered suitable for children's creative activities. White smooth paper, was commonly forbidden. Children were given large paint brushes, strongly coloured powder paints, crude wax crayons for 'little hands to hold' and large sheets of tinted sugar paper on which to make images. Copying, attempts at fine detail or realism and the use of drawing instruments: rulers or optical devices were not encouraged. Gentle persuasion was employed to approve appropriate child art practice: large brushwork and bright colours, and to discourage undesirable art – cartoon drawings, 'outlining', 'colouring in', or copying commercial illustrations, fashion or advertising – the things that children, left to their own devices, were apt to 'fall into'. Such work was removed, it received little praise or simply was not put on the

classroom walls. The innocence and simplicity, the developmental stages of the modern child can be seen to be *produced* in these romantic, progressive and fundamentally psychological art educational discourses. [27]

Old paradigm psychology

What I am leading up to is the notion that both the models – conventional / behavioural model and the new child-centred pedagogies exemplified by feminist methodologies – are based in versions of modernist psychology. Both are ‘scientific’; that is they are both underpinned by evidences about the child produced from experimental and empirical psychology mainly carried out in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Both assume a Cartesian and gendered model of identity with its separation of the cognitive and bodily functions and the separation of an ‘inner self’ from ‘society.’ They are both founded in psychologies and notions of art that have, for many years now, been fundamentally disturbed and challenged by post-modern critiques. [28]

Post-modern psychology: A contradiction in terms?

The discipline of psychology has been undergoing a self-critical transformation for many years. Psychology is no longer the privileged discourse where meanings about identity are being produced; it is now only one of many discourses of ‘the self’ along with insights from post-colonial studies, film studies, linguistics and literary theory and feminism. [29]

New social constructionist psychology and discursive psychologies undermine the Cartesian subject of art education with its ‘inner and outer self’ and its fixed binary gender relations. [30] Post-structural theorists have revealed the notion of the Darwinian/Piagetian developing child as one of the Grand Narratives of modernity. [31] In the field of vision, the work of critics such as Norman Bryson, Laura Mulvey and Jaqueline Rose destabilise the notion of art inherited in art education. [32] Bryson has stressed the role of art as a fully social, active, meaning-making practice, and part of wider conventional and contemporary symbol systems, rather than being a representation or communication of ‘inner’ psychological states of mind.

Poststructuralist, feminist and postcolonial theorists have undermined the modernist notion of creativity, the perceptualist tradition of art, [33] and the male gaze of Western culture and science upon which the dominant discourses of art

and identity rest. [34] Identity, subjectivity, the visual, are all discourses that have undergone radical re-thinking and change particularly since the 1970s. Identity is now thought of as ‘socially saturated’; in post-structural psychologies there is no possibility of thinking of a child outside of relationships, discursive fields, of history, gender, class, culture and social context.

There is no aspect of art education that is not profoundly disturbed by these interventions, yet the educational implications of these new discourses have hardly been considered by those who write national curricula or who implement national policies and who write popular art educational texts. Old Paradigm psychologists and educationalists such as Herbert Read, Eliot Eisner, and Howard Gardner continue to be cited whilst the names of newer influences in educational psychology such as Jacques Lacan, Lev Vygotsky, Rom Harre, Valerie Walkerdine, or Kenneth Gergen are hardly ever mentioned:

The continuing importance of psychology

This paper has taken two important models of English art education: there are others from non-western and critical and socialist traditions whose psychological assumptions, as far as I am aware, have not yet been examined and have not been considered here. My aim has not been to the importance of psychology for art education, nor to reject completely the values and experience gained in the practices of modernist psychology, nor to throw out all that has been achieved through conventional and progressive pedagogies. Psychology has lost much of its legitimising authority as a discourse, but the answer I suggest, is not to dismiss psychology. Art education is a socially accountable practice. It needs – however provisionally held – shared notions of ‘the child’ and ‘art’, of ‘creativity’ and accounts of how vision works on which to base repeatable and non oppressive practices. What is important in art educational theory, is that notions of the subject of art education: the child, and art education’s subject: art, should be constructed within the best possible and most up-to-date and well-researched knowledges available. The older – what some postmodern critics problematise as ‘modernist’ – practices of research, selection, criticism, evaluation, with all their drawbacks, still can, I suggest, provide the best way of making choices about what to teach and how and why, and when to introduce new materials and ideas. [35]

Art education continues to work within old psychological paradigms. Whilst the visible ‘content’ of art education has become more ‘relevant’ and ‘pluralist’ – it now includes women’s and postcolonial initiatives and ‘identity’ – the systems and

structures, the underlying assumptions about the child and the values given to the art it produces are still constructed within humanist and Cartesian old paradigm of the child; child development and visual perception.

What is urgent in art education at present is a deconstruction of the embedded but hidden, active, divisive, restricting and oppressively gendered and hierarchical modernist psychological assumptions. This should be followed by a collective and institutional review of what aspects of old paradigm psychology can be maintained as useful and transformative and what ought to be jettisoned without sentiment. Both conventional and progressive models can offer precedents but there needs to be research and evaluation of the new discourses of psychology, of contemporary art practice, contemporary aesthetic theory and contemporary cultural and critical theory to assess their potential for incorporation into a psychology of art education that is meaningful in contemporary contexts.

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intellect



Where is 'the subject' in contextual practice?

Pen Dalton

Abstract

The notion of the subject implied by contextual practice finds its defining discourse in the traditions of social science where 'society' is regarded as essentially separate from 'the individual'. This it is suggested, has led to a neglect of debate on subjectivity in contextual practice. What is offered as central to any contextual practice is a notion of subjectivity as distributed within, rather than separate from social relations.

Contextual practice (CP) can be seen in a range of heterogeneous new genre art characterized by interaction with the social world within which people live and work; with public rather than private concerns. It engages with institutions of paid and productive work, with people's relation to the global, the economic and the political, it addresses civic rather than domestic identities and has become part of a critique of 'ideological state apparatus' of education, social welfare, health and media. It emerged partly as a rejection of the perceived inwardness and autonomy of modernist fine art and shaped its own practices through non-gallery, non-commercial sites; in public sculpture, site-specific work, mural painting, in community arts and workshops in youth clubs and non-art venues. It has established some of its practices in schools, in gallery education, in shops, housing estates and streets, and it has absorbed its critical practices in the visual and cultural techniques and dissemination of mass media and communications systems. Contextual practice has always had one foot in neo-conceptual fine art practices: specifically those engaged with issues of economics or politics, and more recently with the more private concerns of gender, sexuality, popular culture, consumption and domesticity. But broadly speaking, contextual art practice represents the social world and there is a clear assumption that individuals exist in this social context; as essentially separate. CP's artists, critics and commentators have largely adopted enlightened modernity's public/private divide, and eschewed the personal and the subjective as outside their frame of reference. The complex discourses on subjectivity in psychoanalysis and critical psychology that are active in art history, feminist cultural theory, film and consumer studies and the more recent debates on performativity, alterity and ethical subjectivity have been bypassed in favour of the more social (and simplistic) concept of 'identity' with its attendant notions of multiculturalism, pluralism, and community.

Identity politics

Identity politics and its categories of class, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, able-bodiedness etc. have been established through radical critiques of class and bourgeois culture. In the early 1970s, through the academic discourses of sociology, psychology and cultural studies, new 'sub-cultures' were defined, each with their attendant styles of dress, speech, cultural values and identifying characteristic

- 1 S. Hall (1992), 'Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies', in L. Grossberg, C. Nelson, P. A. Treichler (eds.) *Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge.
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- 3 See Douglas Crimp in conversation with Mary Kelly in M. Iverson, D. Crimp, H.K. Bhabha (1997), *Mary Kelly*, Phaidon.

behaviours: football fans, factory workers, miners, skinheads, 'schoolkids', 'British blacks' and so on. Feminism soon shifted the masculine emphasis of these preoccupations by asserting the economic importance of the labour of women and girls who had been omitted from economic and political theorizing in social theory, and extended the studies to the private economic realm: of unpaid carers, working mothers, housewives, prostitutes, teenage clubbers and dancers, and low-paid contingent workers in home-working, and in service work in cleaning, textiles and catering.¹ They made explicit the economic necessity of care, service and 'emotional labour'. Feminism's insistence on subjectivity as a political and economic issue opened the way to a critique of the often romantic humanist subject of the Left's theorizing, and the dismantling of the public/private divide assumed by enlightened equality politics.

But as time has passed, the radical implications of feminist psychoanalysis and linguistics appear to have had little effect on CPs assumption of the priority of the 'public'. Feminist interventions have been absorbed into the remnants of a Marxist heritage that relegates the personal and subjective to a secondary place. What is left are versions of individualist humanist feminism, which have widened the definitions of 'work' to include the domestic but which have not radically altered the binary terms on which gendered subjectivity - which is the basis of the sexual divisions of labour - is posited.

There is more to this than just oversight. The radical discourses of subjectivity have a history of persistent marginalization by a 'tough' 'politicized' practice that sees its masculine hegemony challenged.

As Terry Smith put it in relation to the *Art & Language* group:

There was an assumption shared by most of us in public sphere politics, including the varieties of Marxism, even anarchism, that whatever happened in that [public] sphere would override the private, or should. There was perhaps also a masculinist suspicion of what seemed an invitation to confusion in 'the personal is the political'. A fear of loss of power, not unfounded.²

It was only through AIDS activism and queer politics that men began to address subjectivity in contemporary art at all. Influential cultural critics have spoken of their reluctance to embrace psychoanalysis, and described the length of time it took for them to begin to take their own subjectivity and sexuality into account.³ But 'subjectivity' in contemporary practice has become synonymous with 'sexuality'. There is still a reluctance to address social subjectivity, and the masculine body is inscribed in *social* relations of political and economic power.

Psychology

Although subjectivity has not been part of CPs constituting discourse, CP nonetheless has to work with an implied notion of an individual - an individual artist and an individual audience or client - who is the subject of its practices. What can be seen is that this notion has its formative origins in the discourses of psychology. A notion of 'the individual' that resorts back to a fundamentally humanist construct of a potentially active and knowing agent, who develops, becomes liberated and articulates through the creative practices of art. Although in the 1970s the radical Left - and subsequently, psychoanalysis - mounted a powerful critique of traditional psychology, nonetheless its discursive practices continue to inhabit the social world

and shape consciousness.⁴ Although new concepts of 'the self' are paid lip service in cultural theory, modernist psychological discourse still underpins many of art's processes and evaluative and creative practices. Psychology continues to work in the world: spreading luxuriantly unchecked by contemporary critique. Its constituting practices are actively saturated into modern institutions of administration, of law, education, health and social welfare, and its place has been strongly reasserted in the cognitive structuring of media systems, in the management of people in global corporations and in business, finance, politics, consumption, advertising and popular culture. It appears as distributed and taken for granted in everyday forms; in pop psychology, alternative therapies and self-help books. The systems and hierarchies, the rationalizing categorizations of scientific psychology are formative of contemporary consciousness.

Psychology did not so much discover as create the identities it claimed only to observe. The acting out, the adoption of its different identifications however empowering for the individual, only reinscribes that identity as 'real'. The notion of performativity articulates this process: performativity does not just mean the 'acting out' of inner subjectivities, but doing things, saying things, making things that produce as subjectivity the effects they name, as it utters them.⁵ In negotiating, for instance, the fragmentations and institutional categories of 'slow learners' or 'talented' identities of psychological discourse, subjectivity is performatively being created in psychological science's own atomistic, binary and hierarchical forms. As Foucault contended: 'the human psyche has been fashioned and shaped by the techniques we have devised to probe its secrets.'⁶

But psychology's unfashionable status in art and cultural theory and its rejection by a Left committed only to 'public' discourse means that, while it is it everywhere, it is also hidden and thus unquestioned.

Psychology is a modernist discourse that claimed to be a 'science of the person'. It adopted the Cartesian notion of mental 'stuff' as being essentially separate from and superior to the body and apart from any social or historical context. It thus privileged investigation into processes of reasoning, intelligence, cognitive growth, memory, imagination, creativity and visual perception which, following pre-modern patriarchal metaphors, it designated 'masculine'. The ideal person of psychology has been imagined as the rational, enlightened, educated and liberated man. It is towards this liberal, progressive person that CP can be said to direct its processes.

Social psychology

There had always of course been attempts from social psychology to oppose extremes of behaviourism and biological determinism in psychology: to theorize the social world as intimately connected to subjectivity and vice versa. But as critical psychologists have pointed out, these attempts always rely on establishing difference in the first place.⁷ In these accounts, 'the social world' is variously seen to play a part in 'shaping, thwarting or nurturing' an otherwise authentic, biological self; the family for instance can negatively reinforce existing identities (by stereotyping, sexism, racism or homophobia); education can for instance deny or ignore existing identities (exclusion or silencing), but by and large identities, the 'real self' - the gender, the race, the talent, the creativity - is there 'inside' as a seed, allowed to 'flower' with progressive experiences, or to be 'stunted' by repression. CP plays its part in this scenario: art and creativity are seen to positively affirm, support

- 4 For this history see D. Adlam, J. Henriques, N. Rose, A. Salfield, C. Venn, and V. Walkerdine, (1977), 'Psychology, Ideology and the human subject', *Ideology and Consciousness*, 1 May.
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- 11 J. Derrida and C. McDonald (1982), 'Interview: Choreographies', in *Diacritics*, 12, pp. 66-76.

and consolidate existing identities (empowering, enabling, giving voice, allowing self-expression or representation) to 'working mothers', 'the young' etc., who are the already identified recipients of its practices. In small group workshops - which is where 'feminist methodologies' can often be found - art and the processes of 'making' are often regarded as essentially liberatory, creative, directed through expressive practices, producing personal growth, insight and self-knowledge, towards the final fantasy of a holistic, harmonic and rational ego-identity.⁸ The artistic products of a group are less important than the group process and social interaction: Asian women's embroidery, black youths' T-shirts or the housewife's autobiographical narratives are received uncritically as the transparent representations of each group's own self/indigenous culture/racial/biological identity, or a natural expression of their stage of growth and creativity. A secure identity can be authenticated by a return to roots or origins, by looking for solidarity and sameness in the group practice, and the finding of (an always assumed neutral) voice or media to express those authenticated selves as the agent of political and personal change. Identities are seen to be *in* people who are CP's already-present subjects. 'Society' is, by and large, assumed to be an aggregate of the individuals within it. The concept of 'community' is, for instance, understood as a number of people having the same inner attributes, or psychological properties or economic needs.

The identity of the artist

In 1989, Sally Morgan identified the role of socially committed artists in five different servicing/managerial roles: as 'servicer/polemicist'; as 'critical observer'; as 'catalyst/animateur'; as 'collaborator'; 'enabler/facilitator'.⁹ The artist in these scenarios - with the unproblematic, already assumed identity - expected to work with/for already identified groups or sub-cultures. The role of the CP artist was to provide groups with the social, communication and technical skills, opportunities and competencies to make their authentic inner voices and desires heard and to bring about transformative change.¹⁰

Community arts practices usually have a recognized artist as leader, teacher or 'enabler' whose trained eye guides the art activity, and through whose named self the work is made manifest to the world as art. The artist may work with and for others but it is often 'their' project that is at stake and for which they are responsible. They may work in a collective or democratically organized group; they may be sensitive to (already identified) identities and they may be aware and tolerant of the differences of others. The CP artist empathizes with the economic position of their 'client' group, may even live and work alongside them, but at the end of the day the artist's self, while it may be changed and affected by the experience, continues as different, even strengthened, by its encounter with and absorption of the 'others' of contextual practice.¹¹

Each individual community member may be complexly made up of different 'identities': for instance, one person can embody the narratives of 'single mother', 'lesbian', 'slow learner', 'Afro-Caribbean' in one female body. This 'fragmented self' as it is newly termed, is held together by an 'I', an overseeing self; a mastering, if fragile, ego. Identity politics and the strategies of CP's implicit aims are to strengthen this ego identity. But this 'empowering' is achieved by accepting its difference from and opposition to someone else who lacks these particular human 'properties'; through their difference from and exclusion from an 'other'. Strategies

are assumed that both seek to assert and claim difference or else to overthrow the 'other' and take their place. In the processes and practices of CP, the ego-identities of, and differences between, the artist and the 'client' group are reiterated.

Problems of identity politics

Identity politics is structured with a notion of lack: as a failure of a subordinate group in not having the something, and desiring what the 'other' possesses. A striving after completeness: women denied access to what men have; female artists seeking the aporias left by male territorializing; black people asserting their difference from, and power in relation to, whites; children whose interests are identified as different from adults. The 'I' who would oppose its own construction is always in some sense drawing from that construction to articulate its opposition; further, the 'I' draws what is called its 'agency' in part through being implicated in the very relations of power it seeks to oppose.¹² The notion of the 'other', difference, opposition and estrangement is always produced by the imperialist 'I'. So the notion of 'allowing' women, 'immigrants', 10-year-old children or trained artists to uncritically have 'their' say or represent 'their' authentic point of view, can only reiterate existing identities in oppositional and binary power relations. In uncritically demonstrating 'their' (feminine) skills or 'their' artistic (working-class) practices without examining how specific identities, skills and preferences have been recursively formed in the first place, leads back to the impasse of psychological explanations, of inner authentic self-expression; or of autobiographical causal accounts, and the reproduction and reiteration of power relations.

Art as communication/representation

The notion of a personal 'identity' as separate from 'society' carries with it certain assumptions about the nature of art. It suggests that art is part of an adaptive interaction between inner (mental) and outer (bodily, social) worlds, serving an expressive (or, in more recent terms: 'representational' or 'communicational') function. This model can be most clearly explained using the words of the influential contemporary art psychologist Elliot Eisner:

The operations of our mental life are essentially private in character. What we think, feel, or imagine is located in our psyche and can be enjoyed, used, or criticized only by ourselves. If what we create in our mental life is to be made social, we must find some means to make it public. It is this realm, the realm through which the private is made public, that we come to the visible and sharable products of our culture. These products are made public in the forms through which we represent what we have conceived. The arts constitute one of the important forms of representation through which humans share what they have thought, felt, or believed.¹³

In this model, mental 'stuff': ideas, emotions or images are assumed to be pre-formed in the mind and through art-making, made visible to be shared with others. The 'outside world', in the same way, enters the inner mind - usually through the privileged sense of vision: visual images are 'inputted' and combine with already existing schema and work to change consciousness.¹⁴ The ego/eye incorporates the world into its existing narrative.

12 Spivak, cited in J. Butler (1994), *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, London: Routledge, p. 123.

13 E.W. Eisner (1988), 'The biological basis of learning', *The Role of Discipline-Based Art Education in America's Schools*, Los Angeles: Getty Center for Education in the Arts.

14 For a more sophisticated explanation of the cognitive model see R. Harré and C. Gillett (1994), *The Discursive Mind*, London: Sage.

- 15 M. Gardiner (1996), 'Alterity and ethics: a dialogical perspective', *Theory, Culture and Society* 13: 2, pp. 121-43; Mikhail M. Bakhtin (c.1929-40/1981), *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, ed. M. Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, University of Texas Press; E. Levinas (1978/1985), trans. A. Lingis, *Otherwise Than Being, or Beyond Essence*, The Hague.
- 16 J. Nealon (1999), *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity*, Duke University Press, p. 2.
- 17 Gardiner, *op. cit.*, p. 131.

Mastery of the world is achieved by a 'problem-solving' and knowing subject. The subjectivity of the liberal humanist artist calls for and invites responses from the world, from its audiences, from 'other' identities and then reduces those responses, that 'otherness', to a subset of its own sameness. Difference is recognized, appreciated, and then 'stolen' or appropriated; absorbed into the enquiring subject's own place in the world.

Other ways of thinking subjectivity

CP cannot avoid a theoretical concern with subjectivity. It assumes and is constitutive of, if only by exclusion and implication, versions of subjectivity, which if not critically examined fall back into older, familiar paradigms embedded in oppositional binaries of liberal humanism. New ways of thinking subjectivity have emerged that question the possibility of thinking of 'society' without its desiring and interested institutions and practices; or of a self that can be separated from the world of objects, things and other people.

Ethical subjectivity

Recent revisiting of the writings of Bakhtin, Levinas, and Deleuze and more recently Gardiner, Irigaray and Nealon (to whose writings - along with many others - I am subject) suggest different ways of thinking subjectivity. A notion of subjectivity as essentially ethical assumes for instance 'the individual' as fundamentally unthinkable without an incorporation of the *interests* of another into one's subjectivity, rather than identity as imagined in *opposition* to and different from another.¹⁵

Ethics are always concerned with being situated in the world, with what to do, and how to behave. 'As a mode of enquiry, ethics necessarily concerns itself both with general theoretical structures and specific concrete responses'¹⁶ and its ability to bring together the theoretical and political is one of the reasons why ethics has re-emerged so centrally in recent critical discourse. Any interesting or useful ethic is precisely a politics of the other, a linkage of the theoretical necessity with concrete responses and a thinking of subjectivity as fundamentally relational.¹⁷

The author/artist is not condemned to the vigilant effort of maintaining a stable ego as an author but arises as a subject always in conditions of alterity, relying essentially on the value given by others and the world at large. It is from an always situated place of perception that requires another to recognize that place before any statement can be enunciated. The self is interlocative, the lack that an individual has is always made up for by the presence of others it does not have to be taken or incorporated. We instead have to enter another's view of ourselves if we are to become. This is not the same as reciprocity, for that implies a bargain, a gaining by giving to the mutual benefit of two already established egos. Alterity implies risk, a giving out, not knowing how it will be received or if it will be recognized and confirmed yet knowing that there always need to be other people - if only in the imagination - who will listen or ignore. This is the improvisatory nature of becoming human. There is a possible range of responses that are known and rehearsed by the speaker, but always the possibility of non-recognition.

Vygotsky

The work of the meta-psychologist, Lev Vygotsky was concerned with the notion of subjectivity as fundamentally social: that there was no possibility of thinking

subjectivity outside of the world in which it becomes; nor could the world be envisaged without the unconscious desires and fantasies of the labouring and imaginative mind/bodies of people. The emphasis in cultural theory has been on the discursive, on language as productive of subjectivity. Vygotsky, working from a linguistic model, developed a concept of psychological tools, a loose analogy drawn from the material tools, that serve as mediators between the human hand transforming the material on which it acts. Psychological tools, like material tools, are made by humans; they are artificial formulations. Vygotsky noted such psychological tools as gestures, language and collective and conventional representations, or sign systems - which include the conventions of art. All signs are grounded in early material practices - gestures, associations with objects, or bodily feelings - but eventually become emancipated from their material signifiers to become abstract, non-material signs that can be freely exchanged and generate new meanings. His work was taken further, demonstrating that with young children the movement of disabled limbs in space and with objects is shown to affect cognitive growth and change: movement of the body, interaction with objects and that things in the world shape the structuring of the mind. The body learns kinaesthetically as well as conceptually the habitual patterns of movement that turn pattern and randomness into something real and relevant.¹⁸

Subjectivity comes into being through mimicry of other moving things in the world: through grasping objects, investing objects with meaning and exchanging them with people; through repetition in doing things and relating to things habitually with the cognizant body, in everyday acts. The body is not subject to the mind, or expressive of mental acts, or just the stuff of which we are made; but it is the learned intermediary between mental consciousness and the world of objects and things:

A movement is learned when the body has understood, when it has incorporated objects and things into its 'world', and to move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call, which is made independently of any representation. Motility then, is not, as it were, a handmaid of consciousnesses ...¹⁹

The cultivation of habit is the grasping of a significance, but it is the motor grasping of a motor significance ... To get used to a hat, a car or a stick, or a computer is to be transplanted into them, or conversely, to incorporate them into the bulk of our own body and mind. Habit expresses our power of dilating our being in the world, or changing our existence by appropriating fresh instruments.

Habit is knowledge in the body that is only forthcoming when bodily effort is made, and cannot be formulated in detachment from that effort. Skill is the result of habit and repetition (practice): the body understands in the cultivation of a habit.

Sometimes the meaning aimed at cannot be achieved by the body's natural means; it must then build itself an instrument, a tool, a language, and it projects thereby around itself a cultural world of 'gear': in order to extend human capacity to 'unnatural' but pleasurable practices: cooking, reading, or dancing; to make images the body employs its extensions; its prosthesis, of tools and technologies.²⁰

Return to the body in art

The modernist Cartesian emphasis on the intellect, on conceptual art, on the visual has led to a return in contemporary arts practice to the 'repressed body' of modernism. This return is manifested in an observing and interrogating revelation

18 I am partially indebted in this paragraph to Katherine N. Hayles (1999), 'Simulating narratives: what virtual creatures can teach us', in *Critical Inquiry*, 26: 1, University of Chicago Press and (1999/2) *op. cit.*, p. 26.

19 Merleau-Ponty, cited in R.C. Solomon (1972), *Phenomenology and Existentialism*, New York: Harper & Row, p. 381.

20 Merleau-Ponty, cited in Solomon, *op. cit.*, p. 386.

21 see Rosalind Krauss (1999), *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition*, London: Thames and Hudson.

22 M. Denis (1890), cited in Krauss, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

of sexual practices: the uncovering and displaying of flesh, viscera, body fluids and gross matter, an interest in horror, the abject and the grotesque. The enlightenment assumption is that by revealing everything that could be seen about the body, somehow we are getting near a repressed 'truth', a balancing up of the mind/body dualism. The human body has become the paradigmatic source of 'matter' in the Cartesian dualism of abstract/concrete, mind/body binary. The body is acted upon, by the thinking mind of the artist; displayed and revealed as flesh, as 'stuff' subject to the superior and controlling 'conceptual activity' of the mind. Artists like Gina Paine, Tracy Emin and Sarah Lucas performatively reiterate and reinscribe their bodies with femininity and silence by calling attention to abjection, pain, suffering and ridicule. The Cartesian mind/body distinction is not put away, but reversed in a grim parody.

Art that calls fetishistic attention to viscera, to such body matter as blood, milk or semen returns the body to its enlightened place in nature, pure matter and biology. It violently denies the body's cultural inscriptions; and the possibility of the body as knowing and thinking. What is repressed is not the organic and natural matter of bodies, but the transformation of matter by bodies. It does not allow the body its productive and consumptive habits, its work; its skills of motility, its specific, meaning-making, performative acts; the body as articulate with objects and technologies in the world, its labour of the intellect. It is media: 'stuff', the work and matter of art, a privileging of its tools and technologies, its processes of production, which calls attention to art's bodily relation. This produces a notion of 'matter' and a bodily subject that is not reduced to the feminine of sex.

Media

The work of art in the public/private divide - its signifying materials, recursive languages, histories, technologies, and skills - are constitutive of subjectivity, but in contemporary practice have been overlooked and denigrated. Media is merely understood as the transparent vehicle for the expression of already identified political, social or otherwise identified needs - individual or collective. But the study of 'media' is still regarded as 'modernist' and therefore to be avoided. Sure enough, it comes with its baggage of modernist notions: of being reduced to its own physical properties, exclusive and apart from the real. But taking the concept of mediums from Rosalind Krauss, I would argue for the continuing of the concept 'medium specificity' in CP to understand how conventions layered into a medium might function.²¹ To examine media 'recursively' would to take into account the elements of a medium that have produced the rules that generate its own being. A 'recursive'²² structure has a history of the production of its own structures; it is something made by human hands, out of human imaginary needs and desires which are historically contingent. Recursive structures of mediums are those that are 'automatic' and latent; taken for granted when we pick up a pen or a needle, they have their memories in the body and lived experiences. Krauss's notion of medium foregrounds the historically situated technical basis of artistic genre, and investigates matter and making, human skill and productivity. This does not necessitate a reduction to determinants of technology or essential matter or truth to materials in the Greenbergian, sensory/visual sense, but a recognition that making is reiterative and citational. In 'performative' practices of remembering, copying, quoting, parodying, imitating, writing, handling objects and images or using different tools and media subjectivities are always in progress and are shaped in

and through the mediating forms. Whether one uses textiles, neon lights, video, steel or paper, pens or needles, mixes colours with oils or light, stapled cloth or by polishing metal; this means negotiating and reiterating gendered, historical and classed technical processes, products and institutions. One is always engaging with materials that are already inscribed through the processes of their manufacture, calling on and reiterating the previous work and skill of other minds, other bodies, other desires themselves recursively structured in gendered and economic interests and in particular, aim-oriented forms. Making is not an empty act on the way towards some identified goal, neither is it an expression of the development of the inner self. It is always a social activity dependent on a field of invisible, past and present subjectivities.

Subjectivity as distributed

Cyber-feminists such as Donna Haraway and Katherine Hayles imagine subjectivity as a 'distributed cognitive system' composed of human and non-human actors.²³ Along with Deleuze, they reject the binarisms, and the evolutionary developmental scheme of man's journey of ascendance to the mental heights of intellect and abstraction. Rather than being concerned about any loss of humanity cyber-human identification might imply, if the human is seen as part of a widely distributed system, not only of technologies but of other people, then their 'fragmentations' or splits can be regarded as part of human necessity. When the 'other' is a machine, then humans can be imagined as both binary and united. Humans are then able to relinquish the total effort required for 'holding in', 'keeping together' unified identity and guarding against 'leaking bodies' or pollution from outside. Passivity and letting technologies and others into 'individual' lives expands those lives. The parameters of the cognitive - always understood as a bodily system - expand in highly specific, local and material ways that would be impossible without electronic prosthesis, without other subjectivities and imaginative places.²⁴ In a kind of gestalt activity, the each of the parts of a distributed cognitive system interrelate and co-produce; if one part is missing, the others substitute to produce an act of closure.

Subjectivity is emergent rather than given, distributed rather than located solely in consciousness, emerging from and integrated into a chaotic world rather than occupying a position of mastery and control removed from it.²⁵

Modern humans participate in social and global systems whose total cognitive capacity exceeds individual knowledge. Cognition is interactively distributed among such devices as cars, washing machines, microwaves or mobile phones. We move in the world with distributed complex adaptive systems - transport, telecommunications, media and so on - no one is outside their reach - we are continually being created and mutually create intersubjectivities through these, through digital and other modern technologies which are ideologically sited in desiring relations of the cognitively distributed systems of global capitalism. Drawing on the insights of Gilles Deleuze, Camilla Griggers, in the following extract, constructs an example of a globally distributed, 'becoming-subjectivity' of a Filipina:

... she appears and reappears in various incarnations as war sacrifice, military bride, plantation bride, red-light-district worker, bride of overseas contract workers, screen bride and international personal ads bride ... Within this global

23 Katherine N. Hayles (1999), *How We became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature, and Informatics*, University of Chicago Press, p. 6.

24 Some of this is paraphrased and adapted from Hayles (1999), p. 291.

25 Hayles, (1999/2) *op. cit.*, p. 291.

26 C.B. Griggers (2000), 'Goodbye America (the bride is walking...)', in I. Buchanan and C. Colebrook (eds.), *Deleuze and Feminist Theory*, Edinburgh University Press, pp. 173-213.

27 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: Athlone Press, p. 457.

system of exchange, technologies of communication and flows of (imperfect) information manifest a technical machine in which Filipinas' becoming materialise in the international marketplace ... abstract machinic functions, such as cost-benefit analyses, perform valuations and significations which materialise on the bodies of Filipinas and place them in transnational zones of exchange ... enmeshed in a machinic assemblage that includes labour, raw materials, real estate and energy on one level, IMF and Asian Development Bank country charts and development banking algorithms on another level, stock markets, currencies and media images (of political stability/instability for example) on yet another level, along with various investments of desire that constitute different invested subjectivities within this complex, autoproductive landscape.²⁶

Subjectivity cannot be imagined as either contained in the boundaries of a body or developing solely according to 'inner' and natural processes. Nor can it be understood outside of any 'social context': it is saturated through and through with the social world, with objects, things and other people. Technologies, desiring machines, political systems or sexual fantasies of others inhabit ways of being and becoming that can never be fully known, let alone 'mastered'. One is subjected to the autoproductive systems of technological machines.²⁷ So it is only by understanding the world humans have made with their intellects and bodies, according to their desires and through the transformations of matter as prosthesis, as tools and technologies, that we can understand the subjectivities that it produces and our own immersion in them. And while we are subjects of the autoproductive systems of the social world it is only through them that resistances can be mounted in the world and other possibilities imagined.

LOSING IT



Peter Land
Yayoi Kusama
Mary Kelly
Paul Pfeiffer
Sam Taylor Wood
N.I.C.J.O.B.
Sofia Hulten
Roi Vaara
Peter Lloyd Lewis
Chloe Piene
Yak Beow Seah

LOSING IT an exhibition of video and screen-based works held at the Fenton Gallery, Cork, Ireland. Curated by guest curator Clíodhna Shaffrey and Nuala Fenton, it includes works by leading international and Irish artists: Peter Land (Denmark) Yayoi Kusama (Japan), Mary Kelly (Ireland), N.I.C.J.O.B. (France/Austria), Sofia Hultén (Sweden), Roi Vaara (Finland), Peter Lloyd Lewis and Sam Taylor Wood, (UK), Paul Pfeiffer and Chloe Peine (USA) and Yak Beow Seah (Malaysia).

The exhibition focuses on the psychological and emotional aspects of 'losing it', regarding this state as a central part of the human condition. 'Losing it' marks the transcendence from one state of being – 'normality', into other highly stressed or disassembled states. Falling apart is not exclusive to those confronted by extreme situations, but is omnipresent within the struggles and evasions of everyday living. For millennia humans have indulged the dionysian drive for pleasure and escape. 'Losing it' might thus be viewed as a vital resource for survival, a requirement for release and communication, and as a corrective to the banality of daily existence.

The works are in general very short, with a maximum duration of 10 minutes. The human figure is present throughout. Raw emotion is exposed, the antihero is celebrated. A central element here is the intense focus on specific moments and actions. Sometimes this is achieved through calculated manipulation of image and aggressive repetition. Isolated from setting or story these works highlight bizarre, unexpected or often misunderstood behaviour within everyday life and thereby allow us to tackle our own limited perceptions of what we perceive normality to be. 'Losing it' inhabits the narrow margins between what is perceived as sanity and insanity.

As a counterpoint to the screen-based works, *Free Massage*, by Malaysian artist Yak Beow Seah offers a release for tension and stress. The artist will be in attendance at the gallery daily for the first five days of the exhibition.

LOSING IT

When all others fail, psycho-aesthetic explanations can throw light on otherwise inexplicable and inarticulate responses to art. The assertion of such an open and ambiguous notion as 'Losing it' produces questions: Losing what? Losing your temper? Losing your marbles? Losing control? And what other losses are implied? Psycho-aesthetic interpretations suggest the original Big Loss: the first separation of mother and child, and the child's creation of consoling substitutes through play. In this scenario, art emerges as the effects or symptoms of loss: the processes of making art appear as attempts to control tangible things through handling and manipulating the symbols of the pleasure and pain of lost love. So where does video stand in this fetishistic scenario? Of course it doesn't 'stand' at all. It has no body, no matter. Yet the *mise en scène* of video is often the body of the viewer in the gallery, staring intently, descending into the dark vital core of the interior matrix of the 'box' where all differences seem to collapse as they fall under the same coded patterns of light.

In a Freudian interpretation, the fetish stands for both the illicit pleasure of what is lost in the establishing of difference, and the pain of losing it. The Freudian emphasis has been on difference, and the first fetish object, the imaginary object that stands for sexual and all other loss brought on by the necessity for difference, is the phallus. The sexual fetish is most effective when, like Koons' or Mapplethorpe's consciously constructed objects, it is hard, shiny, turgid and clearly delineated from its background — graspable, manifestly there. The fetish par excellence, whether instantiated in an object or a person, is required to be bound and erect, its upright stance refusing the possibility of instability. Yet already this image is historic, manifest in the art object and tied to presence, ownership and commodification. Fetishistic art now tends to be ironic, self-ridiculing, and aware that the economy of the durable art object had its rationale in a culture of the symbolic goods of industrialization where labour and economic personal relations depended on

differentiation. But as economic relations have become more fluid, and the fragmentation of identities has proved economically viable, the sexual totem — the phallus — has lost much of its visual/ metaphoric power as the sign of difference.

The coded inscriptions of sexual fetishism avoided any direct relation to the maternal origins of loss: the mother's body. Art practices have tended to separate sexuality from reproduction, eroticism from love, in the flight from mental pain. The First Love implies complete relaxation of the body, diffusion of boundaries of subject from object, confidence, openness, and an ego-less co-existence. Loving implies a letting-go, losing control, being open to pain, and a return to the possibilities of abandonment and ego dissolution. Playing with erotic practices takes sexual pain to extremes and displaces mental anguish, abandonment and the return to helplessness. The pains of loss of love are coded into the sexual fetish, and moments of abandonment are controlled for the duration of the predictable climax. The artist as dominatrix (male or female) performs in ritualised, predictable, goal-oriented play, with disengaged heart, free from guilt, always skirting at the edges of love; teetering in high heels on the brink of loss and chaos, but always managing to close or climax at the crucial moment before unintelligibility places them beyond the boundaries of 'art' and into madness.

At its most caricatured the psychology of the artist is that of a controlling narcissist: a freewheeling ego, an entrepreneur, a calculator of payoffs and reciprocal interests, an individual using audiences, materials and communities instrumentally to enhance and expand his or her own vision. There is no empathy here, but the need for a categorically different 'other': identified differently as 'black', female, disabled, child, and so on, to constantly reflect back the difference and consolidate the identity and personal trajectory of the artist. Materials, animals, people, communities are there to be worked on, forged and moulded according to the mental vision of the artist and are given the properties the artists' imagination

bestows on them. Artists ascribe the qualities which express their own attitudes towards an object to that object itself as its own qualities.¹ So, sunsets speak of the artist's death, horizontality is concerned with the artist's horizontality, a stone speaks of the artist's lack of feeling. Ethnicity is defined by whites, the disabled are defined by the able-bodied, children by the desires of adults and so on.

Yet the ability to discern difference is a cornerstone of theories of human subjectivity: The basic cognitive operation that we perform as observers is the operation of distinction, and by means of this operation we specify a unity as an entity distinct from a background.² But according to recent debates in cognitive science, another fundamental act of cognition is that of analogy, based in the perceptual ability to identify relevant likenesses between unlike things. Analogy presupposes visual discernment and difference, but it is a practice that performs sameness, the possibility of connectedness, and reconciliation. What is at play in such appropriating practices is the artist cognitively making conceptual leaps, 'hyper-linking', producing inspired inferences between dissimilar systems, objects, disciplines, histories and finding resemblances, patterns and likenesses in a mode that emphasises relations between things, rather than treating things or individuals as autonomous. Analogy is an associative process in which the emotions are always involved, and is the very stuff of art making.

Vision, and practices of spectatorship such as those involved in the production and reception of art, operates as part of the cognitive organisation of the realisation of the self to the self. The perceptual material practices and performances of difference and analogy of the visual arts (as opposed to linguistics) are increasingly being called on as figures that reveal the way that subjectivity emerges in practice. Significantly, the 'softer' interactive, fluid, rhythmic pulsing, flickering forms of screen-based and computer practices, of which video art is a distillation, are called on as figures realising human consciousness, 'fusing' in uncanny synchronisations with the

ebbings and eddyings of the beholder's inner life. In a material relation, video recalls Kleinian psycho-aesthetic interpretation of artistic strategies in actualising loss.

In the Kleinian scenario, the function of objects can be understood in terms of children's play, where play is understood as directionless and non-goal oriented, taking place among people in communicative as well as visual relations. Rules are created in the process of actually handling and exchanging materials and objects as 'toys' in play. In the handling of common everyday objects, the child visualises and begins to control generalised anxieties and losses. The first imaginary visual investment is often focused on soft and sensory materials – the blanket, the fluffy teddy – evoking the warmth, texture and softness of the mother's body, and is generally related to repetitious, imitative actions. In Klein's scheme there is an acknowledgement of the Freudian fetish, but greater stress is placed on the human ego's necessity for empathy and analogy. Visual and bodily responsiveness, in acts of non-goal oriented, unfocused creativity, is part of the child's process of becoming and performing, of perceiving difference and sameness, and of developing emotional belonging and connectedness. Such play with others seeks out similarities, affections, constituencies, coalitions and reconciliation.³ Repetition, modelling, looking for patterns and congruence, conserves the autonomous self, which is nevertheless a self like others in necessary practices of discernment of difference and self-creation in imitation.

What the video screen as figure perceptually implies is the mimetic strategies of perception; the continuous surface of sameness. On the screen, the different bounded images – the dancing figures, the crying baby, the singing boy, the car, the flower – all objects and their backgrounds are, in video, subsumed by the same flickering light, the irradiated pixels that pass as informational ones and zeros across the screen. There is difference and sameness in the repetition of the binary bytes and pixels that unify the whole, as tiny pulses of visual information fall beneath perceptual awareness. It has only

through 'low art' – rock and pop-music, video games, dance, wallpaper – at the organisation of the space of difference and sameness has been realised in artistic practices.⁴ The art video takes these overlooked, repetitive, mundane cultural practices and their pulsating ones and zeros, through the formal devices of sampling, looping, editing, mixing, zooming, which mimic the workings of cognition, and brings the small chromatic, temporal and formal differences that fall through the space of presence/ absence perception, into view. Competition in video incarnates with translucent light the latency, the insatiability of the desire to move from a state of individuating singularity that loss implies to a sameness, connectedness, reconciliation. The magnifying imperceptible differences demands the recognition of the constituting autopoietic effects of sameness as difference. The viewing apparatus of video as a medium negates difference too, when its formal construction refuses narrative ('loses the plot'); has no climax, when bodily incapacity, ineffectiveness, futility, fury, vulnerability are depicted. "Soft", artful machinery – televisual video... [does] not duplicate or replicate consciousness; rather [it creates] evocative analogs sensuously capture the epiphanies of first-person subjective experience."⁵

Autopoiesis, a figure devised in cognitive science,⁶ has produced a notion of selfhood as fundamentally necessarily interdependent, arising in performative practices in mutually interested relations with 'the other world'; not just with other people, but with objects, systems, technologies and the natural environment. The forms of relational art can be understood in this way as they are processes of an inter-human game, with art at one nodal point of a network of systems and activities, rather than emerging as the end product of the individual's focus or aim: The role of art works is no longer to form imaginary utopian realities but to actually be ways of living and means of action within the existing real, whatever the choice chosen by the artist. The artist dwells in the circumstances the present offers... he catches the world: he is a part of culture.⁷

Working autopoietically is an aesthetic, analogical practice having many of the formal characteristics of loving relations. It is suggested that the analogical vision itself as a figure has emerged in human consciousness as a realisation of amorous attraction. Analogy is suffused with emotion: a desire and empathy for the other's well being, an interest in maintaining the other as loving, a searching out of likenesses and correspondences. Autopoiesis suggests that cognition is not bounded by the brain, or even the skin of an individual, but extends beyond the body, is distributed between other cognitive modes, other objects and other identities in mutually beneficial, love-like relations.

... Aesthetic forms emerge as a result of open risk taking of letting go of a bounded self, of giving without anticipating return, and entering into empathetic passive modes of love-like sympathy involved in listening, and the suspending of criticism in play, between subjectivities which are actively – but without a preconceived object – struggling to self-make, to become.⁸

Bakhtin argued that our interests as emergent humans and our necessity for different identities require that we act in 'love-like sympathy' or in 'sympathetic co-experiencing' with other people. This does not mean loss of autonomous self, but implies instead a care of the self as different so that one can act effectively in ethical, empathetic and loving relation to others in recognition of their sameness; as another self, another but different 'I'; another 'I' who has rights of autonomy, has different desires, a different nature, mode of being and aesthetic form.

Working with media and engaging with art implies the same relation: 'getting down to work', an intense but open looking, having a passive relation to your subject allowing the media, the subject to assert its own nature. Small repeated events, slips of the tongue, accidents of form, when empathetically observed and attended to, take on significance.

The geneticist, Barbara McClintock described this loss of self and the critical empathy involved in transformative work and the analogous processes of identification, resemblance, connectedness necessary for the creative process: 'I found that the more I worked with (the chromosomes) the bigger and bigger they got, and when I was really working with them, I wasn't outside, I was down there. I was part of the system. I was right down there with them, and everything got big... it surprised me because I actually felt as if I were right down there and these were my friends.'⁹

Letting go, 'Losing it', suspending the ego, is a condition necessary for aesthetic, ethical co-producing of subjectivities, identities and art. The specific economic practices and systems of art-making allow moments and spaces where the limits of letting go can be tested, played out in mutually supportive conditions of recognition and understanding with other artists also situated 'on the edge' of coherence. Absorption and empathy in making art work allows the ego to be relinquished, and a temporary identification made with 'alien' forms, allowing materials to have their say, in self-defining, autopoietic 'safe' games where the recursive rules of play (what constitutes art itself) can be continually re-invented.

Penelope Dalton

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- ² Maturana, (1972) in Maturana, H & Varela F *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*. D. Reidel: Holland
- ³ for information on relational aesthetics see Bourriaud, N., (2002) trans-S. Pleasance and F. Woods. *Relational Aesthetics*. les presses du réel.
- ⁴ Krauss, R. in Bois, Yve-Alain & Krauss, R (1999) *Formless*. Zone Books. p. 164
- ⁵ Stafford, B. M (1999) *Visual Analogy: Consciousness and the Art of Connecting*. MIT
- ⁶ Maturana, op cit
- ⁷ Bourriaud, op cit. p. 13 Quoting De Certeau.
- ⁸ Bakhtin, (1981) op cit; p. 92
- ⁹ McClintock, B., quoted in Keller, E. (1983) *A Feeling For the Organism*. p. 117

TECHNIQUES OF MEMORY, TEXTURES OF MEMORY. THE ASSOCIATIONS OF BARBARA HOWEY'S project suggest the materiality of memory: that memory isn't residing somewhere in the recesses of the mind waiting to be recovered, but is always being produced, differently, performatively, in the present. Through the materials of aesthetic practice and the bodily evocation of images, Howey clothes memory with resonant forms and substance. Here is the grey matter of melancholy; plots are re-worked to render painful events of the past available to revision, to produce perhaps, happier endings. In processes that re-iterate remembering itself, in narratives suggestive of the monochrome pleasures of the *Toile de Jouey* print, Howey slowly activates hidden layers of material. Through the formal devices of weaving, and the textured scraffito of painting she both re-covers and re-works the past.

Like the practices of memory, Howey's strategies are those of framing, editing, creating the flashback, repeating, and recovering of half-recognised mises en scène to bring them to work for present day scenarios of the self. As children we identified with the ideal and vast images on the screen. Through this work we are re-minded of the insubstantial and ephemeral childhood pleasures of 'going to the pictures': sitting in the dark, wide-eyed, not always following the plot, always small, immobile and mesmerised by flickering screens of light. Howey represents stills from a film about childhood, *Whistle Down the Wind* embodying them in technical and mechanical practices of Jacquard weaving and painting from photography. The colours and joys as well as the pains of childhood seem almost trapped in the nets of present day rigid inscriptions and etched codes of half-tone, suggesting that memory is hard won, accessed only through available cultural forms.

Weaving was an early metaphor for consciousness: the web of life criss-crossing the warp of inheritance. The computer, based on Jacquard weaving technology and recursively absorbing earlier metaphoric processes, has taken the place of the loom as the primary metaphor for cognition. But as the Turing test demonstrated, computers are bachelor machines, they cannot recognise differently marked bodies and, like cameras and film screens, operate with ideal inscribed images on one side, with gendered, marked and material bodies facing them on the other.



Howey's work, asserts the indivisible matter of technology and memory; it recognises the inscriptions of culture, film, computer binaries, on the body.

Howey's preoccupations have been with girlhood.

Little girls have been excluded from modernity's cultural plots: are absent from detective novels, adventure stories, cowboy films; structurally unnecessary in most popular war, football, fantasy and 'rite-of-passage' narratives: *Harry Potter* and *Lord of the Rings* do not need girls. Rosi Braidotti has suggested that the little girl's absence from the Oedipal plot accounts for women's exclusion from history and from civil society. She and Irigaray have argued for the re-mythologising of female relations such as sisterhood as crucial for the assertion of a feminine symbolic.

But the little girl, the Oedipal daughter - in a symbolic positioning of non-reproductive young women on the margins of the linear patriarchal order - has taken on a potentially creative aspect. Julia Kristeva suggested that because of their symbolic identification outside paternal logic, young women have some power: "...isn't a woman also the most radical atheist, the most committed anarchist, when she is carried away by what the symbolic order rejects?"¹ ...Having nothing to inherit, nothing therefore to lose, some young women artists have taken up this position and sought to transgress, to disrupt, disturb, subvert, sabotage, ridicule, and embarrass. Girls can gain access (or attention) this way by being ultra-feminine, (wheeling, flirting) or through hyperbolic acts of reversal (disrupting, needling), or finding spaces in the cracks of paternal power. Yet in so doing they performatively confirm their place in the Oedipal plot. 'Bad girls' have the chance to disrupt and annoy, but not to actively construct different power regimes to which they are subject or to acquire authority as of right.

The image of the little girl in Howey's work asserts but does not subvert. She comes to stand for all that has been excluded and wrongly included, is alternative and outside normal frames of reference, is unspoken: a potential outside Oedipal relations and modes of thought. A figure that moves in and out of Oedipal

relations; a figure for unrepresentability itself. Not having any place in the story of family dynamics, the imaginary, half-represented, half-hidden little girl is the figure pivotal of the difficulty of the constitution of subjectivity. Deleuze represented her as 'an impossible figure of anticipation and escape within the Oedipal framework'.² Detached from corporeality; she is not any ideal girl, but stands for the possibility of a way of being, and a potential for dispersal into all subjectivities:

The girl... is an abstract line, or a line of flight. Thus girls do not belong to any age or group, sex, order or kingdom: they slip in everywhere, between orders, acts ages, sexes: they produce molecular sexes in the line of flight in relation to the dualism machines they cross right through...³

The image of the little girl 'looks out' from her embodied medium, she is revealed in the overlay between remembered and represented bodies. The little girl and memory as always a contingent production, socially and historically specific, Howey's little girl is caught in the inscripting nets of film; the technologies of weaving, and is beginning to be revealed but is still elusive in the practice of painting.

Pen Dalton

March 2005

Footnotes

1 Kristeva, Julia. (1977) *About Chinese Women*. Open Forum. p41

2 Driscoll (2000) op. cit., p.64. See Grosz, Elizabeth (1994a) *Volatile Bodies*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin and Driscoll

3 Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Félix (1987) *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. London: The Athlone Press. Cited in Buchanan, (2000) p.75.

Feminist methodologies in art education a critique

Pen Dalton

Feminist methodologies in art education [FMAE] have been active in the US since the early 1970s and have played a part in the shaping of art education in the West for the last thirty-five years or so.¹ The first and most clearly articulated set of practices derive from the writings and pedagogy of the feminist artist Judy Chicago.² Her teaching methods, originally devised for women only have been re-thought in recent years with Donald Woodman to accommodate men and emerge with a new title of '**participatory art pedagogy informed by feminist principles**'. Participatory Art Pedagogy however explicitly borrows from earlier feminist methodologies so it is these methodologies which are in question here. FMAE did not emerge as theory but appeared in a cluster of loosely defined pedagogic practices, '**designed to help female art students develop self-confidence and self-understanding and to validate female experience as a source of artistic content**'. These feminist practices were founded in existing notions of the feminine, which were transferred uncritically into pedagogic practice in response to the prevailing inequitable conditions of art education at the end of the 1960s.³ FMAE claimed to do more than bring gender balance to the art room; it addressed art education's fundamental values, pedagogic practices and power relations. It claimed to be '**the fusion of feminist values into the process and methods of teaching**'.⁴

In its traditional forms, art education had been identified as masculine: as coercive, individualistic and formulaic, with

rigid media specific boundaries. FMAE emerged as a critique of this system of values, emphasising what are traditionally feminine attributes: care, feeling, reciprocity. FMAE, with their implicit assertion of the feminine, it was suggested develops '**collaboratively and creatively. It highlights the sharing of experience, information, ideas, feelings and skills; a sense of mutuality and reciprocity; an equalising of power relations between student and tutor**'.⁵ Collaboration, creativity, flexibility, empowerment were some of the buzzwords of FMAE.

FMAE drew its assumptions about the nature of the child from the revised Freudian theory of Klein and Winnicott.⁶ Its group practices had their origin in the post WWII psychotherapeutic practice derived from Rogers and Kelly.⁷ Small group dynamics emphasised the necessity for trust and a safe environment for allowing the risk-taking vital for creativity.⁸ In the 1980s Diana Dosser explicitly transposed these methods into higher levels of art education, suggesting that: '**The abilities to play, to be flexible, to take risks and to judge their own work are widely recommended as routes to creative visual thinking, they ... the art student needs above all to feel safe to work to full potential**'.⁹

Progressive pedagogy

Many of these practices had been constructed on already existing '*progressive*' ideals that had been active in the early years of schooling for the very young child.¹⁰ Progressivism

had at its heart beliefs about the importance individual freedom and about creativity within natural human development if taught in an environment of care and trust and had always been associated with the feminine: The *Hadow Report* in 1933 stated that women teachers were to be enrolled specifically for these tasks, and educated 'to amplify their capacities for maternal nurturance'.¹¹ What were assumed to be women's skills were explicitly exploited to enhance the development of the younger child.¹² Progressive practice was so successful in the self-regulating of children that progressivism was transposed to older students. The original psychological rationales for progressive pedagogy as a teaching model for the young child only were forgotten and the rhetoric of student-centered education, liberatory play and creativity became a progressive aim in all art education.

Progressive methods were always in competition with tougher vocational and economic demands. Higher education has primarily been concerned with training, certification, systems of continuous assessment, modular and media specific practices and examinations. Progressivism, however, in the guise of gender equality and feminine methodologies received another boost and has steadily taken hold in most art education since the 1970s.

FMAE added to progressive education a political agenda in which power relations between men and women are at stake. Feminine and masculine modes of pedagogy are assumed to work differently. Paternal/masculine power is represented as direct, explicit and governed by social rule and convention. Its style is academic, conformist and it represents the legitimate authority of political power. In art education, this system of power is invested in discipline-based practices, modernist aesthetics, formal examinations, assessment and centrally organised curricula.

Feminine power, on the other hand, emerges as those practices that characteristically operate within family relations, including care and reciprocity, unconditional love, the valuing of sharing of experiences, empathy, growth and processes enculturing the young. The relations of art education have shifted towards less hierarchical, "flatter" (more horizontal) models: children work together with teachers to achieve common aims. With the rhetoric of self-assessment, choice and diversity, children are putatively becoming empowered, active agents in their own education.

Critiques of first wave feminist pedagogy

One of the effects of establishing and privileging a feminist pedagogy based on a notion of the feminine is, by default to create something else that is equally masculine. Throughout the discourses of feminist pedagogy, little attention has been paid to the vast body of work which problematises binary relations, and which questions the traditional association between the feminine and the embodied female.¹³ In FMAE few satisfactory analyses have explained why non-sexed practices such as "discipline based", "repressive", "formal", "linear", "modernist" have been assigned male characteristics; why these values are intrinsically bad; why "nurturing", "caring" and "flexibility" have become associated with the feminine gender or why they are considered more appropriate in the teaching of the older student. A more critical feminism suggests that the associations between, for instance, femininity and caring; masculinity and authority are conventions, habits and traditions, not evidenced by any empirical or logical justification. So it needs to be asked at the outset whether any unexamined notion of the feminine and its associated methodologies is a good basis for any system of education or for feminism.

Progressive pedagogy and FMAE were based on the psychological development of the younger child and in therapeutic practices. Little research has been produced to support its value for older students and adults, indeed there is some argument to suggest that in effect, rather than empowering, it infantilises. Jean Elshtain and Valerie Walkerdine have both argued that feminine pedagogies ultimately have the same aims as authoritarian masculine styles – both are concerned with the production of a normal, self-disciplined, self-aware individual and a stable ego identity – but are hidden beneath the rhetoric of care and love.¹⁴ The practices of achieving growth, empowerment through liberatory discourses of expressive fun and pleasure can give rise to what Elshtain terms 'psycho-pedagogy'. She argues that in 'a manipulative environment, ... a teacher has a hidden agenda, students are treated with less dignity and respect, for all the pedagogical cards are not out on the table.' She goes on: 'at least when one is being overtly coerced one knows who is doing what to whom'.¹⁵

What is not visible in the discourses of FMAE is any engagement with recent theories in the nature of adult subjectivity and the role that art plays in the construction of

subjective relations. The student, the subject of feminist pedagogy is rarely critiqued but presented in terms of clearly defined identity as male or female and in terms of social science's categories of race, ethnicity, nationality or sexuality. Categories, borders, boxes and other such dividing metaphors are anathema to FMAE, but they are nonetheless, assumed in its practices. Art and creativity are seen to affirm positive identities, groups and communities who are the already identified recipients of its practices.¹⁶ The processes of artmaking are assumed to produce personal growth, insight and self-knowledge, building towards the final fantasy of a holistic, harmonic ego-identity. A secure ego is authenticated by a return to roots or origins, by establishing solidarity and sameness in the group practice, and the finding of (an always assumed neutral) voice or medium to express those authenticated selves. FMAE relies on a notion of an individual that resorts to a humanist construct of a pre-existing, active and knowing agent who develops and becomes liberated through the creative practices of art. But FMAE can only collude in reproducing the very categories it claims to challenge. The notion of allowing women, immigrants, 10-year-old children or trained artists to uncritically have *their* say or represent *their* authentic point of view, becomes questionable: without critique, identities can only reiterate their existing relations.

Second wave feminist pedagogy

More recently, FMAE has been revived in Karen Keifer-Boyd's metaphor of the Cyberhouse, explicitly built on Chicago's feminist methodologies. These new models claim to address the wider social context and the relations of power reproduced in the classroom as well as introduce new technologies.¹⁷

Whilst the incorporation of new technologies and concern with the subjectivities formed through discourses of race, power and gender is clearly necessary in the shaping of new models for art education, the building of Participatory Art Pedagogy on the shaky foundations of 1970s liberatory feminism and old paradigm psychology's humanist subject is questionable.

Rather than being in opposition to the power relations of capitalism, I suggest that feminine pedagogies seem to be the best educational practices to accommodate the changing needs of the developed economies, and global systems of power. This is especially so given that much progressive art education has already adopted many of what seem to be

feminist methodologies. There is hardly a mission statement in education now that does not emphasise the economic need for children to have the capacities for flexibility, teamwork, creativity and good communication skills.¹⁸ There is conflict between multiculturalism, gender de-differentiation and corporate culture; on the contrary, FMAE helps consolidate the very identities, concepts of diversity, pluralism and difference upon which niche markets dependent Capitalism doesn't care who does the work. Initiatives for anti-racism, gender theory and feminism can easily be accommodated in new economic realities, for in business today 'a diverse workforce' and a diverse consumer culture 'has clear competitive advantages'.¹⁹

Throughout the developed world, work has become feminized and the main employment opportunities that are open to young people today are in the service industries. On a global scale, service work is increasingly recognised as tasks – physical and emotional – carried out by women. The traditional family and transferred to employment are such as retail and shop work, delivery of goods, equipment repair, receptionists, communication with the public, waiting staff or office cleaners, fast food catering. Teaching, nursing, therapy, entertaining and sexwork are also kinds of feminized services.²⁰ Feminized service work requires emotional skills, good presentation, communication skills, flexibility and teamwork.

Femininity and corporate culture

The performance of feminine behaviours is explicitly recognised in new management strategies in business where it is no longer acceptable to display naked power.²¹ And there is a correlation between feminist methodologies and feminine management modes. There has been an explicit shift in large corporations away from masculine 'command and control' modes, towards non-hierarchical 'flatter' and 'transformational' modes. Good management – like feminist methodologies – values the feminine skills of collaboration and consultation, power sharing, team building, prioritising and praising staff, a holistic approach dependent on flexibility and good listening skills.²² More women middle-managers are being employed who can carry out the profit-led aims of the paternal corporation, but who do so better: with tact, humour and a smile.²³ Many women are finding new and satisfying roles in middle-management education; they see themselves as already possessing the caring, sharing skills and they can encourage co-operation

and utilise non-confrontational techniques of managing disputes to promote teamwork. Multi-tasking is a woman's skill. Networking and small group interactions are today both feminist and capitalist business strategies.

The transference of FMAE's practices based originally in therapeutic psychology and the domestic care of the very young into adult relations can have pernicious effects. Group work, for instance, often means dumbing down to the lowest common ability, and sharing often means conforming in situations where peer pressure stifles any real creativity or opposition. Writing in a context of business management, Hugh Willmott has questioned feminine management styles just as Elstain and Morley questioned feminist pedagogy. He argues that such practices can be manipulative. Employees are infantilized. They, like children, are alternately encouraged, praised and rewarded by managers but at other times kept in the dark, left uninformed and excluded. Methods based on a concept of the feminine methods produce stress, anxiety, self-doubt, guilt and helplessness.²⁷

What are the alternatives to a feminine/feminist pedagogy?

The methodologies described by FMAE's devotees are not in themselves pernicious but I suggest they have often been misapplied and misattributed. A key question that needs to be addressed is: what do gender and family relations have to do with art education? Progressive pedagogy, discipline based practice, formalism, creativity, care, textiles and authority are all common concepts and practices in art education but why are they assigned a gender? Clearly, art education is gendered and always has been, but what is and has been the function of the gendering of art education? FMAE's practitioners have identified it, rightly I think, as having something to do with power relations but power as a concept has no sexual characteristics, so why is it gendered? Art education does not need to continue with familial, gendered and generational metaphors in circumstances, concepts and practices that have nothing to do with sex or the family. Calling educational practices and methodologies "feminist" would not be a problem, if the term was not itself based in uncritical notions of the feminine. Modelling art and educational relationships on an analogy of human relations between masculine and feminine can only re-iterate those categories and power relations associated with them.²⁸

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An alternative strategy would be to make critical evaluations of the civic and political rights and responsibilities between people with different jobs, skills and aspirations and seek to determine what is the nature of the professional relationship between teachers and the those they teach, based on the best available knowledge(s) rather than inappropriate psychological theory and the classification of social science of the early 20th century. FMAE have their place, perhaps for the young and the traumatised, but "care" can be practiced in a context of contemporary ethical and aesthetic relations rather than archaic family obligations, as Jameson indicates, and as contemporary theory suggests, we do need metaphors and models on which to build imagined social structures like education, but we need to question the modelling of institutional practices and work relationships on uncritical notions of Feminism as feminine.²⁹

Pen Dalton is author of *The Gendering of Art Education* (Open University, 2001) and lectures at the University of Central England

Notes

1. The conclusions about FMAE in this article are drawn from my 'Collapsing "Considering an androgynous model for art education' in *Studies in Art Education* (SIAE) (1977) 18-20, P. Roy & M. Schen 'Feminist pedagogy transforming the high school classroom' in *Women's Studies Quarterly* (1987) 15-34; R. Sandell 'The liberating relevance of feminist pedagogy' in *SIAE* (1991) 32-3; J. L. Hicks 'A feminist analysis of empowerment and community in art education' in *SIAE* (1990) 32-3; E. Garber 'Implications of feminist art criticism for art education' in *SIAE* (1990) 32-4 and E. Garber, 'Feminism, aesthetics, and art education', in *SIAE* (1992) 33-4.
2. See also for fuller arguments related to this paper, see P. Dalton 'Feminism and Art Education' in *Drawing Fire* (Jan 1999) 1-3 and P. Dalton *The Gendering of Art Education: Modernity, Art Education and Feminist Pedagogy* (Open University Press, 2001).
3. J. Chicago *Through the Phases* (1973) and *Beyond the Phases* (Viking, 1996).
4. R. Sandell *Feminist Art Education: An Analysis of the Woman's Art Movement as an Educational Event* (1979).
5. Rosenberg, J. and Forrest, L. (1997) p. 179.

5. V. Walsh 'Eyewitnesses, not spectators: activists not academics' feminist pedagogy and women's creativity' in K. Deepwell (ed.) *New Feminist Art Criticism* (Manchester University Press, 1995).
6. M. Klein 'The importance of symbol formation in the development of the ego' (1930), in J. Mitchell (ed.) *The Selected Melanie Klein* (Penguin, 1986). D. W. Winnicott *The Child, The Family and the Outside World* (Tavistock, 1957). See also P. Dalton 'Psychology and the subject of art education' in J. and J. Swift (eds.) *Disciplines, Fields and Change in Art Education*, vol. 3 (Article Press, 2001).
7. K. Rogers, cited in D. Dowser, 'Gender issues in tertiary art education' in *Journal of Art and Design Education* (JADE) (1990) 9, 2.
8. K. Rogers *Encounter Groups* (Allen Lane, 1971). E. E. Kelly, *Assessment of Human Characteristics* (Brooks Cole, 1967).
9. D. Dowser 'Gender issues in tertiary art education' in *Journal of Art and Design Education* (JADE) (1990) 9, 2.
10. V. Walkerdine 'Psychological knowledge and educational practice: producing the truth about schools' in G. C. Laxton (ed.) *What's the Matter? Psychology and Schooling* (London: Institute of Education, Bedford Way Papers, 1985).
11. *Consultative Committee of the Board of Education: Infant and Nursery Schools Report* (London: HMSO 1903). J. Miller *More Has Meant Women: The Feminisation of Schooling* (London: Institute of Education, 1992).
12. V. Walkerdine, 'Progressive Pedagogy and Political Struggle' in E. Luke and I. Gore (eds.) *Feminism and Critical Pedagogy* (Routledge, 1992).
13. See for instance the writings of Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler, Rosa Brando, Derrida, Derrida, Derrida.
14. P. Dalton 'Oedipal Dramas in Art Education' in *Journal of Art and Design Education* (2003) 18, 3. J. B. Elsham 'The therapeutic classroom: a critique and an alternative' in Scott, B. (ed.) *The Liberal Arts in a Time of Crisis* (Praeger, 1991). E. Jipson 'Teacher-mother: an imposition of identity' in J. Jipson, P. Munro, S. Victor, K. Froude-Jones, and G. Trevel-Roland *Repositioning Feminism and Education* (1995). E. Ellsworth 'Why doesn't this feel empowering? Working through the repressive myth of critical pedagogy' *Harvard Educational Review* (1989) 59, 3, and Morley, Louise (1998). All you need is love: feminist pedagogy for empowerment and emotional labour in the academy in *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 2, 1.
15. Elsham *ibid*.
16. For further arguments see P. Dalton 'Where is "the subject" of contextual practice?' in *The Journal of Visual Art Practice* (Intellect) 1, 1.
17. Cited from Participatory Art Pedagogy web site (Presentation of Judy Chicago's feminist art pedagogy by K. Kerfer-Boyd 2003, assisted by Wei-Ching Chang in the animation presentation of the Chicago Woodlawn teaching approach, and based upon the participatory art pedagogical methodology: www.judychicago.com/pedagogy/).
18. Ford, S. and A. Davies 'Art Capital' in *Art Monthly* (Feb. 1998) no. 217.
19. E. Watkins and L. Schubert 'The entrepreneurship of the new: corporate direction and educational issues in the 1990s' in C. Newman and Strickland (eds.) (1995) *After Political Correctness* (Westview Press, 1995).
20. For a description of the contexts and consequences of feminist see Haraway, D. 'A manifesto for cyborgs: science, technology and social feminism in the 1980s' (1985) in L. Nicholson, (ed.) *Feminist Postmodernism* (Routledge, 1990).
21. S. Fournier cited in V. Griffith 'Knowing when to be of service' *Financial Times* (12 February 1998).
22. G. Hofstede *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind* (London: Harper Collins, 1994).
23. J. B. Rosner 'Ways women lead' *Harvard Business Review* Nov/Dec 1990. J. McGregor *Leadership* (Harper & Row, 1978). B. Bass *Leadership and Performance* (Free Press, 1985).
24. R. Pringle (1992) 'Women and consumer capitalism' in L. McDow and R. Pringle *Defining Women* (Open University Polity, 1992). S. All J. Laney, M. Packer *Managing Women* (Open University Press, 1993).
25. H. Wallmott 'Strength is ignorance: slavery is freedom: managing culture in modern organizations' *Journal of Management Studies* (Blackwell, 1993) 30, 4.
26. P. Brown and R. Sease *Higher Education and Corporate Reality: Class, Culture and the Decline of Graduate Careers* (London: University College Press, 1994).

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LIKE PEN DALTON

In this paper I want to reiterate a proposition that is being revisited in cognitive science: ¹ that the establishment of a sense of self is continuously created through analogic performative practices. Then I want to briefly make some comments on analogic practices in contemporary art practice and art criticism.

In critical art discourse it appears that difference, and the modalities that imply difference: diversity, otherness, oppositional identities and so on, have been privileged in theorizing selfhood, gender and identity. So without wanting to question the cognitive necessity for discerning difference and the importance of its subsequent critical debates, in this paper I want to advocate the theoretically neglected practices of analogy: recognising relationships, resemblances and likenesses, and to privilege in art discourse, those figurations that realise selfhood in practices of connectedness, affinity and reconciliation. ²

Plato suggested that analogy was “the most beautiful bond”. ³ In Greek, *Analogon* is the proportion or similarity that exists between two or more apparently dissimilar things; it represents a mediating bridge that can link polar opposites. Analogy is constituted in usually mimetic, metonymic and metaphoric practices that weave seemingly dissimilar particulars into some concordance, whilst at the same time recognising and maintaining their original different identities.

Analogy was born of a desire to communicate those things that are difficult to describe in words, rationally or scientifically. It comes into its own with the need to communicate emotionally laden or sensory experience. And analogy, as cognitive science is now discovering, finds its most distilled and sophisticated practices in the visual arts. ⁴

Analogic practice is based in the recognition that creativity always has some precedent in older shared experiences and phenomena. So it depends on filiations, ties, debts and dependencies as the basis of originality. Felix Gonzalez-

Torres for instance, appreciated this in his understanding of how his work was tied to earlier artistic practices. Instead of rejecting modernism, he absorbed its practices as part of his inheritance as an artist.

I think more than anything else... I'm just an extension of certain practices, minimalism or conceptualism... I don't like this idea of having to undermine your ancestors, of ridiculing them... and I think that this attitude that you have to murder your father in order to start something is bullshit. We are part of this culture... so whatever I do is already something that has entered my brain from some other source and is then synthesised into something new. I do not have an anxiety about originality, I really don't.⁵

Making an analogy is recognition of the common ground and shared experience that prefigures difference, originality and creativity.

Analogies mainly draw their power to convince by reference to some shared human experience: the human experience of embodiment, the basic emotions of love, hunger, fear and sex. But it is the common relations of the biological family that feature most in the structures of analogic communication. Gonzalez-Torres' statement for instance, where he refers to murdering his father, draws on a shared understanding of family relations. In likening the passing on of culture to primogeniture – inheritance from father to son – he demonstrates and naturalises how he is – son-like – an inheritor of the traditions of minimalism and conceptualism, but at the same time as a younger non-legitimate, gay son, he Oedipally distances himself and creates new relations.

Through such 'familiar' analogic figures and tropes emotional power can be given to arguments. The transfer of individual emotions or sensory experience can be communicated by evoking the same experiences in others: in the case of Gonzalez-Torres' example, the almost universal experience of the patriarchal family.

Mimesis and art practice

Since the Romantic period, critical discourse has assumed that avant garde art breaks the bonds with analogic practices. It has either been regarded as unscientific or as uncritical in the way it magically claims to unite otherwise unrelated modes of experience and knowledge: as for example in the analogic practices of mythology and astrology.⁶ With Modernism, analogic inferences and interpretations of art no longer held sway as all vestiges of

1. Getner, Dedre, Holyoak, Keith; Kokinov, Boicho (2001) *The Analogical Mind: Perspectives From Cognitive Science*. MIT Camb. Mass. and Halliwell, Stephen. (2002) *The Aesthetics of Mimesis: Ancient Texts and Modern Problems*. Princeton

2. I understand the conservative, even reactionary implications of analogic practice, but in what is a transcript of a spoken paper, and in condensing some broader themes, I am attempting to recuperate analogy as a critical force. These issues are discussed in more detail in my forthcoming PhD thesis: *Proposal for a Figure of relational Art* Dartington College of Arts.

In the meantime, for a more critical reading of analogy see Ginzburg, Carlo (2004) Family resemblances and family trees: two cognitive metaphors, in *Critical Enquiry*, 30 Spring pp. 537–556.

3. Plato *Timaeus* 31c, cited in Stafford, Barbara Maria (2001) *Visual Analogy: Consciousness as The Art of Connecting*. MIT, Camb. Mass. p.8

4. Stafford; op. cit.

5. Gonzalez-Torres, Felix and Robert Storr: Felix Gonzalez-Torres: *Être un espion* (interview)

likeness to any other forms or disciplines such as narrative and pictorial art became historically associated with the natural attitude and perceptualism. Art's originality, its uniqueness, and the author's individuality as criteria for art's greatness replaced the necessity for the skills of copying optical reality and understanding art through shared cultural and linguistic conventions. While the early work of Barthes and Derrida opened up the linguistic and shared nature of cognition in art, both continued in the acceptance of the Saussurian linguistic emphasis on differentiation with a consequent suspicion of analogic practices, linking them to untenable notions of universal truths and shared observable realities.⁷ The post-Romantic rejection of the mimetic function of art in art criticism, has been paralleled in cognitive science, which in the Modern period focussed on difference as the fundamental structuring form of emerging

consciousness. Both cognitive scientists and art critics overlooked the prevalent concept and practices of analogy, perhaps because of their ideological associations as conservative, repetitious and potentially reactionary tropes. Yet while scientists, linguists and art critics alike have focused on difference, people continue, as they always have done, to communicate through analogic practices.⁸ Artists in particular as David Burrows has pointed out, may "put them under pressure and in tension or twist them and mix them up, they do not always repeat or accept analogies."⁹ Analogy in its forms of irony, mimicry, pastiche, and sampling is the stuff of artmaking and has received less *theoretical* attention as analogy.

Cognitive psychologists are now moving from their emphasis on oppositions between binary difference/sameness which employed methodologies adopted from the mental practices of linguistic and literary theory, to investigating how the mind/body

work together employing figures and models from the complex fine arts. Art practice's engagement with bodily praxis through the transformation of matter and materials are, in cognitive science, providing analogies for the aesthetic, creating processes of 'becoming'.¹⁰

Body arts as practices of difference

Universally experienced emotions, somatic experience and family relations serve as primary sources of shared experience with which to communicate analogically. But as we know, the body and the family are not natural but historically and culturally marked. If the body and the family are the source of performative analogic practices, we need to know which body, which family is in question. Gonzalez-Torres for instance, drew on the analogy of the patriarchal family for the force of his statement; it worked because we all understand and have experi-

in: *Art Press*, January 1995, p. 25 cited in Elger, Dietmar (1997) *Feliz Gonzalez-Torres. I Text. II Catalogue Raisonné*. Cantz Verlag.

6. Benjamin, W (1955) Doctrine of the similar, *New German Critique*, 1979 17/Spring, 65-69

7. Halliwell, op. cit. p. 371

8. Summers, David. Real metaphor: towards a redefinition of the 'conceptual' image, in Bryson, N et al (1991) *Visual Theory Polity* pp. 231-259

9. From a discussion with David Burrows

enced primogeniture. But if family relations were different, perhaps matriarchal or non-genetically related, his analogy would lose some of its power.¹¹

What can be seen in body analogies of much contemporary art are older concepts of the subject: they return to, rather than subvert older Cartesian models of the subject. Much postmodern practice enacts a divided selfhood, but one that is inverted: the body, not the abstract mind is privileged as subversive in hyperbolic, pornographic or fetishistic assertions of power. Such practices depict the body as substrate, as an instrument, emphasising its difference from the intellect or reason; as grotesque, repulsively fascinating, monstrous, abject, as an 'other' threatening the rationality of the abstract mind. The body as stuff, as matter: its oozes and liquidities, its formlessnesses are valorised as newly meaningful and alien to the desires of the intellect. For instance in the Chapman Brother's "Disasters of War" and "Hell" artworks, blood is predominantly featured as the symptom of damage, torture and pain: as an effect of accident, mutilation or violence. In Sarah Lucas' and Tracey Emin's T shirt with the words "Have you wanked over me yet?" semen is assumed as nasty sticky stuff, or as in Rebecca Warren's work, to be aggressively ejected onto the faces of women. Lucas's "Human Toilet" equates the body of women with abjection (admittedly not caring much about it) to represent piss and faeces as foul, desecrating waste. Matt Collinshaw's "Bullet Hole" equates the sexual female with sadistic violence.

Pus, mucous, putrefaction signify in language and in art practices, in an often aggressive gesturing against intellectualism and academicism. The body and its fluids emerge as some kind of unarticulated, unmarked truth, as desires released after years of repressive modernism and intellectual domination. These art works are about much more than I can deal with here, but in this context, whilst they challenge the privileging of abstract intellectualising, they do not dissolve or challenge, but only reverse difference. They inevitably imply the existence of a noumenal mind structured in an anxiety with, and different from 'its' material substrate, of men's bodies and women's bodies as different.

This divided concept of the self that is depicted in figures in art, are externalised and performatively projected onto other social relations. At its most stereotyped, the image of the contemporary artist has been that of the punctual 'I'/eye, a transcending ego, observing and representing 'others' in figures that are analogous to the mind's relation to the body. In 'socially contextualized' practice and in some practice described as relational, collaborative attempts appear to bridge the differences between artists and their audiences.¹² Artists work in so-called relational practices 'with others' that are pre-identified: as 'the homeless', 'the local community', 'the disabled', 'gay' or 'Asian women'

10. See Gentner, *op cit*

11. Fredrick Jameson for instance in *The Prison House of Language* (1975, Princeton U. P.) elaborates on how metaphors lose their power when the experience of changing social realities no longer shore them up.

12. Bourriaud, Nicolas (2002) *Relational Aesthetics*. Les Presses du réel



Felix Gonzalez-Torres "Untitled" (Portrait of Ross in LA), 1991

and so on.¹³ With a primary cognitive image of self hood as separate from its own materiality, 'others' are likely be understood in the same instrumental way: as different from the "I" of the artist and existing as resources and material for the artist's own practice and professional trajectory. In shaping and structuring the art processes, the outcomes that emerge are the result of the artist's own inductive imagination and authored in their sole name. Artists ascribe those qualities that express their own attitude towards others to that other itself as its own qualities.¹⁴ In working with defined others as different, the artist's own subjectivity, their own ego, then is always in some sense strengthening itself, through working with those others who recognise and respond to them as artists. An "I" emerges as even more powerfully different. "The "I" [the artist] "draws what is called its "agency" in part through being implicated in the very relations of power it seeks to oppose".¹⁵

With an analogous mind/body relation, art practices could be differently imagined and organised. Such practices would focus on shared terrain,

common embeddedness and debt within shared historical and cultural meanings. So whilst there would be a recognition of the difference of artists compared with some others; there would also be empathy with, and focus on, contiguity and the shared desire to experience something in the place and event of art experiencing. In analogic relational practices, art is not dissolved in daily life or popular culture, but asserts its own specific concerns so that it can continue to function effectively *as* art. It recognises the need for an audience to respond to it and so cannot be autonomous or privileged; its' very subject and existence as art is in the interdependent moment of shared recognition and experiencing. Again, Gonzalez-Torres provides an analogic relational practice in his direction that piles of sweets be arranged, according to the desires of the owner/curator to represent the body of his dead lover. He sets up conditions in his own absence that allow the sweets to be taken and eaten by strangers, calling on the fundamental human experience of enjoying sweet food with all its emotional, pleasurable, often childlike associations. He says:

I'm giving you this sugary thing; you put it in your mouth and you suck on someone else's body. And in this way my work becomes part of so many other people's bodies ... For just a few seconds, I have put something sweet in someone's mouth...¹⁶

I also think of Mary Kelly's *Post Partum Document* where she described the intensity with which she examined the colour of the poo in her baby's nappy – which is what all new mothers do. She describes a state of aware receptiveness to the material, its texture and colour, and its context: intent on interpreting the health of the child through his non-articulate utterances. In the everyday reflexive processes of child-care her own subjectivity as a mother emerges as does that of her child in becoming a boy. And here, instead of being disgusting and vile, the body's fluids function as gifts, as meaningful signs of care and connectedness that have to be understood. Their function, which is after all to maintain the body's health, is empathetically recognised. The same can be seen in another artist's work, that of Guy Shoham who, instead of representing spermatic fluid as slightly ridiculous and dirty, digitally creates delicate figurines of children in what appears as a translucent, pearly sheen emphasising semen's generative, fertile, and benign aspects. Shoham, a gay man, may have had semen's pleasureable and emotional connotations in mind. In another well known literary example Katherine Hayles describes how in the novel, *Blood Music*, the blood has its own way: it fulfils its own desires. It

13. Relational art has been described as a "New Movement" in art defined as "collapsing the difference between (their) art forms and the average citizen" or simply as politicized art. See for instance BBC interview with Ben Lewis on C4's 'Documentary' series, or the community and performance based projects sponsored by P.L.A.C.E. at U.N.M. website. Its 'newness' and difference from contextual arts of the 70s–80s being often understood only in its distribution in new global technologies. A fuller discussion of different interpretations of relational art and its critics is investigated in the above cited PhD thesis.

14. For a fuller argument of this position see Bakhtin, M. M. (c1919–29/1990) *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays*. Holquist, Michael & Liapunov, Vadim. Texas UP. p. 81

15. Butler argues this in Butler, Judith (1994) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. Routledge. p. 123

16. Dietmar, op cit.

disassembles bodies and re-creates them more perfectly healthy so that they can continue to allow the blood to go on doing what blood wants to do: which is to nurture and heal. Mark Quinn's "Blood Head", vulnerable to defrosting also recalls analogously the intellect's dependence on the flow of matter and the necessity of the artwork and subjectivity to be maintained through systems of technology which are in turn maintained by human care. Here the body is not only depicted, as 'other': horrific and vile but also in its benign aspect, of self-healing, not working in opposition to the mind, but fulfilling its systematic function in maintaining the organism of mind and body so that the whole can continue as healthy.

It is this mutually necessary and beneficial interchange between organisms, the bridge that links polar identities, that is termed *autopoietic*. In the 1970s the cognitive scientist Humberto Maturana coined the term 'autopoiesis' to describe the self maintaining process of bodily organs, always growing as distinct and discrete, but in mutually interested, lived and active relations with each other and the changing environment.¹⁷ Subjectivity, as in the example of Mary Kelly's work, or Gonzalez-Torres' emerges and is transformed in the relational process of the artwork.

17. Maturana, Humberto & Varela, Francisco (1980) *Autopoiesis and Cognition: The Realization of the Living*. Dordrecht: D. Reidel

18. McClintock, Barbara, quoted in Fox-Keller, Evelyn. (1983) *A Feeling For the Organism*. p. 117

Autopoietic activity can be identified in artists' work with materials. The materials have their own properties and possibilities: their own 'desires'. And it is through the empathetic understanding of materials and their linguistic and associative resemblances that the author as artist 'speaks'. The emphasis in autopoietic activity is the search for similar interests. This search requires looking for things in common, identification, and affinity so that we take on aspects of 'the other'. Such absorption in another life form can be seen at work in the words of the feminist geneticist, Barbara McClintock. She described her passion in her loss of self and the critical empathy involved in transformative work. She said,

I found that the more I worked with them (the chromosomes through the microscope) the bigger and bigger they got, and when I was really working with them, I wasn't outside anymore, I was down there. I was part of the system. I was right down there with them, and everything got big... it surprised me because I actually felt as if I were right down there and these chromosomes were my friends.¹⁸

In the same way, engaging with other people's ideas implies an intense but open and empathetic engagement, allowing the other subject to assert their own nature. It is 'relational' in that neither the artist nor the 'other' lose their identity or even their polar structure. As Butler says: "...this 'I' is still there." But she adds that it is an "I" that needs to be "resignified", a different meaning of "I". *Autopoiesis* has become useful as a concept for imagining the dynamic

interactions of mind *and* body, self *and* environment each as being unthinkable without their other. Thinking autopoetically implies that cognition is not defined as 'in the mind' or even in the mind and body, but as distributed through living and non-living 'others' phenomena in constantly self-adjusting, mutually interested relations.

This notion of "distributed cognition" has been graphically illustrated in the work of the psychologist Edwin Hutchins. In his research he demonstrated how, in the handling of huge battle cruisers at sea, thinking in action was not the result of a linear chain of command from top to bottom, but the deployment of learned bodily skills and interactions of many people together, each relying on the other's cognitive organisms, their shared tools and technologies. An immediate complex response to changing and unpredictable weather conditions, the sea, and the reading of charts and measurements. Cognition, he asserted, always happens "in the wild."¹⁹ It is 'in the wild' he suggests, that subjectivities are constantly adjusting and changing.

In this paper I am suggesting that artworks too are produced 'in the wild'. Relational art criticism would require this close and thoughtful mode of attention and empathetic knowledge of the complex changing contexts in which art is made and in which the art experience takes place. There is an assumption of shared interests and an expectation that the audience/critic will want to meet the artist halfway. Relational analogic practice requires a certain passivity in listening or engaging with art utterances, a temporary suspension of ego. What is said may not always be comfortable, altogether intelligible or easy, but the listener/audi-

ence enters the rules of the game in expectation and in a context where they feel the speaker/artist has their ultimate interests at heart. Analogic practices imply relations of care and contiguity: spatial closeness or some common ground between polar opposites, between artist and artwork, artist and audience. Neither of the polar terms: the artist/the critic; the artwork/the context is defined as 'art': the 'art' is found in the encounter, the moment of experiencing. Experiencing art then, suggests a heightened importance of the "wild": the immediate changing contexts in which artist and audience are placed in the experiencing moment.²⁰

It has been suggested that the figure of analogy itself emerged in human consciousness as a realisation of the human experience of love – that it is in the need to be like others, to connect with them, to want to make them love us.²¹ Mikhail Bakhtin takes up this idea when he talks of the 'sympathetic empathy' or 'love-like sympathy' we must always have with another object or person in order to communicate effectively. Love-like sympathy implies making a stand

19. Hutchins, Edwin (1995) *Cognition in the Wild*. MIT Press: Cambridge.

Most of the material for this section has been drawn from Hayles, N. Katherine (1999) *How We Became Posthuman: Virtual Bodies in Cybernetics, Literature and Informatics*. Chicago UP

20. This model of relational analogic art I have based on Oliver, H. H. (1981) *A Relational Metaphysic* cited in McSwain (1994) *A Relational Aesthetics*. Peter Lang. New York

21. Art Becomes You

for the self as a singular responsible entity, but then a letting go and giving up of the self temporarily in utterances, knowing there will always be a possible range of responses, not knowing how one's own subjective utterance will be received or even if it will be recognised at all. Utterances such as artworks involve the risk of loss, rejection or blank incomprehension, but as Bakhtin observes: 'I am conscious of myself and become myself only while revealing myself for another...' ²² Dialogue always takes place in the expectation and trust that others care for us enough to listen, to meet us half-way, in the expectation of saying something. What is being uttered emerges in the process, and not in the mind of the speaker beforehand.

Love-like sympathy is not described as identification with others, merging, or becoming like them but implies an ethical relation in recognising the other as another I, a social "I" who lives in the same world with the same codes and conventions but has a different nature, has rights, has their own desires, mode of being and aesthetic forms. It usually is, but need not be based in human relations, but as Haraway differently imagines: as human/technology; or as in Gaia theory the human/environment relation. It is in the analogic encounter between two polar 'others' each with their often incompatible and incomprehensible desires and natures, yet each eagerly seeking communication with the other, that something different emerges, something like art or a different way of being. ²³

21. Stafford, Barbara Maria
op. cit.

22. Eskin, Michael (2000) *Ethics and Dialogue: In the Works of Levinas, Bakhtin, Mandel'shtam and Celan*. Oxford U. P. p. 103.

23. Bakhtin, (1981) op cit; p. 92 and Nealon, Jeffrey (1998) *Alterity Politics: Ethics and Performative Subjectivity*. Duke: Durham and London