

INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA
313/761-4700 800/521-0600

POETICS OF THE BODY IN FEMINIST ART:
THREE MODALITIES

Renee Baert

A Thesis in the
Graduate Program in Communications

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy at
McGill University
Montreal, Quebec, Canada

January 1997

© Renee Baert, 1997



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-29882-5

ABSTRACT

My thesis is centered on poetics of the body in contemporary feminist art. Poetics, understood as the languages, materials and forms of composition, underscores the symbolically and socially mediated body so rendered, rather than its biological, anatomical, or otherwise 'natural' definition. A feminist poetics is at once a politics, and a creation, of language. I proceed through a close reading of a number of artworks by Canadian artists. These works 'resist' representation, foregoing a biologically grounded figuration to propose in more allusive terms the psychic and conceptual impulses through which the body is apprehended or might be imagined.

Influenced by the writings of Luce Irigaray on the structural isomorphism between *logos*, the phallus, and a privileged masculine model of subjectivity, the thesis investigates the construction within feminist art of alternative and contestatory poetics of the body potentially productive of other knowledge-effects.

Situating my investigation within the context of numerous 'figurations' of the subject that have emerged in recent feminist theory, I propose that feminist art practices provide a corollary contribution, in material form, to the theoretical project of thinking

'difference' beyond dualism.

I identify three modalities of practice that 're-make' the body/embodiment vis a vis a 'phallomorphic' model of identity, unity, self-sameness:

a) **the body in/of language**, as the imbrication of the two identified by Julia Kristeva through the category of the semiotic;

b) **morphologies** of the body as the imaginary body produced through an interweaving of the body's form, psychic dispensations and social/symbolic inscriptions;

c) constructed **spatialities** in which the material spaces of exhibition sites become enacted metaphoric spaces, and foreground the potential and import of spatial representations in the production of personal and social experience.

I argue that the forms, materialities and spatialities specific to visual art can serve to constitute analogues for the materiality of the body. The thesis considers the artworks as embodiments: at once material, textural and spatial 'bodies' of art.

Interdisciplinary in scope, this thesis brings together visual and textual sources drawn from contemporary art and the literatures of feminist (and) poststructuralist theory, cultural studies, postcolonial theory and the field of art history and criticism.

RÉSUMÉ

Ma thèse est centrée sur la poétique du corps dans l'art féministe contemporain. Cette poétique, qui comprend tant les langages et les matériaux que les formes de la composition, met en évidence le corps ainsi interprété dans sa charge symbolique et sociale, plutôt que comme objet biologique et anatomique, c'est-à-dire autrement qu'en fonction de la définition «naturelle». La poétique féministe est à la fois une poétique et une création du langage. J'ai effectué une lecture attentive de plusieurs oeuvres d'art réalisées par des artistes canadiennes. Ces oeuvres «s'opposent» à la représentation, renonçant à une figuration fondée sur la biologie, pour articuler, au moyen d'allusions, les impulsions psychiques et conceptuelles par lesquelles l'idée du corps peut être comprise ou même imaginée.

Sous l'influence des écrits de Luce Irigaray portant sur l'isomorphisme structurel entre le *logos*, le phallus, et un modèle masculin privilégié de la subjectivité, la thèse se veut une enquête, dans le domaine de l'art féministe, sur l'articulation d'une poétique alternative et contestataire du corps, laquelle peut être potentiellement productrice d'autres connaissances et impressions.

Situant mon champ d'enquête dans le contexte des nombreuses «figurations» du sujet élaborées récemment dans le cadre des théories féministes, je soutiens que les pratiques d'art féministes offrent un apport corollaire, notamment en sa forme matérielle, au projet théorique qui cherche à donner corps à une «différence» située au-delà du dualisme.

J'ai identifié trois modalités de pratique qui «recréent» le corps/incarnation par rapport à un modèle «phallomorphique» de l'identité, de l'unité et de la similitude:

a) **le corps du/dans le langage**, en tant qu'imbrication des deux, comme l'identifie Julia Kristeva au moyen de la catégorisation sémiotique;

b) **les morphologies** du corps, en tant que corps imaginaire produit au moyen de l'entrelacement de la forme du corps, des tendances psychiques et des inscriptions sociales/symboliques;

c) **les spatialisations** construites où les emplacements physiques des lieux d'exposition deviennent des espaces métaphoriques participatives et font corps avec la potentialité et l'importance des représentations spatiales pour la production d'une expérience personnelle et sociale.

Je soutiens que les formes, les matérialités et les

spatialisations propres aux arts visuels peuvent constituer des analogies pour la matérialité du corps. La thèse considère les oeuvres d'art comme des incarnations: des corps d'art qui sont à la fois matériels, texturés et spatiaux.

En raison de son caractère interdisciplinaire, cette thèse regroupe des sources visuelles et textuelles tirées de l'art contemporain et des théories littéraires féministes et poststructuralistes, de même que des études culturelles, de la théorie du postcolonialisme, des domaines de l'histoire de l'art et de la critique artistique.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It has been a privilege and pleasure to pursue these studies under the guidance of my co-advisors, Dr. Will Straw in the Graduate Program of Communications, and Dr. Christine Ross in Art History. Each of them has given unstintingly of their time and has offered insightful commentary, criticism and encouragement that has helped to shape my efforts throughout this process. I would add that, not only in this supervisory role, but also in their own scholastic and related work, their integrity, critical rigor and intellectual generosity have been an abiding example and an inspiration. I am deeply grateful to them for their work with me.

I would like to express my thanks to the internal reader, Dr. Charles Levin, whose enriching seminar in the first year of my doctoral program influenced my own interest in and pursuit of questions of embodiment and subjectivity that have evolved into the form of this thesis, and who has given further of his time and support to this later project. I would also like to acknowledge Dr. Marike Finlay, whose courses opened up many avenues of investigation.

The production of a thesis is not an event that occurs only within the precincts of the university, and

so I would like to remember here my friends, colleagues and family, who have endured neglect yet remained a font of encouragement, good dinners, stimulating conversation and necessary laughter. I would like to particularly single out for thanks Jessica Bradley, for the many dialogues which invigorated my reflections, and Cheryl Simon, who regularly rescued me and my stalling efforts with patience, critical insight, and sterling friendship.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	..ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
Chapter 1	
RETHINKING THE BODY.....	38
Chapter 2	
THE BODY IN/OF LANGUAGE.....	77
Chapter 3	
MORPHOLOGIES OF THE BODY.....	120
Chapter 4	
SPATIALITIES.....	186
CONCLUSION.....	250
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	262

INTRODUCTION

If we don't invent a language, if we don't find our body's language, it will have too few gestures to accompany our story. We shall tire of the same ones, and leave our desires unexpressed, unrealized. Asleep again, unsatisfied, we shall fall back upon the words of men - who for their part, have "known" for a long time. But not our body.

Luce Irigaray (1993:214)

If we would create a new body, one no longer nearly paralyzed by the alternative phallic and castrated, but a different body, our best hope, our most efficacious politics would be a practice....which we might call poetics of the body.

Jane Gallop (99)

1. Poetics of the body: three modalities

My thesis is centered on **poetics of the body** in contemporary feminist art. "Poetics", understood as the languages, materials and forms of composition, underscores the symbolically and socially mediated body so rendered, rather than its biological, anatomical or otherwise 'natural' definition. If poetics lie within the differential system of language, a feminist poetics is a politics of language; it is an activity of engendering new foundations of thought, new forms of expression and new interpretations. As language 'makes' the body - shapes our understandings and experiences of its form, meanings and powers - so a feminist poetics of the body is a rethinking of patriarchal conceptions of

the body, a refiguration and remaking that seeks to alter the terms of those definitions.

I argue that the plastic materialities and spatialities specific to visual art (volume, surface, depth, scale, texture, layers, patina, colour, materials, etc.) can serve to constitute analogues for the materiality of the body. These *textualizations* of the body (as its mediated remove from nature, its prise in language and representation) are also *texturizations*, in-corporations of its layered dimensionalities, evoking the relations between exteriority and interiority. This materiality enables a depiction of the body that is neither its figural re-presentation, nor even its stabilized metaphorization, and hence can expand the field of possibility for conveying both the situatedness and the imaginary potentials of bodies and being. Such art practices which address embodiment through allusive modes of depiction form the object of my study.

The challenge of a feminist poetics is set critically against the backdrop of received representations and the ways these have functioned to anchor gender arrangements and to constitute social and sexual identities. At stake in these poetics of the body are interventions on two representational fronts: that

I of the annexation of women's bodies as the visible sign of difference by patriarchal discourses of art and culture, and that of models for conceiving and depicting the body within the contemporary legacies of feminist art practice. Influenced by the writings of Luce Irigaray on the structural isomorphism between *logos*, the phallus, and a privileged masculine model of subjectivity, the thesis investigates the construction within feminist art of alternative and contestatory poetics of the body potentially productive of other knowledge-effects with implications for the transfiguration of the paternal symbolic.

I draw upon the psychoanalytic account of the imaginary body - the lived body as ever mediated by fantasy, as psychically construed - to position these contestatory poetics vis a vis the dominant social imaginary of the feminine body as envelope/container or lack (of the phallic attributes). The artworks of my study 'resist' representation and homology, foregoing a biologically grounded figuration to propose in more indirect terms the psychic and conceptual impulses through which the body is apprehended or might be imagined.

I specify three modalities of practice in feminist art in which the body is so materialized:

a. **The semiotic body-in/and-language.** If language inscribes the body (as sign, as the material bedrock of social operations), so too the body inhabits language. I draw upon the writings of Julia Kristeva on language's interimplication with the body (1974/84) to investigate modes of practice in which a doubled event obtains. In the first instance, as Kristeva describes, the stability of language, and of the body as fixed 'sign', is ruptured by its semiotic underlay. But, unlike in Kristeva's privileged masculine models of avant-garde poetic destabilizations of the symbolic, the present study foregrounds not the transient return from the 'father's' language to the pre-Oedipal impulses of the body's enclosure in the maternal *chora*, but rather the negotiations of these polarized terms from a female position of enunciation. If Kristeva positions the maternal body as at once 'outside of' and linchpin (as the internal debt) of patriarchal symbolization, this stance poses particular problems for the female subject in symbolizing the maternal-feminine body in language without reverting to the very patriarchal structure that denies the maternal (as) subject and defines the feminine as, precisely, 'body', or non-language. Drawing upon Kristeva's corporealization of language through the concept of the semiotic, I investigate modes of practice

which likewise refuse the body/culture dualism through their insistent privileging of the affective body and its traces. The semiosis of these 'bodies' entails a complex interweaving with culturally marked coordinates to situate the feminine-maternal and the body in - rather than as the destabilizing underside of - culture and language.

b. **Morphologies.** The morphology of the body designates its form and structure as a whole, considered apart from its function. In representation, such morphologies propose a selective and constructed relation to anatomy, organizing the perception of the body. If, as Jane Gallop has written, "phallomorphic logic is not based in anatomy but, on the contrary, reconstructs anatomy in its own image", the morphology of the body is not pregiven by anatomy but is rather "a symbolic interpretation of that anatomy" (94). The concept of morphologies shifts attention from a body understood in terms of biology, a body given in nature, to that of a social construct. As modes of figuration, morphologies highlight the relation between the forms by which the body is depicted and the meanings these enable. The morphologies that are the object of my study propose configurations of the body that are not recognizable in anatomical terms, and thus break away

from conventional morphologies based on phallic morphic models. Rather, through the use of body-evocative materials, internal alterities and/or abstracted forms, these works exteriorize the body through formal means that depend less on direct anatomical resemblances (let alone literal representations) than on analogies and imaginative associations. These serve to convey, not 'the body' but embodiment, in its lived, affective, multivalent, cultural and phantasmatic dimensions.

c. **Spatialities:** Unlike the 'ideal' body proposed in classical representation, bodies are ever 'somewhere', are ever spatially located. If space is the 'female' axis of the time/space binary, and is generally conceived of as a neutral backdrop for the objects that occupy it, I foreground modes of practice which charge spatialities with dynamism, and which disassemble the (gendered) space/time binarism through an interweaving of these spatialities with layered dimensions of temporalities. Art practices which occupy or compose specific modes of spatialities can create, through material form, imaginary spaces and places of inhabitation and experience for the spectator. These formalizations of alternative spatialities become a means of creating a counterpoint to, or a layering upon, existing social spaces and the social relations they

organize. Over and above a means of organizing a visual field, these works also invoke other senses, implicating the body of the spectators/ participants through their physical occupation of, and movement/action within, these composed spatialities. Also of pertinence to the bodily inflection of such practices is their evocation of the residue of the body, the physical marks and traces it leaves on the material surface of the world. These spaces can become spaces of alterity, sites for the proposal - the enactment - of alternative imaginaries of social and psychic space, wedded to the questioning of our modes and means of cultural existence.

Through my attention to the dimension of spatiality, I operate a shift in emphasis from the poststructuralist problematic of the subject's constitution in the differentials of language to a consideration of other vectors through which we come to inhabit the world as subjects of being and knowledge.

2. A three-fold aim

My discussion of the materialization of embodiment in feminist art practice allows the elaboration of a three-fold aim:

- a. To identify an important and generative tendency

in contemporary art practice that is distinct from, yet draws upon aspects of, the discursively dominant models through which feminist art practices are characteristically represented. This is not an argument on behalf of the 'return' of the body in recent art practices but rather specifies the *persistence* of the imaginative centrality of the (female) body in feminist art against a long-standing and discursively dominant proscription on its representation as experiential ground - of which this remarked upon 'return' (of the repressed) is a manifestation. At issue, however, is the mode by which the body is thought, and depicted, and its implications for theorizing the conditions and potentials of our embodied subjectivity.

On the one hand, as a materialization of the body, the works that form the object of my study function in contradistinction to the dematerialization of the body in deconstructive art practices, which produce the body as 'sign', as a (patriarchally generated) text, a flat surface to be read, decoded and destabilized. These feminist appropriative, deconstructive practices have typically proceeded through a negative aesthetics aimed at unveiling, and countering, the workings of dominant regimes of representation in the construction of gendered subjectivity. This attention to the function of

Woman as Sign (Cowie), however, even as it dislodges the ready workings of these operations, has rendered the lived body mute or absent, elided issues of agency, and foreclosed on a woman-centered redefinition of the female subject.

On the other hand, the exteriorizations of the body in the works I discuss are distinct, in their more poetic and abstract renderings, from the 'real' body of performance art - whether produced as ontology in 'first generation' art, or as 'performative' in more recent work - and other 'literal' forms of figuration. At the same time, the works are also distinct from a range of practices, typified in first generation art but persistent to the present day, that metaphorize the female body in conventional terms of the 'feminine' through biomorphic imagery, motifs of spheres, circles, flowers, etc. Such work has been widely critiqued for its maintenance of a dualistic economy through the constitution of a parallel 'separate sphere' of the feminine, as well as for a biological essentialism. Yet of abiding currency in this work is its paramount attention to embodiment, the ethics of living and the affirmation of women in their negotiations and revisions of the governing models of social/gendered existence.

If Woman in patriarchal culture is the sign of difference - a sign structured through imaginary processes that have real effects - what 'difference' can women make in reconstituting that sign through positive representational strategies that take female embodiment and the constructs/poetics of language as their intertwined referent? What do these processes of mat(t)erializing the body through strategies of semiotic renderings, abstracted morphologies and enacted spacializations, enable?

b. To consider the effectivity of these multiple models for refiguring embodied subjectivity in opening up a double set of dualistic structures that are part of the legacy of the Western metaphysical tradition - dualisms which, foundational to the social imaginary of bodies and concretized in social relations, have operated to the detriment of women.

I refer, in one instance, to the mind/body dualism, in which subjectivity is seen to emanate from the mind while the body is a neutral entity, mere matter. The correlate to this bifurcation, in parallel binary, is Man's transcendence of the body and assumption of place as (universal) subject, while Woman is body, is tied to bodily immanence. I argue that these art practices

refigure the subject neither through a forgetting/
repressing/renunciation of the body nor through the
inverted parallelism of an autonomous, full feminine
morphology, but rather through an articulation of the
body in its imbrication with the differentials of
language, gender and the spaces of the social.

A second and interrelated dualism is the
conceptualization of bodies in which, as Moira Gatens
puts it, "difference is exhausted by phallic presence or
absence" (72); that is, a conception of only two (types
of) bodies which "are in fact one body and its lack or
complement" (39). Through a discussion of particular
artworks that operate what Adrienne Rich (290) and Jane
Gallop have each characterized as a 'thinking through
the body', I foreground depictions of the body as its
meanings are lived - the affective and situated body.
These models enable a challenge to and shift from a
static model of sexual difference toward a recognition
of historical and cultural specificities of subject
formation, with their procedures of subjectification,
modes of representation and imaginary coordinates.

c. By an attention to the formal and material
aspects of art production - to the embodiment and
spaciality that is specific to it - I suggest that art

offers a corollary practice that is not merely adjunct to, or reflective of, feminist theory but rather constitutes an analagous field of activity which like (yet unlike) writing, provokes generative questions, ideas, insights and interpretations of pertinence to theory. Companion to discursive texts, these works generate important, materialized, theorizations of the embodied subject. If philosophy and psychoanalytic theory have been privileged as territories of debate over the conception, representation and status of the subject in postmodernity, it is my argument that the domain of Western art as a field constructing and gendering the subject through representation is also foundational, is likewise open to contestation and is equally a site of new potentials that may operate radical challenges to dominant cultural codes and open up spaces for alternate conceptions of subjectivity.

3. Embodiments of art

Further to the consideration of the rendering of bodies within the artworks, the thesis considers the artworks as embodiments: at once material, spatial and located 'bodies' of art. In considering the 'bodies' of art, I have found relevant the distinction drawn by David Summers between the 'conventions' of art and its

'conditions'.

Writing on "the disanalogy of art and language" (1991), Summers elaborates on how the impact of linguistic theories on the understanding of art has served to foreground numerous compatibilities between art and language that lend themselves to analogies between the two domains. Most prominent among these is the modern notion of 'form', which breaks with the mimetic understanding of art and foregrounds its distance from the natural. Similarly, the idea of 'style' enumerates a lexicon of differentiations that are not 'natural', but rather relational. The common reference to the 'language of art' has referred not only to its syntax, the formal characteristics that can be 'read', but also to its processes of mediation. All of these have a relation to the conventions of language as these are understood to operate signification through differentiations internal to the arbitrary system of language.

Summers argues, however, that the application of the linguistic metaphor to art conceals "all-important issues of conditionality (that is...real spatiality and embodiment) which are constitutive and therefore meaningful for images (and for what we call art in general...)" (184). The distinction between 'conventions'

(analogous to language) and 'conditions' (the embodiment and spatiality specific to art) does not situate conditions as an already-given outside of a social application. Rather, Summers argues, "it means that history and social affiliation reach even more deeply than the linguistic analogy allows us to suppose into our experience and behaviour" (185).

The differential and arbitrary structure of language, the lack of any direct or necessary relation between object/referent and sign, is predicated, for the purposes of linguistic significance, on its divorce from its material and sensual basis, from its embodiment. The neutrality implied by the analogy of artistic and linguistic signs forecloses upon "what is shaped in art, the real and virtual spaces given specific historical definition by art", and imply that art objects can be understood as written language, without taking account of "the conditions and circumstances of their own real spatiality" (185). Over and above their formal relations or their representational content, artworks have real spatial value that constitutes irreducible meaning. It is, Summers argues, the "fact" of the artistic realization itself (as distinct from the 'incorporeality' of the verbal sign) that points to the real and virtual spaces within which they signify.

Artworks are realized "by materially definite means with equally definite results in determinative collective spaces." Such real spatiality has its own "coordinates and decorums" which, while culturally specific, are not "radically culturally specific", that is, conventional (203).

Though not taken up in this light, Summer's thesis constitutes a pertinent corrective to the postmodern project of 'deconstructing' images wherein their representational content is taken as the (sole) axis of meaning. His attention to the materiality of art, to the virtual space of the artwork as the conditional 'ground' of the image/icon/representation, and his foregrounding of the social spaces of presentation/reception, including their historicity, are all useful for the project of considering what is outside of his framework of discussion, that is, the 'spaces' of feminist production: their material modes, the imaginary/virtual spaces they compose, and the transformations of social sites which they enact.

Summer's point is made in more succinct fashion by Carol Laing with her observation, in the catalogue for the exhibition Picture Theory (1995): "...as all good poststructuralists will admit, the meanings of language *belong to language*. Where then are the meanings of

pictures"(10)? Pertinently, her exhibition foregrounds space, conceived not as 'empty', 'static' or 'female' but as a complex web of differential powers, and her catalogue text issues "a call for representations that are up to the experience of an everyday life where the sights - and sites - are always quickly shifting, and radically unstable, and for a theory informed by *seeing* as well as by *reading*"(11). The sights/sites of feminist art production bring the dimensions of embodiment and spatiality to the question of the conception of the embodied subject in the spaces (discursive and otherwise) of the postmodern.

4. Methodology

Interdisciplinary in scope, this thesis brings together visual and textual sources drawn from contemporary art and the literatures of feminist (and) poststructuralist theory, cultural studies, postcolonial theory, and the field of art history and criticism. The thesis proceeds through a close reading of a number of individual artworks. In each of these, the body or bodies figure prominently, though in such forms as abstraction, trace, emblem or somatic semiosis rather than as figurative resemblances.

I have selected my objects of study from artworks

produced within Canada. While the thesis is only partially centered on a discourse of 'place' in which the place(s) of nation are at issue, I would propose that, in a subtle way, the place of Canada subtends all of the work. A unique feature of the Canadian art system is its relatively generous (in international terms) funding of contemporary art, artists and exhibition sites. Among these sites have been developed artist-run centers for the presentation, publication and circulation of art and other related initiatives, a development that not only wrests the powers of 'legitimation' from prominent institutions, but creates dialogues, tensions and exchanges between different levels of institutions. A consequence of these developments has been a level of participation and legitimation of women artists in the discourses of visual arts in Canada virtually unprecedented elsewhere. (A contention readily confirmed by the most cursory glance at the proportion of female representation within the exhibitions, festivals, biennials of the Western capitals.) Thus the work by artists in Canada, while it participates in the 'international' discourses of art and theory, also functions in dialogue with local critical and aesthetic practices. Further, it is my own 'politics of location' to privilege the 'here' of this

place of artmaking, to bring to bear within the 'local' the theoretical terms of an 'international' discourse whose objects of reference are invariably elsewhere.

The artworks under discussion are produced from an avowedly feminist stance - that is to say that, while my reading proceeds from feminist problematics, these are not simply mapped over non-feminist work, but rather enter into a dialogue with these practices. In distinction from a positioning/politics of negative appropriation/deconstruction, these works operate a critique of patriarchal culture through positive strategies that utilize strategies of visual language to imaginatively reinvest, even if they do not redefine in a unitary way, the sites of the 'feminine' in relation to the voices, predicaments and desires of women.

As with the artworks, so, too, are my primary theoretical sources drawn from the work of theorists whose work operates a destabilization of the patriarchal symbolic. While many of these writers draw upon the work of such celebrated poststructuralist figures as Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Maurice Merleau-Ponty and others, I have generally chosen to incorporate those theorists as their work has been mediated by feminist writers. The universalism and sexual neutrality (the 'in-difference') of virtually

every major male poststructuralist theorist has entailed in every instance a substantial rethinking of their arguments in terms of the 'differences' of sexual difference. Further, feminist thought, though intersecting (in this framework) with poststructuralism, has its own genealogy of interrogation of master narratives, historical canons and the constitutive and exclusionary powers of discourse. Further, within the project of feminism(s), attention to issues of difference has come to center less on the male/female axis of difference than on the differences between and within women. Teresa de Lauretis puts it directly: "We must walk out of the male-centered frame of reference" (1987:3).

My thesis owes a particular debt to the generative insights and arguments that arise from (and follow upon) so-called French feminism in its interrogation of the psycho-linguistic conditions of sexed identity. I single out in particular Luce Irigaray in her wily deconstructions of the 'indifference' of patriarchal systems of knowledge and her (ad)venturing of ways to think the unthought of sexual difference as other than homology or complement within an economy of sameness. Of particular import, and in contrast to the general tenor of poststructuralism, Irigaray does not seek to evacuate

the category of identity: indeed, she insists upon the need to create spaces and places for women's self-representations and being to overcome the dereliction that is their lot within patriarchy. For Irigaray, the (necessary) negativity of deconstruction as the interrogation of patriarchal metaphysics must proceed through new modes of symbolization - of which the objects of my study are an instance. Her own allusive forms of writing, her strategy of mimicry, her concept of morphologies, her subversion of the 'universal' through a speaking (as) woman (an emphasis whose corollate is that of an altered ethics of difference), and so forth, have been generative models for thinking 'differently'. Thus, even though her foundational texts date back some 20 years (considerably less so in translation), and in this do not take into account the extent that feminisms have reshaped conceptions of being and knowledge, and though her work is regularly subjected to critiques based on its purported 'essentialism' or its failure to think difference beyond 'sexual difference', it retains a host of productive possibilities that can be worked with and extended, as I have sought to do in particular with her concept of morphologies. I have also seized upon, if only to bend to other uses, Kristeva's concept of the 'semiotic' as

the interfolding of language and the libidinal. Whereas Kristeva's project is a properly poststructuralist disassembling of the fixities of identity - the semiotic itself a rupture of language and the illusory unities it orders - I have interrogated the limitations of this theory vis a vis the female subject of speech in one chapter, only to recuperate the 'semiotic' in mutated fashion in other chapters for the visual field as the presence of a physical mark or trace in the material form of art that serves to evoke the body, enabling a mode less of 'thinking/writing through the body' than figuring 'with' it, a remembering of the corporeal matrix within the 'body' of art. I would also single out as influences Rosi Braidotti in her insistence on linking the poststructuralist project of thinking difference "to the bodily existence and experience of women" (1994:40), Elizabeth Grosz in her challenging explorations of non-dualist conceptions of both subjects and bodies, and her attention to the bodily roots of subjectivity, and Moira Gatens in her pathbreaking work on the cultural imaginary of the sexually-differentiated body and its implications within/for the political body.

My approach is inflected by my long-standing extra-academic profession as a curator of contemporary art. One of the unsettling aspects of reading feminist

critical theory is the lack of awareness repeatedly in evidence of artistic practices as these overlap with theoretical texts, offering material correlates to the issues foregrounded. Indeed, art not only lends to theory the 'objects' it needs (even as it inevitably exceeds each such use), it also constitutes, often enough, visual evidence in advance of an established conceptual framework that would already account for such work. Hence whether in dialogue with, preceding or influenced by one another, the domains of feminist art and theory may be seen as 'fellow travellers' in their engagements with questions of desire, knowledge and female subjectivity.

Repeatedly the reader of feminist theory encounters calls for the creation of feminist representations that would speak to the theoretical positions under discussion, in ignorance of work already extant. Insofar as art production is discussed, too often this entails a small litany of established names invoked again and again. Works are drawn upon to illustrate theses, rather than forming the ground upon which the theory might develop. Insofar as artworks are discussed, they are often set exclusively in relation to written texts, foreclosing upon their relation to other artworks and too often as well eliding the material and positional

specificities through which their meanings are effected.
As the artist and theorist Carol Laing has
trenchantly observed,

Writing that purports to be about pictures too frequently only uses those pictures as a point of simple reference before quickly circling back to other texts, leaving the artworks and their complex specificities unread.... If it is time to say that pictures, like writing, also endlessly generate issues, ideas and interpretations, isn't it time to try to work to improve the fit, in the realm of the visual, of theory to practice? In other words, can't there be theories that actually *fit* the work? (8)

My thesis proceeds in relation to two intertextual fields of reference: visual artworks, and written texts culled from feminist theory and art history. I proceed through a close reading of specific art works, but these abut and play off theoretical texts, to extend, develop, or put into question elements of each and provoke new possibilities of interpretation. This hermeneutics puts into circulation a third text, the thesis itself, which aims at a re-presentation of the intertextual resources of both fields through a production and re-framing.

While the basis for the selection of artworks arises in part from problematics laid out in theoretical texts, the visual productions, through the specificities of their own modes of language, material and form, are not reducible to these texts, and reverberate upon such texts with new possibilities and challenges. Thus each

field of reference serves as a context for the other, sited within the framework and 'partial fiction' of the thesis/text.

Yet another basis for the selection of the artwork is surely, inevitably, put into evidence in this thesis. Susan Suleiman has described the appeal to the "self-interest" of the writer offered by contemporary works, a self-interest she counters to indifference and disinterestedness. Contemporary artworks, not mediated or distanced by time and history. "... bring the critic's self into play," Suleiman avers, "and into risk. They stir up muddy waters....In a word, they matter to you"(6). To select artworks for study is already a subjective investment; for this writer the 'interest' of/in such work lies in a challenge it poses, a resistance it offers to a ready assimilation, and often a felt effect. Yet if the very act of interpretation - of naming, describing, of bringing to 'sense' what is elusive or opaque - is an act of containing the excess of a work, its alterity, the itinerary of this venture is less the activity of the knowing subject than the production of a writing subject miming anew the very limits of unity, synthesis and identity that the works put into play.

If the 'group show' of curatorial practice enables

the creation of an ensemble or thematic of meaning through the selection, co-presentation and dialogue between material objects in physical space, the flat page of the written text forecloses upon this material and spatial dimension and further translates the work from a visual to a linguistic system. Yet such writing opens out perhaps into a conceptual space where disparate 'texts' can be re-located together for a provisional and, I hope, dynamic moment.

5. Thesis chapters

My thesis draws its influence from contemporary figurations of the embodied subject as these have been conceptualized in feminist postmodern theory. By "embodied subject" I refer in the first instance to figurations that counter the aforementioned mind/body dualism of the Western metaphysical tradition. In the second instance, I refer to the body as its meanings are lived, the affective and situated body: the body as a process with its own potential and actual powers. A poetics of the body, in this sense, slips from its moorings in the differentials of language to evoke as referent a realm of experience that resists or escapes the orderings of a paternally secured language or Law.

In Chapter One, I situate my project within the

context of these feminist theoretical models. Among such discursive figurations can be cited Luce Irigaray's morphology of "two lips" (1977/85), Gayatri Spivak's culturally and historically situated symbol of the effaced clitoris (1987), Teresa de Lauretis' 'eccentric subject' (1990), Carol Laing's 'crisscrossed subject' (1995), Monique Wittig's lesbian as not-a-woman (1981), Donna Haraway's bio-techno hybrid 'cyborg' (1985), Rosi Braidotti's rendering of the 'nomadic subject' (1994), Judith Butler's 'performative' bodies (1990), Gloria Anzaldúa's figure of the culturally hybrid Mestiza (1987), and Elizabeth Grosz' figuration of subjectivity in the form of the Mobius strip (1994).

These new figurations foreground the bodily basis of subjectivity and seek to rethink embodiment and subjectivity from within the framework of poststructuralist thought in its demystification of notions of self-same identity, its critique of rationality, of representational truth (transparency), of master narratives and of the complicity between knowledge and power.

These figurations incorporate the differences that bodies make, privileging the body not as a physical substrate of, but rather as constitutive of, the subject. The body in question is not a pre-given,

neutral, biological or otherwise 'essential' entity. Rather, as Elizabeth Grosz argues, "The body, or rather bodies, cannot be adequately understood as ahistorical, precultural or natural objects in any simple way; they are not only inscribed, marked, engraved by social pressures external to them but are the product, the direct effects, of the very social constitution of nature itself"(x). These discursive figurations are at once a deconstruction of existing modes of conceiving bodies and subjects, and performative models directed to reconceiving the interfaces of bodies and sociality in a more profound complexity.

I argue that feminist art practices have produced a comparable reckoning with these issue, bypassing the linearities of discursive textuality to compose a language of alterity through the specificities particular to art. The material embodiments of art enable a complex layering of the registers of psyche, soma, symbolization and the social.

Chapter Two draws upon Julia Kristeva's specification, through her concept of the **semiotic**, of language's debt to the pre-Oedipal maternal body (1974/84). I argue that the 'poetic language' of the female subject, as a remembering of the bodily basis of language and subjectivity, must entail a quite different

'poetics' from that elaborated by Kristeva in her privileging of the transgressive texts of a male avant-garde. For this male artist, the self-release to the resonances and *jouissance* of the *chora*/semiotic, even as it effects a (temporary) subversion of the ordering processes of the symbolic, is always-already superintended and guaranteed by his 'place' in the symbolic, even as his textual rupture is itself recontained. For the female subject - whose 'place' in the differential structures of language is that of absence, lack; who *is* body - a poetics of semiotic language, a poetics of the body, entails a more radical and sustained dis-ordering of the symbolic.

I center my analysis on the 1974 videotape *A Very Personal Story*, by Lisa Steele, which is put into dialogue with Julia Kristeva's writing of the same year, *La révolution du langage poétique*. My aim in returning to a production more than twenty years old is, in the first instance, to honour this first generation of Second Wave artistic production as the place of 'beginnings' in the production of a feminist discursive space. But the videotape further constitutes a production in advance of the theoretical availability of the concept of the semiotic, and one in which contradictions and impasses within the production yield

insights into the problematic of women's relation to paternal language and the maternal subject.

Through a discussion of this video performance, within which the integrity of its *corpus* is fragmented by the semiotics of the speaker's *corps*, I investigate an aporia in the narrative-performance with respect to the mother: an impasse in which the text's self-contradictory meanings cannot be resolved. This impasse is rejoined to an impasse in the Kristevan text which, in positioning the corporeal matrix of the maternally-connoted chora as an irruption in language, leaves a gap with respect to the maternal (as) subject which bears upon the problem posed in the tape of the daughter's difficult negotiation of this culturally absented term.

In Chapter Three: Morphologies, I draw upon the concept of morphologies, as inflected by Luce Irigaray, to situate and discuss the abstracted bodily renderings produced in artworks by Mary Scott, Martha Townsend and Anne Ramsden and Cathy Daley. These artists rework traditional visual languages - of painting, sculpture and glamour/fashion respectively - to destabilize values embedded in the meanings that have accrued to their conventional forms. In Part A, I foreground the artists' use of abstracted shapes to produce 'bodies' of art whose materiality holds a metonymic relation to the

encultured (as distinct from 'natural') body: in the work of Mary Scott, through a semiosis of the surface, disordering any unity through rupturings, shreadings and enfolded layerings, and in the work of Martha Townsend through a poetics of mimetic excess that draws upon the connotative value of 'skins' to suggest corporeal analogues. In Part B, I examine artists' use of dress, divorced from any status of wear, as a psychically and culturally invested interface between the self and the social, a morphology of the encultured body open to imaginary revision.

The use of an 'available' vocabulary of visual language to constitute alternate meanings entails considered strategies; in these works, it is not a question of overturning meanings but of multiplying them, such that the reworked original is both contained in and altered by the work on the sign. Their effect is not the creation of a new 'definition', but the production of a sign no longer secured, one more ambivalent, paradoxical, enigmatic, and as such, newly available for alternate purposes and readings.

The body that appears in the work of Mary Scott is a 'body' displaced into the very materiality - the threads, folds, fabrics, knots - of the works rather than through any form of figural mimesis. Scott's work

proceeds through a deconstruction and re-occupation of the masculinist traditions of pictorial space, to create a form less that of anti-painting than a-painting, a beside and crossing-over of its traditions. Through this deconstruction, Scott creates a secondary embodiment of a profound materiality on the reworked and painted surface. Martha Townsend borrows from a minimalist vocabulary of abstract forms which are covered and bound in sumptuous skins of leather to bring to bear the textures of body, affect, cultural referentiality that the originals excise. Anne Ramsden and Cathy Daley employ as source referent an iconography of feminine dress drawn from period movies and fashion magazines. These forms are passed through the vector of fantasy, emerging in vivid exaggerations: an ambivalent vocabulary of glamour divorced from any 'real' of the body of a wearer, yet in which the body 'returns' (in both cases gesturally, in Daley's through a further residue body trace) as a dispossession of the image .

I argue that, in foregoing a representational model for the morphological, the artists open up a somatic/symbolic vocabulary that serves at once as critique of the patriarchal 'feminine' and as a means to create a vocabulary of use to women. I suggest that the figuring of alterity can proceed through disruptions

within existing terms, through the recording and recoding their elided elements, to propose new and libidinal vitalities that offer alternatives to the unconscious psychic dimensions through which the masculine imaginary codes women (and which any re-coding of the symbolic must take into account).

In Chapter four: Spatialities, I underscore two interrelated impulses in the feminist engagement with space, each of which has implications for how we conceptualize the embodiment of the subject and perhaps the larger, co-implicated question of social relations, or the ethics of living. The first partakes of the challenge to the dualisms of western metaphysics by which space and time are at once binarized and hierarchized, with accompanying gendered coordinates. On the side of time are what the feminist geographer Doreen Massey terms "portentous things with gravitas and capital letters" (148), that is, history, progress, reason, politics and so forth. By contrast, space is associated with stasis, with immobility, and with those timeless dimensions outside of history but very much part of the 'space' of the feminine: body, home, emotion, Woman. The second tendency that follows from the first has been one of the activation of the concept of space from its definition as stasis and from its

radical distinction from the temporal, and the active theoretical occupation - the opening up and politicizing - of this enlivened spatiality.

Yet if space is traditionally associated with Woman, while Man, in binary logic, occupies the Time of Civilization, this is not to say that women have an already recuperable space/place to claim as theirs. Rather, as Luce Irigaray argues, women, their bodies, are space for men, leaving women bereft, robbed of "the tissue and texture of spatiality" (1993:11).

Through a discussion of works of Faye HeavyShield, Rebecca Belmore and the collaborators Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe, I elaborate on the spacialities these artists produce and the interventions these make within the dominant understandings of space/time, highlighting how these works compose spaces and places that operate within an alternative symbolic economy hospitable to women. Fleming and Lapointe take as their sites abandoned public buildings which already bespeak the withdrawal of social investments, and compose within these sites of abandonment a poetics of abandon, of grace. In the featured work by Rebecca Belmore, the 'neutral' site of the public gallery is remade into a social site, in the spatial motif of a native circle-gathering, for a practice of testament and oral

history, displacing the body as 'sight' onto voice while implicating the spectatorial body in the scene. In a series of works by Faye HeavyShield, monochromatic articles of women's clothing form bulwarks that delineate particular spatial boundaries and inner spaces. The garments, ever embedded in the temporality of cultural and personal histories, ever carrying the traces of bodily wear, are a powerfully evocative medium through which the artist 'embodies' the alternative social spaces the works propose.

7. Conclusion

By an attention to the formal and material aspects of art production - to the embodiment and spatiality that is specific to it - I hope to specify how they may be seen to materially *embody* the conceptions they enact, linking the language of art to feminist interventions within the many domains and practices of life. I propose that these practices constitute discursive spaces and representational sites within which the female subject is released, at least in part, from her capture in the web of phallogocentric discourses and imaginaries. These imaginary spaces, within concrete places (of art gallery and exhibition sites) rejoin other social spaces and sites that women have developed in culture. These serve

to mitigate and counter what Judith Butler has termed
"the pathos of exclusion as the 'ground' of
feminism" (1994:39) .

REFERENCES

- Anzaldúa, Gloria, Borderland/La Frontera, The New Mestiza, (San Francisco: Spinsters/aunt lute, 1987)
- Braidotti, Rosi Nomadic Subjects, Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)
- Butler, Judith, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, (New York and London: Routledge, 1990)
- , with Rosi Braidotti, "Feminism By Any Other Name", *differences*, (summer-fall 1994) pp.27-62
- Cowie, Elizabeth, "Woman as Sign", in Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie, eds. (1990), The Woman in Question, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), pp. 117-134
- de Lauretis, Teresa, Technologies of Gender, Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987)
- , "Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness", (*Feminist Studies* 16, no. 1, Spring 1990), pp. 115-50
- Gallop, Jane, "The Body Politic", Thinking Through The Body, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1988)
- Gatens, Moira, Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)
- Grosz, Elizabeth, Volatile Bodies, Toward a Corporeal Feminism, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994)
- Haraway, Donna, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s", (*Socialist Review*, vol. 18, no. 20, 1985), pp. 65-107
- Irigaray, Luce, This Sex Which Is Not One, trans. Catherine Porter, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)
- , An Ethics of Sexual Difference, transl. Carolyn Burke and Gillian Gill, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993)

Kristeva, Julia, La Révolution du langage poétique, L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle. Lautréamont et Mallarmé, Paris: Seuil, 1974, first part translated as Revolution in Poetic Language, transl. Margaret Waller, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984

Laing, Carol, Picture Theory, (catalogue), (Toronto: YYY Artists' Outlet, 1995)

Massey, Doreen, "Politics and Space/Time", in Michael Keith and Steve Pile, eds., Place and the Politics of Identity, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

Rich, Adrienne, Of Woman Born, (New York: Norton, 1976)

Spivak, Gayatri, "French Feminism in an International Frame", In Other Worlds, Essays in Cultural Politics, (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), pp.134-154

Suleiman, Susan, Risking Who One Is, Encounters with Contemporary Art and Literature, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1994)

Summers, David, "Conditions and conventions: on the disanalogy of art and language", in Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell, eds., The Language of Art History, (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Wittig, Monique, "One is Not Born a Woman", (*Feminist Issues* 1, 1981), pp.47-54

CHAPTER ONE
RETHINKING THE BODY

1. A conceptual blindspot

Writing as recently as 1994, Elizabeth Grosz argues that, not only in Western philosophical thought but also in feminist theory, the body remains "a conceptual blind spot"(3). In the introductory chapter of Volatile Bodies, Grosz passes quickly along the descriptive pathway of Western philosophical dualism, with particular reference to the Cartesian mind/body split, to specify three modes of apprehending the body that follow from this heritage:

a) the body as object of instrumental function in the natural sciences or as "merely extended, merely physical, an object like any other"(8) in the humanities and social sciences;

b) the body as a metaphor of instrumentality - a tool or machine - appropriated at/by will;

c) the body as a medium of expression, passive and transparent, the point of relay between psychic interiority and the organic, sensory reception of data from the external world.

Her ensuing discussion, in three sections, centers on models for rethinking the body outside of a dualistic

structure. The models are principally authored by men and generally proceed without consideration of how sexual difference might alter or inflect the observations and theories they advance. Yet, Grosz argues, they are recuperable in part to a feminist project in the status they accord the body as a constitutive element of knowledge, identity and sociality.

The first of these sections proceeds from "the inside out", focusing on the psychic mapping of the corporeal surface. Drawing upon the fields of psychoanalysis and phenomenology, as well as neurophysiological and neuropsychological renditions of bodily impairment, Grosz provides an account of how the body must be psychically *construed* in order for the subject to locate itself in physical space and in its relation to others. Grosz notes, "We do not have a body the same way that we have other objects; being a body is something that we must come to accommodate psychically, something that we must live" (xiii, my emphasis).

Psychoanalysis routes biology through the vector of fantasy, of which Freud's dictum that the ego is in the first instance a bodily ego, a corporeal projection, is emblematic. From Freud is drawn the psychic mapping of the body's erotogenic intensities and the apprehension

of sexual difference along an axis of absence/presence, lack/ possession, to which Lacan further contributes the imaginary anatomy of the mirror stage. Neurophysicist Sir Henry Head's concept of 'postural schema', and its extension in the psychoanalytically informed model of the 'body image' developed by Paul Schilder, foregrounds the variable relation between the perceived and the objective body. In Maurice Merleau-Ponty's 'corporeal schema', the body is the irreducible condition for apprehending the spatiality essential to distinguishing self from other, hence linking perception to the interrelation of mind and body, while Roger Caillois' concept of mimicry describes a mode of bodily movement and gesture proceeding from within the ground of representation rather than spatial apprehension.

In her second section, "the outside in", Grosz shifts to a model of corporeal inscription in which the body is seen as a surface available to the social incisions which grant it the effects of depth. From Nietzsche, pliable bodily vitalities collated to a profligate will to power; from Michel Foucault, a model of power moving through the very materiality of bodies docile and resistant; from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, the body as 'desiring machine', with its flows and intensities, and its myriad linkages and couplings.

These models foreground the body as socially constituted, brought into being through the procedures and powers and linkages that produce it - hence neither a reductively biological nor a timeless, universal entity but one historically specific and determinate.

In her brief final section, Grosz moves from these 'neutral' accounts of the generalized body to take up the issue of sexual difference, an account centered on corporeal flows and fluids whose traverse dis-integrates the notion of the body as bounded. In Mary Douglas's Purity and Danger, sexual difference provides the paradigm for the cultural processes of regulation whereby the 'clean and proper body' is distinguished from its polluted other. The contaminant, of which sexual fluids are an important instance, is that which threatens to disrupt the coherence of the system of the proper, that which cannot be brought (in)to order. Julia Kristeva's Powers of Horror attends to the psychic dimension of the defile in her account of abjection as the due paid by the subject for attaining the properly constituted social body. The abject, at the boundaries and orifices of the body, is neither inside nor outside, neither subject or object but that which, repudiated, left un- or under-represented, persists as a destabilizing potentiate. The three categories of the

abject - food (incorporation), bodily waste, the liquidities and viscosities of bodily sexual difference - bespeak the body's non-containment. Grosz raises the question as to whether, over and above its delegation as the representative of lack, the female body is not also rendered in Western culture as "a mode of seepage", a secreting body of formless flow that is not merely "a cracked or porous vessel... but a formlessness that engulfs all form, a disorder that threatens all order" (203). It is a speculation supported by Lynda Nead's analysis of the function of the classic female nude in the conventions of artistic representation. In similar terms Nead observes, "If the female body is defined as lacking containment and issuing filth and pollution from its faltering outlines and broken surface, then the classical forms of art perform a kind of magical regulation of the female body, containing it and momentarily repairing the orifices and tears" (7). Such 'repair' affirms the rational, orderly processes of culture as command over the unruly forces of woman/nature, a control ever in danger of slippage, ever in need of patrolling and regulation.

Grosz' account of sexual difference, then, is not one predicated on sexual identity as a stable entity polarized between two fixed, sexed identities, male and

female, but rather of a difference that proceeds through alterity, a non-unifiable difference, as "the very possibility and process of embodiment" (209). The subject is not contained, self-same, a clearly delineated psychic or bodily entity but rather an effect of the play of difference. This alterity is both within the subject as the processes of its psychic constitution and outside the subject in its socially signifying specificities (age, race, gender, ethnicity, etc.). Alterity "conditions but is also a product of the pliability or plasticity of bodies which makes them other than themselves, other than their 'nature', their functions and identities" (209).

Both her introduction and her conclusion specify her labour as a call to feminist theory to retheorize the body in a more encompassing complexity. Central to such a project is her insistence that feminism must abandon the legacy of biological and naturalist conceptions of the body. "Refiguring bodies" would entail acknowledging the particularity, and historical situatedness - rather than the generalizability or universality - of bodies: "There are always only specific types of body, concrete in their determinations, with a particular sex, race, and physiognomy" (19). And, to counter the dominance of a

singular ideal of body type, it would entail a profusion of such ideals, a multiplication of models, to redefine the body in its intrication with representation, cultural production, regimes of exchange, etc.

"If women are to develop autonomous modes of self-understanding and positions from which to challenge male knowledges and paradigms", Grosz writes in her introduction, "the specific nature and integration (or perhaps lack of it) of the female body and female subjectivity and its similarities to and differences from men's bodies and identities need to be articulated"(19). And in her concluding remarks, she adds: "No one yet knows what the conditions are for developing knowledges, representations, models, programs, which provide women with nonpatriarchal terms for representing themselves and the world from women's interests and points of view"(188).

These statements themselves reveal a "blind spot" of her own, in that 30 years of feminist art practice, proceeding from the emerging moments of the Second Wave of the feminist movement of the late 1960s to the present day, has been centered precisely upon the project of developing such alternative representations. As Susan Suleiman observed of the galvanizing surge of the early feminist movement: "The call went out to

invent both a new poetics and a new politics, based on women's reclaiming what had always been theirs but had been usurped from them: control over their bodies and a voice with which to speak about it"(7), and the politics of 're-making' in the domains of knowledge and representation has itself been a fundament of feminist art.

Yet if Grosz's statement underscores the extent to which a one-way traffic between feminist theory and feminist art (one often in evidence) may impoverish theory by confining its 'intertextual' references to the domain of discursive texts, neglecting non-verbal/textual spaces and places of cultural articulation, this is not to say that feminist art practices have not also engaged a comparable re-working of, and contestation over, the philosophical tenets governing representational practice. For as Suleiman qualifies her earlier quoted statement: "What seemed, at first, an unproblematic desideratum - let woman speak her own body, assume her own subjecthood - has become problematized, complicated by increasingly difficult questions: what exactly do we mean when we speak of a woman as subject, whether of speech or writing or of her own body? Is there such a thing as a - (or *the*) - subject? Is there such a thing as woman, or, for that

matter, man" (7-8)? The imperative to rethink the body outside of a dualistic conceptual framework - one that has read woman as body - has been an important tenet within feminist work, though one more widely focused on the category of the subject than that of the body - hence implicated in Grosz' critique.

2. Generative Bodies

The body has been a central term in feminist discourse, and in feminist art as well: whether through positive strategies that create a new feminine representation or negative strategies intended to disrupt existing ones. Indeed, it can be argued that feminism is born as a discourse of the body insofar as it is the sexed body of women that is the sign of the *difference* through which the hierarchies of value that are foundational to Western thought are constructed--with all their material, psychological, economic, sexual and symbolic implications.

It is also the reclamation of the female body as the ground of female subjectivity, from its capture as object of patriarchal discourses, that is a fundamental pivot of feminist discourse. "Our bodies, our selves" may have been a flagship phrase of the early Second Wave feminist movement, recalling a period in which the

stability of the 'body' as well as the coherence and naturalism of the 'self' were not yet in question; yet today, the trenchant politics of the female body that circulate around issues of abortion rights, reproductive technologies, sexual slavery, practices of female infibulation, the 'feminization of poverty', and sexual politics in general ensure an abiding currency for the phrase.

In her introductory chapter, Grosz resumes three modes of understanding the body within feminist discourse, and it is possible within each of these to draw correlatives to art practices. While such summations are necessarily reductive, flattening out differentiated facets and nuances as well as contestatory practices that don't 'fit' the categories outlined, I nonetheless draw upon Grosz' account (similarly a levelling of variegated positions in the interests of a general summary) as it outlines two main lines of thought - that is, 'essentialist' and 'social constructionist' feminisms - that have informed both aesthetic strategies within feminist art practice and the discourses of art through which these practices are critically situated. Grosz further, if briefly, elaborates upon a third model, which she terms 'sexual difference' feminism, within which the objects of my

study are more closely aligned.

The first of these positions, *egalitarian feminism*, proceeds along two vectors. Each of these view the body as biologically determined, and share in common the idea of the female body as, in Simone de Beauvoir's terms, "imminent" rather than transcendable, bound to natural processes.

In its positive interpretation, this analysis would utilize female specificity as a foundation for valorizing (to borrow the title of a well-selling book) "women's ways of knowing". Here categories of sexual difference are kept more or less intact across a fixed sexual divide, while altering its terms of value to valorize the feminine. In women's art, issues of female 'sensibility', the question of a 'feminine' aesthetic, the valorizing of feminine values, traditions, crafts as foundational of a feminine tradition, the symbolization of female sexuality through biomorphic, vulvic forms, etc. most associated with early 1970s "first generation" feminism but residual to the present day, can be associated with this position.

In the negative instance of egalitarian feminism, the female body, in particular in its reproductive functions, is seen as a limitation on women in their claims to social subjecthood; it is a constraint to be

overcome. While the mind is perceived as sexually neutral, the vulnerability and the maternal function of the female body are key to women's subordination, mitigating against their full participation in the public sphere. Within women's art, such a position, in its neutralization of sexual or gender difference and its aspiration to normative 'masculine' values, would not be 'visible' as such in terms of sexual difference or feminism which, as a *politics* of/in representation, positions itself in differentiation from dominant codes. Hence the negative instance of egalitarian feminism may more closely accord with a prefeminist or postfeminist universalism rather than constituting a mode of feminist art practice per se¹.

The second position outlined by Grosz is that of *social constructionism*. Here what is at issue is not the body in its inhindering immanence, but as a template for social processes of inscribing and en-gendering meaning. Thus the focus shifts from the biological, sexed body to the question of gender: the body as the ground of a differentially organized field of representation. Rather than a body/mind, nature/culture divide, the axis of difference, Grosz maintains, is between biology and psychology, between (re)production and ideology. A mind/body dualism persists in that the body remains

acultural, a raw material, a fixed substrate, while the mind is an entity in the purchase of ideology. The locus identified for political struggle is that of transforming gender identities and relations and minimizing biological difference.

This position finds a correlate in the appropriative/ deconstructive art practices that began to emerge in the late 1970s and which foreground the social construction of gendered subjectivity in dominant modes of representation. In this paradigm (of an abiding, even dominant, influence to this day), gender is viewed as entirely a social category wherein there is no immutable, pre-given femininity or masculinity. Rather, gender is a relational system, the 'identity' of which is produced as meaning within an ensemble of social practices, discourses, representations and institutions. The female body is a structuring sign within this system, and the feminist practice characteristically one of destabilizing or otherwise troubling that sign as it is coded within patriarchal discourses. This practice is marked by an evacuation of the body as experiential ground that has been foundational to the 'positive' egalitarian position: the body is 'dematerialized' into a textual surface to be read.

The third position outlined by Grosz, with which

she aligns her own project, is that of *sexual difference* feminism. She associates with this position the French feminists Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and Monique Wittig as well as such figures as Judith Butler, Gayatri Spivak, Naomi Schor and others. As against a biologically-given, acultural entity, the body from this perspective is a lived body, a "cultural interweaving and production of nature" (18), a social and discursive body "bound up in the order of desire, signification and power" (19). There is a "fundamental, irreducible difference" (18) between the sexes. This difference is not a universalist one of essential biological or cultural categories - rather, it acknowledges same-sex difference. But biological differences between the sexes are ever culturally marked and inscribed. As against a distinction between sex as immutable and gender as a social construction, the body is conceived as sexually specific, and "codes the meanings projected onto it in sexually determinate ways" (18). The political project here is that of bringing this difference into social recognition and symbolization.

The ramifications of this third position are further developed in the theoretical work of Moira Gatens. In Imaginary Bodies, she has similarly taken issue with essentialist notions of the body and with the

dualistic conceptions of body and mind in the sex/gender distinction of social constructionism. She draws upon psychoanalytic work on the 'body image' to consider the materiality of the body, its sex, and its powers and potentials, to enable the acknowledgement of historical and cultural differences in female embodiment.

Gatens work, which similarly advances a model of sexual difference, extends upon that of Grosz in her developed discussion of social imaginaries as these circulate around the body and its representations. These often unconscious imaginaries impact upon ("link up" with (xi)) the lived experience of the body. Gatens takes particular aim at the vision of the female body as in need of completion by a man or child, and the extension of these notions of female dependency and incompleteness into political, moral, and juridical thought. She argues, however, against any univocal idea of a social imaginary (which she likens to a discredited notion of ideology), insisting, rather, on the plurality of these imaginaries and highlighting within these multiple imaginaries the many points of paradox, contradiction, and jostling that create openings for alternatives.

Like Grosz, Gatens insists that "the" body is unrepresentable: bodies are plural, diverse. Thus her

focus on imaginary bodies, rather than on physiological, anatomical or biological conceptions of the body, highlights the role of images, symbols, metaphors and representations in governing how we come to comprehend our social bodies. Drawing upon Spinoza's theory of imagination, Gatens advances a model of embodiment "that posits multiple and historically specific social imaginaries" (x).

Gatens' insistence on the diversity and dynamism of social 'imaginaries' creates a space for thinking embodiment through its axes of difference, and in its material, lived dimensions. Further to the artworks I discuss in the ensuing chapters, her distinction between subjective imagination and social imaginaries helps to position culturally these practices, which intervene in the ubiquity of "ready-made" images to form new pathways in the dialectic loops between imagery and knowledge, thus constituting possibilities for alternative social imaginaries which, as Gatens specifies, "link up" with lived existence.

3. New Figurations

As Grosz, drawing upon the work of numerous theorists, has outlined, rethinking the body entails an attention to the body as a dynamic, rather than a mute

or neutral entity. The body is interwoven with the psyche (the inside out), it is socially inscribed (the outside in) and its meanings are produced through the play of difference.

As a visual incarnation of a model for rethinking these dimensions of the differentiated body in corporeal terms, and as an emblem for a refiguring of the body/subject outside of a dualistic paradigm, Grosz advances the mathematical form of the *Möbius strip*. The Möbius strip is a two-dimensional torsion in three-dimensional space, resembling a figure eight, formed by the inversion of a flat band. It is a 180 degree rotation through which inside and outside are positions of transit and reversibility as each side twists into the other. As such it models a relation of disparate elements (the two sides) as neither pure identity nor pure difference, but rather as a mobile differentiation. Against the model of a binaristic divide, the Möbius strip figures the mind/body relation as the joined attributes of a single substance. It further suggests the mutual imbrication of psychic interiority and bodily surface, but through the trope of the *surface*: one whose inscriptions and rotations in a perceptual field "produce all the effects of depth" (210). While this emphasizes the material nature of subjectivity, the

marking of both psyche and social upon the human body, Grosz's claims that it similarly allows for "materiality to be extended to include and explain the operations of language, desire and significance" (210) are somewhat confounded by the form itself. The geometric abstraction and flatness of the Mobius strip is aesthetically dull, affectively unseductive, a 'closed' open system in its limited pathways, freestanding autonomy and its abiding residence within the purchase of dualism. As such it is a model better suited to the principal task she sets it - as an alternative staging of the two component elements of the dualistic body/mind relation that incorporate as well a notion of flow (if not viscosity) - than to the larger demands she makes of feminist theory to find new terms for representation of the postmodern corporeal subject.

Grosz's figuration, and her call for such new models, does not proceed against a backdrop of absence. It is a project already matched in feminist discourse by other writers similarly concerned to bring forward new models for rethinking the embodied female subject within the tenets of postmodernity. I cite a few such instances:

a. Luce Irigaray opens her essay "This Sex Which Is

Not One", in the volume of the same title, with a volley against the entire normative history of Western thought with respect to sexual difference: "Female sexuality has always been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters"(23). The sentence is a concise summation of the effacement of feminine specificity in Western culture, the implications of which form the object of Irigaray's ensuing, fierce analysis. Drawing upon the psychoanalytic account of the Oedipal transaction in its theorization of subject formation, she identifies a lacuna with respect to the woman. Women's sex, she argues, is conceptualized on the model of male sexuality: as either a homology with that of man's (the 'atrophied' clitoral-penis), or as complement to it (the receptive vagina). It is an economy that consigns women's pleasure to dependency, passivity, and proxy. The phallocentrism of this model does not admit of difference. Irigaray's figures this 'unthought' through the feminine typology of the 'two' of the labial lips.

As Jane Gallop has written elsewhere, in passing over both the vagina and the clitoris, Irigaray "produces an in-itself of female sexuality that is not rooted in anything recognized as female experience"(98). Yet it is precisely in so doing that Irigaray produces a model at once sexual and textual: a 'difference' that

hinges on the imbrications of bodily morphology, symbolization and cultural meaning, on the body's mediation by the symbolic order. In so doing, she raises the question of women's relation to the imaginary and the need for symbolizations from the position of women that would open to difference the monopoly of a single discourse, that would create a space for women's own self-representations, that would allow of a female desire different from that of man's.

Phallogentrism privileges the 'sight' of phallic presence; it is dependent upon the visible. What is unavailable to specularization is conceived as absence, lack, not. "Her sexual organ, which it not one organ, is counted as none. The negative, the underside, the reverse of the only visible and morphologically designated organ ...:the penis"(26). Irigaray counters the dominance of this scopic regime with a haptic economy, figured through the touch and contiguity of the lips. If the 'logic' of phallogentrism is one of unity, of sameness, of identity, "of the proper name, of the proper meaning"(26), Irigaray introduces the challenge of a sex 'not one', of an economy of plurality, of difference(s), of dis-unity never reducible to one. "So woman does not have a sex organ? She has at least two of them, but they are not identifiable as ones. Indeed, she

has many more. Her sexuality, always at least double, goes even further: it is *plural*"(28). The 'plurality' of the 'two lips' is a confounding of "an imaginary rather too narrowly focused on sameness"(28), one that, proceeding through a different morphology, may engender an alternative practice of signification. The 'two lips' operate a deconstruction of the mono-logic of phallogocentrism that is also a reconceptualization that seeks to enable the speaking (lips) of the discourses of women.

b. In her influential essay, "French Feminism in an International Frame", Gayatri Spivak augments the feminist critique of the subsumption of female sexuality within the parameters of a phallic model, by a materialist dimension of historical and cultural variability through her introduction of the typology of the *effaced clitoris*.

Taking up the French feminist program of founding a discourse of women, she interrogates this effort from three axes. To the project of *écriture féminine* as a subversion of language that subverts the Name of the Father, and is operative by either sex, Spivak seeks to foreground the historical, political and ideological dimensions that distinguish woman in her specificity.

Skeptical of any inherently revolutionary power of avant-garde literature or philosophy, she insists on the material dimension in its political ramifications. And to the Eurocentricity of this discourse, she insists on the necessity of "a simultaneous other focus: not merely who am I? But who is the other woman? How am I naming her? How does she name me"(150)?

Spivak locates within the French feminist discourse on female sexual pleasure a means of addressing, in a more complex rendering, the generalized sexual objectification of the female sexual subject. Her figure is that of the historically and culturally variable excision of the clitoris.

The clitoris, she argues, "escapes reproductive framing"(151). It is outside the circuit by which female sexuality is assimilated to male sexuality as complement (vagina), to biological reproduction (womb), to the province of exchange of kinship systems and to the system of phallic capitalism in its dependence on the family unit (operating through a "uterine organization of womanhood"(152) as consumer base.

It is through the effacement of the clitoris, the signifier of woman as sexed subject, that woman is bereft of a subject-function other than that of those (aforementioned) defining terms, or as imitators of

men. The amputation of the clitoris proper in clitoridectomy (and of the further excision of labia major and labia minora in infibulation) is a culturally variable application of a more widespread generality: the *symbolic* effacement of the clitoris. "At least symbolic clitoridectomy has always been the 'normal' accession to womanhood and the unacknowledged name of motherhood" (151). This repression is presupposed by both patriarchy and the uterine organization of the family. It is this repression, at once material and ideological, that serves to deny women any mode of sexual subjectivity beyond that of sex object and agent of reproduction. The suppression of the clitoris is at one with normative femininity.

Spivak specifies that the object is not to supplant a uterine social organization with a clitoral one. It is rather a question of 'situating' the former, clarifying that it is founded upon the exclusion of the latter. "Investigation of the effacement of the clitoris - where clitoridectomy is a metonym for women's definition as 'legal object as subject of reproduction' - would persistently seek to de-normalize uterine social organization" (152). Further, Spivak suggests this "ideologico-material" repression is not confined to patriarchal social relations but extends to modes of

production incorporating the bodies of women at the lowest rung of cheap labour.

To the project of a 'new figuration', Spivak introduces a typology with the potential to incorporate a heterogeneous spectrum of female narratives, which may encompass diverse parts of the world and different social situations within these. The clitoris, effaced, invokes at once the feminine body in its specificity and a social inscription of the sexed body which is at once historically and culturally particular yet variable. At the same time, for this writer, this figuration in its insistent negativity - the organ of sexual pleasure, barred - would seem to empower the processes of deconstruction of phallic domination more than empowering the transformative and affirmative dimension of feminism. Though conceptually and politically astute, it is a chilling image.

c. Rosi Braidotti's figure of the *nomadic subject* (1994) is similarly a figure sited in historical and cultural specificity, but that specificity is centered on the migratory condition of postmodernity in which identities are permeable to forces that exceed any fixities of nationality or unary origin. The nomadic subject is at once an evocation of the existential

situation of the multicultural, polyglot subject of post-modernity ("a migrant who turned nomad") (1), and a "performative image" (2) enabling a weaving, or indeed collaging, of the heterogeneous elements of identity, levels of experience and political/theoretical undertakings.

While nominally inspired by migrant subjects and cultures, Braidotti's nomadism, however, is directed less toward physical modes of displacement than to the un-settling of socially entrenched patterns of thought and behaviour. "It is the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state, not the literal act of travelling" (5). As such, nomadism is defined as a form of critical awareness, a political fiction (4) and a "style of thinking" (8). It is also an epistemological model that privileges the creation of new ways of knowing and a mode of conceiving social being through 'differences' that are not biologically reductive.

Braidotti draws heavily upon the Deleuzian concepts of deterritorialization and nomadology, with their emphasis upon the radically de-centered nature of identity and the affirmation of the positivity of (multiple) differences. However, her figuration is distinguished from the Deleuzian nomad in the first instance by her attention to the sexually differentiated

body.

If the body is the fundament for this project, the body so instantiated is conceived neither in biological nor in sociological terms; rather, it is the body re-thought and re-figured in an anti-essentialist framework as the "overlapping" between the physical, symbolic and sociological dimensions of existence. Such an overlapping incorporates multiple, and simultaneous, axes of differentiation and situatedness.

In a further instance of Deleuzian patterning, Braidotti counters the metaphysics of fixed and stable identity with an unfixed modality of connections, flows, shifts and transitions. Hence a form of non-static stability is preserved through patterns of links and (inter)connectedness, yet the subject of these 'nomadic shifts' is a becoming-subject: "nomadic shifts designate therefore a creative sort of becoming: a performative metaphor that allows for otherwise unlikely encounters and unsuspected sources of interaction of experience and of knowledge." (6).

This figurative mode of nomadic consciousness may function in what Braidotti terms the philosophy of 'as if', an unfixed modality of connections and flows, rather than the stasis of a fixed and stable subject. This epistemological relevance of the 'as if' is

described within different terms of emphasis in her earlier essay, "The politics of ontological difference":

In order to enunciate a feminist epistemological position the feminist woman must proceed as if a common ground of enunciation existed among women. As if the subjectivity of all was at stake in the enunciative patterns of each one. In this respect, feminist theory rests on another double negative: it proceeds as if it were possible to negate a history of negation, to reverse through collective practice a centuries-old history of disqualification and exclusion of women (103).

This 'as if', however, far from only an imagined possibility, is concretely enacted in the multiple practices through which the 'ground' of feminism(s) is itself constructed and which in turn sponsors the enunciations of women.

The 'nomadic subject' described by Braidotti is an at times dizzying compendium of conspicuously 'postmodern', properly destabilized, endlessly flowing and connecting traits. (Indeed, her nomadology seems an apt description of the itinerant internationalism, physical and intellectual, of certain streams of professional academic life.) But as a figure for an understanding of the subject that decenters or dissolves notions of fixed identities or origins while enabling the recognition of the (partial, discontinuous) particularities that constitute a situatedness, the

nomadic subject enables a thinking of the subject as a movement, a 'becoming' rather than an entity, and thus opens up a space for change and re-location. (This writer, however, hesitates to fully embrace the image of the postmodern-styled nomad, a concept too readily (if not by Braidotti) divorced from the pains of exile and displacement, too easily self-styled as the subject of (a presumed available) 'everywhere' and an imaginary 'everything'.)

d. If Braidotti's nomadic subject is already a figuration of the subject of a world transformed through transnational migrations of every kind, the *cyborg* advanced by Donna Haraway in "A Cyborg Manifesto" (1985/1990), a hybrid compound of organism and machine, extends the concept of the subject to in-corporate bodily borders and couplings not centered on genders. It is the figuration of the subject of a world rearranged through the impact of science and technology - a world of post-industrial information-based systems of production and the new forms of social relations they generate.

The cyborg is also a compound in another sense: it is at once a social reality (in the breakdown by the sciences of boundaries between human and animal, between

animal-human and machine and between the physical and non-physical) and an imaginative possibility; it is a ground of experience and a political fiction. The cyborg's generative possibilities as myth are founded upon its pertinence as a model of social/bodily reality and as the imaginative potential for affiliative linkages and couplings.

Acknowledging the achievement of feminism in constructing the collective object 'women's experience', Haraway's aim is to change "what counts" as women's experience through foregrounding the intensification of domination effected by new technologies and global, mobile capital and their impact on women's conditions of existence. The cyborg is already extant: what is at stake is the making of its meanings and myths. "The cyborg is a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self. This is the self feminists must code." (1990:163)

The "manifesto" of Haraway's title situates her text as a political intervention, and this intervention is directed toward constituting resistance to the power networks of new economic systems, a resistance predicated on theoretical and political models that meet the challenge of the new configurations of power and of subjectivity these systems advance. The feminist 'dream

of a common language', the establishment of taxonomies of feminism, the search for forms of originary wholeness are counterproductive to such a project, and further replicate the ontologies of unity that are correlatives of humanism and domination. These must give way, Haraway argues, to a radically post-humanist paradigm that embraces partiality, contradiction, incompleteness, incompatibility. It is a stance of irony wherein "irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectically, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true"(1985:65). Its importance within the project of re-figuring the subject lies in its fusing of the politics of the split subject with the ramifications of emergent technologically-driven geo-political realities. Haraway challenges us both to rethink the boundaries of subjectivity radically and to contest oppressive social relations through the creation of enabling... nvisage and enact alternatives grounded in these new social realities.

e. Carol Laing's figuration of the *crisscrossed subject*, described in the exhibition catalogue, Picture Theory (1995), is her formulation of a theoretical model that attempts to identify the subject position of the

artist as a figure informed by both contemporary cultural debates and by the contemporary and historical legacies of art production; hence it is of particular pertinence as a model of an enacted dialogue between theory and art. The position of the crisscrossed subject as a mode from which work is produced is applicable to both sexes, though these are configured in language differently. The female crisscrossed subject is rendered as "s/he", the male "he/r". This conjoining of the two genders, while specifying a positionality of sexual difference, responds to the many points of identification and experience that cannot be contained in a subjecthood conceived in self-same or unitary terms; it further intervenes within the normative binary nomenclature in Western culture by which subjects are positioned along an axis of (hierarchically organized) difference and opposition. "The fact still is that *he* is of *her*...but *she* is also of *him*, though in a very different way" - in that "s/he still lives up against" the legacy of patriarchy and its terms set in the singular masculine(9).

The crisscrossed subject is not only positioned within sexual difference, but crisscrosses the strands of other vectors that constitute its identity, vectors of race, history, class, sexuality, cultural origin,

etc. The politics of identity conjoin the politics of location for, as Laing specifies, "it is not just a question of *who* - and of *how* - s/he is, but of *where* she is. Where she pictures herself"(9). This "where" , however, is not a literal 'place' but a multiply-potential spatial context (one which may also, in pictorial terms, compose the figure-ground relation). "Subject positions become complex spatial metaphors: the ways in which identity and location can be pictured must be imagined and produced"(10): a statement foregrounding the activity of art not as a representation of subjectivity but as central to its (re-)construction.

In foregrounding 'space', Laing takes up the 'female' term of the time/space binary - the term that lends itself to the 'pictorial' in similar fashion to the association of time with the linearity of language. But rather than counterpoising space and time, she focuses on the image as 'freeze-frame', which is at once time suspended in space (the space of the image) but also the pictorial space held in time in that pictures carry the temporality of their moment of production. Thus the multi-layered intertwinings of s/he and he/r, the crisscrossed subject, are paralleled by the space/time intrication of the pictorial object, a move that underscores the non-transcendent positionality of

subjects-in-process, and the working processes of art production.

These examples are but a few of the 'new figurations' of the subject of feminism that have appeared in recent years in feminist theory. Others include Hélène Cixous' evocation of the laughing Medusa, Teresa de Lauretis' description of the 'eccentric' subject' trafficking between center and margins, Monique Wittig's figuration of the lesbian as not-woman, Judith Butler's account of performative bodies and parodic masquerade, Gloria Anzaldúa's figure of the Mestiza as hybrid subject, etc.

The above models may be seen to not only counter logocentric, dualistic and phallic models of subjectivity, but also to set out alternative conceptualizations vis a vis other feminist figurations. Uniting these diverse typologies is a non-'essentialist' aperception of the subject through an attention to the subject's constitution in language and inscription in culture. These models further emphasize the multiple vectors of difference(s) through which identity is made and known, and the intersections of these specificities with differentials of power. Sexual differentiation forms part of the materiality of bodies, but in these

renderings the corporeal is thoroughly intertwined with the social and symbolic. These figurations could be said to operate within the gap or interstices or contradictions between the 'feminine' as a position in language disruptive of fixity and unity and women as historical subjects staking a claim to social, political and cultural space.

Braidotti has described such figurations as "politically informed images that portray the complex interaction of levels of subjectivity"(1994:4) and, she adds, the more the better. I add that such figurations, none 'complete' in itself, constitute, along with the visualizations of art practices, ongoing moments in the constitution of an alternate symbolic treasury, an imaginary storehouse of representations. Such a symbolic foundation serves to counter women's dereliction in the governing symbolic even as these figurations propose new, and even utopic, models of subjectivity.

The 'new figurations' that have been proposed by these and other theorists serve to open up the categories by which embodiment and social existence are conceptualized and depicted. They offer new ways of thinking that, in a 'double movement'², both challenge the heritage of Western culture - with its normative concepts and lingering representational conventions -

and propose alternative conceptions of subjectivity. These latter proceed with particular reference to the female subject, incorporating the influences of poststructuralist and feminist thought, the one in its insistence on the primacy of the subject's constitution in language and culture, and the other in its claims for a new, multiply constituted, subject of history and its emphasis on the bodily roots of subjectivity.

While these discursive figurations arise from the realm of feminist theory, feminist art practices as well have proposed alternative poetics of the body, and have taken up these theoretical issues in material terms across a broad spectrum of practice. If the theoretical/discursive figurations are conceptual schemata through which to envisage terms of contemporary - even imaginary - subjectivities, the feminist art practices that are the object of my study have undertaken a parallel reckoning with the insights of poststructuralism to render, in visual-spatial terms, the subject's positioned negotiations with identity, language and representation. These works advance alternate renderings that, through the language and material of form, introduce critical and transformative dimensions of meaning.

Unlike the discursive models cited, the 'body' in

these artworks is not a singular core figuration or encompassing meta-figuration. Rather, these bodily poetics constitute local, partial, faceted instances of differentiated and situated 'bodies'. They are 'bodies' of art that create a material language through which we might imaginatively identify, recover or discover the culturally complex ground of our relation to our own embodiment.

NOTES

1. However, such surveys as exist with respect to the proportional representation of women artists in public exhibitions and private galleries, strongly suggest that the difference neutralized at the level of production may not be so neutralized at the level of exhibition/reception. Yet the question of the 'visibility' of the feminine-as-referent also raises considerations as to whether or not a feminist practice can even be recognizable (rendered visible) as such without a direct engagement with this sign - an imposing limitation on the understanding of the possible reach of feminist art practices.

2. Teresa de Lauretis describes this double movement dialectically, as "a tension towards the positivity of politics - an affirmative action in behalf of women as social subjects, on one front, and the negativity inherent in the radical critique of patriarchal bourgeois culture on the other" (1985:154). Gayatri Spivak attributes an "implicit double program" as the contribution of the "best" of French feminism: "against sexism, where women unite as a biologically oppressed caste, and for feminism, where human beings train to prepare for a transformation of consciousness" (1988:144).

REFERENCES

- Anzaldúa, Gloria, Borderlands/La Frontera, The New Mestiza, (San Francisco: Spinster/Aunt Lute, 1987)
- Braidotti, Rosi, Nomadic Subjects, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)
- "The politics of ontological difference", in Teresa Brennan, ed., Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis, (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 91-92
- Butler, Judith, Gender Trouble, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990)
- Cowie, Elizabeth, "Woman as Sign", in Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie, eds. (1990), The Woman in Question, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990), pp. 117-134
- De Beauvoir, Simone, The Second Sex, trans. H.M. Parshley, (New York: Random House, 1952)
- De Lauretis, Teresa, "Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness", (*Feminist Studies* 16, no. 1, Spring 1990), pp. 115-50
- "Aesthetics and Feminist Theory: Rethinking Women's Cinema", (*New German Critique*, no. 35, 1985)
- Douglas, Mary, Purity and Danger, An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo, (Routledge: London and New York, 1966)
- Gallop, Jane, "The body politic", in Thinking Through The Body, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 91-119
- Gatens, Moira, Imaginary Bodies, Ethics, Power and Corporeality, (Routledge, London and New York, 1996)
- Grosz, Elizabeth, Volatile Bodies, Toward A Corporeal Feminism, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996)
- Haraway, Donna, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s", (*Socialist Review*, vol. 18, no. 80, 1985), pp. 65-107

-----, "A Cyborg Manifesto", Simians, Cyborgs and Women, (London: Free Association Books, 1990)

Irigaray, Luce, "This Sex Which Is Not One" in This Sex Which Is Not One, transl. Catherine Porter, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), pp.23-34

Kristeva, Julia, Powers of Horror, An Essay on Abjection, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)

Laing, Carol, Picture Theory (catalogue), (Toronto: YYZ Artists' Outlet, 1995)

Nead, Lynda, The Female Nude, Art, Obscenity and Sexuality, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992)

Spivak, Gayatri, "French Feminism in an International Frame," In Other Worlds. Essays in Cultural Politics, (New York and London: Routledge, 1988), pp. 134-154

Suleiman, Susan, "(Re)Writing the Body: The Politics and Poetics of Female Eroticism", in Susan Suleiman, ed., The Female Body in Western Culture, Contemporary Perspectives, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985)

Wittig, Monique, "One is Not Born a Woman", (*Feminist Issues* 1, 1981), pp.47-54

CHAPTER TWO:

THE BODY IN/OF LANGUAGE

The theory of the semiotic elaborated in Julia Kristeva's Revolution in Poetic Language¹ offers a generative possibility for women on several counts. In the first instance, it is an intervention that emphatically dephallicizes language by an attention to the prephallic dispositions on which it depends. Further, it undercuts the bipolar operations and the seeming transparency of language by a thickening and infolding of the discursive with its embodied supports. The disruptive function of the semiotic, its rupturing of and tearing at the stability of the sign (with its pretence to secure identity) opens up this unifying order of discourse to reveal a heterogeneous and multiple field; with this arises a potential, identified in specifically feminine terms, for resistance to phallogocentric norms of culture and identity. The semiotic also offers promising avenues for theorizing the poetics of contemporary feminist art as a material, embodied practice.

This subversive potential, however, comes at a price, one that some have found exorbitant². In this chapter, I place the Kristevan theory of 'poetic

language' in intersection with an object of North American feminist cultural production of the same year(1974), a video-performance in which the semiotic register identified by Kristeva is brought into visible play. As a production in advance of the availability in translation of Kristeva's thought, this video is not itself informed by, or a direct engagement with, this theory: rather, it is sited within the emergent post-modernism of the early 1970s and the first wave of second generation feminism. In this chapter I investigate the potential of the Kristevan theory of the semiotic to inform a reading of important dimensions of this artwork that a focus which foregrounded its overt (narrative) content would pass over. At the same time, however, I propose that the videotape puts into evidence key difficulties for women in Kristeva's thesis, particular as regards the question of sexual difference, the relation of the feminine subject to the symbolic and, interwoven with these, the 'knot' posed by the maternal in the production of feminist discourse.

Central to this chapter is the nexus of the maternal, which figures as a site of loss in both Kristeva's concept and in the videotape. If the videotape is the enactment of a psychic grieving centered upon maternal loss, it is a grieving marked

through the body, and not directly expressed in the narrative. The poetics of the body being considered here is not the figuration of the corporeal; rather, it centers on an alterity produced and revealed through the body, through a somatic-semiotic field anchored, as Kristeva specifies, in the lost symbiosis with the maternal body. Considered (in part) through the perspective of the Kristevan semiotic, the videotape initiates a basis for a more complex understanding of the body, and of the subject.

In her pathbreaking book, Kristeva turns from a structuralist model of language as the operation of pure linguistically organized difference to a consideration of language as a 'signifying process'. This process entails not only the ordering that is its symbolic disposition but also, she argues, a disordering and transgressive dimension which she terms the semiotic. These elements are counterpoised but inter-implicated, imbricated one within the other, within every signifying practice. Thus to language as representation, meaning, sign, syntax and paternal law, Kristeva brings an analysis of what traditional linguistics leaves out of account: the power of drives to transgress - to "pulverize" - this systematicity and so to unsettle meaning.

In Kristeva's model, the symbolic, following Lacan, is the order of language, law, exchange - the order of social and signifying relations. But Kristeva introduces a triad of terms - the semiotic, the *chora* and the *thetic* - that distinguishes her theory from a Lacanian model and challenges the 'guarantee' of the phallic sign as the privileged signifier that holds meaning in place.

The semiotic is the material, bodily basis of the subject, the libidinal forces and corporeal energies of the primary processes of pre-Oedipal sexuality. Kristeva utilizes a spatial metaphor drawn from the Greek term *chora* (meaning enclosed space or womb) to designate the site of emergence of these energy charges. Defined in Plato's *Timaeus* as "an invisible and formless being which receives all things and in some mysterious way partakes of the intelligible, and is most incomprehensible" (1980:6), the *chora* is indeterminate, a third term and mediating bridge between the poles of being/becoming, that enables the transition between these. The Platonic *chora* is without qualities itself yet it is necessary to - it is the precondition of - the genesis of the material world.

As Kristeva describes, semiotic operations are provisionally organized by the *thetic*, in two phases: in the mirror stage and, more securely, through the Oedipus

complex or the Law of the Father. With the subject's entry into the symbolic order, the polymorphous drives of the infantile body are repressed, and their energies organized and harnessed by the secondary processes of the symbolic.

As a bodily force preceding subjectivity and signification, the semiotic *chora* is not directly representable; it is manifest through its traces within processes of signification, as a remainder or excess or heterogeneity not assimilable to the signifier - in the gestures and rhythms of the body, the tonal qualities and rhythms of the voice, etc. In turn, the semiotic provides the energetic forces necessary for the 'enlivening' of the symbolic. Yet even as the semiotic, in its dependence on the symbolic, can never fully displace it, the semiotic endangers the stability of the ordering processes of the symbolic, ever threatening to exceed the boundaries by which it is contained.

As Elizabeth Grosz specifies, "the semiotic involves both the inscription of polymorphous impulses across the child's body, and the return of these infantile inscriptions in adult form. They 'return' in the form of rhythms, intonations, melody accompanying *all* representation" (1989:44, my emphasis). Yet this 'return' is not as an unmediated bodily force but rather

as a mark or 'trace' or residue within signification. As Nicola Diamond importantly points out, in defense against the criticism of biologism directed at Kristeva, "a 'trace' already implies an inscription which, furthermore, always figures in relation to a symbolic field, positioning a subject and directing the drives" (25).

In Kristeva's appropriation, she specifies the chora's links to the body and to the maternal: it is "receptacle, unnameable, improbable, hybrid, anterior to naming, to the one, to the father, and consequently maternally connoted" (1980:133). Though sharing the gestative qualities associated with the womb, the *chora* is not apprehensible as a 'thing'; it nonetheless carries the connotations of enclosure and nurturance that link it to the 'feminine', and it is identified with the undifferentiated, corporeal matrix of the mother/child dyad.

For Kristeva, the texts which she terms avant-garde poetic language are those which unleash the semiotic impulses, or *jouissance*, beyond the constraining powers of the symbolic, a disruption of its ordering operations which puts into crisis both the identity of the subject as self-same and the text as the organization of coherence and meaning. Kristeva's thesis proceeds from

the insights of psychoanalysis on the divided subject of civilization, fissured through the travails of the Oedipal complex, as well as from Roland Barthes' (1974) distinction between the readerly text (the classic text with its conventions of verisimilitude) and the writerly text (a subversion of language-as-communication, releasing it to play, sensuality, language-itself and *jouissance*). It is indebted as well as to Derrida's insistence on the materiality of discourse, with its correlate of psychic drives and unconscious processes in the unspoken recesses of texts: the elided elements integral to any text, repressed yet constituting its conditions of possibility, its boundaries and its unacknowledged debt. For Kristeva, the 'revolution' in poetic language lies in its capacity to enact and reveal ruptures in identity and symbolization that subvert a repressive social order and can open a space for social change. As Grosz describes, "crises in representation signal cracks in the functioning of the Symbolic that may also indicate points of political vulnerability" (1992:196).

Kristeva's account of the *chora* as the residual trace of pre-Oedipal primary processes, with their maternal connotations, within the secondary processes of language and speech performs a number of interventions.

To the structuralist model of language as a universal, differential sign system, it insists on the *embodiment* of language, refuting the paradigm of a desubjectified language. It desecures the domination of the phallic signifier through its attention to the pre-Oedipal primary processes as the very support of language. Her account of an interweaving of symbolic and semiotic dispositions, of the discursive and the prediscursive, of the Oedipal and the pre-Oedipal, undercuts a monological or generalizable theory of culture by a decentering that at once uncovers the heterogeneity of signification and the exclusionary stakes in its repression. As Ewa Ziarek describes, such distinctions are

not neutral or self-evident but are implicated in operations of exclusion, power, and control over the production and interpretation of discourse. In other words, not only is the division between the linguistic and nonlinguistic shifting and open to revision, but also the decision about what aspects of signification fall on one or the other side of this divide is culturally produced and rests on gender presuppositions. As Kristeva constantly reminds her readers, linguistic analyses are not free from ethical and political decisions, especially when they refer to the role of the maternal in the production of discourse(92).

Specifically, Kristeva reveals that what language usurps and covers over, at levels at once cultural and personal, is the subject's debt to the maternal matrix

as the other scene of the subject's emergence.

If poetic language is a harnessing of the semiotic to new ends within language, there are other modes through which the semiotic overrides symbolization, most notably in mystic ecstasy and psychosis. But the semiotic, always-already underlying speech, is also brought to particular presence in situations of psychic crisis (Grosz:1989:68): in the video production *A Very Personal Story* by Lisa Steele, a return to the scene of maternal loss presents such an instance. In this tape, the semiotic excess within the voiced narrative is rendered immediately visible (and, through stresses on the voice, audible) within the speaker's body, compounding the evidence of primary unconscious elements present and residual within the subject of language. Yet if the exile from the corporeal matrix with the mother that is the price of entry into civilization is revealed through the unleashing of the semiotic *chora*, that universal exile is doubly compounded in Steele's videotape. For what the female subject confronts with her entry into the symbolic order is a second exile, in that the register of the feminine within this order is itself that of lack, dereliction, negativity, non-Being; further, in the videotape, this double exile is augmented to a third register through the actual loss,

by death, of the mother. In this the videotape puts at issue, with respect to the generalized 'subject in process' of Kristeva's 'semanalyse', the specific encounter of the female subject of enunciation with the conditions of a patriarchally structured symbolic order and with this compounded registers of exile-in-language.

A Very Personal Story, In Four Moments

1. A narrative of self

The opening shot of the 1974 videotape, *A Very Personal Story*, is of a bare wall. The videomaker, Lisa Steele, appears suddenly in the frame from the righthand side of the screen, wearing jeans and naked above the waist. In this 'real time' closed circuit video production, she has evidently turned on the recording equipment, and is now taking her place before the camera. The camera is set low, and she scrunches down to a seating position cross-legged on the floor in front of a blank wall. The camera frames her head and bare shoulders.

For some 20 seconds after she is seated, Steele does not speak. She looks to the side, at the camera and away, she focuses on her fingers, she fidgets. Finally, facing the camera directly, she opens "I have a story to

tell you", then faces away as she continues, "a really, a very personal story". As she continues, always in the same position, her eyes shift between a direct gaze at the viewer and away. "This isn't a...uh, I'm going to tell you, I'll tell you the end first, the end is about that, uh, my mother dies, in the end, (pause), but, so there isn't any, there won't be any, *punchline*, so you know that part before we start, so we can start the story now."

Her elbows are evidently perched on her knees; her hands, which she joins and unjoins by knitting and unknitting her fingers and nervously groping and touching them, obscure a full view of her face (Figs. 1 and 2). The apex of the triangulation created by the perched arms is joined at eye level: throughout the narrative, by raising or lowering her hands, Steele can hide her eyes or make their movement - toward or away from the viewer - visible.

The narrative begins with the announcement by Steele of its conclusion, its 'punchline': the death, years earlier, of her mother. The remainder of the 17-minute tape is given over to a detailed account by the artist of the events of that day in the life of her fifteen-year-old self, never directly discussing the mother. She proceeds through a sequential description of

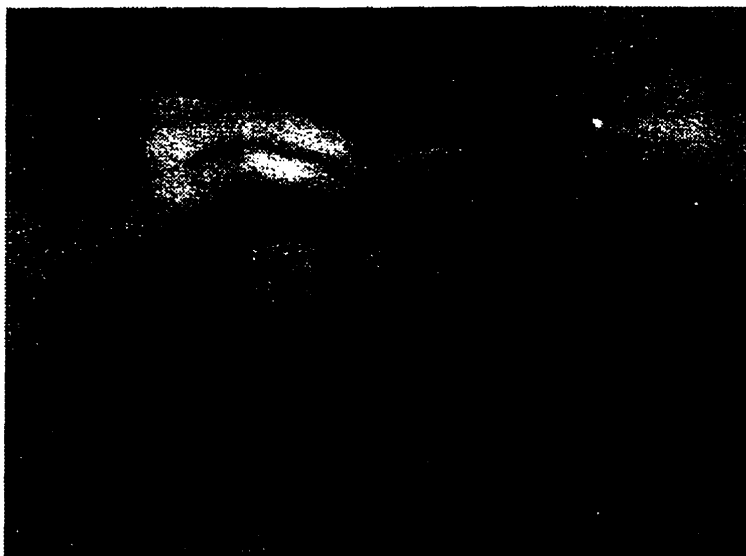


fig. 1
Lisa Steele
A Very Personal Story



fig. 2
Lisa Steele
A Very Personal Story

each remembered event of that day: activities with a girlfriend before school, a regular school day with a play rehearsal, time spent after school with her boyfriend, returning home and recognizing, from the unlit house and the open door visible at a distance on this December day, that "something had happened on that day that hadn't happened on previous days", mounting the snow-drifted steps, placing her hand on the doorknob ("but there wasn't any question for me about what was inside"), entering the house, discovering the body, and then an account of the reaction and reflections she has in the brief interlude before leaving the house to "get help, tell somebody".

The primary narrative focus is neither on the mother, nor on her death, but rather on the daughter's sense of her own being, not only in the minutely remembered details of that day in her life but more specifically in the articulation of her precipitation into an intense experience of her own sense of separate identity.

My mother was on the bed, and she was obviously dead. She was dead, just gone. And I guess I felt really (long pause) more, more like my *self* right then than I'd ever felt before.

As she goes on to narrate, it is through an imaginary identification with fictional heros, male and female, that she is able to project her own survival and

seize upon her own sense of independent identity.

I just knew, I knew I had grown up a lot, that I would have to. I had no other family, basically - I had a brother but nothing, nobody else to stay with, and that I would, I would be on my own from then on. I'm a very dramatic person and I thought to myself right then, I thought, 'Well, Lisa, this is it'. And I felt like David Copperfield, Jane Eyre, somebody, getting on the stagecoach or something. And I would make it, you know, I would get to the next station and everything would be alright.

The 'end' of the story is of the mother's death: Steele herself declares this at the beginning of the tape. Yet this is not what the story is 'about' or leads to. The story she continues to tell is not focused on the incident of loss, but on her own poise and self-possession at this unforgotten moment:

I wasn't surprised. It wasn't scary, awful. I spent the next two or three minutes just standing beside the bed, looking around" {as if for someone to explain what had happened}...One more turn around the room and I looked back at her and I thought...I should check. {She places a mirror in front of her mother's lips.} I felt I'd done what I should do, I'd checked if she was dead, and she was.

I had another two or three minutes before I went back out to get help, tell somebody - I had no thought of taking care of it myself. But I had a couple of minutes and I stood there and then I sat down, softly, didn't move her at all, and that was it. I knew that my mother had gone away from her body, um forever, she would never be back, and that I was still there.

This "I", the motherless daughter, is now a figure literally alone: she confronts a new beginning devoid of the maternal environment.

I sat down, softly, didn't move her at all, and that was it. I just, I knew, that my mother had gone away from her body, umm, forever, she would never be back and that I was still there....I knew that those couple of moments that I had would be all that I'd have for the rest of my life. Nothing else happened. I got up...I walked down the length of the bed, I turned to the left, I walked across to the end of the bed, and to the door. I put my hand on the doorknob and I looked back, you know, I just knew, I knew I had grown up a lot, that I would have to...I would be on my own from then on....

The tape concludes on a note that rebounds to the viewer. In it, Steele speaks of a loneliness that follows not only from the loss, but, more importantly, from the isolation of an experience that lacks a community through which it can be registered and shared.

I also knew that (pause) anyone who came into that space with me that night ... and probably my friends for the rest of my life, would never understand what I understood right then, unless it happened to them....and I knew that I was really alone then, not even in terms of - your mother dies, yes, you're alone - but I was alone in a larger way, too, because it was a big experience in my life and, *nobody really wants to hear about it.... too much.* (My emphasis)

Hand propped on her palm, she looks out toward the viewer for several seconds, then get ups and exits the videographic scene.

2. The difficulty of saying 'I'

A Very Personal Story is a subjective remembrance of a personal event in the narrator's life. Yet paradoxically, even as the videotape constitutes a

poignant reflection on this event and its deeply personal meanings, it also enacts a dis-placement of the speaker, not only, inevitably, in its mediation as a representation, but further through the remove of time, by which the production assumes its status today as a 'period piece', an artefact of a particular, stylistically identifiable, period of feminist aesthetic practice.

Who is speaking? On the one hand, it is unquestionably Lisa Steele, the author-(as)-subject, the 'self' of this deeply personal narrative recounted in the first-person singular. But the manner of unfolding of this "I" also unfolds at its core - in its structure, style and mode of telling, even in its subject matter - the story of a moment of time and a space of artistic production. Steele is herself 'spoken' by this framework.

From the first few moments of the videotape there can already be witnessed the convergence of a range of discursive, aesthetic and political moves that situate the work as one highly emblematic of its period of production. To begin with, *A Very Personal Story*, in being 'personal', and in being a 'story', is already inserted within the post-modern rupture in art from the formalism of postwar modernism. The production forms

part of a broader artistic movement that, as against modernist canons of purity of form, non-referentiality and formal reductiveness, privileges emotion, autobiography, referentiality, narrative, the use of 'low' art forms marked as traditional feminine crafts (embroidery, quilting, etc.), collage and such pluralist media as video, performance and body art. This turn is further compounded by the de-repression of affect from the work of art.

Steele's use of the medium of video - the production's unscripted immediacy, its unedited elaboration in 'real time', its intimate scale and closely recorded gestures, its highly personal yet anti-dramatic narrative, its direct address to the viewer, its excavation of personal history - not only operates a rupture from modernist art but also intervenes in the cultural legacy of television/mass media.

The semi-naked bodily presence of the artist, bearing (baring) the insistent evidence of sexual difference, countermands the governing ideology of art as universal and gender free. As Mary Kelly has written, "The specific contribution of feminists in the field of performance has been to pose the question of sexual difference across the discourse of the body in a way which focuses on the construction not of the individual

but of the sexed subject" (1984:97). Steele's deliberate but unposed exposure of her body further countermands the traditions of the nude and the fetishized display of the feminine body, in line with Lisa Tickner has described as this period's "de-sexing", "de-colonizing" of the female body (1978:240).

The production further shifts the status of the woman in art from that of (silent) model/object to (speaking) artist/subject. Christa Wolf has written elsewhere of "the difficulty" for women "of saying 'I'" (1987:22)³. The narratives of women's lives, as told by women, are not a feature of the inherited cultural landscape of the early 1970s. The first person narrative is a putting into the realm of culture the intimate experiences of one woman's existence. That this narrative does not deliver the "punchline" of the classic narrative, that its dramatic 'action' is displaced, that its content circulates around the maternal figure, that its protagonist is a woman, the intimate cast of the story, are all emblems of a 'different' story, told differently.

It is, in short, a 'personal' story, produced in the period of an emergent women's movement which claimed as its banner the slogan 'the personal is the political'. This slogan challenged the divisions between

'public' (male-coded) cultural space and 'private' (female) domestic space, sponsoring the politic move of bringing into symbolization the intimate spheres of female existence.

Yet *A Very Personal Story* is, indeed, a 'story', not a truth already guaranteed by the sincerity and experience of the speaker. It is a performance and narration that is framed through formal structures and is filtered through memory, with its compound of elisions, lapses, partial recollections and desire. The mode of its telling is also situated, a situatedness marked in its enunciative strategies. One is always somewhere, and that somewhere is both spatially and temporally located. The art object, with its visual evidence/evocation of a particular period of feminist artistic production, points to a time of recent history, and to women's negotiation of their place within it, while the personal story of an autobiographical 'self' unveils a more complex rendering of the 'subject'.

Even as the story itself recounts the tale of a 'self', its axis circulates around a mother who is missing, who is missed. And in this, too, it has correlatives with other feminist work of this period. Steele's video, although indeed a 'very personal story', tells a story more than personal, a broader story about

absent stories, about 'missing' mothers and lost potentials. The story is not only a 'personal' story but a collective one, of the missing mother at the symbolic level of culture, of daughters bereft.

The tape, particularly in the context of its period of production, provokes a complex range of questions pertaining to women's relation to language, subjectivity and desire. In its ambiguity in both bringing to presence the mother yet excising her from the narrative - in the 'death' of the mother as the inaugurate of the daughter-self - there is a curious echo with other feminist texts of this era.

The tape forms part of a larger body of visual art produced within the first surge of a postwar feminist movement in the early 1970s. And in many respects, this moment has held within it a paradox: that even as 'motherhood' as an institution was being refuted and the women's liberation movement was directed toward challenging, undoing, transforming the normative feminine position, typically occupied by the mother, at the same time, there abounds everywhere the search for the mother - the apt, not deficient mother. This desire may be seen to be in some respects displaced into the search for a matrilineage at the symbolic level of culture: into the embrace of Goddess mythology, into the

reclamation of lost female forbears, into the rewriting and reinterpretation of classical Western myths, etc. Steele's tape, in acknowledging the mother, yet displacing her onto a narrative of the self, partakes in part of this ambivalent relation to the mother-figure.

In the mid-1970s, on the heels of this tale of emergence, arises the announcement of the 'death of the author' (Barthes:1977). And indeed, the many ways in which this 'author', Steele, and her performative narration, are underwritten by the time of their enactment, and are subject to interpretive readings, does displace the singular author/narrator as the source or center of articulation or meaning. Even the 'self' of the author as a transparent entity, so central to the narrative, is belied at all turns (and not least by the work as theatre, as mediated production). Indeed, this subject, framed by a low-resolution black and white vintage camera, appears on the video monitor whose screen of pointillist light further augments the very 'blurring' of the boundaries of the subject of discourse that the production as a whole enacts.

Not a few writers have commented upon the coincidence in time of the announced 'death of the author' and the historical emergence of women's narratives and claim to authorial voice. Nancy Miller has charged that,

while women might applaud the move to dismantle the institutionalized canon and "the function of the work of art as (paternally) authorized monument", that this demise has not led to a revision of the concept of authorship. Rather, it has "repressed and inhibited discussion of any writing identity in favor of the (new) monolith of anonymous textuality", one wherein "it matters not *who* writes" (1986:104).

Miller's question of the 'who' of the subject within the scene of writing foregrounds the feminist emphasis on the situatedness of feminist writing (and reading) practices: their social and symbolic coordinates within the framework of cultural specificities. These specificities may include, as Miller outlines, women's structurally different relation to "integrity and textuality, desire and authority" as these arise from women's already "decentered, 'disoriginated', deinstitutionalized" relation to the public sphere (106). Miller argues the importance of textual practices in staging alternative models of subjectivity and authorial identity, rather than foreclosing prematurely on these questions.

Miller's intervention challenges the circulation of the 'feminine' in discourse as a mode of symbolic disruption unrelated to, even exclusive of, the question

of women as historical subjects. In Steele's tape can be found many strategies for the disruption of patriarchal symbolic structures alternative to the 'dissolution' of identity/meaning ventured by Kristeva as revolutionary poetic language. These include the "I" of the female subject of symbolic speech, the maternal genealogy invoked in the narrative, the privileging of a new medium whose lexicon is (paternally) unscripted, its problematizing of traditional modes of enunciation, and indeed its opening up of a new genre, a different style.

Yet inadvertently, as an uncensored excess in an otherwise reflexive production, Steele also enacts the Kristevan poetic wherein language, and identity, are each other than itself; she performs a writing/speaking "that is open to the subject's production as both 'I' and an other" (McCance:146). As I discuss in the following section, the traverse of the somatic puts into evidence the psychic scene of the split-subject. Steele's discourse proceeds as a seemingly transparent autobiography taking the self as authentic ground. Yet the unscripted process of its production precisely undercuts that ground to open up the space of the subject and its traces in textual language. But the maternal nexus in Steele's tape operates as an irresolution whose itinerary is as much social as

semiotic.

3. The subject of signification

Psychoanalysis and deconstruction have each underscored that texts have an unconscious, that the stability and coherence of their form is purchased at a debt to other terms that are censored, left unspoken.

This divide in the subject and within the text is evident in pronounced fashion in *A Very Personal Story*. The spoken text is not one with itself, its narrative coherences ruptured by slippages and shifts, the integrity of its *corpus* fragmented by the semiotics of the speaker's *corps*. Similarly, the 'story' recounted is at odds with itself, a narrative of coming-to-self that, in the telling, reveals the divided and fragmented nature of that self.

A Very Personal Story renders indirectly within 'representation' the semiotic: Kristeva's 'story' of language's embodiment in the pre-Oedipal drives of the maternally-coded *chora*. This story is told not through the narration but through Steele's own self-exposure to the unyielding eye of the camera, which intimately records, in unedited immediacy, the raw accidents and excesses of her unconscious movements, gestures, pauses and sounds. And what the camera presents in this

videotape is not the mirror record of a coherent, autonomous "I" - the "I" that Steele herself (would) speaks as - but the split subject, with its resistances to language.

Kristeva specifies that both the semiotic and the symbolic together constitute the subject and all signifying practices. The semiotic is the other side, the underside, of language, yet its co-constituent. From Steele's story about the (autonomous) 'self' is produced an account of the (split) 'subject', bearing within language its pre-Oedipal, pre-discursive origins. In an indirect fashion, the tape brings the *chora* to presence at the level of the effect of speech through the semiotic impulses that traverse Steele's body during the processes of her narration.

It is in the gaps and silences, the slippages in words and the nonverbal gestures within Steele's body - the pulsional pressures on her speech - that the semiotic emerges as the residual trace of the maternal matrix, breaking the narrative coherence. The difficulty of telling this story of loss is itself evidenced in the first moments of the videotape, in Steele's anxious fidgeting, the reluctant silence that precedes her speech, her run-on scattered sentences and her wilful gaze toward, then nervous, private turn away from, the

viewer. This latter movement - the resistance to the task she has set of putting the experience into language and narration - can be indicated by italicizing in transcribed text the moments when she does engage an 'eye to eye' communicational contact with the viewer:

(silence)...*I have a story to tell you, a really, a very personal story. It took place in December, uh, I don't remember the date, in the middle of December, in 1963 (pause, eyes down). There isn't a, uh, I'm going to tell you, I'll tell you the end first, the end is about that, uh my mother dies, in the end (pause) but (looks down), so there isn't any, there won't be any, punchline, so you know that part before we start, so we can start the story now.*"

As she speaks these words, her clasped fingers continue to veil parts of her face, but at each moment of emphasis, her hands drop below her eyes to establish contact. As she begins her story, and particularly in the moments following her entry into the house, her discovery of the mother lying as if asleep in her bed, and the moments she spends with her, Steele's voice alters and in its registers can be heard the voice of her younger self.

But the register of an irresolution within Steele's gestures and speech, the failure of language to secure the subject, can't be ascribed only to the 'presence' of a semiotic excess disrupting the cohering force of language. Rather, it further entails a recognition of an

'absence' at the heart of the narrative: an absence in no way recoverable through a return to/of the matrix of the semiotic. Rather, it is an absence that circulates around the figure of the mother on the other side of Oedipus.

Alice Jardine writes elsewhere: "When a man says, 'I too am woman,' he is sure of himself" (39). The feminine, Woman - textual *jouissance* - is a rhetorical space, a disruptive position within the norms of signifying practice, beyond (sexual) 'identity'. But Steele, a woman speaking - yet always already complexly implicated in Woman as spoken - is less 'sure of herself'. For what sponsors her speech when the paternal metaphor operates her exclusion and the maternal is no support - symbolically, and existentially - but an exclusion and absence? When she is in triple exile.

A number of writers have underscored a specific problem at the heart of Kristeva's derivation from Plato of the concept of the *chora*. Jacqueline Rose notes that, if Plato designated the *chora* as "nursing, maternal" receptacle, "it was because the mother was seen as playing no part in the act of procreation, a receptacle or empty vessel merely for the gestation of the unborn child" (154). Judith Butler similarly points out that Plato's formulation of the *chora* operates a specific

feminine exclusion by relegating the maternal to a receptive and nurturant principle without attributes or inscriptionary power, thereby placing the genesis and procreativity of the Forms on the side of an autogenetic masculine principle(1993:41-42).

If Kristeva bends Plato's concept of the *chora* from that of "an invisible and formless being" (1980:6) to that of a fluid and mobile articulation of the presymbolic, she maintains Plato's analogy of the *chora* with the maternal and feminine, and in this respect rearticulates the Platonic binary through the modality of the maternal semiotic and the paternal symbolic, even if the former is at once a co-constituent and destabilization of signification.

In considering Kristeva's theory in relation to the Steele videotape, the maternal 'space' of the *chora* segues into the question of the women's 'place' in culture, and the transformations in symbolic, cultural, institutional life that would need to be effected to enable women to occupy the spaces of their own devising and of their own self-representations.

For Kristeva, the import of avant-garde poetics lies in its capacity to subvert the transcendent self, the father's law, allowing the *jouissance* to break through from the constrictions of the symbolic. The

revolutionary force of this language as an excess breaks apart ossified historical forms of the symbolic, forecasting the potential of a broader social revolution to recast the symbolic's forms and norms. Kristeva further insists on the historical situatedness of avant-garde practice, its emergence from within specific historical conjunctures. As John Lechte's discussion of Kristeva's thesis specifies, "it would be incorrect to see literature as the vehicle of poetic language, as isolated from history and society; rather, textual practices have to be seen to be - at least in part- the basis of history and society" (123).

Steele's work has important correlatives with 'avant-garde' practice as nominated by Kristeva, for it too is a destabilization, if not of language itself, of the codes of patriarchal symbolic language, a 'revolution' in modes of enunciation that forms part of an historic women's movement whose sights are centered on the institutions, practices and modes of representation in patriarchal culture, and whose vehicle is woman as the subject of speech. Yet in this, the female encounter with the "difficulty of saying 'I'" is of quite another order from the dissolution of the "I", of the ruse of identity, advocated by Kristeva.

4. A poetics of irresolution

In Kristeva's account of "poetic language", the avant-garde artist, prototypically male, ruptures language, releasing its energies and impulses, its vocalizations, pushing language to the brink. Yet this masculine performance is always, one must note, from the safe distance from the mother that his Oedipal repudiation has enshrined, a distance that enables his see-saw from sense to non-sense yet guarantees his return to his 'proper' place in the land and the law of the fathers.

Grosz has suggested that "if transgression implies a position from which transgression is possible", this may account for Kristeva's privileging of a male avant-garde.

Only men can transgress the symbolic because only they are subjects with a position to subvert. Only some men are able to retain a position in the symbolic as enunciative subjects and an attachments to an archaic maternal *chora*. While women can retain their maternal attachments, they do not gain a stable position in the symbolic. And where they gain a stable speaking position, it is through masculine identification, and consequently her specificity as a woman is effaced. For woman the only socially recognized, validated position in the symbolic is as mother(1989:68).

How might a stable - or provisionally stable - speaking position be gained by the female subject beyond the two vectors of masculine mimesis or feminine

narcissism that Kristeva has criticized as problematic attributes of female texts? For if the masculine subject of poetic language is privileged by Kristeva on account of how his Oedipal renunciation of the mother assures his status in the symbolic, safeguarding his self-release to the reverberations of the *chora*, the woman's distance from her pre-Oedipal 'origins' is less secure. The videotape in this respect operates a complex negotiation of the situation for the female subject, in which the pre-Oedipal 'space' of the *chora* is not superseded by a 'place' in the symbolic from which to sponsor the subject of speech. In particular, a provocative 'knot' in the videotape with respect to the maternal legacy suggests that the 'poetic language' of the female subject might entail a different itinerary, vis a vis the *chora*, the symbolic and their intertwining, from that of the masculine subject.

Steele's 'return' at once to the mother and, in semiosis, to the maternally connoted *chora* is not guaranteed a 'place' in patriarchally organized culture to contain and secure her, since the paradox of female subjectivity and desire is its structural 'non-existence' within a symbolic order that distributes its subject positions on a sexually-differentiated axis in relation to the phallus. That place for the female

'speaking subject' does not pre-exist; indeed, the making of the videotape forms part of a collective generational attempt to name, define and secure such a place. And the evocation of the mother in Steele's videotape points indirectly to the centrality the maternal figure as mother-subject will come to assume in such a project.

If the prediscursive maternal body is 'unrepresentable', a substrate 'materiality' of the symbolic, a locus of *jouissance* whereas the father is the embodiment of symbolic law; if the mother is Other to the masculine subject, indeed, prior to his entry into the laws and language of the fathers, from what cultural vantage can the mother as subject, or the mother-daughter relation, be symbolized? While Kristeva insists on restituting the debt to the maternal, it is a move that still designates the mother as body, not subject: in the pre-Oedipal, outside of the language of which she is the limit-point and linchpin, culturally confined to the space of unrepresentability and *jouissance*.

In Steele's video, the semiotic foundation of the spoken word is rendered visibly present, though not as ululation, rhythms, word play, non-sense and other linguistic disorderings of the semiotic disposition in

literary production but rather - through her recounting the scene of maternal loss - evidenced in the arhythmic bodily poetics of her narrative, and even more particularly, in the hesitations, gaps, avoidances that accompany her speech.

Yet it is not only via the semiotic and the pre-Oedipal that the maternal axis is rendered in the videotape - and it in this that Steele's videotape, even as it embodies the split subject of Kristevan poetics, offers another register in a poetics of irresolution that circulates around the aporia of the mother as subject. Steele introduces a story in which the 'end' is the death of the mother, then she tells another story, of a day, of a daughter, of a self, yet in the 'end' tells the story she said she would tell, the story of the mother - not the pre-Oedipal mother but the mother-subject - and the daughter's loss of the mother, and in this indirect way, even more poignantly than if she had spoken it. Her wavering voice tells a story. Her hiding hands tell a story. She tells us that, for eight years, she had been unable to remember a detail of the day, the time she had spent after school with her boyfriend, the last event before this loss - a repression that tells a story. The displacement of the trauma to (otherwise) acutely remembered details of the day tell a story, as

does the lack of detail about the mother herself, who emerges only once, at breakfast, from her sickroom on the morning of the fateful day, already a ghost, her words (if any) not reported, so vague and ghostly a presence as to be already absent. The struggle to tell the story at all tells a story.

The mother does not appear, in image or narrative, in the video text, yet (like the repressed maternal debt of language) she is ever present as the support of the entire production, her death the very drive source of the affective levels active within it. Through this indirect, rather than literal, representation, the mother as absent character pervades the daughter's discourse, and returns through her very body. And it is precisely in Steele's subtle, even tactful, and non-literal rendering of the mother's absence that she foregrounds to more powerful and evocative effect the encompassing and abiding presence of this primary personage as *meaning* rather than its disordering.

Yet there is a certain complication in relation to the maternal legacy in the video, a compounding of avowal and disavowal not only in relation to the death (which is displaced onto the narrative of the day's events, the very vividness of which recollection carries the transfer of affect) but in the ambiguous transition

whereby the death of the mother inaugurates the forceful initiation of the self. Indeed, at the moment in the videotape when she utters the words "She was dead, just gone. And I guess I felt really more, more like my *self* right then that I'd ever felt before", a remarkable transformation occurs: Steele looks directly at the camera as she says these words, and drops her hands. From this point forward, her hands, which had partially veiled her face, are no longer in view of the camera, no longer constrain her gaze outward nor obstruct the viewer's toward her image. And from this point forward, the register of her voice alters, its lower and steadier tone bringing to a retroactive awareness the tighter, higher voice that had preceded it. It is a visual incarnation of the spoken text, the stricken inarticulate child, returned for a moment to its archaic dependence, superseded by the 'self' in possession of her powers, the transcending specular "I".

Steele's story, in incorporating the divided attitudes that characterize feelings toward the maternal figure ("....Nobody wants to lose their parent not matter how much you ha...dislike them or don't get along with them. You don't want to lose them"), points to a broader arena of conflict and bereavement. In Steele's narrative, it is her identification with heroes and

heroines that enables her to anticipate her own sturdy capabilities and survival. These identifications are with fictional figures of both sexes drawn from culturally familiar narratives, but figures cast in a 'masculine' mode by virtue of their role as active agents in their lives. In this sense, the narrative would seem to indeed replicate the 'masculine identification' with which Kristeva has faulted women writers.

Clearly Steele as author of the work does not occupy the classic feminine position in patriarchal narrative: the fetish, the object of a sexualized fantasy. Nor does she reproduce the 'story' for women as Rachel Blau Duplessis describes, one which "has typically meant plots of seduction, courtship, the energies of quest deflected into sexual downfall, the choice of a marriage partner, the melodramas of beginning, middle and end, the trajectories of sexual arousal and release" (1985:151). To the contrary, in her account Steele seems to have arrived at a stable subject position through a masculine identification, and her narrative has its own registration within the classic male narrative of the quest. Indeed, the narrative, in its description of the coming to self with the death of the mother, and in her excision of the mother from the

narrative, might be seen to operate a very masculine scission. But, as Jessica Benjamin specifies, the masculine relation to the mother is marked by a *repudiation* of the maternal, a repudiation nowhere in evidence in this poignant tale of loss (1988:159-69).

As protagonist, Steele is not the masterful figure of the classic masculine text: indeed, she is no hero at all, but a child of fifteen brought abruptly to adulthood. Yet she is not without her own relationship to the drama of the 'quest', of the transformative passage through a difficult task, as she makes clear.

Yet while this is not the feminine drama of the failed quest, neither does it reproduce the itinerary of the masculine quest. What she brings 'home' from this journey is not her paternal origin (the found father, the symbolic Law, the attainment of one's masculine place in a patriarchal order). The position of enunciation of the videotape is the first-person female, "I", and the tape is orchestrated around the memory, perception and experience of this figure. Yet this command of the position of enunciation is not simply the occupation, through identification, of the masculine position. It eliminates the father altogether, orchestrating the narrative in complex levels around the figures of mother and daughter.

Steele presents neither an Oedipal narrative in which the daughter might seek the desire of the father, nor yet a pre-Oedipal one of melding with the mother. Steele's videotape can be seen to be, in the substance of its production strategies, a repudiation of the classical Oedipal narrative. Yet at the same time, it is a negotiation against and across this script. She is necessarily implicated within it - there is, then, no other 'language' from which to speak, there are no non-masculine models of 'self'. But her tale of 'self', in this inaugural moment of the 'women's liberation' movement, is itself a journey across the abyss of loss to re-member the mother.

The poetics of the videotape are not those of Oedipus: presence, fullness, identity. They are the itinerary of a trace, operating on two registers: at once a ghosted residue and a tentative inscription. The former can be seen as the irruption of the semiotic in poetic language, a return in text/speech of the trace of a universal exile: the exile from the maternal dyad, and with it the never-secure triumph of language over the infantile body. It is the Kristevan poetics of language/identity as other-than-itself, a poetics important for a feminism that would not, in seeking to alter the register of the paternal symbolic, reinstate a

homology of the self-same, the transcendent I.

But the latter, a tentative inscription, is a pulsing push of the female voice against "the difficulty of saying 'I'", a 'difficulty' coincident with the "signifying limbo" (Doane:4) that is the exilic position for women under the governance of the phallus. As a tentative inscription against the register of Woman, it turns on, even as it cannot resolve, a re-inscription of the mother: the mother that, hinge and recess of the paternal symbolic, lacks a registration as subject and hence is not symbolically available to the daughter in her own claim to subjecthood. In Steele's video, the mother is at once trace and erasure, present and absent, an aporia bespeaking the registers of exile confronting the female subject in language and in this suggesting that the itinerary for a 'revolution' in symbolic language for women will entail different coordinates from those of Kristeva's generic, but masculine-privileged, subject-in-process. The poetics of irresolution in the videotape bespeak the split subject-not-one, but they also bespeak a fracture of another kind at the heart of the female "I".

Kristeva's vision is conservative in that the revolutionary rupture of poetic language is only ever a temporary breaking apart; the semiotic is ever and, for

Kristeva, necessarily re-contained by the symbolic. One might say, with Jacqueline Rose, that "psychosis - we can be thankful - was never offered as a revolutionary ideal" (148), but this inevitable recontainment already bespeaks the limits of semiotic heterogeneity as a political force. Further, the recontainment, though allowing of transformations within its ordering, is of a symbolic under the sign of the phallus. Yet as the instance of Steele's tape suggests, it is not the pre-Oedipal maternal matrix that is the stake for the female subject, but the maternal *subject*, who is accorded no place of her own under the law of the fathers.

For the female subject, a poetics might well seek a more sustained dis-ordering of a repressive paternal symbolic: one in which the split-subject, ever in exile from the maternal body, might neither 'transcend' the body nor expropriate the maternal (as) subject. It is only (the creation of) such a discursive space, a "rupture within discourse" of another kind to that proposed by Kristeva, that could more amply house the murmur of the mother within Steele's poignant story, anxiously told.

In both the form of her story and in what is left unspoken but rendered to presence, Steele unmistakably 'tells' another story, enacting the situation of a

generational 'sisterhood' of daughters seeking the possible terms of their own identity and desire. Central to this quest is the vexed question of the mother: the mother as subject, the mother-daughter dyad on the side of the symbolic. It is a pairing whose presence is culturally unmarked, a discursive space still in the making. And it is at once a very personal story, and a collective tale, whose conclusion (if there could be said to be one) remains unwritten.

NOTES

1. Originally published in 1974 as La Révolution du langage poétique, L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle. Lautréamont et Mallarmé, the first part of the book was translated by Margaret Waller and published in 1984 with the title Revolution in Poetic Language.

2. See especially Elizabeth Grosz (1989, 1997) and Judith Butler (1990).

3. Wolf writes, "It becomes more and more difficult to say 'I', and yet at the same time often imperative to do so" (1987:22).

REFERENCES

- Barthes, Roland, "The Death of the Author", in Image-Music-Text, trans. Stephen Heath, (London:Fontana Paperbacks, 1977), pp. 142-48
- , The Pleasure of the Text, trans. Richard Miller, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974)
- Benjamin, Jessica, The Bonds of Love:Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination, (New York: Pantheon, 1988)
- Butler, Judith, Bodies That Matter, On The Discursive Limits of "Sex", (New York and London:Routledge, 1993)
- Doane, Mary Ann, The Desire To Desire, (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1987)
- Duplessis, Rachel Blau, "Beyond the Hard Invisible Horizon", in Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985)
- Grosz, Elizabeth, Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists, (St. Leonard's:Allen & Unwin, 1989)
- , "Julia Kristeva, in Elizabeth Wright, ed, Feminism and Psychoanalysis. A Critical Dictionary, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992)
- , Space, Time and Perversion, (New York and London: Routledge, 1995)
- Jardine, Alice A., Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985)
- Kelly, Mary, "Re-viewing Modernist Criticism", in Brian Wallis, ed., Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation, (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984)
- Kristeva, Julia, La Révolution du langage poétique. L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle. Lautréamont et Mallarmé, (Paris: Seuil, 1974), first part translated as Revolution in Poetic Language, trans. Margaret Waller, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984)

----, Desire In Language, trans. Leon S. Roudiez, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), cited in Moi (1985)

Lechte, John, Julia Kristeva, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990)

McCance, Dawne, "L'écriture limite: Kristeva's Postmodern Feminist Ethics", (*Hypatia*, vol. 11, no. 2, spring 1996), pp. 141-160

Miller, Nancy, "Changing The Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader", in Teresa de Lauretis, ed., Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986)

Moi, Toril, Sexual/Textual Politics, (London and New York: Methuen, 1985)

Rose, Jacqueline, "Julia Kristeva - Take Two", Sexuality in the Field of Vision, (London, New York: Verso, 1986), pp.141-164

Tickner, Lisa, "The Body Politic: Female Sexuality and Women Artists Since 1970", (*Art History* 1, 1978), pp.263-275

Wolf, Christa, The Fourth Dimension: Interviews with Christa Wolf, trans. Hilary Pilkington, (London and New York:Verso, 1987)

Ziarek, Ewa, "At the Limits of Discourse: Heterogeneity, Alterity, and the Maternal Body in Kristeva's Thought", (*Hypatia*, vol. 7, no. 2, Spring 1992), pp 91-108

CHAPTER THREE:

MORPHOLOGIES OF THE BODY

The cross-fertilization of psychoanalysis and poststructuralist philosophy has focused attention upon the bodily roots of subjectivity and the complex intertwinings of subjectivity, corporeality and language. Psychoanalytic theory instructs us that subject formation itself proceeds through the imaginary, fantasmatic procedures of the psyche's construal of the body, thus relocating the body, as it means, from the domain of biology and anatomy into the realm of psyche and signification. Poststructuralist theory further complexifies the conception of the body from that of a neutral *tabula rasa*, or a biologically pre-given entity, in emphasizing its function as a sign whose materiality is bound up in the orders of discourse and power.

The variability of the conception of the body in different cultures and epochs, each bearing its standard of the 'natural', underscores the fantasmatic, desiring aspect subtending our apprehension of the body as well as the social and political overlay writ upon its irreducible materiality. As Bruce Knaupt has observed, "Cultural conceptions of the body, being so merged with the reality of bodily perception and experience, seem uniquely natural and basic. While the body is eminently

'natural', it is just this perception of naturalness that allows culturally variable concepts of the body to be so fundamentally ingrained in the collective psyche. In fact, images of the body everywhere embody social and cultural form" (201).

Feminist theory makes the case that, in a cultural imaginary subtended by the conceptions of sexual difference, it is the "social and cultural form" of the masculine body that is invested as representative of social subjectivity, whereas the female body image is constituted as object, as lacking. Moira Gatens specifies: "The female body, in our culture, is seen and no doubt often 'lived' as an *envelope*, *vessel* or *receptacle*. The post-oedipal female body, to paraphrase Freud, is first a home for the penis and later for a baby" (41). As she elaborates, women's bodies are seen to lack integrity: to be partial, lacking, incomplete, adding: "...here we should note the etymological links between *integrity* and *morality*.... Women are not thought to be 'morally sound' or to possess 'honour' - that is, to have integrity - precisely because they are not thought of as *whole* beings" (41).

It is this very question of "images of the body" - in particular the 'naturalized' female body, and the complex and detrimental relation of such visual and

rheterical images to cultural norms - that has been at the nub of contemporary feminist art practices for more than 25 years. As Susan Suleiman notes, "the cultural significance of the female body is not only (not even first and foremost) that of a flesh-and-blood entity, but that of a *symbolic construct*" - and, as she adds, signification in the discursive field "is never unmediated, never free of interpretation, never innocent" (2).

As Gatens leads us to understand, the resonances of imaginary understandings of the 'partiality' of the female body - its porousness, lack of boundaries, incompleteness, 'castratedness' - relative to the imagined wholeness and integrity of the masculine body also extend metaphorically into the realm of ethics and is reproduced in the cultural imaginary of the body politic itself which utilizes the masculine figure as representative of the human - a coding at the very heart of phallocentrism. Thus these social and sexual imaginaries of sexual difference constitute a crucial axis for rethinking the embodied subject and the representation of women. Yet such representations, if they are not to fall into the order of the Same, the perspectival mimesis of an ordered 'identity' already coded from within the norms of a phallocentric economy

which appropriates the visible sign of woman to secure the identity of the masculine subject, a mode of language is necessary that can bring to presence something of that which escapes this ordering without submitting it to a new repossession.

In this, Irigaray's morphology of the 'two lips' (1977/85) is apposite: it at once points to and dislodges the privilege of the phallus by proposing an alternate economy lodged in the terms of multiplicity that the unitary and solid phallus elides. Similarly, her 'metaphysics of fluids' (1977/85) countermands the solidity and unity of a metaphysics of 'solids' by rendering apparent what it represses.

Irigaray's morphological elaborations proceed from and exemplify her analysis of an isomorphism between the masculine form and philosophy (and psychoanalysis) that operates an exclusion of feminine specificity, which remains unrepresented, unthought. As Margaret Whitford observes of Irigaray's analysis, "the links between sexuality, conceptualization, 'knowledge' and social organization are intrinsic. Women are 'in exile' or 'unhoused' in male sexuality, male discourse and male society" (1991:150). Whitford describes a three-fold characteristic to the imaginary morphology of western rationality: the principle of identity, the principle of

non-contradiction, and binarism. Each of these, she argues, is "based upon the possibility of individuating, or distinguishing one thing from another, upon the belief in the necessity of stable forms. An equation is made between the (symbolic) phallus, stable form, identity and individuation" (1991:59).

Yet if one of the hallmarks, and symptoms, of the postmodern putting into crisis of classical reason and binary metaphysics has been a series of configurations of the 'feminine' as the display and disordering of metaphysical fixities and binaries, these tropes of Woman, of a feminine indeterminacy, have had little commerce with the politics of feminism; have indeed seemed to evacuate women altogether, retaining the 'feminine' as a textual positionality divorced from the bodily existence and historical/political claims of women.

By contrast, Irigaray's model of morphologies, while not claiming an 'identity' for women, operates a writing in the 'feminine' that joins sexual to textual politics through foregrounding the question of difference. Irigaray's move, which shifts the terrain from a representation of the body in terms of biology or anatomy or expressivity to one of a morphology offers an important lead for a feminist re-figuring of embodiment.

Morphology is not mimesis: it is an imaginary body symbolically adapted through an interweaving with the body's form. In foregrounding the body as cultural construct rather than given in nature, Irigaray's model, Gatens has argued, "breaks with traditional boundaries between desire and instinct, between consciousness and bodies" (1996:58). I would add, however, that part of the productivity of the model of morphology lies in her rethinking the body as more than an inscriptional surface, as a body (necessarily) in language, yet also a body not necessarily restricted morphologically to its surface, or visible, plane.

Writing on the Irigarayan morphology of the 'two lips', Jane Gallop makes the point that "phallomorphic logic" is itself not based on anatomy but rather "reconstructs anatomy in its own image"; by the same argument, what Gallop terms Irigaray's "vulvamorphic logic" is similarly not anatomically given but rather "already a symbolic interpretation of... anatomy" (1988:94). Gallop proposes that Irigaray's bodily poetics is not an expression of the body but rather its creation, a *poeisis*, one which extends beyond the commonplaces of a postmodern 'feminine' textuality to compose a nonphallomorphic sexuality. She argues the potential for such poetics of the body to create a new

sense of the body beyond the binaries of whole/lack. Such a poetics, in which a move that operates within the differentials of language is also complexly intertwined with referentiality, serves to enable the reconstruction and remetaphorization of experience. Such a poetics would entail the reconceptualization of the imaginary of the body.

At issue, however, is not a question of countermanding masculinist forms with the rendering of an 'autonomous' feminine definition (the project of so-called first generation art in its emphasis on female aesthetics, sensibility, biomorphic forms, etc.); rather, it is that of making a space for alternate visions, for a heterogeneity - which in itself puts into evidence the ruse of the universal, the One.

Significant to the import of morphologies of the body as a mode of bodily symbolization available to feminism, Irigaray's models both of the 'two lips', and of 'fluids' reveal how readily we can conceptually construe ideas of, and recover experiences of, the body through symbolic renderings that are not representations of our 'literal' body. Indeed, our understandings of the body are not literal: the body is itself not pregiven as a real but is psychically construed. As Jean Laplanche specifies, "Psychoanalysis has to rely upon a false

biology if it is to represent life within the psychical apparatus"(46). Morphologies, in mediating between psyche and anatomy, are *imaginary* bodies that are at once "constitutive of and constituted by" the ways in which the body is "inscribed, marked and made meaningful"(Kirby:20).

Here Gallop's nomination of Irigaray's morphology as "vulvomorphic" itself introduces a sexed literalness to the Irigarayan 'speaking' lips, the effect of which is to repeat the biologicistic interpretations leveled against Irigaray by her critics, an interpretation which Gallop otherwise challenges. As I hope to demonstrate with respect to the artworks in this chapter, if morphologies of the body are already abstracted from any form of anatomical or biological mimesis, and if one can imaginatively apprehend the body through metonymic figural analogies, the plasticities of art may overcome the problem of an interpretive literalness to which Irigaray's model in its referentiality continually falls prey, while yet continuing the project of a polyvalent resignification of women's embodiment and its psychic registrations.

In this chapter, I draw upon the concept of 'morphologies' to focus attention on strategies of feminist art practice which shape or form an unfamiliar

language of/for bodies, figurations which are neither strictly anthropomorphic nor biomorphic yet which nonetheless evoke the body through indirect or connotative or formally resonant means. If a poetics of the body is a language of the body, not a transparent accession to its 'real' but an interpretation whose meanings are secured through the differential system that governs language, these 'bodies' of art engage with, and challenge, a representational model where the 'difference' of sexual difference "is exhausted by phallic presence of absence" (Gatens:72).

In bringing to bear the body of fantasy rather than of biology they bear within them a recognition of the phantasmatic nature of our bodily understandings. They compose, through a reworking of the very traditions of the representational field of art and popular culture, a visual language of 'difference' wherein a vivid visual presentation is not readily assimilable to representation and identity. Their poetics of indeterminacy - with their tropes of sensuous excess, of marked and fractured fields, of polyvalence, of enigmatic surfaces - convey states of being rooted in an experience of the body, yet are not recuperable to a phallomorphic logic of containment and unity.

In invoking bodies of fantasy, the meanings these

works produce draw upon our capacity to imaginatively and conceptually apprehend the ways in which language 'makes' the body. But in these works can be observed as well the approximation or material analogue of a Kristevan semiotic. This is found not in the bodily surplus of verbal/textual language, the residue of a maternal corporeal matrix in the speaking/writing subject, but rather in material analogues for the bodily trace, a surface disturbance within signification, a double registration: a semiosis within the 'body' of art.

In the examples of such works that I draw upon in Part A, I lend particular attention to how the semiotic values of cloth are employed to compose a kind of second skin, an affective surface. In the second section, 'cloth' as a material base is extended to a more socially-encoded 'clothing'. The clothing in these works is transformed and denaturalized from its function as wear, and through the artist's use of and interventions within the clothing signifier, put into the service of the staging of fantasy and cultural memory.

In Part A, I proceed with particular reference to the work of Mary Scott, further accompanied by a discussion of works by Martha Townsend. The works of both these artists privilege an abstracted language,

hence is at a notable remove from the overt referentiality of both deconstructive and figurative practices. Abstraction, as Rosemary Betterton has observed, has been "one of the most ignored areas for feminist intervention" in the visual arts(79). Here I demonstrate that these artists use 'available' languages within the history of art to reconstitute these languages not only 'in the feminine' - understood as a deconstructive project of uncovering the constitutive repressed term upon which an extant, privileged form is dependent - but also as a feminist aesthetic textuality. The work of Mary Scott takes its departure from the painterly paradigm, while Martha Townsend borrows from the lexicon of minimalism. The artists' appropriation of a formal vocabulary, however, proceeds from a postmodernist understanding of form, well summarized elsewhere as "an associative, metonymical one in which aesthetic qualities are inextricably bound up with symbolic and historical references"(Hatt:42).

In Part B, I focus attention on artists' appropriation of an 'available' language drawn not from 'high' art but from popular culture and the realm of fashion and clothing. Here an iconic referentiality is present as source, but is distorted or transformed in processes of a recomposition. I foreground works by Anne

Ramsden and Cathy Daley which employ the fashion signifier and the cultural/gendered specificities always already embedded in clothing to compose an ambiguous language of feminine desire. The emphasis throughout this section on clothing as a surrogate for - and suggesting residue traces of - the body, and as a culturally and historically laden material, is developed further in Chapter Four in my close reading of a number of works by Faye HeavyShield. While my emphasis in that chapter is on the spatialities composed within the works I discuss, HeavyShield's installations also propose morphologies of the body which are composed through the use of clothing, and in which memory, fantasy and a performative - even utopic - theatricality are complexly intertwined.

Part A:

1. The 'body' in/of Mary Scott's 'paintings', elaborated with different emphases over several series, is, to be sure, as far removed from the conventions of figural representation as her work appears to be from painterly traditions. Yet it is precisely in working from within, while twisting almost off its axis, that most masculinist of art traditions that Scott forges a pliable language suited to her twisting of other, equally patriarchal metaphysical and cultural traditions which 'naturalize' the female body in specific cultural terms. While Scott's works do not depict the body in any conventional sense, they are consistently identified with the body - a de-naturalized and anxious body - by virtue of the connotative dimensions of their profoundly worked materiality as well as the psychic terrain, with its implicit corporeal supports, which they turn upon.

Scott has specified the foundations of her work: "Since 1982, my art has been initiated by readings: French Feminisms, psychoanalytic theory and criticism, social/cultural feminist criticism, literary criticism and literature by women" (Lemecka:32). But if her work is deeply engaged with contemporary feminist theory, in particular the problematizing of Lacanian theories of language - and the place of the feminine within it - as

advanced by such figures as Monique Wittig, Helene Cixous, Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, her work is far from an illustration, or even an elucidation, of psychoanalytic theory. Rather, it is an engagement and dialogue with it; it is perhaps even, as psychoanalytic critic Jeanne Randolph has proposed, an *enactment* of the psychoanalytic as a process of interpretation in which meaning is construed through an alogical and non-binaristic association of elements (Randolph:39). Yet an artistic engagement with this theory - theory which itself attends to particular gendered 'blind spots' of discourse - through the historically laden medium of painting demands a parallel reworking of the artistic medium.

The possibilities of a feminist criticality operating upon the formal signifiers of the painterly tradition was already evident in an early series of Scott's works, produced while still an undergraduate student and preceding the direct engagement with theoretical discourse that marks her work post-1982. In these works, Scott dispensed altogether with canvas and its supports, building up a thick surface and ground through the laborious aggregation of paint released from a syringe. The process, with its ejaculative thrusts of paint, offered a parodic mimicry of the 'seminal' mark

of the artist (one recalls Renoir's oft-quoted statement that he painted with his prick, or even Barthes characterization of painting as "a panic erection...the entire body-as-phallus which swells, hardens, and collapses") (1985:150).

At the same time, this approach yielded a remarkably versatile instrument, one which enabled Scott to 'write', and hence to build up a visual/linguistic surface that contaminated the illusion of painting's 'pure' visuality. As Jessica Bradley has described, "Scott's first paintings...were already virtually anti-paintings in that they appeared to deny all that was intrinsic to modernist painting: the flat, two-dimensional surface, the authenticity of the original image, the expressive artistic gesture, and, finally, the liberated realm of the visual untainted by the intellectual constraints of the verbal" (58). Yet rather than 'anti-paintings', a negation of painting, Scott's enterprise, so installed within its traditions, is more a form of a-painting, a painting Otherwise.

If the 'words' of this painted writing were a gesture toward a 'body' of language rather than an accessible signification, a subsequent series of 10 works produced in 1985-86, dubbed the "quotation paintings", offered a moderately more legible text, the

paintings constructed through layerings of shellac, spray paint and metal letterings, pointing, as Barbara Lounder has described "to physical, bodily experience beyond the given codes of representation"(2) even as its uses of quotation emphasized women's voices/texts as symbolic sources.

Each of the quotation paintings appropriates an image drawn from the repertoire of the visual arts - from Leonardo da Vinci to Victor Burgin to Jill Posner to Mapplethorpe to Dorothea Lange. Over, around, below, above, to the side, crossing over and in various other combinations, Scott incorporates onto the surface of the visual field quotations drawn from feminist criticism, psychoanalysis, literature and cultural criticism. The procedure, which she has termed a "quoting in excess", created a multiple, fractured set of voices and images, an impossibility of containment in a coherent 'one' - a flouting of singular textual authority through a productive multiplicity. The accompanying labels for these otherwise untitled works indicate the precise source of the quoted fragments of image and text.

For example, in the first work of the series, *Untitled (quoting J. Kristeva, M. Duras, S. Schwartz-Bart, P. Modersohn-Becker)*, the iconography is drawn from a painting by Paula Modersohn-Becker of a kneeling,

veiled woman. This image occupies the center right of the canvas, accompanied by a text by the Caribbean writer Simone Schwartz-Bart and, as Scott has put it, "a drop of a Marguerite Duras quote that slides down the righthand side" (Randolph:35). This "drop" points to the gestural nature of the quotations, each partial, yet sufficient to point to a scene outside of the work. The work thus displaces the immediacy of 'sight' and visuality into the procedures of reflection and interpretation. While offering the viewer a scripto-visual object, it is less an object complete and intact than one that opens out and extends toward other objects and readings only partially present in the work itself.

Covering the top of the canvas and extending down the entire center left of the painting is Kristeva's 'voice' on the subject of *jouissance*. *Jouissance* is that in woman that exceeds the Oedipal law, the law that, in Freudian and Lacanian theory, assigns the subject to its position in relation to the phallus. If feminine 'lack' is the correlate of an Oedipal positioning, *jouissance* is its obverse, a pleasurable excess remaining outside of linguistic structuration and phallic signification. Kristeva's work, as discussed in Chapter Two, specifies how a non-phallic *jouissance* can break through the unities of the symbolic order, revealing its debt to the

repressed pre-Oedipal maternal matrix and destabilizing the governance of the drives and the fixities/fictions of identity it would establish. In Scott's rendering, the *jouissance* of Kristeva's 'voice' is brought to the surface plane of the painting as a ripple of loosely organized colour, a semiotic field, a voice discharged from the 'order' of the discursive text to enter the scene of a pulsing disturbance.

While Kristeva locates the exemplars of this semiotic bursting through in the work of a number of turn of the century masculine figures of the avant-garde, Scott creates a kind of semiosis of the surface by rendering materially the surges and pulsations of voices in which it is female subjects of speech that are privileged. Refuting Kristeva's attribution of male mimicry and narcissism to female writing, Scott foregrounds women whose work turns upon a 'difference' or disruption of the paternal symbolic - even as the work also re-members the body. Indeed, it could be argued that Scott, by uniting in a common visual field fragments of these female symbolizations while introducing material analogues for the non-representable of the corporeal matrix, treats women's voices and images (including Kristeva's) as themselves a source of *jouissance*. Scott's 'quoting in excess' is a theatre of

voices, and signs, of meanings made by women; these are not arranged in a fixed ordering, but are put in circulation as glimpsed force fields of thought in a syncopated concatenation.

As Bradley has observed, "in these works, the female body (is) not so much 'written' in the manner of the French feminists, as written across...a libidinal surface obscured by language" (58), though I would propose that this writing is yet further dispersed, surrounding and crossing over and located 'beside' the body, obscuring any divide between writing through the body and realizing the body through language. The sexually differentiated 'body' in this work is a body in/of language, an 'impossible' morphology of women's voices, whose 'form' is rendered not anatomically or otherwise representationally but in a language whose gestures are already distanced from the familiar tropes of sexual difference, in a poetics of heterogeneous polyvocality.

As this example suggests, the series complicates the specular foundation of the visual field through the supplement of a textuality that demands a 'reading' as well as a 'seeing', and, as well, a kind of 'listening' to the voices released through the reading, each of which carries its particular tenor. In so doing, Scott

foregrounds the intertextuality wherein any form of 'seeing' is far from an innocent apperception unmediated by language and the accumulations of culture. It also marks the point of an intervention wherein an image can be newly contextualized, the spectator brought to a 'reading' of the figure of woman from within a matrix privileging the female voice. The work effects a dissolution of the "I" of identity to which the expressive paradigm is beholden through the actualization of multiple voices, linking the work to the collective project of female enunciation.

Scott's subsequent *IMAGO* series (Figs. 3-6), twelve numbered works produced between 1987-89, is an investigation more directly centered on the import and imprint of images in the constitution of psychic life, one bringing to painting the psychoanalytic interrogations of feminist theory. The 'quotations' that specified the intertextual nature of her earlier practice remain vestigially present in the lengthy titles that accompany the work. Scott has made explicit the relevance and potential of the imago as a site of investigation:

The Imago is an interesting site because it is not available.... It doesn't matter whether it is real or fictional. It matters only that it appears in your psychic life. The Imagos are in any number of forms, and parental images are one, but the Imagos also are striking points in terms of how you

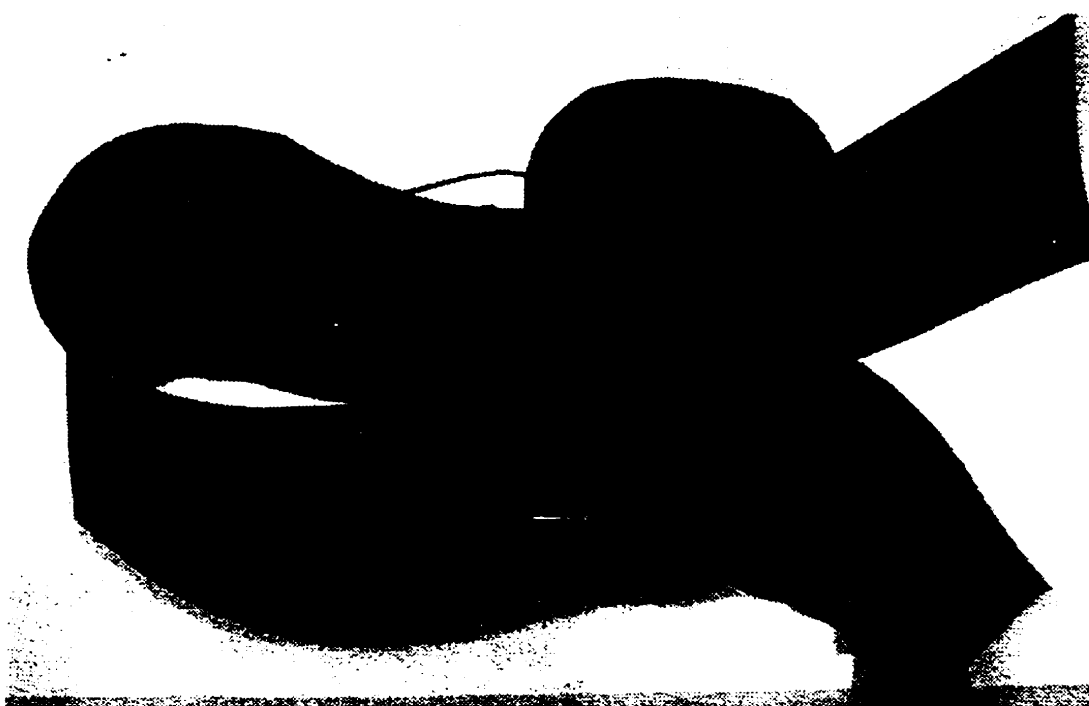


fig. 3

Mary Scott

In you more than you s:d:m:k:f ll

understand yourself as a character, as a subject.... *Quite simply, its significance is that it looks like it might be a possible site for change: cultural change, psychic change and individual change* (Randolph:37-38, emphasis added).

In the round-robin between the imaginary and the symbolic - wherein the patriarchal symbolic is subtended by the imaginary even as the imaginary is shaped by the symbolic, hence is culturally determined - the 'loosening' of the imago is a potential breakage in the circuit of that round-robin, opening to the potential of other imaginary and symbolic structures.

Imagoes are unconscious representations, the phantasmatic mental repository of received images and clichés which preferentially orient perception and behaviour. Lacan's concept of the imago sites its derivation in the preverbal realm of the imaginary, replete with illusory mis-recognitions, rather than the 'symbolic' register of language and social exchange. The imago is at once static - a cliché image - and dynamic in that it acts upon concepts of self and processes of intersubjective relations. In Jane Gallops' incisive reading of Lacan, she observes, "it could be said that the symbolic can be encountered only as a tear in the fabric of the imaginary, a revealing interruption. The paths to the symbolic are thus in the imaginary. The symbolic can be reached only by not trying to avoid the

imaginary, by knowingly being in the imaginary"
(1985:60).

The imaginary, as Gallop specifies, is itself made up of imagoes; it is a storehouse of images of every kind. Thus the imaginary is conceived by Gallop as a site already mediated, through the mechanisms of the imago, by representation, culture and sociality. These imagoes structure our modes of perception, distorting human interaction through projection and transference. As Gallop points out, however, "the point is not to give up the imagoes (an impossible task) nor to create better ones...but in the symbolic register, (to understand) these imagoes as structuring projections"(1985:61). This is the scene of psychoanalysis, wherein the distorted mirroring of the imaginary is revealed to the subject when it is not the mirror's image, but rather its frame, that is perceived. "It is the imaginary as imaginary which constitutes the symbolic"(1985:62, emphasis added).

Each of the works in the *Imago* series incorporates one or more found images which might be seen as paradigmatic of aspects of the mediation through visualization of bodies and gender in culture. Yet their function is not illustrative (these structures are inaccessible), but rather more gestural and cursory:

what Scott has described as a "'going toward', not a capturing/explaining/enunciating" (Lemecka:32). In this series, Scott's approach to bodily referentiality is indirect and enigmatic, the 'body' displaced into the very materiality--the threads, fabrics, wax--of the works, the figurative elements little more than a trace, paint only vestigially present. The imago in the works is an overlay upon a flowing and sensuous expanse of colour, even as the fabric itself is variously torn, shredded and distended. The rich, unbound silk might be seen as an overflow of *jouissance*, a symbolization of that which is by definition outside of language but which underwrites its very energies and pulsations. The poetics incorporate a shredding and tearing of/at the material foundation, identifying a scene of anxiety wherein the cultural markings traced upon the folds of fabric are like tenacious but permeable imprints upon a libidinal field.

In *Imago (V) red*, <<who isn't there>>, for example, the source images are a painting of Madonna and child by Leonardo da Vinci and the image of a woman appropriated from a skin magazine, her head thrown back in sexual ecstasy (Fig. 4). The ground of the work is a long expanse of red silk (165 x 1065 cm). At one end, roughly embroidered in the silk, are outlined features of the



fig. 4
Mary Scott
Imago [V] red <<who isn't there>>

face of the Penthouse Pet, her open mouth an analogue of genitality; at the other end, the figure of the Christ child lying upon its mother's lap are imprinted schematically with finger-thick strokes of gold leaf and in the center, the whole fabric is reduced to its horizontal threads. "Who isn't there" is precisely the woman as subject.

In *Imago IX*, *Urverdrängung:refoulement*, "translatable", <<it will be impossible>>, gold or silver leaf, worked in narrow, truncated lines into a swath of silk fabric, forms an obscure image, barely recognizable, the drawn lines broken, the detail obscured (Fig. 5). The source is a drawing attributed to Leonardo da Vinci, which depicts an anatomical section of a couple performing the sexual act, but wherein a certain ambiguity enters by virtue of its wrongly, not to say strangely, configured body parts: a headless woman, a doleful expression on the man's visage, an inverted placement of feet. In Jacqueline Rose's summation of Da Vince's painting, "the depiction is inaccurate, uncomfortable, undesirable and without desire" (22). This source image is more schematic than illustrative, an outline in broken traces superimposed on the fabric, an inscription onto the voluptuous body of the silk.



fig. 5
Mary Scott
Imago X Urverdrängung:refoulement
"translatable"
<<it will be impossible>>

This work, though at the furthest remove from the expressive, gestural model of the painterly paradigm, reworks the language of painting--flatness, surface, mark--to create a secondary 'embodiment' of a profound materiality on the reworked and painted surface. The fabric itself is partially - laboriously - dethreaded, releasing trails of silken thread which fall loosely, creating web-like openings in the 'painterly' surface and effecting an unbinding of the contours of the works. The lush fabric - silk, taffeta, organza - with its feminine associations, is the material foundation of the work. This association to the feminine rejoins with the imago's formation from within (yet already foreshadowing the rupture from) the pre-Oedipal locus of maternal plenitude. But in this series, particularly in Scott's latter works, Kristeva's differentiation of the realm of the semiotic from that of the Imaginary described by Lacan, is central, for the semiotic is not the site of a comforting if illusory unity but one of chaos, a body without limits. The full title of the work refers to the primary repression ("Urverdrangung: refoulement") of this originary desire, its symptomatic re-emergence ("translatable") and its disturbing persistence as a force within the unconscious ("<<it will be impossible>>"). This writing-the-body as an inscription

on a material foundation produces a soma-psychic field that does not allow of 'transcending' the body, but rather produces a morphology of embodiment in which the cultural overlay is only ever tentative, always threatened with rupture from a *jouissance* of never quiescent power.

To a visuality that conventionally foregrounds the sexually differentiated body, Scott counterposes a visualization of corporeality in terms that defy such a literal mapping of gender, or even anatomy. Rather, it is a morphology which foregrounds in a more abstract mode the intrications of different levels of psychic/corporeal existence.

This volatile body reappears in the three works of *In You More Than You:s:d:m:k:f:(1990-1)* (Figs. 3 and 6). The title derives from the final chapter of Lacan's The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, and the single letters refer to the schemas, diagrams, maps, knots and figures in Lacan's writing. In these paintings, a foundation of draped shot silk is layered over, in black bias tape, with diagrammatic forms drawn from the Lacanian repertoire. For this viewer, the dry humour that seems to insert itself lightly around the edges of Scott's notably 'serious' work (from the syringe-phallus to the shredded clichés), is

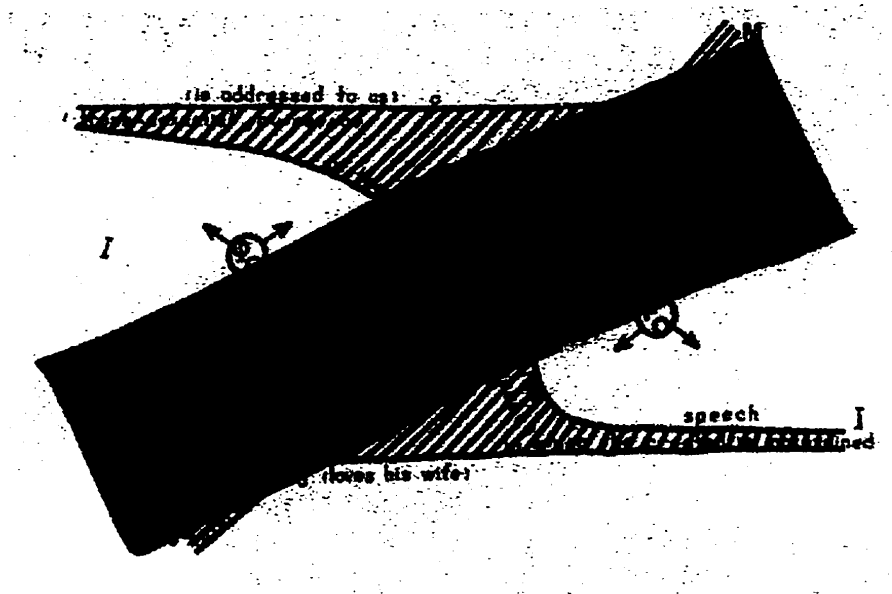


fig. 6
Mary Scott
In you more than you s:d:m:k:f l

particularly manifest here, in the linear lines of force that seem to strive to hold down and superimpose themselves upon the billowing voluminous fabric. Amy Gogarty suggests that "the play of desire activated by the sensuous material is held in check; in its turn, desire destabilizes any attempt to grasp experience solely by cognitive means" (43). Yet while the work surely does point to the problem of formalizing in language that which exceeds it, the former part of Gogarty's analysis ("the play of desire...is held in check") is belied by the sheer physical presence and contour-exceeding fabric. As Bradley has remarked, the work "reduc(es) to ruin the pretense of Lacan's arcane diagrams", elaborating: "Scott symbolically abolishe(s) classical psychoanalysis' reification of the phallic sign, inevitably recalling another moment of feminist art in which these diagrams figured rather more authoritatively - Mary Kelly's 1979 *Post-Partum Document*" (59).

Scott's subsequent series (and the final one exhibited to date) *In me more than me: schemas, diagrams, maps, knits, figures: stuck* (1992) is quite literally a return to earlier work, as the collectively titled pieces consist of the binding and wrapping of older paintings which, though covered over, remain

partially visible beneath their bindings. In the context of the sacrosanct valuation traditionally accorded an artist's oeuvre, it is a stunning transgression, as Scott, as ever, eschews the author-signature to render literally the process through which an art practice ingests its own history.

Many of these works are biomorphic: clusters of angular, tubular or lumped forms (Figs. 7-10). These pieces are variously bound with pale-coloured cotton thread, suggestive of tendrils, or with translucent double-sided conservator's tape, which lend the work an opaque membrane-like surface. Partially, occasionally, discernable beneath - at once concealed and revealed, destroyed and preserved - are the metallic letters, folds of cloth, solidified words from syringe-applied paint of earlier paintings. A singular, and the largest, work of the series (Fig. 11) is composed of five rectangular closely-spaced paintings, each wrapped first in stretch-cotton garments then covered again in sumptuous folds of richly coloured silks, folded and knotted across the surface of the rectangular frame and forming bands that join the five segments together.

The processes of binding and enveloping these works recalls time-based forms of post-minimalist art as well as its early feminist permutations in textile-based

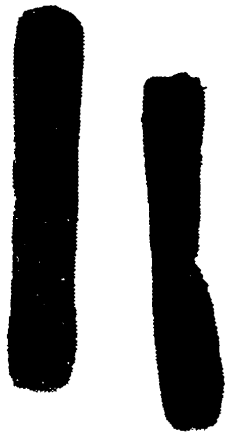


fig. 7



fig. 8



fig. 9



fig. 10

Mary Scott
In me more than me
scheras, diagrams, maps, knots, figures
stuck



fig. 11
Mary Scott
In me more than me
schemas, diagrams, maps, knots, figures
stuck

works with their valorization of 'feminine' materials. Here the paintings, with their enigmatic interiors, biomorphic forms and skin-like surfaces offer a disquieting analogue of embodied consciousness, foregoing the flat surface of the painting canvas to body forth an interiority. Scott's work has fixed upon the instabilities and elusive processes in the formation of always-unfixed subjectivities. If the title of the series (*In me more than me...*) itself refers to the psychoanalytic recognition of the unconscious as an unrecognized presence by virtue of which the self is a stranger to itself - that desire is itself the negotiation of a dispossessed subjectivity - the objects themselves are equally unstable, with their loosening threads, shifting shapes, visible fragments, tentative forms. Nell Tenhaaf has declared the works "life-forms that are as cohesive as any", but also "transitory, only briefly adaptive as we are, always at a threshold of changing into something else"(10). This sense of organicity in the works, their curious body-like morphism, refers us in an immediate way to the body. But as Tenhaaf reminds us, this body - the indeterminate state of the works - is as much an epistemological body as a semiotic one.

This interpretation underscores a motif, and (if it

is possible to avoid its psychologizing inflection) motive present in Scott's work from her earliest processes of 'quoting in excess' to these filled and truncated forms, and which I have detailed in my discussion of Scott's several material strategies: that of interrogating, as a female subject and through an embodied practice, the discourse of the 'subject' in postmodernity. This is conducted through an intertextual practice of working in the 'gaps' of the patriarchal tradition of painting to mount a parallel investigation of the elisions and points of disturbance in the theoretical account of the symbolic Law of the Fathers. It is the work of an undutiful daughter whose practice opens up a space for an other kind of poetics that incorporates the unrepresentable feminine in the field of the symbolic, that loosens the hold of the familiar image supports or body imagoes that subtend the cultural imaginary, that re-members the body. The work is difficult and unsettling, in no way reassuring: it offers a poetics of irresolution and anxiety that does not reinstall identity but embodies alterity, dissolves centers and borders, and instantiates a re-figured politics of the imaginary as a task of undoing, of proposing (speculating upon) something other, as yet uncoded.

2. Martha Townsend's work in the late 1980s was primarily made of evocative found objects placed in unusual pairings which set into a disjunction the 'ready-made' connotation of the component parts. *Burying Eve* (1985-87) is emblematic of this earlier work. An inverted shovel hangs suspended on the wall, the blade at eye level; in the centre is embedded a gold wedding band. The work sets up a relationship between two discordant elements: the shining delicate circle of gold and the pedestrian shovel of base metal and rough wood; the ring made for a woman's finger and the inverted shovel posed upright as a phallus. These relations are neither dialectical, in which the conflicting elements find resolution in a third term, nor are they binary oppositions, bound together as complements; rather they are the site of a collision of meanings. The title of this work adds to its ambiguity; is "Eve", the first woman, being buried anew or is she being unearthed?

In 1988, with the first of a series of works predicated on the shapes of wedges and spheres, ideal forms not found in nature, Townsend declared a new direction in her work, one in which metaphor is displaced by a more austere abstraction (Figs. 12-18). At the same time, the stringent formalism of her work is countermanded by a voluptuousness of material. *Rocco and*

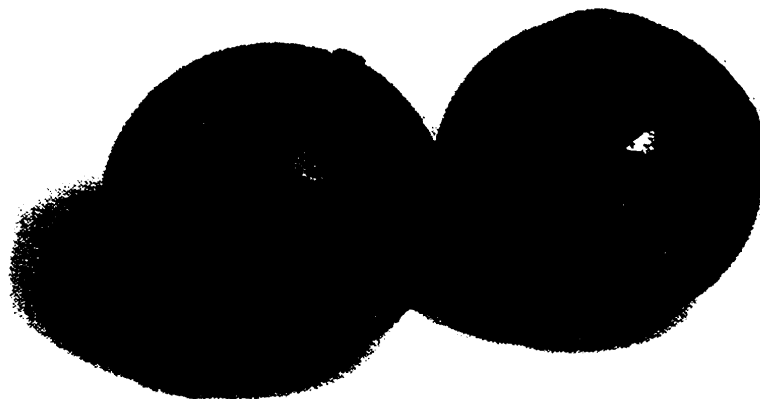


fig. 12
Martha Townsend
Rocco and Rolly

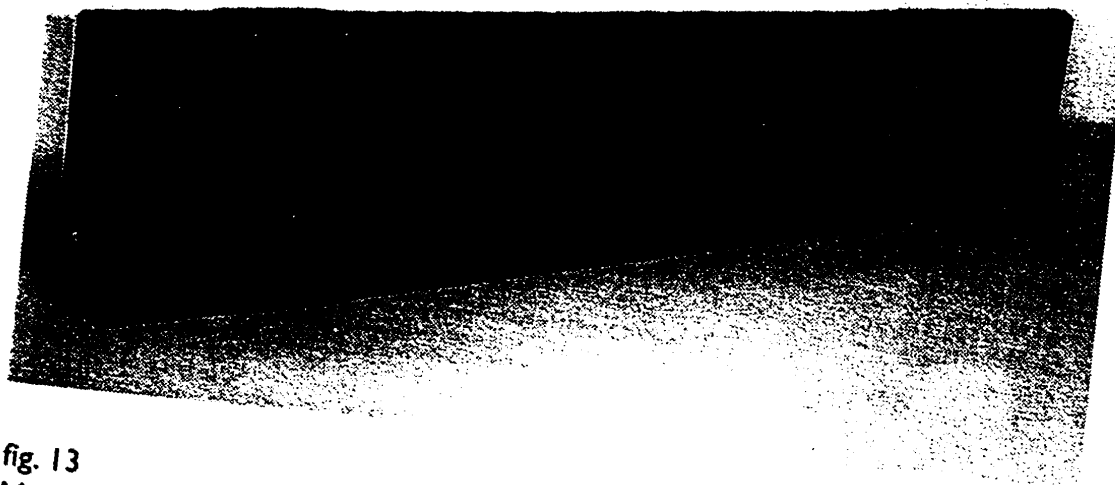


fig. 13
Martha Townsend
Large Wedge

Rolly (1988, Fig. 12) consists of two five-pin bowling balls, one covered with a band of fitted black leather edges with a strip of suede, the other wrapped with a band of black suede trimmed with leather. The pair - one a marbled blue-green, the other a variegated brown - are placed in snug proximity, their skins touching. *Large Wedge* (Fig. 13), made in the same year, is a beautifully crafted block of polished mahogany five feet long, narrowing to a crisp edge. But the abstract and formal quality of this piece, with its echoes of minimalist sculpture, is complicated by the sculpture's other element: a rich red sheath -condom - of leather cut to fit the body of the wedge tightly, folded back upon itself at the widest edge to reveal several inches of the flesh of the wood.

If minimal art inverted the values of abstract expressionism, foregoing gesture in its radical attention to system, Townsend borrows from the visual lexicon of minimalism while in turn rescinding the masculinism of its values. Minimalism privileged such forms as the cube and the rectangle: bare materials stripped of metaphor, morally neutral. Townsend utilizes geometrical forms but renders these voluptuous and sensual through 'clothing' them in tight skin-like leathers, inverting their Suprematist aspirations of

purity and absoluteness by reinvesting them with meanings.

Townsend's approach in these works has a rapport with the model of 'mimicry' proposed by Luce Irigaray (1985). For Irigaray, mimesis - as the entering into and distantiating copying of the ideas and roles through which the 'feminine' is articulated in patriarchal thought - is a mode of revealing its structures and undoing its logic. "One must assume the feminine role deliberately", she writes. "Which means already to convert a form of subordination into an affirmation, and thus begin to thwart it... To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to locate the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to be simply reduced to it" (76).

What are we to make of these balls and wedges, modelled on an art style so naked in its masculinity, with its authoritarian insistence on the rational, the unemotive, the universal? Townsend's spheres and wedges are likewise formal objects without inherent meaning. But in covering these shapes with leather, thus juxtaposing abstract forms, organic materials and the social and sexual connotations of skin and clothing, what Townsend wryly introduces into these objects that look so much like minimal art is precisely what

minimalism would repress: gender and sexuality. But Townsend goes further in not only introducing an excised affective 'feminine' dimension to the self-contained forms, but in also 'speaking' the phallus, while in the process altering its conventional morphological correlates. In an interview, Townsend has remarked of these clothed balls and wedges: "It's taboo for women to speak of men's sexuality as we experience it" (Baert:39). Yet while these sculptures may offer a speculation on male sexuality, they also cannot be tied to so specific a reading: they are declaratively sexual but by no means definitively gendered.

Townsend's approach bypasses popular currents of figuration and deconstruction in favour of abstract forms that put meanings -often sexual meanings - into play. She has elsewhere described her motives in shifting from a metaphorical emphasis to one of abstraction:

I became conscious of the fact that 'farm tools' - or found objects - work {e.g. *Burying Eve*} was using the symbolically, and culturally, laden aspect of those objects to displace other readings. I was pushing up against the edges of this bubble of consensus about how we understand the world but I was still operating inside the bubble, in the universe of symbolism...., I was wondering if I couldn't make a work which would propose a similar kind of affective moment without going through the reading process that the found objects called for, bypassing that value-laden and richly imbued stuff (Laing:1989:3).

In utilizing abstract forms to compose 'figures' that are not 'figurations', that evoke the body through materiality, through their inviting tactility, through - following minimalism - the 'theatrical' space of the viewer's embodied relation to them, Townsend finds a means of moving beyond 'symbolism', the already-known and familiar. These enigmatic objects - their mute exteriority nonetheless positing the problem and invitation of their dense, unknown and invisible interiority - open a space for the viewer's speculations and inventive investments.

Townsend's breaking away from the "bubble" of symbolism is an opening to the challenge of creating a vocabulary of the body not already overwritten with associations, one that might offer new possibilities for conceiving our soma-psychic existence. Jane Gallop's remarks on the limits of referentiality, of the reprise of the already-known, are relevant to an understanding of Townsend's strategy:

Belief in simple referentiality is not only unpoetic but also ultimately politically conservative, because it cannot recognize that the reality to which it appeals is a traditional ideological construction, whether one terms it phallogomorphic, or metaphysical, or bourgeois, or something else. The politics of experience is inevitably a conservative politics for it cannot help but conserve traditional ideological constructs which are not recognized as such but are taken for the 'real'. And a poetics of experience is no poetics at all if we understand poetry to be

that effect which finds a loophole in the law of the symbolic" (1988:98-99, emphasis added).

If mimetic representation bodies forth the familiar, the known, and hence reproduces an economy of the same, Townsend's poetics draw upon a language of abstraction whose meanings are far less secured. In introducing obliquely into this vocabulary terms - of affect, of the body, of sexuality, of the feminine - that are outside the precincts of a formalism, Townsend opens up this vocabulary as a space for a desire in the feminine: something for which there exists no adequate cultural language but which is imaginatively recoverable as a potent and affectively laden enigma/potential from within the surplus, the 'loopholes' of symbolic language.

Townsend further introduces among the geometric forms the sphere - most dramatically in *Orb* (1992) (Fig. 15), a monumental sphere with a polished black surface, 150cm in diameter, a form that remained unexplored within minimalism. The circle or sphere is symbolically associated with the feminine, as the obverse of the phallus, by virtue no doubt of its relation to the breast and to the concave interiority of the female body. (Though of course, especially works such as *Cradle* (Fig. 14) and *Rocco and Rolly*, the 'balls' carry a

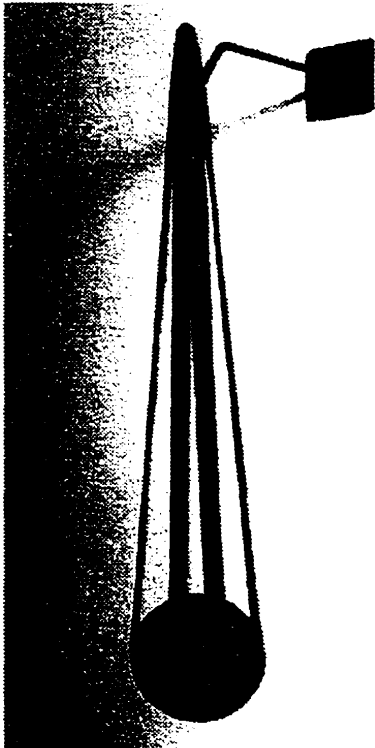


fig. 14
Martha Townsend
Cradle

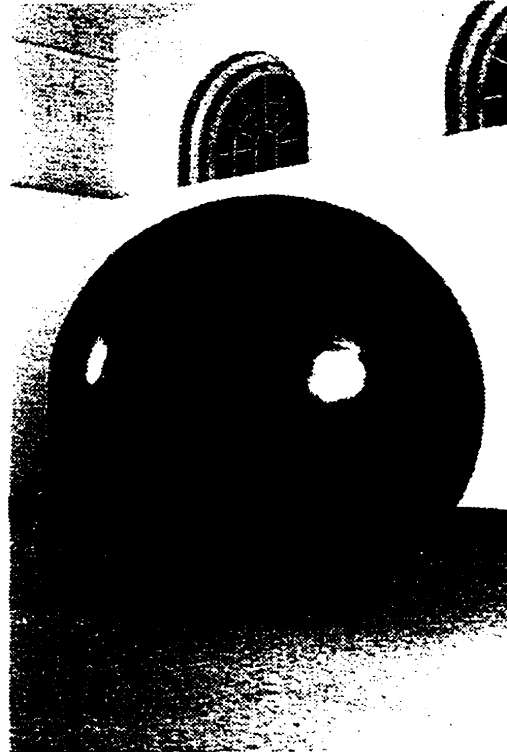


fig. 15
Martha Townsend
Orb

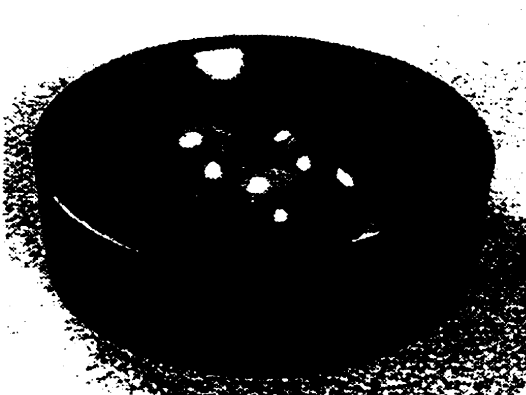


fig. 16
Martha Townsend
Carom

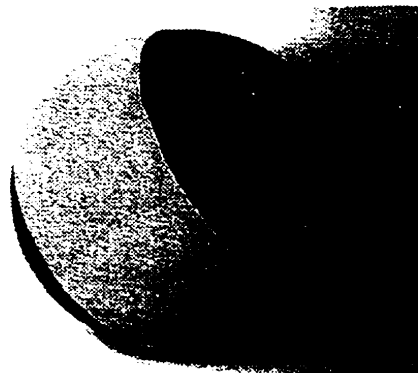


fig. 17
Martha Townsend
Morning Sphere

distinct masculine connotation). Townsend's spheres are not forms that allow of entry - they do not reproduce a 'body' in/of art analagous to Gaten's description of the symbolism of the female body as "envelope" or "container"; they are dense and closed, abstract and solid forms. Yet it is through foregrounding their surface, highlighting through skins or paint its inviting tactility, that Townsend enables an attention to the dialectic between interiority and exteriority, eroding binaries and dualism by foregrounding these as interconnections rather than discrete entities.

It is precisely the enigma of Townsend's forms - abstract yet evocative of the body and possessing an affective power - that impel our attention to the rich material surfaces of the work. Yet these inviting surfaces that channel our attention to the exteriority of the objects also draws us to an awareness of the quiet power of their dense, invisible, latent interiorities, establishing a reverbertation between the two. "The closed off surface", the curator Yolande Racine writes of this work, "alludes to the depth that dwells within form and shapes it, to a virtual power that gives rise to a rhythmic interplay of surface and depth, of advance and retreat, appearance and disappearance" (50). The sphere in particular, composed

through the organization of matter equidistant at all points, is thoroughly dynamic, embodying an undeniable internal logic and coherence, and seeming to be constructed from the inside out. Though stripped of metaphor or overt referentiality, neither are these purely 'formal' objects, bound to a formally reductive system, but rather propose a latency, a possibility. As Racine suggests, "Townsend does not use these forms in a literal manner but rather, for their evocative power - as spaces, let us say, for the conversion of objective experience into subjective experience"(53).

These speculative explorations of modalities of proposing the affective and sensual aspects of existence without direct reference to the physical body are extended in *Pochettes* (1994) and *Vessels* (1995).

Pochettes (Fig. 18) consists of three small cylindrical bags of deep red velvet, which drape and fall open to reveal inside a cluster of small round stones. *Vessels* is a site specific installation composed of three elements. The centrepiece is an aggregate of many dozens of vessels of various sizes and textures, all of a rounded circumference. The theatrical light that falls upon these bowls creates a series of quarter and half-moons. This lunar reference is expanded in the audio component of the work in which several women's voices, heard

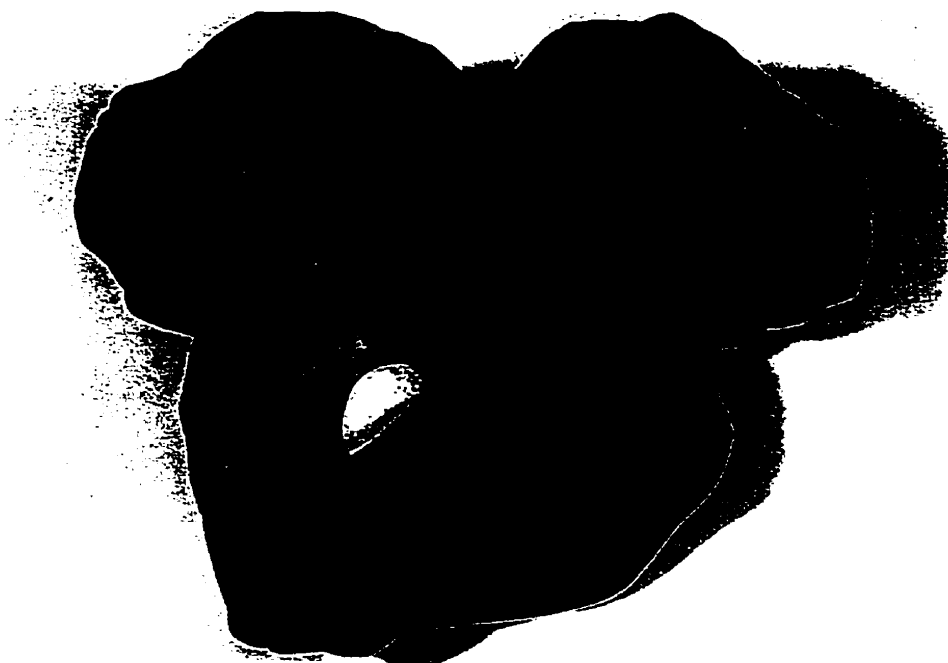


fig. 18
Martha Townsend
Pochettes

individually and in concert, recite the months of the year in their respective mother tongues. The reference to female fecundity in *Pochettes*, with its egg-like contents encased in a skin of soft cloth and revealed through its orifice, is clear. *Vessels* alludes to the lunar cycle but in its use of multiple vessels as the visual foundation of the work, it is their surface rather than interior that is emphasized.

These works return to questions of the representation of female sensuality originally developed in the early 1970s, work often characterized by a metaphorical symbolization of female morphology in 'central core' iconography and biomorphic forms. This approach was accused of reproducing a biologically derived definition of women: in short, of essentialism. Yet one of the effects of the refusal to bond women to biology has been the eliding, the virtual proscription on representing, any relation of body to being. In Townsend's move - itself perhaps a strategic mimicry of early feminism - the lessons that emerged from the work of the 1970s (that the body cannot be read outside of social or linguistic signs) are taken into account; Townsend's objects do not produce a body that is 'real' in any sense - for what 'body' do we see in these spheres, wedges, vessels and stones? The bodily

reference is cast in a visual material language and in cultural terms. Yet these rich, sensual 'bodies' grant the importance of the physical and psychic aspects of interiority to the imaginary and polymorphous nature of our apprehension of ourselves.

Through a poetics grounded in abstraction, Townsend bypasses both "symbolism" and the merely descriptive to arrive at a mode of aesthetic rendering in which no hard and fast line between the psychological (the enigmatic interiorities) and the physical (the rich surfaces) is possible, refiguring the 'body' of/in art as the intrication of each. It is a language that speaks of/to the body, a mode of figuration that, bearing no recognizable figure, utilizes morphologically-laden abstract shapes (the phallus/wedge, the hole/circle) to create a sexually-evocative language that is non-phallic, indeterminate, open to new pleasures: one that might be said to occupy, and produce, the space of the 'interval', a 'between' of unities.

Part B:

1. Clothing is a remarkably versatile and exact instrument of cultural expression. Formalized through dress codes that may extend as far as legislative decree, or that may be radically overturned by the more mobile decrees of fashion or through subcultural challenges to a culture's given mores, clothing constitutes a part of the social fabric at both its most general and most personal levels.

Dress is at once a social form and a surrogate for the body, an interface between the body and the public domain of code and symbol. In Nina Felshin's concise summation, it is "a dense coded system of signification that transmits psychological, sexual and cultural messages" (20). It is the tissue encompassing, yet differentiating, the self and the social, private and public. Yet if dress is a social form, as a surrogate for the body it also partakes of the body's relation to psyche and desire. Kaja Silverman has emphatically underscored the relation of dress and self: "I would feel impelled to stress as strongly as possible that clothing is a necessary condition of subjectivity - that in articulating the body it simultaneously articulates the psyche" (147).

In her monumental study, Seeing Through Clothes,

Anne Hollander has drawn attention to how the long tradition of figuration in Western art has itself shaped the visual codes through which we apprehend the body, whether dressed or undressed. Our visual self-awareness - as well as our shifting models of the look 'natural' to any period - is itself purchased through these representational codes. Hollander distinguishes the Western culture of clothing from the 'abstract' clothing of ethnic dress, folk costume and so forth, forms which reduce the wearer to an interchangeable, often depersonalized, "symbol-bearing abstraction"(xiv). In Western culture, with its long history of figurative art, the function of clothing is "to contribute to the making of a self-conscious individual image, an image linked to all other imaginative and idealized visualizations of the human body"(xiv).

Whereas Hollander's account of the centuries-long dialogue between the domains of art, fashion and clothing foregrounds the *depiction* of clothing in art, the avant-garde of the early 20th century turned to clothing as medium. If current art practices more typically depict clothing emptied of, yet standing in for, the body, or in performance works wherein clothing is altogether in excess of function, earlier art practices engaged with questions of clothing *per se* were

no less concerned with the radical potential of dress as cultural sign, and as emancipatory vessel. These include such instances as the pre-Raphaelite revamping of medieval clothing as artists' dress; the radical body politics of Italian Futurism, incorporating streetwear of riotous design and colour, manifestos on clothing, Balla's "anti-neutral suit", costumes that mechanized movement, etc.; the Russian Suprematist and Constructivist art-into-life designs for a revolutionary social subject (Rodtchenko, Tatlin, Stepanova, Lamanova and others); the Simultaneous clothing of Sonia Delaunay; the Surrealist alliances in the designs of Schiaparelli (memorably her *Shoe Hat*, inspired by a Dali design). These adventures in clothing also extended to new visions of social subjectivity manifest in costuming for performance and avant-garde anti-naturalist theatre in such movements as Futurism, Constructivism, the Bauhaus (famously Oskar Schlemmer's concoctions for dance and theatre), Dada cabaret, etc. These remodellings of dress and costume constituted a means of rethinking subjectivity in modernity. It is this awareness of the imbrication of body, clothing, subjectivity and sociality that the post-modern 'address' of clothing shares with these precedent projects.

The second wave of the feminist movement inaugurated the more contemporary trend of divorcing clothing's status as function (dress) from its status as sign - a sign which nonetheless drew upon the connotative dimensions of clothing. Though often worn as costume on the body in performance, film, video and other practices, clothing in women's art of this period also figured in usages abstracted from the body. Women artists found in dress and related signifiers of the personal/domestic a pertinent means of signifying and critiquing the constructs of gender identities. The medium held the further allure of its association with 'feminine' craft and domestic traditions which many women artists sought to valorize in new terms. This early feminist work was instrumental in undoing any notion of the 'universal' subject (*qua* man) through its foregrounding of sexual difference and of the imprint of the social upon gendered experience and possibility.

While contemporary artists have, following antecedent artistic practices, taken notice of the potential of clothing as a means of figuring aspects of subjectivity, their utilization of dress has been more closely aligned with the radical rethinking of the status of the subject associated with poststructuralist theory in its challenge to notions of fixed, innate or

'essential' identity, whether biologically or culturally given. Often divorced from the body as bearer, and in excess of any function as dress, these garments serve to critically foreground fantasy, memory, gender, sexuality and history through the indirect depiction of embodied being.

Clothing is not a stable symbol but a circulating sign, as Hollander's account, spanning from antiquity to the 20th century, proposes. It is this property that enables not only the cyclical overturnings of fashion, but also sponsors the potential for subversive play with the clothing signifier. Clothing, never natural, inescapably cultural, partakes of preexistent sets of meanings and conventions. As a social form, its 'readability', whether as fashion or critique, is dependent upon certain forms of social consensus which construct that reading. In this sense, feminism itself provides a viable social ground upon which alternative readings can be elaborated. The mobility of signification, its potential for recoding from within these social processes, has important implications for the destabilization of dominant codes of gender and other social markers which, though embedded in relations of power, have no guarantee.

Streetwear in contemporary culture has itself been

an important vehicle for precisely such operations, and the field of cultural studies has taken particular notice of semiotic battles against dominant culture played out in subcultures through the sign of clothing. The zoot suit, punk wear, the gay 'clone' look, gender crossdressing and so forth put into play alternative sign systems concerning being and appearance. In their discussion of women in punk, for example, Caroline Evans and Minna Thornton have described how, despite the patriarchal structure of punk subculture, punk women were able to claim their own critical space through the use of oppositional dress. As a street style, their clothes borrowed from the cliches of prostitute street wear and from the private closet of the fetishist. Punk wear separated these signifiers from their signifieds, redirecting and diverting meaning. As the authors note, "when punk women appropriated the bad girl look, the separation of the look from its signified, sexual availability, constituted a form of deviance in itself. This was a refusal to submit to the pressure on women to be what they appeared" (19). As a street style, women's punk mangled sexual codes, confounded given meanings, valorized 'bad taste', advocated an unpretty look of menace and threat and generally "pinpointed the masquerade of femininity, the unholy alliance of

femininity, naturalness, good taste and good behaviour" (18).

Yet streetwear is necessarily constrained as a vehicle for the symbolic recoding of meaning by its function as dress (and with that, as with punk, its potential for commercial recuperation). By contrast, art and the field of visual representation can, through the framing devices particular to each medium, isolate clothing to produce effects that emphasize 'meaning' over 'being'. This reframing is most apparent in the visual arts where clothing - unlike in streetwear, performance, theatre, film - may be altogether divorced from the body as bearer. The disembodied garment retains its connotative dimensions, linked to gendered and encultured bodies, yet without the literalness, or voyeuristic entrapments, of the figured body. In this way, it functions not as dress or costume *per se* but as a culturally coded sign, assimilable to other symbolic operations.

As Scott's and Townsend's works draw upon the connotative and semiotic values of particular fabrics, so artists' engagement with clothing as signifier calls not only upon the connotative value of dress but also the mobility of its signification, its potential for recoding from within these social processes to

destabilize the dominant codes through which identity finds its possible image.

**

Anne Ramsden's storefront installation, *Dress!* (1991) accentuates the channeling of desire through the lures of commodity culture through her deployment of dress as a kind of fetish object of displaced desire.

The site-specific work was installed in 20" deep display cases built into two windows on either side of the entrance to the Contemporary Art Gallery in Vancouver, evoking the look of a commercial storefront display of fashion clothing - a reference pertinent to the installation's location across the street from a community college with a fashion design program. As an installation for the exhibition Public Domain, it also referenced the processes of urban renewal and gentrification transforming the neighborhood, with their corrolary influx of office workers, and consumers.

In one window, draped in half over a gold-painted display rod, hung a set of 'impossible' accessories: a pair of black nylon stockings, sewn together at the tops; a double-ended tie of a vividly coloured design; a belt with buckle holes at both ends and a pair of floral patterned evening gloves sewn together to compose one continuous arm (Fig 20). Laminated to the wall behind



fig. 19
Anne Ramsden
Dress! (detail)

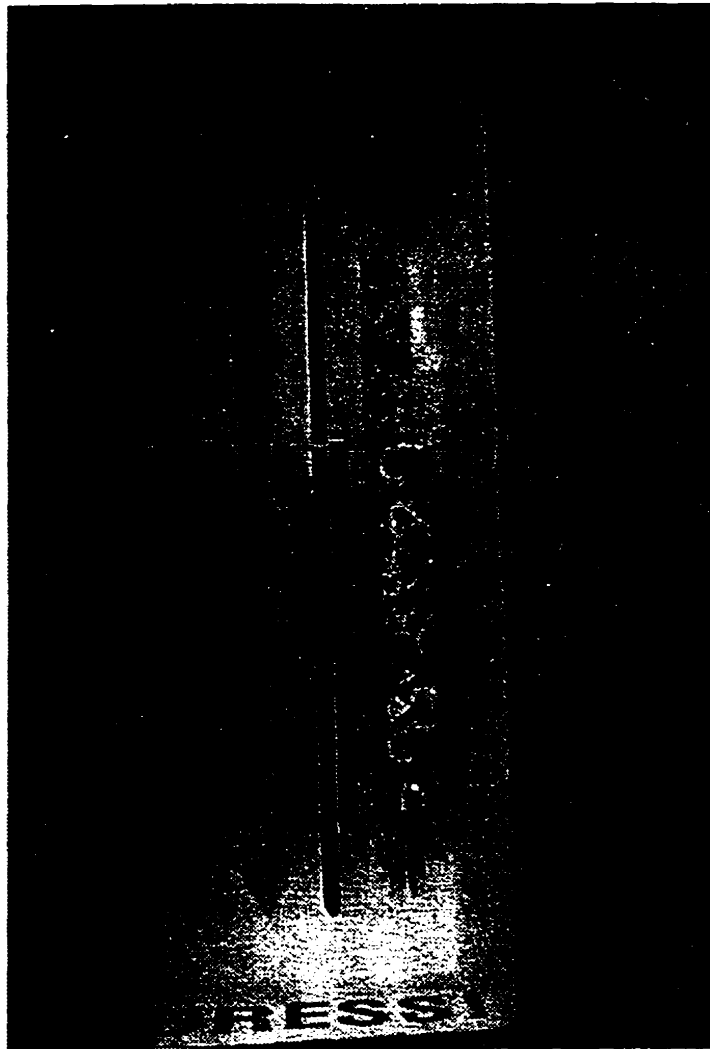


fig. 20
Anne Ramsden
Dress! (detail)

these objects, at one:one scale, stood a black-and-white photographic backdrop depicting these items at their unfolded length. In the other window was the privileged object/spectacle of allure: a form-fitting evening gown of emerald green satin, hung from the shoulders on a gold-painted rod, the base of the dress a cascading pool of fabric (Fig. 19). Yet the object was deceptive: while appearing of a classic design, the dress is of a narrowness defying any bodily fit and a length exaggerated beyond any possibility of wear. Like the accessories, it has no 'use' value: it is purely an object of desire - whether for the art viewer or the shopper, whose gaze is compounded.

The dress in its gleaming autonomous presence suggests a fetish object in the sense of an object of irrational, excessive desire. In Freudian theory, the fetish has little relation to female subjecthood, in that fetishism is viewed as a distinctly masculine perversion by dint of its relation to castration anxiety. Sexual fetishism represents a compromise psychic formation through which maternal castration is at once recognized and disavowed via the fetish, which stands in for the missing maternal phallus. From the perspective of numerous texts, of which Laura Mulvey's classic "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema" has been

particularly influential, the dress as costume for woman-as-spectacle would be seen to play its part in the fetishistic displacement of male castration anxiety; spectacle is constructed as transparent femininity, thus making femininity available to structures of voyeuristic and fetishizing looking. Yet the aspect of dress foregrounded by Ramsden is one that considers the dress as signifier of female pleasure rather than as (only) the passive lure for the male gaze or as advertising's fetishization of the female body. In the absence of a body 'behind' the dress - in making the dress itself, rather than a body, the object - Ramsden converts the fetish-spectacle object from its disposition in masculine terms to one proffered toward female narcissistic and spectatorial pleasure. Its fetishistic character invokes the chain of metonymic displacements that constitute the fetish; these displacements disorder, through their very prolificacy (in that almost anything can be a fetish object), its connotations as substitutive phallus (Freud) or money (Marx) - thus inviting the objects' consideration as a fetish/metonym of female sexuality. The morphology of the dress, while evoking the feminine form, is not of a shape to fit a body anatomically conceived. It is the phantasmatic body that 'supports' the dress - or vice versa, the dress

supports, enables, the figuring of another relation to the body, one in which the fantasmatic dimensions of sexual difference can be recuperated for an articulation centered on women.

The object also forms part of what Emily Apter terms "the contemporary hypersensitivity to the sexuality of *things*. Objects are revealed as provocations to desire and possession"(2, my emphasis). In this sense the psychoanalytic notion of the fetish (as displaced sexuality) conjoins with the Marxian sense of the commodity fetish as a reified object. Yet as well as an insistence on its *thing*-ness, Ramsden also plays upon the status of the dress as a sign. In the post-Marxist elaboration of the commodity fetish - Roland Barthes' semiology of images, Jean Baudrillard's 'simulated' objects of a 'hyperreal' social order, etc. - the 'image' value of the fetish is seen to supercede altogether its objecthood in its circulation as sign. In William Pietz' summation: "it is no longer the material use of products that is the object of our consumption so much as their commodified meaning - the content of their form, their exchange value - now revealed as autonomous forces in packaging and advertising"(124). The *thing*, together with its value as an image (of glamour, of pleasure, of sexual allure) are each put into play.

The aspect of allure and visual pleasure in *Dress!*, however, is thwarted by the objects' quality of being withheld. As an object of clothing impossible to wear, the dress - and its companion pieces - may be seen to signify desire itself, desire that by definition is never fully attainable. In this sense, it is not only that the object of desire passes through the commercial commodity form, but that desire itself is the product on offer. It is a product ever-renewable in that its promised satisfactions can never finally be purchased yet can ever be proposed in an endless stream of seductive image-products.

As a lure for the spectator/consumer, the gown is of an ambiguous register. It is an imaginatively potent source of feminine identificatory and spectatorial pleasure, even as it is also an elision of other possibilities - beyond spectacle and consumerism - for imagining the objects, motives and activities of female desire. Laura Mulvey has suggested that the representation of desire requires an image (1986:7), and Ramsden's deliciously yet perversely exaggerated *Dress!*, in drawing upon the fashionable, glamorous aspects of feminine wear, accentuates an imaginative relation to self-adornment along the axis of sexuality and pleasure. (Indeed, I am here reminded of a billboard prominent

throughout Paris three years ago, the image that of a happy bride-to-be swirling the voluminous white satin and lace skirt of a wedding gown. The text as remembered, in translation: "At last I've found the man to go with the perfect dress!")

Nor is the body, removed from the scene of the work, entirely absent: "Fashion", the philosopher Karen Hanson reminds us, "calls attention to illusions grounded on *embodiment*. The last thing it would let the soul forget is its connection to the body...attention to dress is inseparable from attention to the body" (234, my emphasis). The physical body removed from the spectacle of voyeuristic looking is returned as the *imaginative* correlate of the spectator's identificatory apprehension. If the body ego is a complex amalgam of fantasy, corporeality and signification, a psychic 'mapping' of the (encultured) body through clothing enables the articulation of a *jouissance* not organized around the sign of castration and the concomittant resurgence of a pre-Oedipal matrix, but an axis of feminine pleasure in the symbolic not centered on the phallus. (This may remind us that the female body is not lived as 'lack'.)

In a similar vein, Cathy Daley's *Untitled* drawings (1994-6) present a morphology of dress inspired by the

iconographies of female glamour found in high-fashion magazines and in the studios of a vintage Hollywood. Daley's depictions of an extensive series of gowns and skirts proceed in an extravaganza of designs, an energetic proliferation of models of elegance and flair.

These robes, most lifesize, are drawn with sweeping, confident movements of black oil pastel on translucent white vellum. The series includes full-length gowns impossibly long and slender, with looping pin thin straps; voluminous skirts that supersede the bodice almost entirely; crinolined gowns and form-fitting sheaths with ruffles or spanish flares or ostrich feathers; circle skirts opened in twirling motion, the exposed legs in animated movement; an array of shoulder-baring bodices over skirts of every kind (Figs. 21-26). The dresses charge the empty white field with all the charisma of icons, while the vivid strokes of Daley's lines also lend them a sense of movement and verve.

These are images made to the measure of desire, like *Dress!*, idealized and unattainable objects. The shapely figures are a quotation of the female body reconstrued to a more fanciful proportion. No bodies inhabit these gowns, and no bodies could: they are fantasy's transcendence of the corporeal. Yet this mode

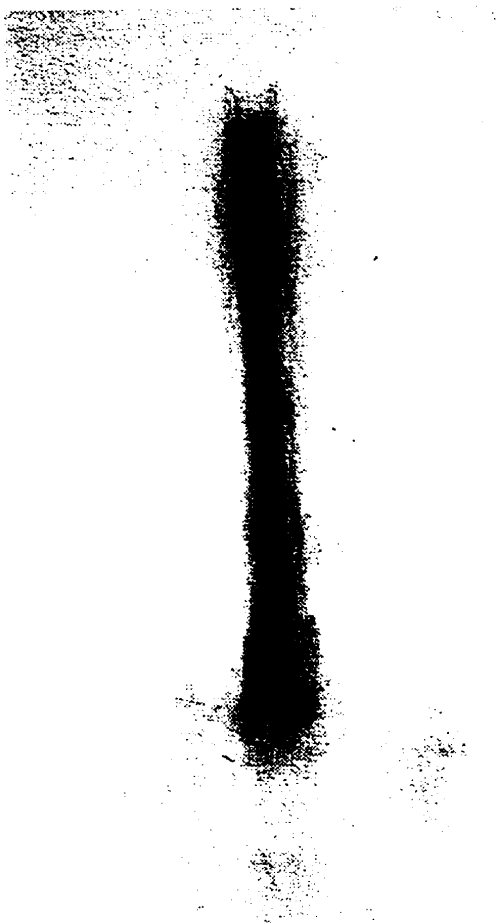


fig. 21
Cathy Daley
Untitled



fig. 22
Cathy Daley
Untitled

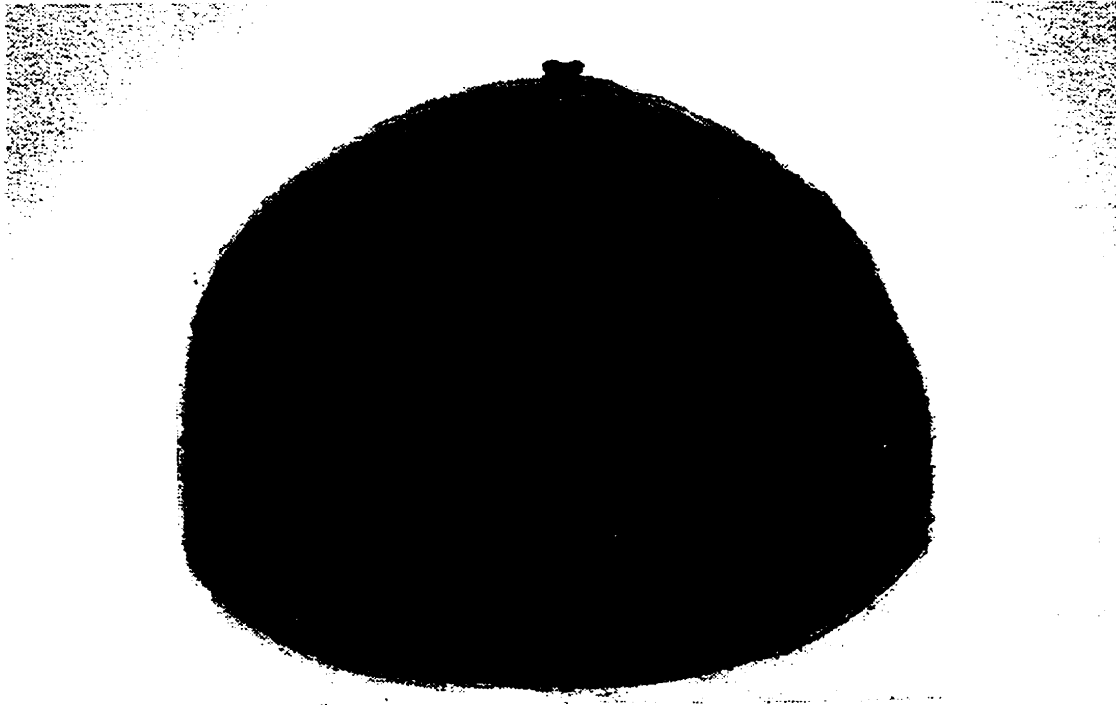


fig. 23
Cathy Daley
Untitled

of transcendence is not a bracketing of the body by the imperial mind; rather, it is an overcoming of anatomical literalness to reimagine the body in terms of affect, image, gesture, as occupying a host of movements and shapes that are materially externalized through the expressive garments.

But as fantasmatic objects, these robes are also rooted in representation and its mediations of the body. Like *Dress!*, they derive from inherited stereotypes of glamour, residual traces of former ideals, contemporary 'classics' of the feminine. If Daley's drawings proffer a semiotics of feminine glamour divorced from any day to day of women's existence, her use of sources whose representations of femininity are a forceful presence in the cultural imaginary highlights how such representations shape the contours of identity. At the same time, the very changeability and multiplicity of the forms, like the endless overturnings of fashion, figures the self as an unfixed entity. As Alison Ferris observes, "clothing's role...is to display a unified 'identity' while in reality holding together an always fragmented 'self'", but marks, traces and unfixities in the visual field of the drawings work against such stabilizing effects, thwarting an idealized identification and compromising the seduction effects of



fig. 24
Cathy Daley
Untitled



fig. 25
Cathy Daley
Untitled

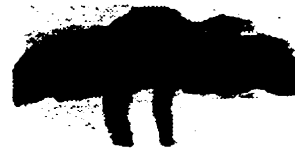


fig. 26
Cathy Daley
Untitled

the garments.

The datedness of the dress styles, with its trace of nostalgia, situates the images in the field of memory, yet memory imprinted by a social iconography that is itself annexed by fantasy. In drawing (literally) this mental impress of the past into the present, Daley raises entirely contemporary issues concerning the female body as spectacle and object of voyeurism, the merchandising of the female body and the inextricable links between identity and image. (In this respect, for example, the phantasmatic 'skinny' dresses - a narrow vertical column with a cleavage indentation and almost ephemeral shoulder straps - call forth a potent association to the body-ideal of the anorexic.)

The work, like that of Ramsden, addresses, through its vexed ambiguities, the challenge for women of securing a language of female desire and sexuality from within the vocabulary of culture. Mulvey has argued "the common need to redefine women's relation to their image, beyond the question of male appropriation of their image for masculine pleasure, to discover a feminine desire and understand female sexuality" (1986:7). The question of redefining women's relation to their image passes in this work, via the emblem of clothing, through the vectors of lived experience and fantasy to foreground

how the former is shot through with the complexities and ambiguities of the latter, while fantasy is in turn shaped by, and shapes, the modes of discourse of a culture. Yet an ambivalence in these depictions sets in place an uncertain tension between the appeal of these gowns and a resistance to their allure, highlighting the difficult negotiations of the compound of pleasure and danger that beset a reclamation of the iconography of the feminine.

This resistance is marked by several elements in the work that conspire to undo the ego-ideal of the perfect dress. Most immediately apparent is the very excess of the rendering of the garments, an exaggeration which highlights their illusory quality. This departure from the stable ideal, the already-available cultural image, is furthered through the lack of definition or coherence in the contours of the garments and their attenuated and otherwise distorted morphologies.

But the most notable interference occurs in the margins of the work. The translucent white ground, far from a neutral margin of vellum to set off the garments, is marked with smudges and carryover strokes of oil pastel, besmirching the surface field. The reminder of a 'real' body, incorporated through the residual traces of its gestures, movements and exertions, counterpoints the

fantasy body of the absent dress. These semiotic traces, without any real shape or form of their own, form a body signature, embedded in the tissue: a limit-point of transcendence, a defile of the purity of the image, an corporeal infiltration of the unity of the subject.

These markings rejoin another element of the work, a note of melancholy, that is figured through the somber (black) colour, the residue traces of the body, the body-empty dresses. There is another side to the corporeality that fashion covers over: the mortality that is its end. As Hanson observes of the philosopher's fear of the body that fashion identifies: "...as our clothing is testimony to our embodiment, it can whisper of the actual material death that, as humans, we may rather seek, in vain, to avoid. The uncanny quality of empty clothes may quietly speak of the intensity of the fact of our embodiment and thus at once murmur the truth of our real mortality" (235).

The ambivalence with respect to the iconography of feminine dress - the pleasure and refusal so interimplicated in the work and its feminine imagery - finds an echo within feminist thought, between its forceful critique of the fashion industry on the one hand, and, on the other, the recognition of fashion as an object of pleasure, an embodiment of fantasy and a

vehicle of play. Elizabeth Wilson has proposed that feminism is riven by an unresolved tension between two mutually inconsistent cultural models, the 'authentic' and the 'modernist', each of which finds expression in the issue of fashion and clothing. The model of the 'authentic' is bound up in ideas of the natural and committed to the expression of identity and the 'true' self: it is condemnatory of consumerism, the artifice of fashion and the oppressiveness of beauty culture. As exemplars of the 'authentic' model, Wilson cites the dress reform movement of the nineteenth century and the modern-day hippie. Conversely, the 'modernist' cultural model privileges dissimulation, fluidity of codes and subversive play with the signifier. Thus the nineteenth-century dandy and contemporary punk are prototypically 'modernist'. Indeed, by extension, the 'modernist' position would challenge the idea that there is such a thing as a 'natural' form of clothing - or indeed any cultural manifestation - against which to measure 'artifice'.

Wilson comes down on the side of the modernist paradigm which, unlike what she terms the "cult of the authentic" (246) allows for the ambivalence of fantasy and the "contradictory and irreconcilable desires" (246) that are part and parcel of subjectivity. Fashion,

Wilson points out, is a vehicle for fantasy, which expresses the "unconscious unfulfillable" (246); hence ambivalence is indeed an appropriate response to the desires that fashion - rooted in the body, ensconced in fantasy - advances.

Hanson has similarly argued against a feminist strategy that would rejoin philosophy in its repression of the body and its devalorization of the sites, such as fashion, invested as feminine. The threat to women's identity posed by the objectification of women's bodies cannot be adequately met through a comparable renunciation of corporeality and the realm of the feminine. "A tradition that displays this sort of embarrassment about carnality, a repressive tradition, may not be the most agreeable companion on the quest to reassert and reevaluate women's lives and feminine experience" (235).

Both writers, while arguing for the import and value of the fashion signifier as an unfixed site of feminine pleasure and a material delegate of corporeality, also insist upon a necessary ambiguity that is its companion. This ambivalence finds expression in the compromised lure of the objects produced by both Ramsden and Daley, the dresses a spectacular 'sight' of both pleasure and anxiety. "The daring of fashion",

Wilson reminds us, "speaks dread as well as desire; the shell of chic, the aura of glamour, always hide a wound" (246).

The works by Ramsden and Daley break, through the body surrogacy of clothing, with the iconoclastic repression of the body of the deconstructive model of art practice. But neither do the artists propose a feminine 'identity': indeed the vacated dresses forestall any naturalization of identity, foregrounding its cultural supports, its temporality, and the current of desire beneath it. The artists utilize the iconography of feminine clothing to refer at once to embodiment and enculturation, as these are each interimplicated and shot through with fantasy. If the mediation of the garments underscores their relation to a broader field of representations, the gestural presentation within the works underscores that the referent is the imaginary rather than the biological body. If the imaginary as Lacan describes is itself a theatre of illusions, it is the site in which are secured the psychic and libidinal body images that are the basis of sexual identities. Working *through* the cultural imaginary of the female body, the artists utilize the surrogate of clothing to re-compose the image of the female body in terms that give primacy to

the complex predicament of the 'unrepresentable' of feminine desire and to the bodily roots of subjectivity over the phallogentric coding of the female body as envelope/phallic absence.

If clothing has continued to form a crucial part of the construction of the feminine within a patriarchal order of meaning, these works propose that clothing, ever a sign, also offers women a vocabulary by which to subvert and transform these meanings. These works extend the use of dress as a vehicle of cultural critique into a psychoanalytic dimension incorporating unconscious dimensions of anxiety, identification and desire. If the artists insist on an acknowledgement of the body and a valorization of women's stake of pleasure in the 'feminine', their appropriation of these signs to create a language of desire through a disruption within, and recoding of, existing terms, is necessarily ambiguous: there can be no 'pure' language of sexual difference uncontaminated by the legacy of history, its representations and their meanings, nor even a unified identity. But in utilizing iconographic forms already culturally, sexually and fantasmatically invested, and transforming the operations through a poetics of dissonance and morphological exaggeration, they at once decode these culturally available iconographies and

release, or retrieve, their vitalities for other potentials of desire, pleasure, and critique.

REFERENCES

- Apter, Emily and William Pietz, eds., Fetishism as Cultural Discourse, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993)
- Apter, Emily, "Introduction", in Apter and Pietz, eds, (1993)
- Barthes, Roland, The Responsibility of Form, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1985), pp. 149-152, cited in Laing, (1990)
- Betterton, Rosemary, An Intimate Distance, Women, Artists and the Body, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)
- Bradley, Jessica, "Mary Scott", (*Parachute* 72, October-December 1993), pp.58-59
- Evans, Caroline and Minna Thornton, Women and Fashion: A New Look, (New York and London: Quartet Books, 1989)
- Felshin, Nina, "Clothing as Subject", (*Art Bulletin*, vol. 54, no. 1, spring 1995)
- Ferris, Alison, "Discursive Dress", in Discursive Dress, (catalogue), (Sheboygen: John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 1994), pp.1-17
- Gallop, Jane, Reading Lacan, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)
- , "The body politic", in Thinking Through The Body, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)
- Gatens, Moira, Imaginary Bodies, Ethics, Power and Corporeality, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)
- Gogarty, Amy, "The Embodied Viewer" *Parachute* 63, July-September 1991), pp. 43-44
- Hanson, Karen, "Dressing down dressing up", in Hilde Hein and Carolyn Korsmeyer, eds., Aesthetics in Feminist Perspective, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), pp. 229-243
- Hatt, Gordon, "Modern Romance: Carlo Cesta's 'Romance Language'", (*C* magazine, #51, October-December 1996)

Hollander, Anne, Seeing Through Clothes, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993)

Irigaray, Luce, This Sex Which Is Not One, trans. Catherine Porter, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Kirby, Vicki, "Corporeal Habits: Addressing Essentialism Differently", (*Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 3, Fall 1991), pp. 4-22

Knauft, Bruce M. "Bodily Images in Melanesia: Cultural Substances and Natural Metaphors", in Michel Feher, ed., Fragments for a History of the Human Body, Part Three, (New York: Zone, 1989), pp. 192-280

Kristeva, Julia, Revolution in Poetic Language, trans. Margaret Waller, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984)

Lacan, Jacques, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Norton, 1978)

Laing, Carol, "How Can We Speak To Painting?", (*C Magazine*, no. 25, 1990)

Laplanche, Jean, New Foundations for Psychoanalysis, transl. David Macey, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989)

Lemecka, Vera, The Embodied Viewer, (catalogue), (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1991)

Louder, Barbara, In You More Than You (exhibition brochure), (Halifax: Mt. St. Vincent University Gallery, 1991)

Mulvey, Laura, "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema", (*Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1975)

-----, "Impending time", Mary Kelly, Interim, (catalogue), Edinburgh: The Fruitmarket Gallery, Cambridge: Kettle's Yard and London: Riverside Studios, 1986)

Pietz, William, "Fetishism and Materialism", in Apter and Pietz, eds., (1993)

Racine, Yoland, "Entre le silence et l'écoute", Martha Townsend (catalogue), (Joliette: Musée d'art de Joliette,

1995)

Randolph, Jeanne, "Quotations, imagos, back again: an interview with Mary Scott, (C magazine 24, winter 1990), pp. 34-39

Rose, Jacqueline, "Sexuality in the field of vision", in Sexuality in the Field of Vision, (London, N.Y.:Verso, 1986) pp. 225-235

Schilder, Paul, The Image and Appearance of the Human Body, (Newark: International University Press, 1978)

Silverman, Kaja, "Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse", in Tania Modleski, ed., Studies in Entertainment, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986)

Suleiman, Susan Rubin, "(Re)Writing the body: the politics and poetics of female eroticism", in S.R. Suleiman, ed., The Female Body in Western Culture, (Cambridge, London: Harvard University Press, 1985)

Tenhaaf, Nell, "Mary Scott: In me more than me", Mary Scott, (Edmonton: The Edmonton Art Gallery, 1993)

Wilson, Elizabeth, Adorned in Dreams, Fashion and Modernity, (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985)

CHAPTER FOUR

SPATIALITIES

The 'spatial turn' within postmodern thought arrives from many directions at once, its many theorizations jostling one another in a textual surface akin to Carol Laing's description of space: "Where things that are next to each other are not necessarily connected, or the same" (10). Foucault has nominated the present day as the epoch of space, observing that "the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space, no doubt a great deal more than with time" (1986:23). He designates space as a "relation between sites", and proposes the analytic category of "heterotopias" as countersites within sociality, as *enacted spaces* (distinct from the no-place of utopias) that effectively "suspect, neutralize or invert" those sets of relations they reference (24). Fredric Jameson finds a foreboding historical amnesia in the domination of time (hence history) by a fragmented logic of spaciality under capitalism; the potential for an oppositional political culture requires a cognitive mapping - a delineating of and positioning within - the "saturated spaces" of postmodernity and the "global space of multinational capital" (54). Paul Gilroy offers the articulation of

diasporic space as an imagined site of negotiation and mediation of identities at once inside and outside the West, "a spatiality that draws on connections across oceans and continents and yet unifies the Black experience inside a shared territory" (Keith and Pile:18). In a similar vein, Homi Bhabba proposes the conception of a 'third space' as a space of hybridity, "articulating minority constituencies across disjunctive, differential social positions" (220). Whereas Michel de Certeau draws upon metaphors of walking, pathways, etc. to describe the "practices of everyday life" as ever spatial-symbolic practices (1984), Jean Baudrillard's pedestrian strolls in the synthetic landscapes of the hyper-real - while the playground of emerging technologies offers its own postmodern joyrides through the spaces of virtuality. And so forth.....

The feminist geographer Doreen Massey points out, however, that the many emergent models that map postmodernity through conceptions of its spatialities (be these material or metaphorical), are not of equal usefulness as a ground for thinking through the politics of cultural intervention. "Some definitions of space", she writes, "deprive it of politics or of the possibility of politics; they effectively depoliticize the realm of the spatial" (1993:142). In particular,

Massey argues against the conception of the spatial and temporal as discrete and mutually exclusive categories, arguing instead for an understanding of the spatial as constituted by "the interlocking of 'stretched-out' social relations" (1994:2), and always as an interweaving of space-time. Massey nominates models which consider a 'politics of location', and draw upon notions of periphery, margin, etc., as those which conceptualize spaciality in politically enabling terms.

I would like to underscore two interrelated impulses in the feminist engagement with the concept and the lived dimensions of space, each of which has implications for how we conceptualize the embodiment of the subject, and perhaps the larger, co-implicated question of social relations, or the ethics of living. The first, as described in my Introduction, partakes of the challenge to the dualisms of western metaphysics by which space and time are at once binarized and hierarchized, with accompanying gendered coordinates. The second tendency that follows from the first has been one of the enlivening of the concept of space from its definition as stasis, and from its radical distinction from the temporal, and the active theoretical occupation - the opening up and politicizing - of this activated tempo-spaciality.

If women's position in masculinist discourse is one of marginality (or more drastically, in psycho-linguistic terms, of exile, lack, non-Being), this space of marginality has itself been claimed as a site of productive potential for theorizing the female subject and for conceptualizing the manifold dimensions and politics of her situatedness. I cite here a few instances of models which conceive of the subject of feminism as implicated in, but not subordinated to, dominant representational or existential spaces, as occupying heterogenous, doubled, overlapping spaces, a complex ground incorporating sites of resistance and remaking.

--Teresa de Lauretis has described feminist production as putting into evidence an "elsewhere" of masculine discourse, "the blind spots, or the space-off of its representations"(25); that space not 'seen' - made unrepresentable - yet nonetheless implied within (necessary to the structuring of) that discourse. The subject of feminism is seen to move back and forth between two places: those sites in which she is culturally positioned, and another space of a (collective) re-making, "spaces in the margins of hegemonic discourses, social spaces carved in the interstices of institutions and in the chinks and cracks

of the power-knowledge apparatus"(25). These spaces are concurrent yet contradictory, hence neither dialectical nor integrative nor combinatory but rather multiple and heterogeneous. Feminism inhabits the tension of a "two-fold pull in contrary directions"(26): the negativity of its theoretical enterprise as the critical analysis of patriarchal orderings, and the affirmative positivity of its political agency.

--In a similar vein, Irigaray describes herself as occupying the "borders" of phallographic discourse ("for one cannot simply leap outside that discourse") and moving "continuously from the inside to the outside"(1985:135).

--these 'gaps' within representational spaces described by Irigaray and de Lauretis as a: occupiable locus for feminism from which to operate a destabilizing countersite are extended more directly into the realm of the political space of diverse marginalized communities by bell hooks in her conception of the margin as "space of radical openness"(1990). To be in the margins is, as hooks describes, to be part of the whole but outside the main body - as in the visual appearance of a written text, where the margin is the border that demarcates it, is structurally integral to it, yet the off-space of it - the blank, and the edge. Hooks distinguishes between

two different manifestations of the margin: one the imposed site of relations of domination and deprivation, of marginalization, the other a chosen counter-site, a space of resistance, of radical openness and possibility, a site for re-vision, reclamation and creation. The latter is "a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist" (150). Hooks describes this margin of openness as a "profound edge" (149). This edge might be envisaged as abutting (insofar as the margin is what is 'kept out') but also pushing against, perforating and otherwise deforming or rendering porous those lines of constraint (the edge-space as resistance) while at the same time constituting the outer contours of a generative edge-space of creation and revision.

The feminist geographer Gillian Rose has coined the term "paradoxical space" (150) to describe the layered and contradictory spaces of feminism. These entail several dimensions, including feminism itself as a 'site' of multiplicities and contradictions, and its mapping together of inside/outside as a mutual and simultaneous spaciality. Rose describes the sense of space associated with the emergent subject of feminism as multidimensional, shifting and contingent, but also paradoxical in that "spaces that would be mutually

exclusive if charted on a two-dimensional map - center and margin, inside and outside - are occupied simultaneously" (140). These imply "radically heterogeneous geometries" that are "lived, experienced and felt" (140)) and also articulate arguments and occupy positions with respect to power, resistance and difference.

These conceptions of overlapping spaces, the space-off, the margin, paradoxical space open up a theoretical ground through which to think about bodies and spaces and the relations between these. Corollary to this discursive theory, the spatialities that art composes can create tempo-spatial orderings for the articulation of countersites of memory, desire, and the socio-ethical relations, incorporating alternative poetics that resist or remake the staging of discursive and social space. In this chapter, I bring to bear upon the 'spatial turn' of postmodernity a discussion of specific spatialities composed in feminist art practices, and the corollary question of the relations between the spaces and places of 'dwelling' as lived and imaginary sites, and the spaces of representation.

The spatial metaphor, with its tropes of mapping, location, position, relation, brought to bear upon a discussion of art practices, highlights their

locatedness in terms that may encompass geographic locale but is, in this framework, primarily concerned with the critical moves entailed in constituting enabling imaginary and discursive sites - sites within which the restaging of the parameters of the subject can have real effects on the social imaginary and on our structures of knowledge.

In this chapter, I focus upon specific elaborations of spatialities that occur in a number of works by Faye HeavyShield, by Rebecca Belmore and by the collaborators Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe. In my discussion of these works, I foreground the ways that these spatialities are articulated through enactments of embodiment and memory to produce poetics of space that re-image and reimagine the terms and potentialities of social relations. These sites might be seen as, to borrow a phrase, "the spaces that difference makes" (Hooper and Soja), spaces that counter the dereliction Irigaray describes by composing alternative symbolic/imaginary places of dwelling - or even of passing momentarily through. These spaces constitute an intervention into and a momentary release from the conventional ordering of social space and offer an external form for the viewer's own imaginative participation.

I begin by drawing upon the work of the feminist geographer Doreen Massey in her reconstructive analysis of the categories of space and time to enable my description of the transformative operations of these art works.

Space, Massey outlines, is characteristically conceptualized in opposition to time. Time is conceived of in terms of dynamism, process, change, movement, hence its alignment with history, progress, civilization. Space, by contrast, is conceived of as empty, as stasis, as backdrop, as a "flat, immobilized surface", in effect, as Massey puts it, "the realm of the dead" (1994:4). The political is seen to occur in the dimension of temporality, while the province of the spacial is passive, depoliticized, a mere setting for objects and their interaction.

This binarization and sundering of time and space forms part of the same process of dualistic thinking characteristic of the western philosophical tradition. In these binary operations, a positive term is set against, and in mutual exclusivity from, the other term of the dichotomized pair. Crucially, as Massey specifies, the opposing term is characterized not in its own positivity but by its lack of the attributes of the positive term, as its negative. Thus the dichotomizing

is not between 'A and B', but between 'A, not-A', one a presence and positivity, the other its absence or negative. This operation proceeds across a now familiar range of dualisms: mind/body, culture/nature, transcendence/immanence and the linchpin and overriding metaphor, man/woman.

It is precisely these modes of dualistic thinking that have been the object of the intensive deconstructivist operations arising within the intersections of poststructuralism and feminist thought. Such deconstructive practices disturb the stabilities of the naturalized 'positive' term of a dyad through a precise attention to that which cannot be assimilated to its logic yet is necessary to its function. Feminists have had a particular investment in analyzing and disinvesting the gendered coordinates of these dualistic operations, the stakes of which are, as Rosi Braidotti describes, the conceptualization of woman in terms "other than that of not-man" (91).

As Woman is defined in binary opposition to, and as an absence of, the defining attributes of Man as universal subject, so space is conceived as that which lacks the dimensions of time - its feminine/negative other. At issue, Massey specifies, is not an upgrading of the devalorized term of the binary pair, but of

undoing these formulations of irreconcilable dichotomies which impoverish both terms and which, in their fixities, mitigate against change. Space, Massey argues, must be recognized in its own positivity, and in its intertwinings with time: as relational rather than absolute, as space-time.

In her recasting of the fixities of time and space, Massey's thesis rejoins that of Luce Irigaray, who writes, in An Ethic of Sexual Difference: "The transition to a new age necessitates a new perception and a new conception of *time and space*, our *occupation of place*, and the *envelopes of identity*" (1993/84:7). As Massey underscores the implications in the gendering of space/time for the conception of social relations, so Irigaray argues the links between social/spatial organization, knowledge and sexuality in the un-housing, the dereliction, of women (Whitford:152).

The spatial, Massey argues, is not an autonomous dimension but is, rather, constituted through social relations and material social practices. As she puts it, "the spatial is social relations 'stretched out'" (1994:2). As social relations are themselves inherently dynamic, so the simultaneity that is the defining characteristic of the spatial is likewise dynamic. Moreover, she argues, since social relations

are thoroughly "imbued with power and meaning and symbolism", the spatial is itself "an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification" (1994:3). It is this aspect of Massey's thesis -- the interweaving of space, social relations and signification, that is, space as a lived dimensionality - that I draw upon in my discussion of the works that are the object of this chapter.

Massey's analysis also extends to conceptions of place. Distinct from the flow and simultaneity and emptiness that are the traditional views of space, 'place' is understood as bounded and filled. Places are specific delimited sites within a more open geography of space. But, she argues, place, as bounded space, is seen to assume similar attributes of stasis: place-as-identity, as fixity and stability, as authenticity, as "unproblematic in its identity" (1994:5). For Massey, if space is social relations writ large, 'place' is a particular instance, a given articulation, of those networks of social relations. Moreover these relations are not adequately conceived in terms of their internal histories or as timeless identities: they stretch beyond the specifics of their geographical locale. Trade, migration, travel, exchange already bespeak the non-unitariness of place, its internal multiplicities, its

necessary external dependencies.

I draw upon Massey's enlivening of the categories of space and place to suggest that, in the works I discuss in this chapter, both Belmore and HeavyShield take the site of the gallery as an artificially-constituted 'neutral' space - the white empty room that is a residual legacy of the imagined transcendences of high modernism - and make of it a dynamic space and indeed, through their constructions of bounded spatialities that evoke, and activate, "networks crisscrossing social relations and signification", a 'place'. Conversely, Fleming and Lapointe's reinhabitation of derelict public buildings that possess specific social histories operates an intervention that transforms each of these identified 'places' from a fixed, static identity into a dynamic place, and also into a kind of provisional unbounded 'space' of imagination and memory - dynamic and poetic spaces that 'unfix' the identity of these places and propose alternative social imaginaries.

If Massey's conceptualization of space as relational and constituted of social relations suggests a simultaneous multilayering of the spaces of the world, as she writes, "cross-cutting, intersecting, aligning with one another, or existing in relations of paradox or

antagonism"(3), Henri Lefebvre's emphasis upon space as lived practice (1991/74) foregrounds the symbolic dimensions, the social meanings, of particular spatializations.

Over and above being objects *in* space, artworks can also define or compose spatialities, crisscrossing and overlapping significance and signification within space-time. The artwork's properties of spaciality and materiality can enable the presentation - the embodiment, if you will - of the simultaneous layering of temporalities and spatialities in dynamic ways. Thus in Fleming and Lapointe's reoccupation of buildings, the specific histories of use of these buildings is complexly layered with other temporalities, other modes of occupation and alternative significations while both Belmore and HeavyShield evoke, within and through the spatialities they compose, a crisscrossing of temporal orders and of social sites.

Time is brought to bear within the spatialities of these artists' work not only through the lived time of the viewer's experience of them, but also through their evocation and activation of the axis of memory. Memory performs a collective function, as a social mechanism that secures the foundations upon which traditions and cultures and histories are made - and upon which the

events and meanings of that making are contested.

"Remembering", Homi Bhabba proposes, "is never a quiet act of introspection or retrospection. It is a painful re-membering, a putting together of the dismembered past to make sense of the trauma of the present". It is an analysis of the political function of memory shared by bell hooks, who draws a distinction between memory as nostalgia, what she qualifies as "a kind of useless act", and as a form of remembering "that serves to illuminate and transform the present" (147). Both writers remind us that remembrance is an active process in the struggle over meaning and cultural memory. Though seemingly born of the past, hence static and fixed, memory is, rather, mobile and labile. It is an activity, a process, which draws upon the past but whose impetus is ever in the present and directed toward the future. And with respect to its public forms, memory is ever subject to the pertinent question of 'whose' or 'which' memory: the question of power.

As the works of these artists create alternative renderings of spaces and places, and give material form to memory at a level at once personal and cultural, so too is the body re-membered, enlivened from its status as 'mute matter', or as a template for social inscription, to convey the sense of the import of agency

and affect within embodied social existence. The work might be seen as a "thinking through the body" along the vector of the spectatorial body: the body of the spectator as it is brought to a participation in the spaces/places the works compose, and as it is positioned dialogically in space and time with other bodies evoked within the works.

1. Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe

The abandonment, *déréliction*, that Irigaray speaks of as the ontological condition of women finds a register in an encompassing social sense in the work of Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe. This theme emerges in full distinction in the sites they select for their installations, derelict buildings the architecture of which reveals the traces of a public function now past.

The abandonment of a public building bespeaks the withdrawal of specific social investments. The buildings Fleming and Lapointe work within are not randomly chosen; they once formed an important part of the public life of the surrounding communities and represent particular orders of social experience. As the artists specify, "they are ideologically, socially, emotionally and economically charged architectures"¹. In utilizing these fixed sites as theatres of memory, the artists

reveal these architectures to be more than physical spaces: they are the exterior register of meaning structures of psychic and social complexity and nuance.

In entering into the dimly lit interiors, the spectator immediately transgresses the ordering of the architecture which had previously delimited the 'public' space of the building. Stepping across the threshold, the spectator enters into a theatre of signs and symbols, markers and tokens of social history. Through the artists' interventions, the buildings have undergone a metaphoric and critical renewal; a familiar landmark has undergone a material and conceptual transformation. Fusing social history, architectural dissection and local history with visual/cultural signs, iconographies and objects, the artists have grafted a counterpoint ordering upon the depths and surfaces of the buildings. If, as Rosalyn Deutsche suggests, "the built environment is a signifying system" (23), the artists' interventions at once reveal the social structures implicit in the architectural organization of their spatialities and propose new potentialities for the psychic experience of these spaces.

The artists introduce into the fixity of these architectures a disruption, a dis/location; their move destabilizes its 'place-as-identity' into a fluid and

contestatory space/place of multiple meanings, interpretations and possibilities. As Massey proposes, "it is precisely by introducing into the concept of space that element of dislocation/freedom/possibility that enables the politicization of space/space-time" (10). Like Massey, Fleming and Lapointe emphasize the multiple meanings of places, the fluidities that inhere in them, their contradictions and potentials; they further underscore the symbolic meanings of spaces and their modes of organization. As Fleming has described:

We work with the complex psychic fabric left as a kind of palimpsest or aura on the structure itself. The material we manipulate is in fact not so much the building per se as its psychic history, which is of course the thread that weaves buildings into and out of the living and magnetically contradictory social history that is mapped out onto the urban fabric" (44).

Of their several projects, I focus here on the first three, produced between 1983-1987 in their home community of Montreal - a city whose own economic marginalization has played a part in the availability of these abandoned sites for the conception and materialization of such projects.

The preoccupations and methods governing these site-specific works of re-habitation and reclamation were already well articulated in their first project, *Projet Building/Caserne #14*, which opened for seven days

in January 1983 in the former Firehall No. 14 in east-central Montreal (Fig. 27). No heat or electricity warmed or brightened the spaces, but in each of the eight rooms other sources of illumination - from flashlights to strobe lights to a camera obscura reflecting the street outside - made shadows play across the bodies of the spectators and of the ghosted figures evoked within the rooms. The exhibition centered on the 'private' life of the public building, and the processes of what Foucault has elsewhere called 'dividing practices' (1982): in this instance, divisions between public and private space not only in the points of physical access for the 'public' but also the hierarchical divisions within the allocation of the building's internal spatialities, which are revealed to be patterned upon military models of hierarchy and order, and in the further division of social roles, here foregrounding, in a similar military model, the practice by which designated professions are isolated from the society they are called upon to serve. As Tom Folland has described, "one's uses of space are mediated by a complex set of social relations that at their heart pertain to forms of identification" (11); Fleming and Lapointe identify the relations structured into these organized spaces, but open these out to the possibility



fig. 27
Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe
Project Building/Caserne #14



fig. 28
Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe
Le Musée des Sciences

and playground of other identifications and uses.

In their next project, *Le Musée des Sciences* (1984), the artists, together with colleague Monique Jean, took temporary repossession of an abandoned post office. Unlike the site specific enterprise of Firehall #14, here the neo-classical building was selected for its resemblance to Montreal's Musée des beaux-arts (Fig. 28). Behind its beaux-arts façade, the artists developed an imaginary museum, a feminist anti-museum which took as its object the historical conceptions and representations of women in the discourses of medicine, science and art; their alternative body politic foregrounded the relation between the fragmented bodies of women and totalizing 'body of knowledge. At issue was the legitimizing authority of the public institution - its systems of classification, its mode of discourse, its purported objectivity, its power.

La Donna Deliquenta opened in 1987 in a turn-of-the century vaudeville theatre in Montreal's working class quarter of St. Henri (Fig. 31). As Jennifer Fisher has described the building's former significance to the surrounding community, "even in a dilapidated state it is a majestic relic of a community's history, where for seventy-five years it was one of the few places people congregated outside of church" (59). The theatre, with

its curving balconies, intricate moldings and peeling trompe-l'oeil decorations, had been abandoned for two decades. The title of the work is also the title of a treatise on female criminality by Cesare Lombroso, whose work typifies late 19th-century attempts to codify psychological types through their physiological and genetically inherited characteristics. *La Donna Delinquenta* was a meditation on marginality and criminalization, on deviance as a social construct and on the spectacle as a mode of social ordering.

The artists' use of site and emblematic objects to evoke the past is, as Diana Nemiroff has written, "quite unlike the enumeration of artifacts that a museum would attempt....rather than a history of the objects which occupied the space, it posit(s) a history and poetics of that space" (61). But this poetics is not of the space as it was, but rather, like the layering of a palimpsest that leaves behind the original impressions, an overlay upon and through the architecturally organized disposition of the space to reveal, and/or remake, it anew. Thus in *Caserne #14*, for example, from the floor of the lieutenants' quarters upstairs, the hierarchical relations of power were evoked through flashlights between the open doorway and the washrooms of the men's dormitory, which pointed a line of vision to a row of

sinks and mirrors - to the backs of invisible men, surveilled. In *Le Musée des Sciences*, a large-scale mural at the entrance established the theme: a fresco depicting the Salpêtrière, a building in France that dates back to the time of Louis XIII whose functions were a compendium of socially charged investments - the manufacture of gunpowder, then armaments, later a prison for the homeless, a hospital for the poor, a hospital for aged women and, at the turn of the century, a women's hospital legendary as the site where Charcot treated - with public demonstrations - female hysterics. Over the stage in *La Donna Delinquenta* hung painted drop curtains on which the image of a female figure in prison garb was echoed in Fleming's intermittent silent performance as the convict.

The installations all evoke absent bodies as a form of memorializing, of bringing to presence the forgotten, the repressed, the marginalized. On the ground level of *Projet Building/Caserne #14*, for example, firemen's costumes--hats, coats, boots, gloves--were laid out on the floor in the shape of a fire truck, a strobe light at its head announcing a ghost emergency, the flash of the strobe creating a perception of movement in the clothes as if bringing the firemen momentarily to life. In a large tableau in *Le Musée des Sciences*, an archive

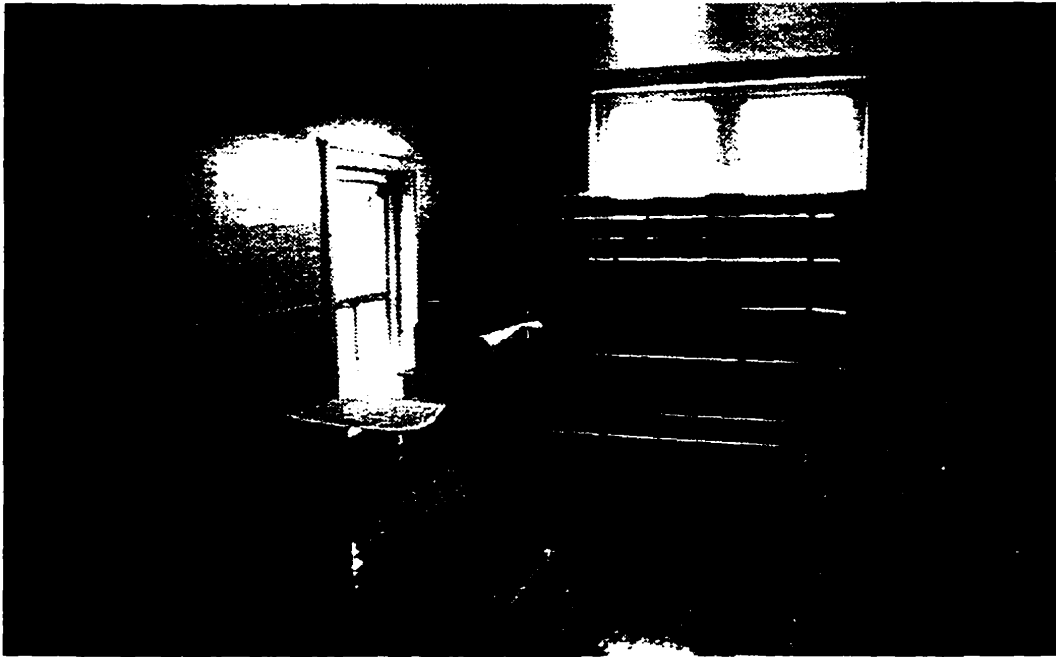


fig. 29
Martha Flemming and Lyne Lapointe
Le Musée des Sciences (detail)

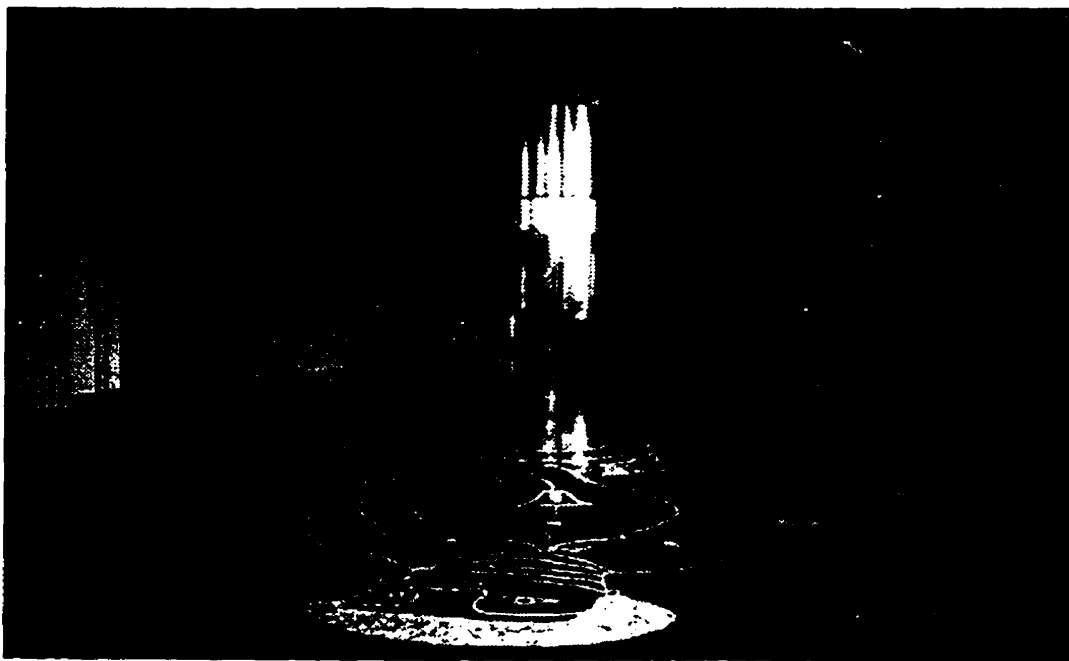


fig. 30
Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe
Le Musée des Sciences (detail)



fig. 31
Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe
La Donna Delinquenta

photograph is enlarged to life size, its image that of a medical theatre in which an anonymous woman on an operating table is surrounded and examined by a trio of male doctors and a host of male medical students as her (perspectivally centered) exposed breast is submitted to the scalpel; above the image, four rows of enlarged photographs of women's gesturing hands; the limbs - isolated from the source image drawn from Charcot's documentation of the bodily poses of (induced) female hysteria - divorced from their signification of pathology. In *La Donna Deliquenta*, the female 'convict' in her striped garments is brought to dance upon the backdrop curtains.

Over and above the references to particular 'bodies' of/in history through forms of depiction and through the highlighting of the architectural shaping of the lived relations of use of the buildings, the firehall, the post office and the vaudeville theatre themselves evoke past bodies as presences through the residual imprint of the traces of the buildings' years of occupation and use on the material surfaces of the rooms. Settled stains and marks, shadow frames of hung objects, discolorations and signs of wear - or their absence in an eerie uncovered newness - on walls and floors, echo the long presence of living bodies in these

once-inhabited spaces.

The installations also create a theatrical staging of the bodies of the spectator. If the architecture of buildings shapes the uses and movements within them, the opening up of these spaces enabled an altered poetics of movement. In *La Donna Delinquenta*, with the rows of theatre seats removed, the broad expanse of the refurbished sloping floor made a spacious second stage. As the public moved through the theatre, each visitor became not only spectator but spectacle, a shadow player in the half-light (Figs. 32-33). A reviewer writing of *Caserne #14* described moving to avoid a figure viewed in shadow, only to discover with a start that the shadow was her own (Blouin:75). But this freedom of movement may also place the spectator in an equivocal position of participation. Thus in *Le musée des sciences*, the spectator enters an amphitheatre where a 19th century gynaecological chair has been readied, with its cover of crisp white paper, for the spectator's imaginary occupation (Fig. 29); a strip of mirrors is placed precisely at stirrup height and rows of seating oversee the scene. In *Caserne #14*, a campbed for the ghost firemen's rest, with a film projector placed at its foot, does not invite psychic repose.

If these projects evoke lived social relations from

the past, they also propose through their poetics alternative arrangements in the present. Thus though occupying 'public' buildings, the projects are at a far remove from the notion of the public embodied in either the buildings (which are actually private in their use, and in their subsequent withdrawals of the services they had provided the community) or the generalized notion of a fictive, ideal 'public'. The artists, rather, construct a space of intimacy to house a theatre of memory, emotion and imagination that, in its fluidity, is revealed to be predicated on the public's 'common denominator' of difference, specificity, heterogeneity. Central to their approach vis a vis the spectator is the paramount importance the artists accord to subjectivity, as a force at once embodied and imaginative. Fleming declares:

Let us speak of our deep longing and need for these experiences and let us speak of their banishment from the public square. The power of the galvanising field they create is directly related to their severe proscription from a political realm.... It is time to equate the word public with the apparatus of social control. It is time to reinvent the city square as a multitude of mutable and intersecting *privacies* which are not synonymous with secrets and taboos and that construct, through both sought and spontaneous intimacies, proud and loving personal identities capable of forging political solidarities. These are the meetings of our many voices" (10, my emphasis).

As the described details within these works are



fig. 32
 Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe
La Donna Delinquenta (detail)

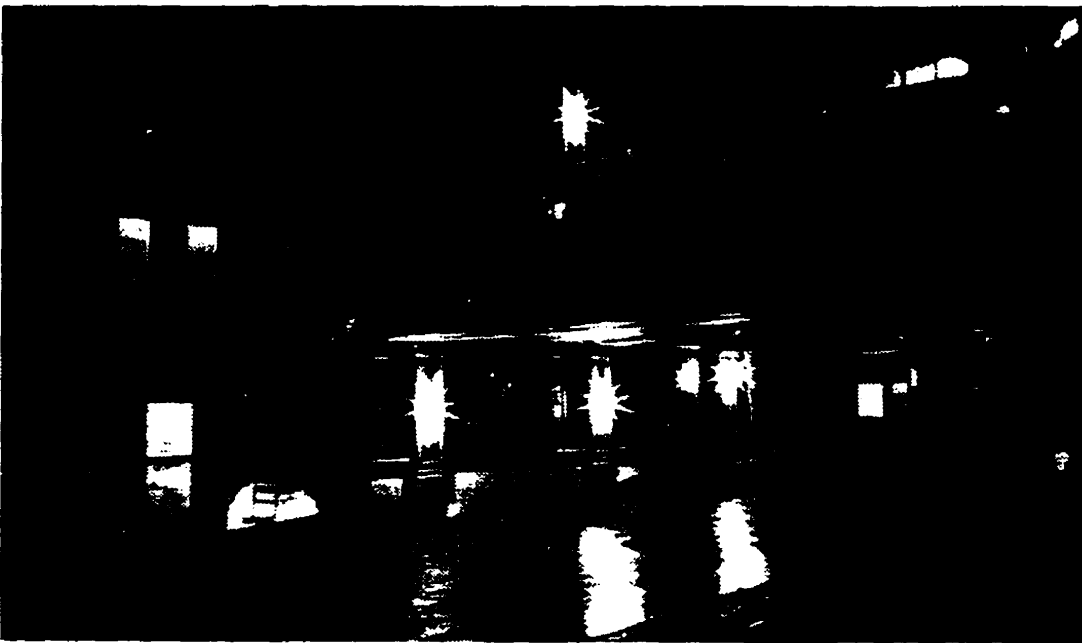


fig. 33
 Martha Fleming and Lyne Lapointe
La Donna Delinquenta (detail)

only fragments from a larger and more varied inhabitation of the buildings, so the installations themselves proceed through fragments, through dis-organizing the field of vision and the occupation of space. Thin streams of light through cracks and holes provide pure points of illumination and refracted colour (light in darkness itself a potent metaphor); drawings are often incomplete or assembled in a collage; evocative details are appropriated from familiar and unknown sources and invested with enigmatic importance; juxtapositions provocatively reveal the conceptual relationships between objects (as, in *Le Musée* for instance, the similarity of instruments for cleaning rifles with those designed for gynaecological examination in early 19th century medicine); camera obscuras bring the outside street into the interior of the building and invert it as well, ceiling to ground, ground to ceiling. At every turn, the usual, the familiar is estranged, yet rather than creating anxiety, it seems to permit an interregnum suspended between past and present yet filled with the emotional power released through mnemonic objects and traces. If buildings can be understood to be modes of representation, it is through fragmenting the totalizations and rigid organizations that had previously governed the defining function and

signification of these structures that the work enables the profusion of a labile and desiring subjectivity.

If the walls and floors of the art museum are conceived as a neutral stage for the objects placed upon them, in these art works the built space of the host site, with the social imprint of its internal spatial divisions and the bodily imprint of its residue traces, is put into evidence; it is an integral part of the drama of depiction. The artists' approach, though employing visual iconography, does not privilege visibility, the 'retinal'; rather, it invests all the senses, inviting apprehension through movement, through relation to a space, through sounds and light and touch. The artists bypass mimetic modes of representation. In this the work also breaks from the perspectival ordering of space (and time). Emblematic of this is their use of anamorphosis, most dramatically in *Le Musée des Sciences* but also important in other installations. In that work, on the open main floor of the post office was drawn, in voluminous scale, two anamorphically distorted female figures, copied from anthropological and medical texts (Fig. 30). The former image was that of a black African Hottentot, with hypertrophy of the labia, recorded by Levaillant, the other a drawing of a white European from an anatomical textbook by Charles Estienne, in which her

vulva is visually equated with the anus². The anamorphic deformations were rectified in the reflection of a vertical cylindrical mirror, but the same mirror threw the viewer's body out of scale: an apt metaphor for - and parody of - the distortions of the female figure within representation. Yet the anamorphosis is also a strategic style, a mode of figuration on the slant that depicts without 're-presenting' and that embodies negatively within its form the processes of distortion necessary to 'organize' and compose the perspectival illusion.

If, as Peggy Phelan describes, "the process of self-identity is a leap into a narrative that employs seeing as a way of knowing" (5), the visual axis of the work foregoes mimetic modes of representation - the repetition of the same - through the use of the fragment, the anamorph, the detail. A further dis-ordering of the perspectival grid is the use of mirrors as a repeated motif; these likewise become a means of breaking up the holism of reflection and perspective (with its 'mirroring' of reality) by undoing their seamless totality. The mirrors employed by Fleming and Lapointe are never clear surfaces for reflection; they are old mirrors with corroded silver backing and greyed, veiled reflective powers, cracked mirrors in which the

viewer sees not her/himself but some arrested detail in the off-side background, distorting mirrors which throw the body out of perspective, the blurred reflection of polished aluminum and even 'mirrors' of mica, a black mirror which absorbs and reflects light yet offers no reflection. The mirror refracts, fragments, obscures and mottles even as it doubles some chosen or arbitrary detail. While Lacan links the mirror to the imaginary ordering of the subject along an axis of self-deception, the infantile body in pieces held together by a projective illusion of totality(1977), the artists, in riposte, foreground the mirror's capacity not to hold together but to fragment, to be partial and random and so to enable an imaginative rearrangement of parts, different conjunctures of fragments, an escape from the tyranny of fixity: "What was a plane becomes a hinge"(Fleming:15).

The concept of the hinge, which both folds over and separates, provides an apt analogy for another operation in the work, one in which the property of a previous history becomes re-possessed, in the service of the possibility of a kind of 'dispossession': the abandonment reclaimed for a scene of 'abandon': of a giving over or yielding to feeling and impulse. Their privileging of affect and libidinality as a central

ethic within their work is reminiscent of the distinction made by Hélène Cixous between what she terms the Realm of the Gift and the Realm of the Proper (1981, 1985). The economy of the latter is structured according to 'masculine' values: the Proper as hierarchy, classification, ordering, and the Proper as property, with its attendant anxiety of 'expropriation' and loss (in short, fear of castration). The Realm of the Gift operates from within a different libidinal economy, characterized by generosity, exchange, pleasures. Viewed from the vantage of the Realm of the Proper, it is a threat, a subordination.³ If the installations were poetic spaces for re-visiting and re-visioning a site now dis-arranged from its previous logic and re-arranged as an indeterminate site enabling the emotion, nostalgia, remembering, uncertainties and imaginings of subjectivity, this was already an overturning of the realm of the Proper, and the artists claimed these diverse, dynamic activities "for a feminism on the verge of nova, a diffuse, cumulative, encompassing feminism...." (43).

All of these installations advance an alternative orientation to existence from that which has dictated the uses of the buildings they occupy; the artists utilize the buildings as signifiers that can be

reinvested. Fleming's and Lapointe's return to the past is less to reclaim it than to explore its fissures and openings, the spaces in the stonework in which new life can take hold. The artworld orthodoxies of the past many years would prescribe a more academic, deconstructivist approach to the social criticism that Fleming and Lapointe undertake, and forewear proposing alternatives. But each of these works of poetic repossession is an insistence on *embodying* the potential for material and imaginary pleasures. They propose the importance of a political will that can abide paradox and can embrace visual, sensual and mnemonic delight. If abandonment - of neighbourhoods, of histories, of cultures, of people - is a signifier of loss, of dereliction, the positive register in their work is that of the possibilities of regeneration. The word 'abandonment' holds within it another word with another registration and potential: that of abandon. Their work proposes that from the detritus of abandonment it is possible to reshape an economy of love, a lived poetics of abandon, of dispossession, of grace.

2. Rebecca Belmore

Rebecca Belmore's "*Mawu-che-hitoowin: A Gathering of People for Any Purpose*", was originally developed for the National Gallery of Canada's Land, Spirit, Power exhibition (1993). The exhibition was notable as the institution's first (only) sustained attention to contemporary First Nations art, and the first large-scale survey exhibition of such art since the lauded, landmark Beyond History exhibition four years earlier. The latter exhibition challenged commonplace notions by which native art was widely seen as bound to 'timeless' aboriginal tradition, through curators Karen Duffek and Tom Hill's focus on a generation of academically-trained artists negotiating and reinvigorating two distinct visual and cultural legacies (even as Hill's catalogue essay traced different moments and movements in the contemporization of First Nations art). The exhibition at the National Gallery, given its primacy as a cultural institution, fell at an extraordinary time: the cinquecentennial of Columbus 'discovery' of the Americas, and in the throes of renewed constitutional debates in which native struggles over land claims and self-government seemed (for a moment whose promise was unfulfilled) to be gaining new ground. As Scott Watson observed, "part of that struggle has been for access to

the cultural institutions of Canada where....non-native Canadians might begin to question the various fictions most of us hold about native people" (34).

Belmore's work was composed of eight household chairs of various shapes and styles, arranged equidistant in a circle. The chairs were placed upon a raised square platform of polished wood, colourfully painted with decorative flowers in a motif reminiscent of native decorative beadwork (Fig. 34). The platform marked the parameters of the piece, creating a bounded space, appropriating and claiming that space within the site of the museum and at the same time shaping, through this designation, the viewer's experience of the gallery setting. On the back of seven of the chairs was placed a set of headphones, through which could be heard the voice of a woman recounting a narrative drawn from her own life history. Belmore had approached six Ojibwa women from her home community (then Thunder Bay) to participate in this event - to, as she put it to them, "come with me", to take up this given "opportunity to speak about something, as a First Nations woman, in this country, in our lives"⁴. The women's stories - many painful, others stories of love or of cherished remembrances, all of evocative and emotive power - were recorded unedited. Belmore also borrowed from each of

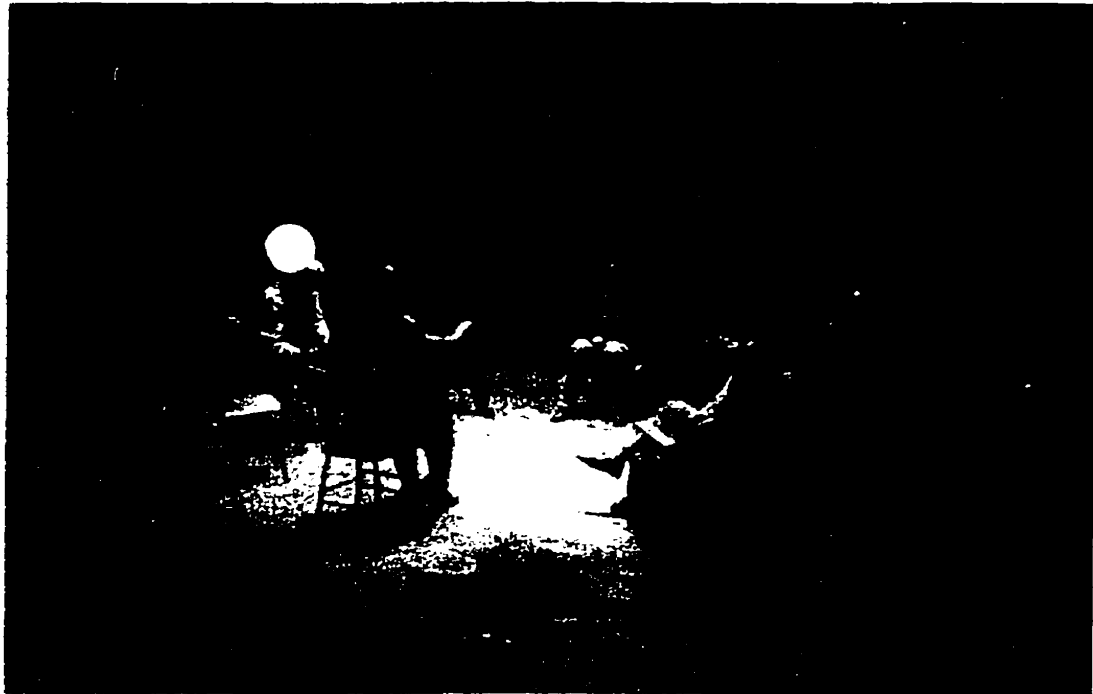


fig. 34

Rebecca Belmore

Mawu-che-hitoowin: A Gathering of People for Any Purpose

the women their favourite chair, upon which the headphones through which their story could be heard was placed. Belmore's own audiotape and chair made a seventh seating, while one chair was a free space. The domestic chair became a surrogate for the absent body of the speaker, from which issued her voice, and also temporarily placed the seated spectator in her 'position'.

The effect of the circle was to create an inner space in the gallery. The work performed a reconfiguration of the exhibiting space from that of a spectator/object relation to a participatory dynamic. The only way for the spectator to 'see' the work was to participate in it, to be seated in one of the chairs, to take up a position with/of one of the absent women - or to occupy the empty space, the provisional space for his or her own narrative. Thus the spectator joined the circle, becoming part of the *mawu-che-hitoowin* ('meeting'), partaking at once in a private and intimate encounter with another (via the headphones) and a shared collective gathering (the circle of chairs occupied by others). That space was at once within the exhibition as a whole, yet, through the intimacy effect of the circle and its demarcated boundaries, apart from what surrounded it, and transforming the neutral space of the

gallery into a culturally marked and 'local' environment.

The work foregrounded and, importantly, enacted, an oral and community tradition, which is 'viewed' through the mediation of objects which serve as emblems of the processes (of giving voice) which they enable. The work has different registers and resonances depending on whether the spectator is native or non-native; it gives direct voice to native women (even as it suggests that it is time for non-natives to listen). In refusing authorial command, in not 'representing' others, Belmore composes a visual symbol of multiple subjectivities even as the piece interrogates public modes of address, raising the question of who speaks for whom.

At the same time, as the floral pattern on the floor honoured women's culture through its translation, in paint, of the beadwork that is the traditional expression of Ojibwa women's artistry, so too the installation honoured the lives and stories of anonymous women within a wider cultural context, native and non-native alike, where, as Belmore describes "at the social level, it's always men speaking"⁵. As Charlotte Townsend-Gault comments, in allowing her work to be a conduit for the voices of others, "Belmore...brings

together concerns that have always been important to her: the search for ways to represent native women and, in so doing, give them their own voices back - voices that had been forgotten, silenced or ignored: and the search to find ways of ensuring that those voices will be heard by several different audiences"(114).

Kaja Silverman has declared that "the crucial project with respect to the female voice is to find a place from which it can speak and be heard" (192). Contrary to the scene of cinematic representation as described by Silverman, where the female voice is subordinated to the female body, and enclosed "within narrative recesses and closets"(69), Belmore occupies the centerpiece institution of national culture, and utilizes it to bring aboriginal women's voices into textual production and enunciative authority. The women are brought to 'embodied' presence through the immediacy of their voices, which articulate subjectivity in the first-person pronoun to intervene in the historical processes which have absented them. Many of these voices, further, speak with the distinctive inflections, tenor and pacing that often distinguish native-Canadian patterns of speech from that of Anglo-Canadian speakers. If, as Silverman proposes, "the voice... cannot speak without assuming an identification, entering into

desire, or invoking the Other" (162), Belmore orchestrates a chorus of female voices - recorded and, via the empty chair, admitting of multiple others - that multiply, in the created 'meeting' space, the registers of feminine identity and desire and aspiration.

3. Faye HeavyShield

The circle also emerges as a structuring spatiality in Faye HeavyShield's *Sisters* (1993), a circle composed of six pairs of women's high heel shoes, arranged equidistantly across a 5' diameter (Fig. 35). The circle is an abstract spatiality of perfect proportion of a kind not found in nature: its significances are always culturally marked. It is, as in Belmore's installation, the form of a protective enclosure, a signifier of the gathering of people united in common cause; the shape is of a non-hierarchical form granting each participant equal place in the social or ritual event. Yet another metaphor and use of the circle, clearly in evidence here, is as a protective barrier: an ancient form of defensive positioning against the danger of attack from an uncertain or multiple direction. In this work, were the toes of the shoes pointed inward, they would suggest the former communal gathering, but they are positioned pointed outward, the implied body in a defensive posture

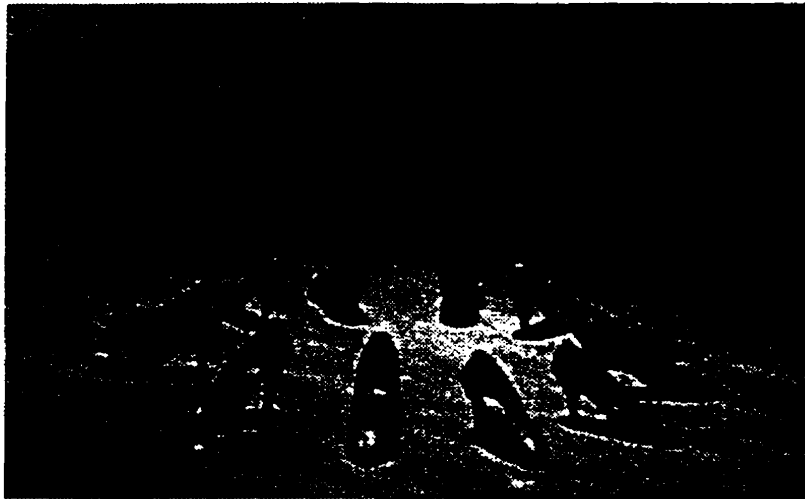


fig. 35
Faye HeavyShield
Sisters

against an external threat.

In its original presentation, *Sisters* formed part of a larger exhibition titled Heart Hoof Horn⁶, which took as its object of reference a specific physical place -that is, the residential school system in which several generations of First Nations children in Canada were educated - and the individual and collective psychic residue of the social relations within that place. Under the now-infamous Indian Act of 1876, Catholic and Protestant churches were granted legal authority to remove children of school age, forcefully if necessary, from the protection and care of their families and communities in order to place them in these schools, often far from their homes, administered by the churches. The effect of this policy was the traumatizing of children peremptorily removed from the security, nurturance and affection of their homes and relegated to an environment of chill discipline and foreign ways.⁷ The aim of this transplantation was no less radical: the excising of the 'difference' of native cultural specificity and a schooling of the children in the mores of the dominant culture. Robert Houle describes: "Their function was simple: to eradicate aboriginal cultures and languages, to eliminate the indigenous foundations of ritual, ceremony and spirituality, and to assimilate

these children into Christianity"(1).

Among the haunting legacies of this schooling, and one now much in the news by virtue of native community-based processes of healing and reparation, was the widespread sexual abuse of these young charges. Compounding this specific injury of bodily invasion was a more generalized form of invasiveness. As HeavyShield has described: "You don't realize what's happening right then, but they're wearing away at the person you were born as, deciding what could stay, what couldn't, trying to clean you in every way, cleaning your soul, cleaning everything..." (Murphy:50).

In the exhibition as a whole, HeavyShield set within the space of the gallery a re-rendering of the social relations of that other place, compounding spaces and layering time. If *Sisters* can be isolated as a work from the installation as a whole, it is also the case that the larger context illuminates the multiple levels through which this history was addressed; thus I will introduce *Sisters* together with one of its five companion pieces. *Now I Lay Me Down* (1994) has been incisively characterized by Houle as a "metaphysical, meditative poem of lamentation"(1). The spare, bone-colored work consists of a series of five cup-shaped fonts on a wall-mounted backdrop such as are used for

holy water in the Catholic Church. On each icon above the font in raised letters is one of the five words of the title, which together compose the sentence that begins this common childhood prayer. Yet the phrase isolated from the prayer as a whole bears a sexual connotation, and with it an association to the sexual abuse that is the revealed scandal, tragedy and commonplace of this schooling.

The sense of touch is evoked by the font, by the movement of the hand toward the benediction that is its promise. The recollection of the trusting obeisance of childhood in the familiar prayer for protection is sundered, cut through, by another cast to the weighted words which opens up the scene of nighttime dread, of violation, religious hypocrisy and the betrayal of entrusted authority in unwanted sexual touch - and, further, of violation perpetrated by the very figures who introduced aboriginal children to this Christian prayer for protection. The quietude of the work, the receptive shapes of the fonts, the simple childhood prayer, seem to shape from the drama of transgressions a visual incarnation of yearning, of the possibility of a blessed space warded from spiritual and physical danger.

If *Now I Lay Me Down* has the power of an elegy, *Sisters* suggests transformative potentials, not only

through the use of shoes which, though still, suggest the potential of movement, but in the glow that seems to emanate from them, achieved through HeavyShield's use of an overlay of yellowish gesso which absorbs the gallery lights so that the shoes appear to shine from within, to be alive. The placement of these 'glowing' objects in a circle also recalls the circle as a ritual sacred ground.

The threat of sexual invasion referenced in *Now I Lay Me Down* is repeated here indirectly through the sexual associations of the labia-like cleft in the toes of the shoes, the 'hole' the shoes surround. The high heel shoe is itself an evocative symbol of female sexed identity, one which from one vantage emphasizes allure but from another, in its hobbling of movement and distortion of the foot, an oppressive femininity. In *Sisters*, HeavyShield transforms this icon of feminine sexuality into an instrument of defensive weaponry, a tribute to female power and strength, and a virtual space so powerful in its effects that it psychologically disadmits, even though the spacings between the shoes do not disallow, the spectator's physical entry into the circle.

The raised cleft in the toes of the shoes also fuses the human and the animal, evoking First Nations

spiritual traditions that do not abide the Western division between culture and nature, between the spiritual and the animal. Here too the circle can be seen to echo the defensive posture of animals, such as the bison of HeavyShield's prairie land home, which form a protective circle around their young. This motif joins with a highly Western iconography of clothing. If Western clothing is itself a signifier of native assimilation by the dominant culture, HeavyShield's rendering is not the 'pure' product of a monoculture, but a product transformed and remade as the hybridity of the two. As one writer has commented, the reworked objects "fuse the high artifice of adornment with sexuality, ritual, the human and animal. They are objects of transformation, giving such humble things another dimension of meaning" (Baele). The clefted shoe conveys a double reference, not only to sexual but also cultural defense and collective empowerment.

The "sisters" of the title suggests female solidarity, whether familial (incorporating the biographical note of HeavyShield's five sisters) or more generally defined in the sense of a sisterhood or community among women. It evokes women's empowerment in standing together, but also the dangers that beset women from all sides. While the monochromatic coloration of

the shoes furthers the metaphor of unity, each is differentiated from the other in modulations of size, shape, traces of wear. If feminist thought has shifted attention from women's difference seen as a difference from men to that of emphasizing, and problematizing, in Teresa de Lauretis' phrasing, the "differences between and among women"(11), in HeavyShield's rendering, the unity is an alliance of difference: is constituted in and through difference. Feminist practice, Rosi Braidotti argues, "posits the recognition of the otherness of the other woman as the first step towards redefining our common sameness, our 'being-a-woman'"(177). The framing of 'difference' around the figure of the other woman has invited an alternate strategy, one engaged not only in the deconstruction of patriarchal relations but in the articulation of (new) social identities, identifies in difference(s). If *Sisters* proposes a diversity that counters the elision of difference in summary notions of female and racial identity, it might also be seen as a utopic expression of solidarity, a collapsing together of these differences; but here the positioning of the shoes is apposite - each one facing out toward the world from its own vantage.

The center of the circle might be seen as

representing certain kinds of 'common ground'. The defensive positioning of the shoes conveys that the 'inside' of the circle is that which is being protected. Yet the inner circle is empty. Against the patriarchal morphology of the feminine sex as absence, envelope, HeavyShield's rendering is that of a positivity. This space might be seen as a metaphor for a psychic interiority, bodily integrity, or spiritual wellbeing that is being defended. The space, however, might also be seen as a provisional or potential space for women, a protected and valued 'place' of our own.

Sisters is the first of a series of works by HeavyShield which have in common two properties: they are composed in whole or part through transformed articles of women's dress - already culturally dense signifiers - and they serve to shape or bound particular spatialities - here, the circle. If, as Massey proposes, space is social relations writ large, HeavyShield's use of items of apparel as the material foundation for the construction of these bounded spatialities foregrounds space/place as a lived and dynamic multi-dimensionality.

In the installation *She: A Roomful of Women*, (1993), the narrativity implicit in *Sisters* is brought into textuality. Yet like that work, neither the visual forms nor the narrative elements draw their poetics from what

Phelan terms the "familiar grammar of the linguistic, visual, and physical body of the Same"(6). Drawing upon journal entries in which she has recorded stories she has heard and events she has lived, HeavyShield produces a series of narratives incorporating a range of events and experiences drawn from the lives of aboriginal women; these include memories of the residential schools as well as other stories of violence and of the suppression of native cultural and spiritual traditions as well as accounts of endurance and spiritual redemption. The stories, rendered in measured, poetic cadences, are anonymous; though only twelve in number, they are composite stories speaking to and with a range of voices, and recalling the oral tradition of her Blackfoot heritage.

In this installation, the space HeavyShield creates is a room for the bodies and voices of women. The work is composed of three principal elements: the twelve stories, each text mounted and framed on the wall, and beneath each, a pair of women's shoes, their heels against the wall, 'facing' the viewer, their placement creating, as curator Janet Clark observes, "the illusion of embodiment, a persona occupying the space between, with the text becoming a vehicle for speech"(5). Each pair, spray-painted a uniform matte black, is different,

suggestive of different ages and personalities of use. Along the center of the room is positioned the third element, ten articles of female clothing of various kinds, from a child's dress to lingerie to women's clothing of various genres; these have been stiffened with paint of a monochromatic red ochre tone - visceral, bloodied bodies.

In this as in her other works, memory is not a personal recollection but a process of distillation from shared narratives, an intersubjective and intra-cultural memorialization: "All my work comes from memory," she has said. "Not just my memory but other people's memories - my father's memory, my mother's memory, women I know" (Baele). Heavyshield's work of embodied memory is an act of anamnesis - a refusal to forget violations both bodily and cultural, and a refusal to forget the feeling body. Yet if the socialized body is a body inscribed, as Foucault specifies, by technologies of power that work through the materiality of the body, HeavyShield's work is a radical redirection of these inscriptional lines, curving them toward other ends yet leaving visible on the surface their anterior force.

"There is an effort to remember", bell hooks writes, "that is expressive of the need to create spaces

where one is able to redeem and reclaim the past, legacies of pain, suffering, and triumph in ways that transform present reality. Fragments of memory are not simply represented as flat documentary but constructed to give a 'new take' on the old, constructed to move us into a different mode of articulation" (147). The fragments of memory, the fragments of stories, the fragmented bodies proposed in these piles of blood-red clothing, become a kind of evidence, inviting a witnessing. Yet they also form the material foundation through which to transform absence and oppression and exclusion into presence and public voice. A room, full of women, becomes a protected space in which to "redeem and reclaim the past", a layered space of multiple histories, and a potential space for other women's stories, voices, bodies, values.

The spatiality proposed in *Clan* (1996), viewed from a distance, appears as an indoor rendition of an inhabited landscape. The conal form of the many objects that compose the installation create an iconographic resemblance to a gathering of tipis hugging the ground (Fig. 38). The terra cotta colour of these abstract forms alludes to the organic materials drawn from the earth. Here the work draws upon the historic importance of land within native cultural identity, and seems to

virtually install a tribal community within the space of the gallery. In utilizing form to visually proclaim, through a dis-placed 'place', the survival and continuance of native communities vis a vis a history of dispossessing colonialism, HeavyShield, like Belmore, claims the public space produced through the traditions of Western art as a site in which to focus questions of inclusion, belonging, marginalized histories and representational occlusions.

At a closer view, the tipi forms give way to an abstract rendering of human figures, as the objects are revealed to derive their form from clothing that has been dyed and wrapped in a spiralling conal cloak (Fig. 39). What from afar could appear as large objects on a distant landscape is revealed as small objects standing apart only inches above the ground.

The title of the work, together with the wrapped 'figures' of the covered forms recalls the iconography of the sheeted robes that disguised the identities of members of the Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist secret society most active as terrorists in the southern U.S. during the 1920's, but which has had periodic revivals to the present day. Southern Alberta has been the object of notoriety for the presence there - not far from Stand Off, the Blood reservation that is HeavyShield's

home - of training centers for paramilitary and related groups, including the Ku Klux Klan.

HeavyShield utilizes this history and iconography to compose a counter-history and iconography, counterpoising the destructive powers of the Klan with the sustaining agency of clan - of family, ancestry, heritage, community. The installation suggests the characteristics by which the racist views the Other - as to be looked down upon, as faceless, as 'all the same': here the registration of the terra cotta colour is racially inflected. But within this racial identity, suggested by the blending of the figures within a common monochromatic surface, differences abound. The figures stand at variable heights and widths, the colour holds different densities and shades according to the cloth to which the paint is bound, patterns are visible beneath the plain surface, each object has different detailing, etc. The composition of the installation forms a grouping in which each figure stands distinct and in which no particular organizing order of bodies is to be found. Yet while each object stands alone - the cloaking of the bodies suggesting protective covering and privacy - they also stand together, public. The large number of forms also attests to indigenous survival against the institutionalized attempts at cultural genocide that is

the legacy of native history under colonial domination.

At the same time, HeavyShield's work is not reducible to a mere negative/positive reversal along the axis of two cultures, for it refuses to privilege any notion of cultural uniformity upon which such a binarism would rest. Thus the grouping that suggests protection also evokes insularity, the expressivity of the clothing is also partially repressed by the conformity of its painted overcoating, the figures that together constitute a community of forms also stand separate and alone. The scene the work composes is of a shaded complexity antithetical to a narrow dualism or to a vaunted holism within human cultural arrangements.

Viewed yet more closely, it is also apparent that the clothing within the work is drawn from women's wear. Thin shoulder straps, floral patterns, decorative buttons, camisoles, frilly trim are visible beneath the paint. The range of feminine garb points (again) to the variable social experiences and histories that constitute female identity, while the feminine dressing of the phallic forms defies binaries of sexual identity and iconography. In utilizing female clothing as the material element of the composition, HeavyShield gives particular privilege to the female bond within the cultural solidarity proposed by the installation as a

whole.

Identity is itself interwoven with public space and the ways it constitutes social relations. The art gallery, and its organization of viewing practices, coexists with other public sites. The political intervention into public space is not, as artist Jin-Me Yoon has elsewhere described, a matter of "simply positing/plopping in the marginalized subject and therefore unproblematically reclaiming space" (Folland:8). Rather, as in these works, questions of identity are wedded to the histories of regimes of representation, norms of language and visual imagery, cultural specificities and the differentials of social situatedness - and, in the spatial interventions of these art practices, to the past histories of use of the social site of the gallery.

In siting within the 'neutral' space of the gallery a series of internal spatializations of an impacted cultural registration - the multivalent circle, the room (full of women), the virtual tribal homeland - HeavyShield brings the spectator into a confrontation with the 'spaces' of a forcefully hybridized history whose representations, insofar as they exist, have been mostly mediated via colonial relations of dominance. Her articulation of these spaces implicates the spectator at

once psychologically and bodily: the psychic exclusion of the circle of *Sisters*, the *corps-a-corps* with the absent yet 'speaking' bodies lining the enclosing room; the necessary entry and bodily folding into the space of *Clan* to 'read' the detail of the small forms. The bodily interaction required if the spectator is to enter the works' staging instantiates a performative poetics that operates through a provisional structuring of the experience of embodiment of the spectatorial subject

These works by HeavyShield center in the 'space' of the gallery the "space-off" of dominant representation, and do so with a quiet intensity. By contrast, *Venus as torpedo* (1995) occupies the exhibiting gallery with an explosive and visceral impact, as if the gallery walls had given way from the powerful pressure of a slow and irresistible force. The huge, abstract, jutting structure, a dark ochrous red, encroaches into the space with implacable force. It is as if organic, still growing, as if, propelled by a still greater density not yet visible behind the barrier of the walls, it could deepen its expansion further and further into the bounded space. It is as if a force unleashed.

The wonderfully-titled work, with its reference to the mythic Roman goddess of love and beauty, could not be at a further remove from the traditional depictions



fig. 36
Faye HeavyShield
Venus as Torpedo (detail)

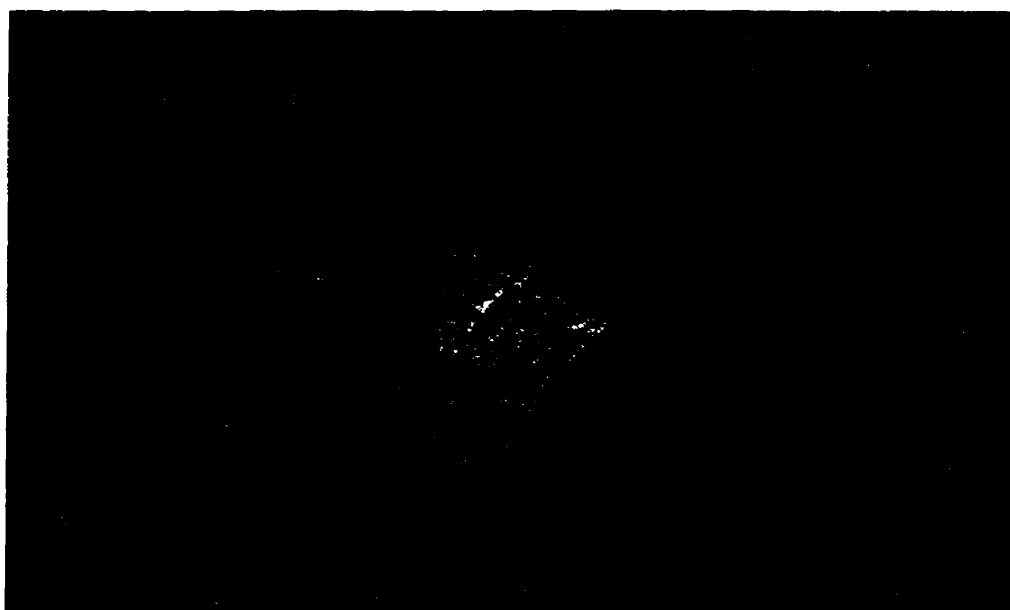


fig. 37
Faye HeavyShield
Venus as Torpedo (detail)

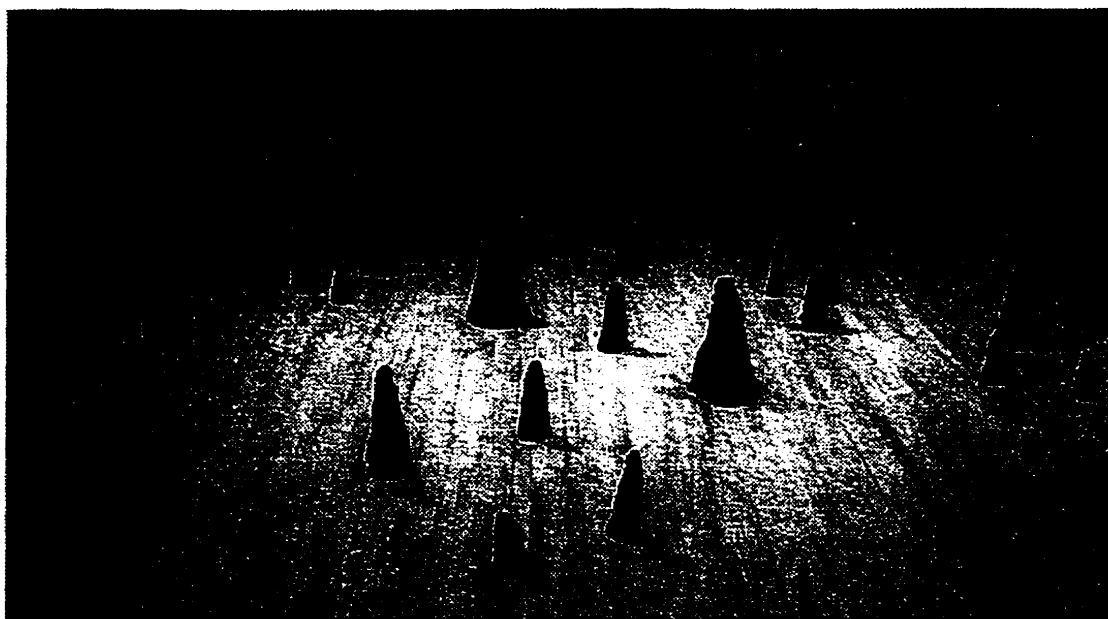


fig. 38
Faye Heavysield
Clan



fig. 39
Faye Heavysield
Clan

of Venus. On the one hand, there are the ubiquitous, prehistoric squat-bodied fertility figures, with bulbous breasts and exaggerated hips, called venuses, of which the prehistoric *Venus of Willendorf* (circa 30,000 to 10,000 B.C.) might stand as exemplar. On the other hand, handed down through the Western art tradition, is the classical Venus - famous works such as the Cnidian Aphrodite by Praxiteles, renowned for its perfection, or Sandro Botticelli's 1478 *The Birth of Venus*, a goddess whose attenuated body signifies the ideal of the celestial mind.

In Kenneth Clark's study, The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art, he divides the Venus into two types, of which these examples are representative: the one, the undisciplined body of the Earthly Venus or Venus Vulgaris, the other the Celestial Venus, wherein the unruly body has been rendered universal and intelligible through the controlling discipline of artistic form⁸. In Lynda Nead's important critique, The Female Nude, she specifies with reference to Clark how the female nude as ideal masks an operation of taming the female sexed body, of containing and regulating its sexuality, its openings, its leakages - in short, its excess. "The forms, conventions and poses of art", she writes, "have worked metaphorically to shore up the female body - to

seal orifices and to prevent marginal matter from transgressing the boundary dividing the inside and the outside, the self from the space of the other"(6) and in this way to help to shore up a conception of the subject as free of the forces of the irrational, the body, the untamed.

In *Venus as torpedo*, with its organicity and blood-like colour, the body by contrast is rendered as a visceral ground. It is a force of nature, a power of culture, an embodiment of vitalities, and a dynamic morphology of woman. If the Venuses of art are conventionally nudes, HeavyShield sidesteps the nude as 'ideal form', together with its voyeuristic entrapments, through utilizing clothing as a skin. And if the Venus, the female nude, is the mute figuration of the feminine upon which a host of patriarchal discursive constructs of Woman are enacted, in HeavyShield's work, voice and speech emanate from this body.

The torpedo as a feminine force of propulsion, an energy and living force in movement, a "venus", contrasts sharply with the torpedo as phallic weapon of destruction. If the work assumes the shape of a torpedo, its 'venus' is also proposed by the shape which suggests together the sexed body and the speaking body through its abstract form whose elongated morphology suggests at

once female genitalia and a tongue (Fig. 36). Indeed, as Vera Lemecka has written, HeavyShield "converts the patriarchal torpedo from a weapon of war into a force of words, a tongue that speaks to the strength derived from the intimacies, the talk, with which women sustain each other" (7).

The powerful visuality of the work is compounded by an audio element at low volume, voices and sounds which emanate from inside the structure. The viewer's body must draw close, lean in, to the work to hear the sounds: a background of water and forest bird song - the outdoor sound in the gallery dislocating the sense of place - and stories told in HeavyShield's soft scarcely inflected voice, narrated in English but with a repeating chorus in Blackfoot. Greg Beatty comments upon the dynamic by which HeavyShield admits and addresses simultaneously two communities of spectators, one whose lives have been implicated in the stories she tells, the other being brought into their orbit of intimacy: "Interestingly, HeavyShield elected to record the Blackfoot chorus at a lower volume than {her} English text. But this does not have the effect of subjugating her ancestral tongue to English. Rather, the chorus functions as a whispered exchange between HeavyShield and those gallery visitors fluent in Blackfoot" (37). The

stories, like those in *She: A Roomful of Women* are personal and compound stories, this one, as example, drawn from the experiences of the residential schools:

Friday night alone in the dorm made
lonelier by the efforts
of the nuns to be extra nice to her
they bring out boxes of
comics and she's allowed to stay up
until ten staying awake
only prolongs this ache better just to
sleep to stare at the
light coming from the stairwell the red
eye of the exit light
squinting to blur all that surrounds
you this scratchy black
blanket of night wanting to sleep and
not dream this is the
only time that she prays without
being told to and what she
prays for is not that she'll go home
next weekend or that
her mother will magically appear or
that her bed will be dry
in the morning she chants to keep all
those thoughts at bay
she whispers hail mary's sound to
stuff the cracks to muffle
the whistles coming down the tunnel
of no one else here but
me no one else here she prays to no
one it's only for the
sound of the words hail mary and the
longer ones the creed
the act of contrition I believe I am
sorry...⁹

In giving voice to women's stories, HeavyShield brings the women to presence through language and the bodily intimacy of voice. But as the spectator draws close, the spectator not only 'hears' but also visually confronts the manifold detail by which the object is made. The ribbed metal frame of the jutting structure is

coated with overlapping articles of girls' and women's clothing, stiffened with paint (Fig. 37). As clothing is a surrogate for the body, the torpedo/tongue seeming to move inexorably through the space suggests the force and power of women. The many articles of clothing - of various styles and sizes, shaped to the wear of different bodies - vary the depth and detailing of the Venus' surface texture and have distinct and affect-laden cultural referents. Its apparent monochrome, as in other works, is also modulated by the variable colour densities and decorative patterning of the original garments beneath the stiffened paint, which alter its hues. The colour of the object is a visceral red but, rather than evoking the scene of carnage associated with the weapon, it, as Lemecka has written, suggests "a warm tide of blood that has washed over everything...The blood suggested here is...new: that which carries oxygen to all parts of the body, like the stories that carry sustenance to the women who hear them, who absorb them through their skin, their bodies"(11).

If the monochromatic colour and the singular object serve to create a unified image, it is at the same time one composed of pluralities, a bringing together of differences and modulations through which similarity, unity, is irreducible to sameness. While the critic Greg

Beatty argues that "a phallic-shaped object draped in female clothing argues for a non-binary form of gender construction which recognizes the masculine component inherent in every woman's personality" (37), this thrusting phallic/tongue 'organ' seems less a feminine claim of a 'masculine component' than a defiance altogether of these gendered categories for describing the libidinal forces that move us, and that can be harnessed, as the work suggests, to transformation and change.

In this chapter, I have proposed that, in the work of the artists I discuss, space and time are complexly layered through the material form of the objects and the modes of spectatorship they invite. The real time of the viewer's attendance is brought into dialogue with the historical time of pasts to which the works refer and a present-future time of its utopic or transformative dimensions. Their modes of spatiality likewise draw upon our knowledge or experience of other social spaces - literally, as in the re-occupation by Fleming and Lapointe of abandoned buildings that had housed public services, and referentially in all of the works - even as they compose specific spatialities enabling an alternative dynamic of social relations and imaginative

enactment.

Elizabeth Grosz' specification of the stakes of rethinking space in ways that transform the patriarchal legacy of its conception as an emptiness available to various orders of penetration and colonization is apposite to the alternative spatialities advanced in these works:

The project ahead, or one of them, is to return women to those places from which they have been dis- or re-placed or expelled, to occupy those positions - especially those which are not acknowledged as positions - partly in order to show men's invasion and occupancy of the whole of space, of space as their own and thus the constriction of spaces available to women, and partly in order to be able to experiment with and produce the possibility of occupying, dwelling or living in new spaces, which in their turn help generate new perspectives, new bodies, new ways of knowing(1995:124)

These works, with their interlayering of bodies, space, time and memory, propose conceptualizations of space as enacted potentials crucially joined to the manifold dimensions and relations of social existence. As they make reference to the embodiment that is the fundament of the social subject their bodily poetics proceeds through displacements that do not re-present the unified subject yet exteriorize the subject's embodied experience through the residual traces of the body on physical matter (clothing, built structures, objects); through the grain of the voice, spoken and

textual; through evocative objects and strategic absences.

These poetics of the body further extend to 'incorporate' the spectatorial subject, who is a player in the theatre of the works, whose own bodily expressivity is itself exteriorized. The works resist re-presentation and render difficult the distancing effects of the spectatorial gaze. Rather, they place the spectator in a direct and physical relationship to the work, a mode of performativity through which the works effects are produced: and with that - crucially - a different possibility of perceptual and psychic identification or apprehension.

NOTES

1. Interview with Martha Fleming
2. The sources of these images are not specified in the installation but appear in their book Studiolo (1997).
3. In a similar vein within literary anthropology, Lewis Hyde distinguishes between a market economy and a gift economy. In The Gift (1979), Hyde maintains that the mythology of the market emphasizes qualities of self-possession and the function of 'getting' rather than of giving - a different emphasis on a parallel relation of unequal power from Cixous' economy of the Proper. The gift, by contrast, is bestowed, and exists as a gift only through its circulation; it represents a relationship of mutuality and exchange. The gift, Hyde writes, is that which "we long for, the gift that, when it comes, speaks commandingly to the soul and irresistibly moves us" (xvii). The gift touches us.
4. Interview with the artist
5. Ibid
6. Heart, Hoof, Horn, Glenbow Art Gallery, Calgary, 1993
7. HeavyShield has elsewhere described her childhood first encounter with the strange hooded appearance of the school nuns and the contrast they presented to her association of women with nurturance: "They were very cold, not even close to warm". (Murphy:50)
8. This is discussed by Lynda Nead in Nead:1992:19
9. Printed in Beatty (1996: 49)

REFERENCES

- Baele, Nancy, "Artist creates from experiences", (*The Ottawa Citizen*, April 13, 1994) (copy, unpaginated)
- Beatty, Greg, "Faye HeavyShield, Venus As Torpedo", (*Espace 14*, hiver/winter 1995-6)
- Bhabba, Homi, "The third space: interview with Homi Bhabba", in J. Rutherford, ed., Identity: Community, Culture, Difference, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990)
- Blouin, Danielle, "Caserne 14", (*La Vie en Rose*, mars 1983), p.75
- Braidotti, Rosi, "The politics of ontological difference", in Teresa Brennan, ed., Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), pp. 89-105
- Butler, Judith, with Rosi Braidotti, "Feminism By Any Other Name", (*differences*, summer-fall 1994) pp.27-62
- Cixous, Hélène, "Castration or decapitation?", trans. Annette Kuhn, *Signs*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1981, pp. 41-55
- , *La Jeune Née* (en collaboration avec Catherine Clément), (Paris: UGE, 1975), cited in *Moi* (1985)
- Clark, Janet, She: A Roomful of Women, (catalogue), (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Arts Center, 1993)
- Clark, Kenneth, The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art, (London: John Murray, 1956)
- De Certeau, Michel, The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. Steven Rendall, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984)
- De Lauretis, Teresa, Technologies of Gender, Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987)
- Deutsche, Rosalyn: "Men in Space", *Artforum*, (February 1980)
- Fisher, Jennifer, (*Parachute* 48, fall 1987), pp. 59-60
- Fleming, Martha, Studiolo, (Windsor: Art Gallery of Windsor, 1997)

Folland, Tom, "Social subjects, public subjects", Social Spaces (catalogue), (Toronto: YYZ Artists' Outlet, 1993)

Foucault, Michel, "The Subject and Power", Critical Inquiry 8 (Summer 1982):777-795

-----, "Of Other Spaces", diacritics, (spring 1986)

Gilroy, Paul, "'It ain't where you're from it's where you're at'. The dialectics of diasporic identification", (Third Text 13, winter, 1991)

Grosz, Elizabeth, Space, Time and Perversion, (New York and London: Routledge, 1995)

Hill, Tom, "Beyond History", in Beyond History, (catalogue), ed., Karen Duffel and Tom Hill, Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1989

Hooper, Barbara and Edward Soja, "The Spaces That Difference Makes", in eds. M. Keith and S.Pile: (1993)

hooks, bell, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness", in Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics, (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1990)

Houle, Robert, Heart, Hoof, Horn, (exhibition brochure), Glenbow Art Gallery, (Calgary: Glenbow Alberta Institute, 1993)

Hyde, Lewis, The Gift, (New York:Vintage Books, 1979)

Irigaray, Luce, This Sex Which Is Not One, transl. Catherine Porter, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

----, An Ethics of Sexual Difference, transl. Carolyn Burke and Gillian Gill, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993)

Jameson, Fredric, Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, (London: Verso, 1991)

Keith, Michael and Steve Pile, Place and the Politics of Identity, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

Lacan, Jacques, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I", in Ecrits, A Selection, transl. Alan Sheridan, (New York, London: W.W.Norton, 1977)

Laing, Carol, Picture Theory, (catalogue), Toronto: YYZ Artists' Outlet, 1995

Lefebvre, Henri, The Production of Space, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991)

Lemecka, Vera, Venus as Torpedo (catalogue), (Regina: Dunlop Art Gallery, 1995)

Massey, Doreen, "Politics and Space/Time", in Keith and Pile, eds., (1993, pp. 141-162)

-----, Space, Place, and Gender, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994)

Moi, Toril, Sexual/Textual Politics, (London and New York: Methuen, 1985)

Murphy, Mike, "Intuition Before Order: A Conversation with Faye HeavyShield", Artichoke, (Fall 1993)

Nead, Lynda, The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992)

Nemiroff, Diane, "Project Building/Caserne #14", (Vanguard, April 1983)

Phelan, Peggy, Unmarked, The Politics of Performance, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

Rose, Gillian, Feminism & Geography, The Limits of Geographical Knowledge, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)

Silverman, Kaja, The Acoustic Mirror, The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988)

Townsend-Gault, Charlotte, "Rebecca Belmore", in Diana Nemiroff, Robert House and Charlotte Townsend-Gault, eds., Land, Spirit, Power, (catalogue), Ottawa: National Gallery of Canada, 1993

Watson, Scott, "Whose Nation Is It?", (Canadian Art, Spring 1993)

CONCLUSION

In the framework of my thesis, I've drawn upon the feminist (and) poststructuralist analysis of a reigning dualism in Western culture, within which the sexed body as the sign of visible difference is culturally coded in determinative ways. These binary structures cover over difference as a positivity, reducing identity to an axis of homology with, or complement to, or lack of, a normative masculinity. The ideal representative position of Man as universal or generic subject reduces its others to devalorized variants of a putative norm. In these binary operations, the association of Man with mind/culture/phallus and Woman with body/nature/lack serves to displace human corporeality onto Woman as delegate body (for men), leaving women's sexed specificity unspoken and the contingency's of men's relation to corporeality elided.

The realm of representation has been of particular import in constituting and securing these operations through its assimilation of biological difference to the production of gendered identities. Representations, symbols, images and related cultural inscriptions are not simply writ 'upon' or 'across' the template of a passive or already-given body, but, as Elizabeth Grosz

has described, "literally constitute bodies and help to produce them as such"(x).

The body so constituted is an unconscious dimension of our social existence, a historically specific, and culturally produced, imaginary of the body and its sexually-differentiated meanings that is constructed through language, symbolization and social practices. This imaginary body is an interweaving of anatomy, fantasy and social inscription. If the imaginary, as Jane Gallop describes, is composed of (already-culturally mediated) imagoes, the cultural imaginary is a shared depository of dominant representations that shape and structure our modes of perception.

But, as Moira Gatens emphasizes, "The imaginary body is developed, learned, and connected to the body image of others, and is not static "(12, my emphasis). If the cultural imaginary of the body is produced in part through practices of signification, the realm of symbolization constitutes a field through which other relations to body and being can be imagined. It is the argument of my thesis that the poetics of the body in the feminist art practices I discuss constitute such an instance.

The thesis seeks to demonstrate that the materiality, spatiality and plasticities of art can

serve to compose analogues for the materiality and spatial relations of the body. The poetics of the body which I foreground create renderings of embodiment wherein 'difference' does not circulate around the phallic sign; rather, they open to other valences of alterity which disarrange the discourses of dualism and unbalance the 'phallomorphic' logic of identity, unity and self-sameness. These feminist poetics of the body, constitute a symbolic re-making of the 'form' and image of the body through the 'body' of art. Sited in the 'loopholes' and gaps in the law of the fathers, these practices advance means through which we may imaginatively recover or understand in other terms aspects of our embodied subjectivity.

If language is already a site of loss, a covering over and neutralizing of the bodily roots of subjectivity, and if images recruit the body to a play of differences within an Oedipal imaginary in which the female body stands at once for All, Other and Absence, a transformative poetics of the body cannot proceed through the norms of 'representation'. Rather, it entails alternative renderings of embodiment that neither 'forget' the exclusionary powers and normative deformations of discursive and visual language, nor its semiotic foundations. Such an art practice would be one

that, as Carol Laing describes, "exists to recover the experience of a life grounded in a feeling body" (11).

In Chapter One, I've identified a movement on many fronts to rethink embodied subjectivity outside of the parameters of the dominant mind/body, culture/nature dualism with its delimited pathways of the feminine. I've proceeded through an attention to the new figurations and typologies of the subject in the writings of a number of feminist theorists whose work is sited within the poststructuralist interrogation of the category of the subject. Rethinking embodiment in a more profound complexity entails the recognition of how the body is produced through the intrications of biology, symbolization and sociality. As Gatens observes, "The body's own text is 'written upon' by other bodies, other texts, and it in turn 'writes upon' other bodies and other texts" (38). Such an understanding extricates the conception of the body from its moorings in biology, yet underscores its centrality in the formation of subjectivities in which 'difference' is not 'naturally' but discursively produced. What I have tried to demonstrate in this thesis is that such a project has correlatives in feminist art practices. I have suggested that these material/visual models constitute a comparable, or companion, mode of feminist

theorization. In identifying modes of practice as these put into play semiotic, morphological and spatial dispensations, I've emphasized multiple ways in which 'difference' in these works proceeds not through a feminine homology of 'identity' (a countering of the phallic 'one' with a parallel 'two') but through alternative orders of alterity.

In Chapter Two, as I argue with respect to the videotape *A Very Personal Story* by Lisa Steele, this alterity is produced in the spoken narration through a disjuncture between body and word that renders visible a difference 'within' the subject: a speech and self-representation that is other-than-itself, manifest through the somatic. While the tape itself recounts in indirect fashion a poignant story of maternal loss, I suggest that its deeper poignancy lies in a resistance to speech that instantiates the "difficulty of saying 'I'" (Wolf) for the feminine subject of this historical moment. The 'other' within the "I" as the irruption of the semiotic in speech - the residue trace of the Oedipal ascension to paternal law with its uneasy, and ever uncertainly contained, losses associated with the earlier maternal corporeal nexus - is here compounded by the dereliction of the female subject in a patriarchal economy. A poetics of irresolution operates in this work

along two axes: the necessary instability and non-unitariness of the subject-in-language as the abiding potentiate of destabilization on the one hand, and on the other, the lack of a mediating means through which to 'resolve' a relation to the mother-subject. Thus the mother, absent for the daughter most immediately through death, is also, in a broader cultural sense, symbolically absented, placed out of reach and comfort on either side of Oedipus.

In Chapter Three, I foreground artists' production of morphologies of the body as modes for overcoming some of the dilemmas posed by both mind/body dualisms and the problem of the recuperation to prevailing norms of description of the 'sight' of the female body. The Irigarayan concept of morphologies is an insistence on the imaginary body, the body culturally produced, the body already mediated by language and filtered through the vector of fantasy, image, representation. If, as Irigaray argues, a phallomorphic logic of unity, solidity, identity prevails in Western metaphysics, these works abstract the body from the underpinnings of re-presentation, utilizing material, spatial and textural elements to propose alternative morphologies through which other possible modes of comprehending the meanings and powers of embodiment may emerge. As Gatens

has described, "morphological descriptions of the body construct the body as an active, desiring body since the form of the body is its being, its form is its desiring"(58) The forms so produced, in the objects of my study, are ones that reference allusively particular aspects of a dualistic patriarchally-coded visual heritage, only to unbalance and subvert it: in Mary Scott's 'paintings', as an unruly semiotic pulse that destabilizes the borders and boundaries of the visual field; in Martha Townsend's orbs and wedges, as a subversive miming of the icons of a pure rationality through a repetition enveloped in a seductive 'flesh'; in Anne Ramsden's *Dress!* through the fetish-commodity as an object of dispossession, of the unruly 'impossible' of feminine desire; in the drawings of Cathy Daley, the residue 'stain' of the Real of the body as the defile of the image, as the figuring of the ambivalent resistance to/allure of the feminine body-ideal or imago.

Chapter Four operates a shift in emphasis from a psycho-linguistic model of subject formation to highlight the potential and import of spatial representations in the production of personal and social experience. Material spaces (of the gallery and other public sites) become enacted metaphoric spaces through the physical movement, and imaginative participation,

within them of the spectator. The spatialities the works compose bring to bear crosscultural questions about the 'spaces' of women's lives and how these converge with the spaces of representation. Against a conceptual divide between time and space, the works spatialize time and temporalize space through the material layering of histories, through the creation of 'places' within 'spaces' which serve as sites of counter-memory and are fluid spaces of/for alternative patterns of identification and remembrance, through the use of physical markers which bear the traces of bodies and histories within them, through the evocation of corporealities endowed with memory. The work of Fleming and Lapointe, sited within buildings whose built architectural spaces embody the logic of specific power relations, open these abandoned buildings to the a-logic of abandon, of graceful dis-possession; Rebecca Belmore's spatial enactment of a traditional native 'sharing circle' invites the spectator to imaginatively negotiate a 'common ground' with her Ojibwa community, to traverse boundaries of identity, to share their own stories; Faye HeavyShield's spatial morphologies create a modelling of diversity within semblance, of differences that connect, of an alterity within, and between, that does not disunite. The works create spaces

from within which difference can be spoken.

The works that form the corpus of my thesis both draw upon and serve to constitute specific insights, experiences, histories and desires from the enunciative position of/as women. They advance positions and perspectives not realizable from within a neutral or universal account of social existence: rather, they are partial and partisan.

Dwelling

Luce Irigaray has posed a question at once resonant and poignant: "Où et comment habiter?", where and how to dwell. It is a summary phrasing of women's homelessness, *déréliction*, within patriarchal structures of existence and a galvanizing call for the creation of places, spaces and ethos of living (within) which women can abide.

What can feminist art practices bring to bear upon such a project? What can the 'bodies' of art contribute to an understanding of the powers and potentials of our lived embodiment? How do the spaces specific to art - its sitedness, its internal spatialities - intersect critically with the spaces of social existence?

'Dwelling' suggests a subject-who-dwells. My thesis focuses attention on the means through which the

symbolizations that are the object of my study turn upon women's negotiations and re-imag(in)ings of the terms of social existence. 'Dwelling' as a term implies embodiment as its precondition. In my study, the poetics of the body compose alternatives to the 'ready-made' images, symbols, metaphors and representations that govern how we come to comprehend our social, gendered bodies. They intervene into the syntax of language, conceptions of space, and the politics of memory to convey particular understandings of our situatedness, and so create a new possibility and language of 'dwelling' - of embodied, located, multivalent existence.

Introducing the multi-dimensional metaphor of dwelling to a discussion of the poetics of the body enables an understanding of these practices in terms of their active socio-ethical engagements and their import as *materialized* theoretical interventions into the social imaginary of embodiment, with discursive and imaginary meaning-effects.

If poststructuralist thought has nominated language as the primary abode of the subject, the concept of 'dwelling' argues the further dimension of spatiality to foreground, as it were, the thickness of the coordinates of our lives. These works encompass several social

vectors: the exilic position of women in the differentials of language and the productive potential of a visual/spatial syntax to at once critique and mitigate this exilic position; space as an important dimension of the tissue of sociality, incorporating discursive, imaginary and social space, and intersecting with the meaning effects produced through the spatial values of art; and the unconscious dimensions of identity, thoroughly imbricated with corporeality.

This thesis proposes that feminist art practices have been important sites through which to construct, through material form, imaginary 'spaces' and 'places', shelters of entry, abiding and articulation which counter the *déréliction* and un-home-edness Irigaray describes. These 'materialized' imaginary spaces, within concrete places (of art gallery and exhibition sites) rejoin other social spaces and critical sites that women have developed in culture.

The poetics of the body in these practices are a means of 'linking' art to life. They encompass the histories of a past, they embody understandings already altered in the present, and they imagine 'forward'.

REFERENCES

Gallop, Jane, "The American Other", in Reading Lacan, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Gatens, Moira, Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)

Grosz, Elizabeth, Volatile Bodies. Toward a Corporeal Feminism, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994)

-----"Où et comment habiter?", (*Cahiers du Grif* 26, March, 1883, pp.139-43), cited in Whitford (1991).

Laing, Carol, "(K)ein Vergleich: Different, and the Same", (K)ein Vergleich, (catalogue), (Lethbridge: Southern Alberta Art Gallery, 1996)

Whitford, Margaret, "Ethics, Sexuality and Embodiment", in Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 149-169

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Parveen, and Elizabeth Cowie, eds., The Woman in Question, (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1990)
- Anzaldúa, Gloria, Borderlands/La Frontera, The New Mestiza, (San Francisco: Spinsters/aunt lute, 1987)
- Apter, Emily & William Pietz, eds, Fetishism as Cultural Discourse, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993)
- Baele, Nancy, "Artist creates from experiences", *The Ottawa Citizen*, (April 13, 1994)
- Baert, Renee, "Objects In Advance of the Concept", *Canadian Art*, (spring 1990)
- Barthes, Roland, The Pleasure of the Text, trans. Richard Miller, (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974)
- , "The Death of the Author", in Image-Music-Text, trans. Stephen Heath, (London: Fontana Paperbacks, 1977), pp. 142-48
- Battersby, Christine, Gender and Genius, Towards a Feminist Aesthetics, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989)
- Baudrillard, Jean, Simulations, trans. Paul foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman, New York: Semiotext(e), 1983)
- Beatty, Greg, "Faye HeavyShield, Venus As Torpedo", *Espace 14* (hiver/winter 1995-6)
- Benjamin, Andrew and Osborne, Peter, eds., Thinking Art: Beyond Traditional Aesthetics, (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1991)
- Benjamin, Jessica, The Bonds of Love: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and the Problem of Domination, (New York: Pantheon, 1988)
- Best, Sue, "Sexualizing Space", in Grosz and Probyn (1995b), pp.181-195

Betterton, Rosemary, Intimate Distance: Women, Artists and The Body, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)

Bhabba, Homi, "The third space: interview with Homi Bhabba", in J. Rutherford, ed., Identity: Community, Culture, Difference, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990)

Bradley, Jessica, "Mary Scott", (Parachute 77, October-October-December 1993), pp. 58-59

----, and Johnstone, Lesley, eds., Sightlines, Reading Contemporary Canadian Art, (Montreal:Artextes editions, 1994)

Braidotti, Rosi, Patterns of Dissonance, (Oxford: Polity Press, 1991)

-----, Nomadic Subjects, Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Brennan, Teresa, "Introduction", in Teresa Brennan, ed., Between Feminism and Psychoanalysis, (London and New York: Routledge, 1989)

Brodribb, Somer, Nothing Mat(t)ers: A Feminist Critique of Postmodernism, (Melbourne: Spinifex, 1992)

Burgin, Victor, The End of Art Theory, Criticism and Postmodernity, (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1986)

----, James Donald & Cora Kaplan, eds., Formations of Fantasy, (London and New York: Methuen, 1986)

Burke, Carolyn, Naomi Schor, Margaret Whitford, eds., Engaging With Irigaray: Feminist Philosophy and Modern European Thought, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Butler, Judith, Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity, (New York and London: Routledge, 1990)

----, and Scott, Joan W., Eds., Feminists Theorize the Political, (New York and London: Routledge, 1992)

-----, Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex", (New York and London: Routledge, 1993)

-----, with Rosi Braidotti, "Feminism By Any Other Name", *differences*, (summer-fall 1994) pp.27-62

Chadwick, Whitney, Women, Art, and Society, (London: Thames and Hudson, 1990)

Chicago, Judy, Through The Flower: my struggle as a woman artist, (New York: Doubleday, 1977)

Cixous, Hélène, La Jeune Née (en collaboration avec Catherine Clément), (Paris: UGE, 1975), cited in Moi (1985)

-----, "Castration or decapitation?", trans. Annette Kuhn, *Signs*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1981, pp. 41-55

----, "The Laugh of the Medusa", eds., Marks, and de Courtivan (1980)

----, "Coming to Writing" and Other Essays, ed. Deborah Jenson, transl. S. Cornell, D. Jenson, A. Liddle, S. Sellers, (Cambridge, Mass. And London: Harvard University Press, 1991)

----, "Preface", in Susan Sellers, ed. (1994), pp.xv-xxvi

Clark, Janet, She: A Roomful of Women, (catalogue), (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Arts Center, 1993)

Clark, Kenneth, The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art, (London: Johnb Murray, 1956)

Colomina, Beatriz, ed., Sexuality & Space, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992)

Cooke, Lynne & Woolen, Peter, Visual Display, Culture Beyond Appearance, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995)

Cowie, Elizabeth, "Woman as Sign", in Parveen Adams and Elizabeth Cowie, eds. (1990), pp. 117-134

De Beauvoir, Simone, The Second Sex, trans. H.M. Parshley, (New York: Random House, 1952)

De Certeau, Michel, The Practice of Everyday Life, trans. Steven Rendall, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1984)

De Lauretis, Teresa, "Desire in Narrative", in Alice Doesn't: Feminism, Semiotics, Cinema, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984)

-----, ed., Feminist Studies/Critical Studies, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986)

-----, Technologies of Gender, Essays on Theory, Film and Fiction, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987)

-----, "Eccentric Subjects: Feminist Theory and Historical Consciousness", *Feminist Studies* 16, (no. 1, Spring 1990), pp. 115-50

-----, The Practice of Love: Lesbian Sexuality and Perverse Desire, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994)

Deutsche, Rosalyn: "Men in Space", *Artforum*, (February 1980)

Diamond, Nicole, "Biology", in Elizabeth Wright, ed, Feminism and Psychoanalysis, A Critical Dictionary, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992)

Doan, Laura, ed., The Lesbian Postmodern, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994)

Doane, Mary Ann, The Desire To Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s, (Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1987)

Dollimore, Jonathan, Sexual Dissidence, Augustin to Wilde, Freud to Foucault, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991)

Douglas, Mary, Purity and Danger, An analysis of the concepts of pollution and taboo, (London and New York: Routledge, 1966)

Duplessis, Rachel Blau, "Beyond the Hard Invisible Horizon", in Writing Beyond the Ending: Narrative Strategies of Twentieth-Century Women Writers, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985)

Ecker, Gisela, ed., Feminist Aesthetics, trans., Harriet Anderson, (London: The Women's Press, 1985)

Erens, Patricia, ed., Issues in Feminist Film Criticism, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990)

Evans, Caroline & Thornton, Minna, Women & Fashion, A New Look, (London, New York: Quartet Books, 1989)

Felman, Shoshana, Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight, Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1987)

Felshin, Nina, "Clothing as Subject", (*Art Bulletin*, vol. 54, no. 1, spring 1995)

Felski, Rita, Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989

Ferris, Alison, "Discursive Dress", in Discursive Dress, (catalogue), (Sheboygen: John Michael Kohler Arts Center, 1994), pp. 1-17

Fisher, Jennifer, (*Parachute* 48, fall 1987) pp. 59-60,

Flax, Jane, Thinking Fragments, Psychoanalysis, Feminism & Postmodernism in the Contemporary West, Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford, University of California Press, 1990

Fleming, Martha, Studiolo, (Windsor: Art Gallery of Windsor, 1997)

Fletcher, John & Andrew Benjamin, Abjection, Melancholia And Love, The work of Julia Kristeva, London and New York: Routledge, 1988

Foilland, Tom, "Social subjects, public subjects", Social Spaces (catalogue), (Toronto: YYZ Artists' Outlet, 1993)

Foster, Hal, ed., Vision and Visuality, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988)

-----, The Return of the Real, The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century, (Cambridge, Mass and London: The MIT Press, 1996)

Foucault, Michel, Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews & Other Writings, 1972-1977, ed. Colin Gordon, (New York: Pantheon, 1972)

-----, "The Subject and Power", *Critical Inquiry* 8
(Summer 1982):777-795

-----, "Of Other Spaces", *diacritics*, (spring 1986)

-----, Technologies of the Self, A Seminar with Michel Foucault, ed. L. Martin, H. Gutman, P. Hutton, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988)

Frosh, Stephen, "Time, Space and Otherness", in Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift, eds., Mapping The Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995)

Frueh, Joanna, Langer, Cassandra L., & Raven, Arlene, eds., New Feminist Criticism: Art/Identity/Action, New York: Harper Collins, 1994)

Gallop, Jane, Reading Lacan, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985)

-----, Thinking Through The Body, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988)

Gamman, Lorraine & Merja Makinen, Female Fetishism, A New Look, (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1994)

Gatens, Moira, Imaginary Bodies: Ethics, Power and Corporeality, (London and New York: Routledge, 1996)

Gilroy, Paul, "'It ain't where you're from it's where you're at'. The dialectics of diasporic identification", *Third Text* 13, (winter, 1991)

Godard, Barbara, ed., Collaboration in the Feminine, Writings and Women and Culture from Tessera, (Toronto: Second Story Press, 1994)

Gpgarty, Amy, "The Embodied Viewer", (*Parachute* 63, July-July-September 1991), pp. 43-44

Goldstein, Laurence, ed., The Female Body, Figures, Styles, Speculations, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1991)

Gouma-Peterson, Thalia and Patricia Mathews, "The Feminist Critique of Art History", (*The Art Bulletin*, vol. LXIX, no. 3, Sept. 1987)

Greene, Gayle & Kahn, Coppelia, eds., Changing Subjects, The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

Grossberg, Lawrence & Nelson, Cary & Treicher, Paula, eds., Cultural Studies, (New York and London: Routledge, 1992)

Grosz, Elizabeth, Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists, (St. Leonard's: Allen & Unwin, 1989)

-----, Jacques Lacan: A Feminist Introduction, (New York and London: Routledge, 1990)

-----, "Julia Kristeva, in Elizabeth Wright, ed, Feminism and Psychoanalysis, A Critical Dictionary, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992)

-----, Volatile Bodies, Toward a Corporeal Feminism, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994)

-----, Space, Time and Perversion, (New York and London: Routledge, 1995)

-----, & Elspeth Probyn, eds., Sexy Bodies: the strange carnalities of feminism, (London and New York: Routledge, 1995)

Hanson, Karen, "Dressing down dressing up", in Hein and Korsmeyer, eds., (1993)

Haraway, Donna, "A Manifesto for Cyborgs: Science, Technology, and Socialist Feminism in the 1980s", (*Socialist Review*, vol. 15, no. 80, 1985) 5-52

----, Simians, Cyborgs and Women, (London: Free Association Books, 1990)

Hatt, Gordon, "Modern Romance: Carlo Cesta's 'Romance Language'", (*C magazine*, #51, October-December 1996)

Haug, Frigga, ed., Female Sexualization, (London: Verso, 1987)

Hein, Hilde & Korsmeyer, Carolyn, eds., Aesthetics in Feminist Perspective, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993)

Hill, Tom, "Beyond History", in Beyond History, (catalogue), eds. Karen Duffel and Tom Hill, (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1989)

Hirsch, Marianne & Keller, Evelyn Fox, eds., Conflicts in Feminism, (New York and London: Routledge, 1990)

Hollander, Anne, Seeing Through Clothes, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1993)

Hooper, Barbara and Edward Soja, "The Spaces That Difference Makes", in Keith & Pile, eds., (1993)

hooks, bell, Talking Back: thinking feminist, thinking black, (Boston: Sheba Feminist Publishers, 1989)

----, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness", in Yearning: race, gender and cultural politics, (Toronto: Between The Lines, 1990)

----, Art on My Mind: Visual Politics, (New York: The New Press, 1995)

Houle, Robert, Heart, Hoof, Horn, (exhibition brochure), Glenbow Art Gallery, (Calgary: Glenbow Alberta Institute, 1993)

Huyssen, Andreas, After The Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986)

----, Twilight Memories, Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia, New York and London: Routledge, 1995

Hyde, Lewis, The Gift, Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property, (New York: Vintage Books, 1979)

Irigaray, Luce, "Où et comment habiter?", (*Cahiers du Grif* 26, March, 1983, pp. 139-43), cited in Whitford (1991)

----, Speculum of the Other Woman, trans. Gillian Gill, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

-----, This Sex Which Is Not One, trans. Catherine Porter, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985)

-----, Sexes and Genealogies, trans. Gillian Gill, New York: Columbia University Press, 1993)

-----, An Ethics of Sexual Difference, transl. Carolyn Burke and Gillian Gill, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993)

Isaak, Jo Anna, The Ruin of Representation in Modernist Art and Texts (Ann Arbor:UMI Research Press, 1986)

Jaggar, Alison and Susan Bordo, eds., Gender/Body/Knowledge/Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1989)

Jameson, Fredric, Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism, (London: Verso, 1991)

Jardine, Alice A., Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985)

Jay, Martin, Downcast Eyes, The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth-Century French Thought, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1994)

Jones, Amelia, Postmodernism and the En-Gendering of Marcel Duchamp, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994)

Keith, Michael and Steve Pile, Place and the Politics of Identity, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

Kelly, Mary, "Re-viewing Modernist Criticism", in Brian Wallis, ed., Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation, (New York: New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984)

Kemal, Salim and Ivan Gaskell, eds., The Language of Art History, (Cambridge, New York, Port Chester, Melbourne, Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1991)

Kirby, Vicki, "Corporeal Habits: Addressing Essentialism Differently", (*Hypatia*, vol. 6, no. 3, Fall 1991), pp. 4-22

Knauft, Bruce M., "Bodily Images in Melanesia: Cultural Substances and Natural Metaphors", in Michel Feher, ed., Fragments for a History of the Human Body, Part Three, (New York: Zone, 1989), pp. 192-280

Kolbowski, Silvia and Mignon Nixon, eds., feminist issueS, (October 71, winter 1995)

Kristeva, Julia, La Révolution du langage poétique. L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle. Lautréamont et Mallarmé, Paris: Seuil, 1974, first part translated as Revolution in Poetic Language, transl. Margaret Waller, New York: Columbia University Press, 1984

-----, Powers of Horror, An Essay on Abjection, trans. Leon Roudiez, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982)

-----, The Kristeva Reader, ed., Toril Moi, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986)

-----, Abjection, Melancholia and Love, ed., John Gletcher and Andrew Benjamin (London and New York: Routledge, 1990)

Kroker, Arthur and Marilouise, eds., Body Invaders: panic sex in America, (Montréal: New World Perspectives, CultureTexts Series, 1987)

Lacan, Jacques, "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I, in Ecrits, A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 1977)

----, The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Norton, 1978)

-----, Feminine Sexuality, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose, trans., Jacqueline Rose, (New York and London, W. W. Norton and Pantheon Books, 1985)

Laing, Carol, "How Can We Speak To Painting?", (C Magazine, no. 25, 1990)

----, "(K)ein Vergleich: Different, and the Same", (K)ein Vergleich, (catalogue), Lethbridge: Southern Alberta Art Gallery, 1996)

----, Picture Theory, (catalogue), (Toronto: YYZ Artists' Outlet, 1995)

Laplanche, Jean, Life & Death in Psychoanalysis, trans., Jeffrey Mehlman, (Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976)

-----, New Foundations for Psychoanalysis, trans., David Macey, (Oxford and Cambridge, Basil Blackwell, 1989)

-----, Seduction, Translation, Drives, (London, Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1992)

Lechte, John, Julia Kristeva, (London and New York: Routledge, 1990)

Lefebvre, Henri, The Production of Space, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, (Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991)

Lemecka, Vera, The Embodied Viewer, (catalogue), (Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1991)

----, Venus as Torpedo (catalogue), (Regina: Dunlop Art Gallery, 1995)

Lingis, Alphonso, Foreign Bodies, (New York and London: Routledge, 1994)

Louder, Barbara, In You More Than You (exhibition brochure), Halifax: Mt. St. Vincent University Gallery, 1991)

MacCannell, Juliet Flower and Zakarin, Laura, eds., Thinking Bodies, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994)

Mariani, Philomena, ed., Critical Fictions, The Politics of Imaginative Writing, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991)

Marks, Elaine and Isabelle de Courtivron, New French Feminisms, (New York: Schocken, 1980)

Massey, Doreen, "Politics and Space/Time", in Keith and Pile, eds., (1993, pp. 141-162)

-----, Space, Place, and Gender, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994)

McCance, Dawne, "Lécriture limite: Kristeva's Postmodern Feminist Ethics" (*Hypathia*, vol. 11, no. 2, spring 1996), pp. 141-160

Milan Women's Bookstore Collective, Sexual Difference, A Theory of Social-symbolic Practice, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1987)

Miller, Nancy K., "Changing The Subject: Authorship, Writing, and the Reader", in Teresa de Lauretis, ed. (1986)

-----, Getting Personal: Feminist Occasions and Other Autobiographical Acts, (New York and London: Routledge, 1991)

Minh-ha, Trinh T., Woman Native Other, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989)

Mitchell, Juliet, Psychoanalysis and Feminism, Freud, Reich, Laing, and Women, (New York: Vintage Books, 1975)

Moi, Toril, Sexual/Textual Politics, (London and New York: Methuen, 1985)

-----, ed., The Kristeva Reader, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986)

Moore, Catriona, ed., Dissonance, Feminism and the Arts 1970-90, (St. Leonard's, Australia: Artspace, 1994)

Mulvey, Laura, "Visual pleasure and narrative cinema", (*Screen*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1975)

----, "Impending time", Mary Kelly, Interim (catalogue), Edinburgh: The Fruitmarket Gallery, Cambridge: Kettle's Yard and London: Riverside Studios, 1986)

Murphy, Mike, "Intuition Before Order: A Conversation with Faye HeavyShield", *Artichoke*, (Fall 1993)

Nead, Lynda, The Female Nude: Art, Obscenity and Sexuality, (London and New York: Routledge, 1992)

Nemiroff, Diane, "Project Building/Caserne #14, *Vanguard*, (April 1983)

Neuman, Shirley and Stephenson, Glennis, eds., ReImagining Women, Representations of Women in Culture, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1993)

Phelan, Peggy, Unmarked, The Politics of Performance, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

Pollock, Griselda, Vision & Difference, Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art, (London and New York: Routledge, 1988)

Probyn, Elspeth, Sexing The Self: Gendered Positions in Cultural Studies, (London and New York: Routledge, 1993)

----, Outside Belongings, (New York and London: Routledge, 1996)

Randolph, Jeanne, "Quotations, imagos, back again: an interview with Mary Scott, (C magazine 24, winter 1990), pp. 34-39

----, Psychoanalysis and Synchronized Swimming, and other writings on art, Toronto: YYZ Books, 1991)

Raven, Arlene, Langer, Cassandra, Frueh, Joanna, eds., Feminist Art Criticism, an anthology, (New York: Icon Editions, 1988)

Regan, Stephen, The Politics of Pleasure: Aesthetics and Cultural Theory, (Buckingham, Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1992)

Rich, Adrienne, Of Woman Born, (New York: Norton, 1976)

Rose, Jacqueline, Sexuality in the Field of Vision, (London, New York: Verso, 1986), pp.141-164

Rose, Gillian, Feminism & Geography, The Limits of Geographical Knowledge, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993)

Ross, Christine, "Je vais vous raconter une histoire de fantômes, vidéos de Nelson Henricks", catalogue, (Montreal: les éditions Oboro, 1995)

Sappington, Rodney & Stallings, Tyler, eds., Uncontrollable Bodies, Testimonies of Identity and Culture, (Seattle: Bay Press, 1994)

Sarup, Madan, An Introductory Guide to Post Structuralism and Postmodernism, (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1989)

Saunders, Gill, The Nude, a new perspective, (London: The Herbert Press, 1989)

Scarry, Elaine, Resisting Representation, (New York, Oxford: Oxford University press, 1994)

Schilder, Paul, The Image and Appearance of the Human Body, (Newark: International University Press, 1978)

Schor, Naomi, Reading in Detail, Aesthetics and the Feminine, (New York and London: Routledge, 1989)

----, & Weed, Elizabeth, eds., The Essential Difference, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994)

Silverman, Kaja, The Subject of Semiotics, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983)

----, "Fragments of a Fashionable Discourse", in Tania Modleski, ed., Studies in Entertainment, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986)

-----, The Acoustic Mirror: The Female Voice in Psychoanalysis and Cinema, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988)

Spivak, Gayatri, "French Feminism in an International Frame", In Other Worlds, Essays in Cultural Politics, (New York and London: Routledge, 1988)

-----, The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues, (New York and London: Routledge, 1990)

Suleiman, Susan Rubin, "(Re)Writing the Body: The Politics and Poetics of Female Eroticism", in Susan Suleiman, ed., The Female Body in Western Culture, Contemporary Perspectives, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1985)

-----, "Writing Past the Wall", in Deborah Jensen, ed. (1991)

-----, Risking Who One Is, Encounters with Contemporary Art and Literature, (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1994)

Summers, David, "Conditions and conventions: on the disanalogy of art and language", in Kemal and Gaskell, eds., 1991

Tickner, Lisa, "The Body Politic: Female Sexuality and Women Artists Since 1970", (*Art History* 1, 1978)

Townsend-Gault, Charlotte, "Rebecca Belmore", in Diana Nemiroff, Robert Houle and Charlotte Townsend-Gault,

eds., Land, Spirit, Power, (Catalogue), Ottawa: national Gallery of Canada, 1993

Wallis, Brian, ed., Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation, (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art, 1984)

Watson, Scott, "Whose Nation Is It?", *Canadian Art*, (Spring 1993)

Whitford, Margaret, Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine, (London and New York: Routledge, 1991)

-----, ed., The Irigaray Reader, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991)

Wilson, Elizabeth, Adorned in Dreams, Fashion and Modernity, (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1985)

-----, The Sphinx in the City: Urban Life, the Control of Disorder, and Women, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991)

Wolf, Christa, The Fourth Dimension: Interviews with Christa Wolf, transl. Hilary Pilkington, (London and New York: Verso, 1987)

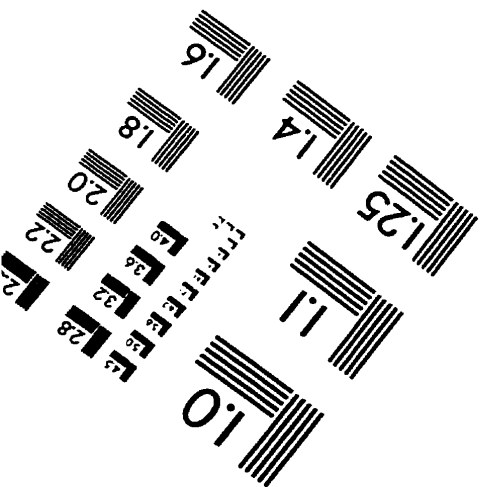
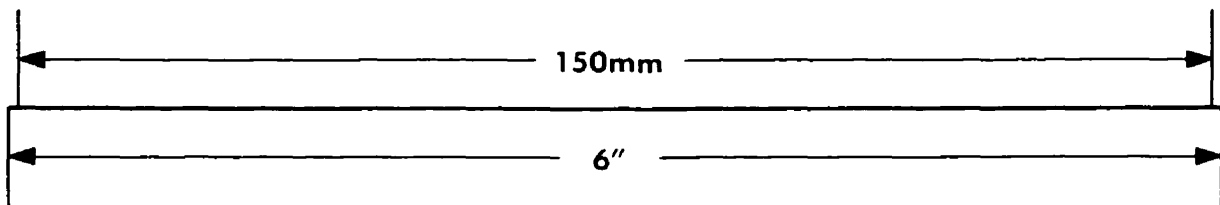
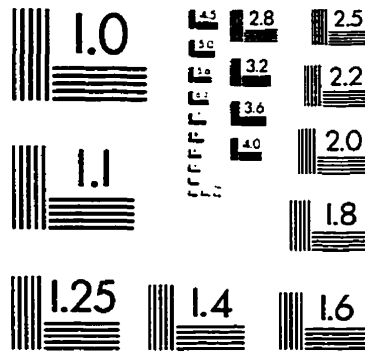
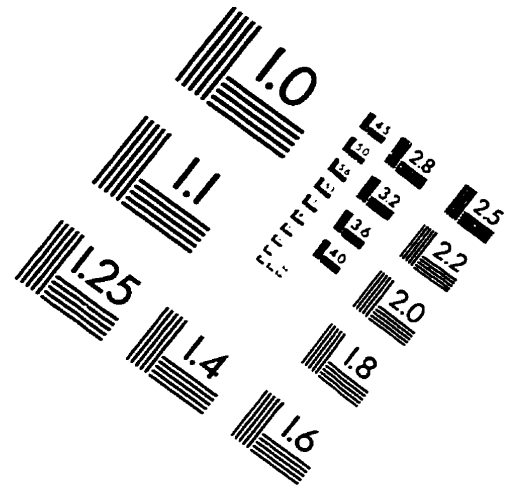
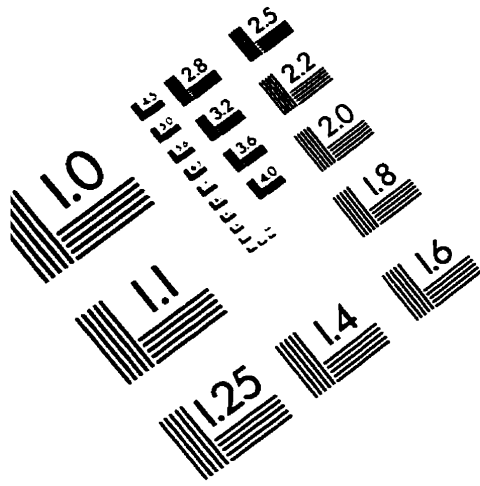
Wolff, Janet, Feminine Sentences: Essays on Women and Culture, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990)

Wright, Elizabeth, ed., Feminism and Psychoanalysis, A critical dictionary, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992)

Young, Iris Marion, Throwing Like a Girl and Other Essays in Feminist Philosophy and Social Theory, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990)

Ziarek, Ewa, "At the Limits of Discourse: Heterogeneity, Alterity, and the Maternal Body in Kristeva's Thought", (*Hypatia*, vol. 7, no. 2, spring 1992), pp. 91-112

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989

© 1993, Applied Image, Inc., All Rights Reserved

