



Provided by the author(s) and University of Galway in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite the published version when available.

Title	How can Utopia inform the understanding of works of visual and plastic art?
Author(s)	Matthews, Elizabeth
Publication Date	2017-02-15
Item record	http://hdl.handle.net/10379/6357

Downloaded 2024-05-01T21:26:54Z

Some rights reserved. For more information, please see the item record link above.



How Can Utopia Inform the Understanding of Works of Visual and Plastic Art?

Elizabeth Rose Matthews, AAS, BFA

Professor Timothy Emlyn Jones, Professor Áine Phillips, PhD
Professor Tom Moylan

Burren College of Art, College of Art, Social Sciences, and Celtic Studies;
National University of Ireland Galway
August, 2016

Table of Contents

DECLARATION	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	III
ABSTRACT	V
INTRODUCTION	1
PART I. DOCUMENTATION OF RESEARCH EXHIBITION	5
ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE PROJECT	7
KEY MOMENTS	15
RE-IMAGINING	27
PART II. ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL CRITICAL CONTEXT	37
INTRODUCTION TO PART II: HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL CONTEXT	38
KEY CONCEPTS AND BIOGRAPHIES	40
UTOPIAN THEME AND STRATEGY	47
DIFFERENT DISCOURSES	61
UTOPIAN ART AND ARTISTS	82
SUMMARY OF PART II.	103
PART III. STUDIO PROCESS	105
PART III. INTRODUCTION	107
THE METHODS, PRACTICE BASED RESEARCH	109
STUDIO PROCESS AND OUTCOMES	115
CONCLUSION	165
SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTION	166
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	168
APPENDIX A: WORK WITH LUCE IRIGARAY	170
BIBLIOGRAPHY	174

Declaration

I, the Candidate, certify that the Thesis is all my own work, and that I have not obtained a degree in this University or elsewhere on the basis of any of this work.

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial 'E'.

Elizabeth Matthews, 18 July 2016

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the people whose contributions have made this work possible. First, a big thank you to Professor Luce Irigaray who invited me to participate in her seminar for PhD students in 2013, which she holds so generously each summer, and who then invited me to present an exhibition of my work the following summer, providing mentoring via a collaboration with myself and two other artists who I also thank, Michaela Miese and Meghan Hedley. Under her tutelage we investigated art and mothers, and the mother-daughter relationship. I thank Professor Irigaray also for endorsing my consideration of the utopian aspect of her work in my project, about which she concurred: ‘I am utopic by constraint’, and for her publication of the paper I presented on her website: ‘Utopia of Difference’ included in appendix A of this document.

I thank the University of Bristol for sponsoring my participation in the Luce Irigaray summer seminar for PhD students and the University of Warwick for hosting a display of works from the doctoral research project. I thank the Iniscealtra Festival of Arts, Gallery 126, and Goldsmith University Pro-create Project at the Women’s Art Library, for their commissioning and inclusion of my work in their projects. I thank the Backloft in Dublin, and the Dublin Live Art Festival for commissioning work, which I developed in collaboration with performance artist John Freeman whom I also thank.

I thank the members of the Aesthetic Group of Dublin: Jeanette Doyle, Mick O’Hare, Colm Desmond, Catherine O’Carroll, Clodagh Emoe, and Connell Vaughan; I thank GradCam’s director, Noel Fitzpatrick, for the related sponsorship of the group which provided much needed research activity including the collaborative writing of two articles now published in GradCam’s peer reviewed journal *In Print*.

I thank my supervisors for their invaluable guidance and support throughout the project: Timothy Emlyn Jones, Áine Phillips, and Tom Moylan. I thank Mary Hawkes Greene and the Burren College of Art for support. I thank NUIG and the Hardiman Library graduate student support and writer support teams. I thank my colleagues Jill Miller and Mollie Douhit over the past five years for camaraderie and support. I thank Eileen Hutton who paved the way for the PhD program at BCA and offered invaluable advice. I thank Robert Ellis for excellent technical and library support. I thank Martina Buesnick and Ann Hogan who provide support and encouragement as well as great food to all at BCA. Thank you also to all the faculty and staff of BCA, especially Martina Cleary who gave advice so generously at the start, and Conor McGrady who came in when help was needed at the finish. I thank the many artists in residence who gave their thoughts and input, too numerous to mention, but I will especially name Mira Cantor, Sharon Cosgrove, Kate Geddes and Connie Fu, who kept me going during summer 2016 in the final push to get finished; I thank Angel Carey and Ashleigh Downey, who did the same. I thank Sarah Quick who helped me through with so much moral support. I thank my miraculous installation helpers Betty Connelly and Judy Higgins.

I thank my daughters, Paula, Jackie, Katie, Bridget, and Rose, who stood by me through these years. I thank my mother Katherine, and my brother David, along with thanks in memory of our aunt Jonah, who gave support along the way and always showed care. I thank my late husband Billy Matthews, who gave so much, and keeps giving through many great and mysterious ways, and all his family who are now my family too: Linda and David, Mary and Christina, Bob and Colleen, together with all the Matthews in spirit. I dedicate special thanks in memory of Donna, Billy, Beanie and Bill Matthews.

Abstract

This project explores the production of visual art, utopian studies, and the interpretation of the works of Luce Irigaray, through a body of artwork that embodies and demonstrates perceptions of utopia as informing strategies for critique and re-imagining aspects of society. The explorations led to the discovery of a common liminal (Van Gennep) character in the concept of utopia and the utopian element as enmeshed with the desire for a better way of being (Ruth Levitas); the concept of 'transitional phenomena' of object relations theory as pertaining to art (Donald Winnicott); and the idea of the 'sensible transcendental' in considering twoness of being (Luce Irigaray). These contributions are embodied in and represented by the body of work and explained in the written dissertation that accompanies and supports the body of work

Introduction

I will argue that utopia, the sensible transcendental, and transitional phenomena share a common liminal quality. The purpose of this enquiry was to study the condition under which the utopian impulse can be used and understood in and through the production of works of visual art. The analysis of observations will demonstrate that utopia, the sensible transcendental, and transitional phenomena share a common liminal quality. From this analysis, a new understanding of utopia and contemporary art practice is gained.

In Part I, Documentation of Research Exhibition, photographs of the installation of the works of art installed in the research exhibition presented. The works are analysed in part III. The works in the research exhibition are the body of work that embodies the contribution to new understanding. The body of work consists of three groupings. The first grouping is a selection from the archive of the project. The second grouping is a series of drawings and sculptures. The third grouping is a series of paintings with mixed media sculptural elements. Together the groupings form a single body of work.

Part II of the thesis outlines the historical and critical context. The concept of utopia, the field of utopian visual art, the utopian aspect of the work of Luce Irigaray, and Donald Winnicott's idea of transitional phenomena are explored. These are the areas of interest in which the research is situated. Art research is, by its very nature, interdisciplinary. In this art research project the discourses of psychoanalytic theory, philosophy, and political theory, although by no means mastered, are utilised in critical analysis of the works of art. Thus an interdisciplinary approach provides vocabulary, thinkers and concepts, enabling the discourse generated by the project.

The main concepts that emerged in a specific way in the project are the concept of utopia, the concept of the sensible transcendental, and the concept of transitional phenomena. These concepts are defined, explaining how and why they are used in the analysis in part III. Terms which might otherwise suffer from confusing, multiple definitions, are explained in terms of how they are used, and by which definition, in the project. These terms include: patriarchy, liminality, art, female, male, man, woman, feminine, masculine.

Biographical introductions are provided for the main thinkers who influenced the project. Their ideas informed the research in the studio. The thinkers are Luce Irigaray and Donald Winnicott. Both have a psychoanalytic background, and both have interdisciplinary approaches.

The concept of utopia as the theme of a better world is explained first by using the examples of Thomas More who coined the term utopia in 1516 and Plato who wrote *The Republic*. These examples show that both satire and utopian imagining comprise the utopian genre. Emergent concerns in utopian studies are discussed, chosen selectively per applicability to the concepts in the project. The idea that utopia can be considered dangerous or bad is contrasted with the idea of utopia as necessary and good. Of interest and focus is the relationship of utopia to reality and imagination. Utopia escapes the dichotomy of real and unreal, and emerges as an in-between mode or state of being. Utopian strategy, forms, functions and types are matters of discussion and debate in the field of utopian studies.

Luce Irigaray, utopian, and feminism(s) as plural, are discussed. These topics are discursively placed within the question how can a work of art be utopian and the consideration of the common liminal quality found in the three concepts of the project.

Dissensus, consensus and diversity are discussed. Utopia engages with political theory and can be seen in parallel to the work of prominent political theorists. Consideration of the work of philosopher Jaques Rancière provides an insight into the concept of utopia, aesthetics, and politics.

Bridging the physical and metaphysical divide is explained. Our western philosophical tradition is noted as habitually severing the head, or mind, from the body, to achieve transcendence. This entire project engages with a critique and re-imagining of that tradition. Hence the project concerns itself with the physical – meta-physical divide, offering alternative perceptions of a binary mode of thinking.

Utopian art, and artists are discussed. Utopia, as present in visual art, is traced from images of paradise in the Christian era, followed by modern images of a reconstitution of society, followed by post-structural critique, and contemporary re-imagining focused on the aim of this project. That aim culminated in a re-imagining of subjectivity as twoness of being in culture, critiquing and re-imagining labour, and self-becoming. The culmination includes re-

imagining pertaining to issues of the feminine, mother-daughter relations, social roles, and labour inequity regarding raising children and working in the art world. Specific examples of this later in the thesis include 1. *Stitched Piece* which re-imagines relationships between those who labour, and those who receive the products of the labour, as a relationship among equals (non-hierarchical), and 2. *Key Moments*, which re-imagine the male tradition of the art world from the perspective of a woman and mother.

The third part of the thesis introduces the studio process and describes the research methods and rationale. It analyses the outcomes of select works from the four years of doctoral research. Finally, it analyses the body of work comprising the research exhibition.

Part I. Documentation of Research Exhibition

Archaeology of the Project



1. Installation view 1, Archeology of the Project



2. Detail, Installation View 1, Archaeology of the Project



3. Installation View 2, Archaeology of the Project



4. Detail 1, Installation View 2, Archaeology of the Project



5. Detail 2, Installation View 2, Archeology of the Project



6. Detail 3, Installation View 2, Archeology of the Project



7. Detail 4, Installation View 2, Archaeology of the Project

Key Moments



8. Installation View 3, Key Moments



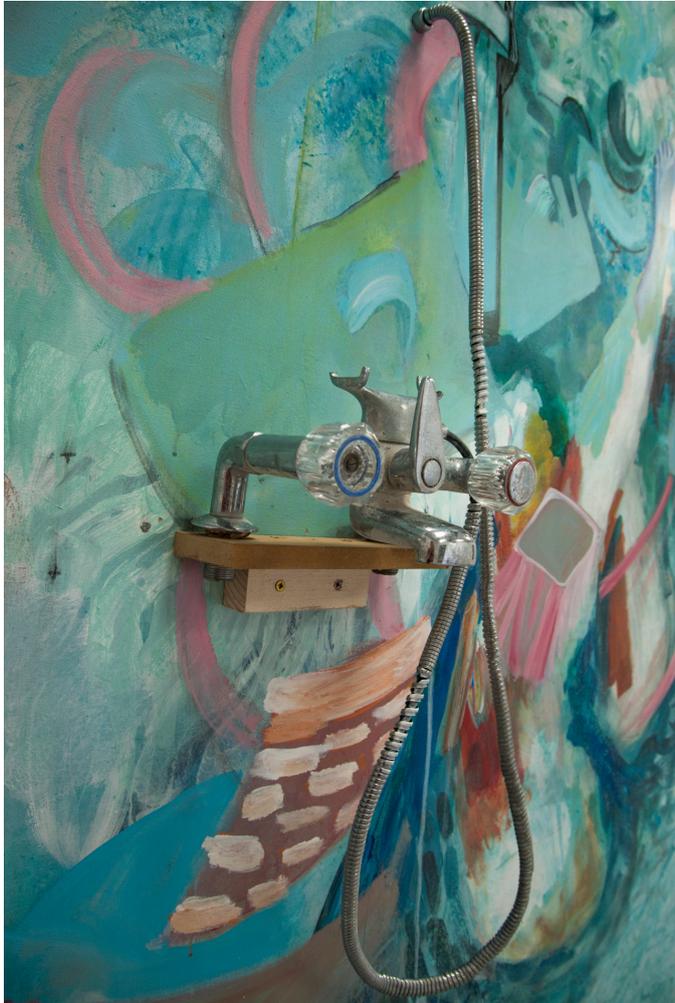
9. Detail 1, Installation View 3, Key Moments



10. Detail 2, Installation View 3, Key Moments



11. Detail 3, Installation View 3, Key Moments

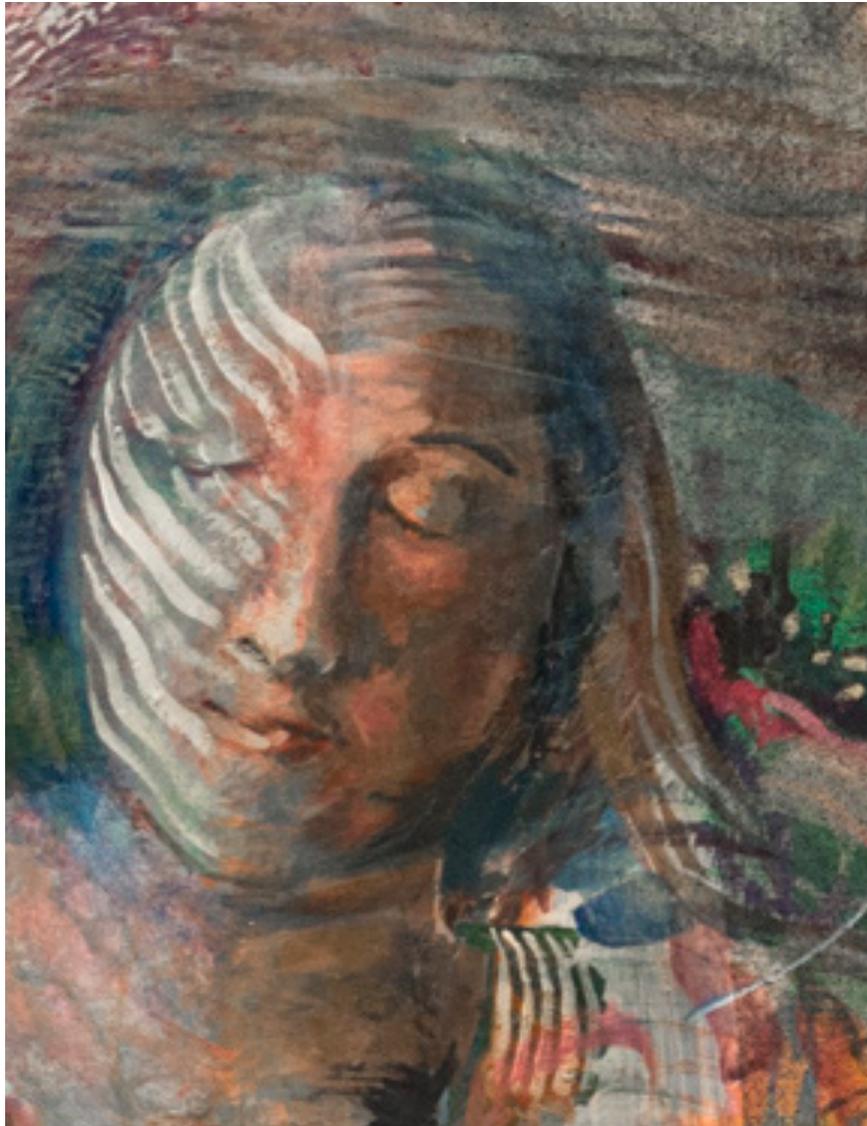


12. Detail 4, Installation View 4, Key Moments



Key Moments

13. Installation View 5, Key Moments



14. Detail 1, Installation View 5, Key Moments



15. Detail 2, Installation View 5, Key Moments



16. Detail 3, Installation View 5, Key Moments

Re-imagining



17. Installation View 7, Re-imagining



18. Detail 1, Installation View 7, Re-imagining



19. Installation View 8, Re-imagining



20. Installation View 9, Re-imagining



21. Installation View 10, Re-imagining



22. Installation View 11, Re-imagining



23. Installation View 12, Re-imagining



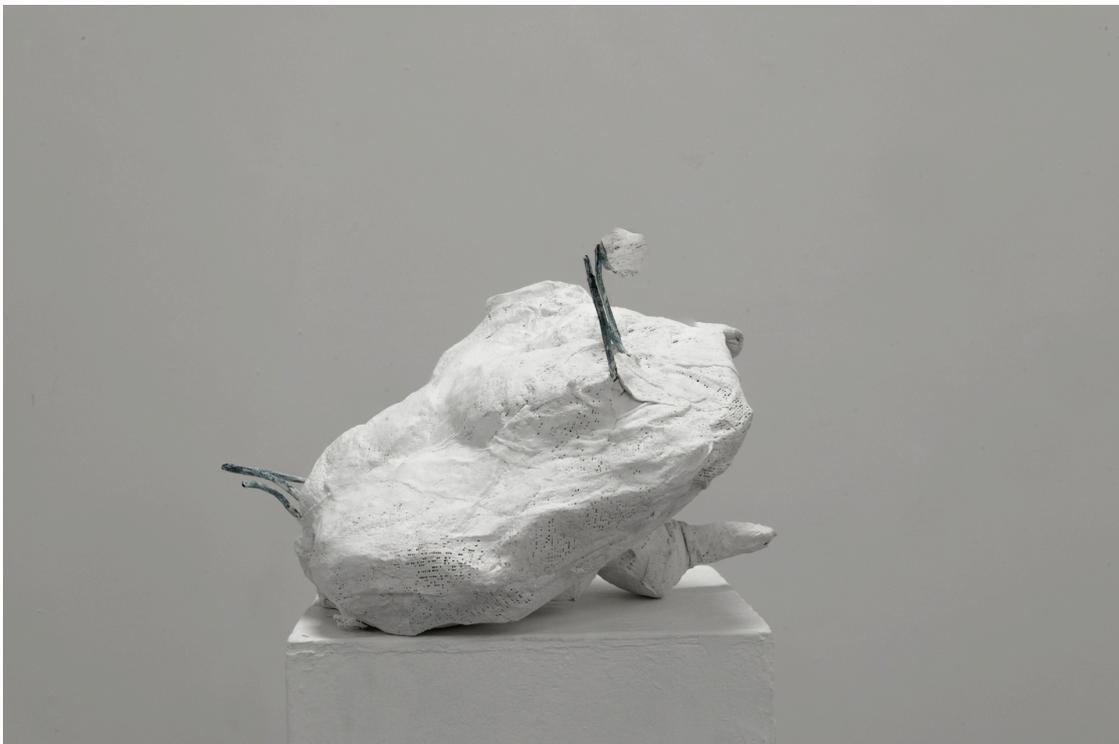
24. Installation View 13, Re-imagining



25. Installation View 14, Re-Imaginging



26. Installation View 15, Re-imagining



27. Installation View 18, Re-imagining

Utopia of Difference

**PhD Research Exhibition
Elizabeth Matthews
August 19, 2016**

**Opening remarks by
Margaretta D'Arcy**



28. Installation Views 19 – 24, *Utopia of Difference*, Opening of Research Exhibition, August, 2016

Part II. Analysis of Historical Critical Context

Introduction to Part II: Historical and Critical Context

This is the second part of the thesis, the reflective analysis of the theoretical and historical material, which informed and generated the studio work (just as the studio work informed and generated the scholarly research). Three key concepts emerged in the project: *the utopian element or aspect of art*, *transitional phenomena*, and *the sensible transcendental*. These are defined and it is explained how they are used in the discourse that follows. The terms patriarchy, and liminality, are used in a very specific way in the thesis, so they too are explained.

The theme of utopia as the desire for a better world is the starting point of the research. The desire for a better world is a constant throughout human existence, and some of the most salient examples of its expression in Western literature, Plato's *Republic*, and Thomas More's *Utopia*, are considered in relation to this project. The forms that utopian expressions take may change, but the core concept, the desire for a better world, is the same. It is this core that informs the work in this project. The work of Luce Irigaray and Donald Winnicott evidence this core and are originators of the two main concepts that emerge: Luce Irigaray as author of the idea of the sensible transcendental, and Donald Winnicott as author of the idea of transitional phenomena. They are situated in the discussion that follows. The concept of liminality originating with Van Gennep is also explained.

The utopian is discussed as strategy, form, function and type, concluding that understanding the utopian as a process, is crucial for the concept of utopia. As such, the utopian in relation to the thought of Luce Irigaray, and feminism are discussed. The utopian, and utopianism, are considered in terms of how they are situated within a larger feminist discourse.

Different discourses are drawn upon to analyse the work in the project. Psychoanalytic discourse is discussed, to show how and why it is relevant to the project. Psychoanalytic discourse has a political dimension, as do the concepts that flow from it. Dissensus (Rancière, 2013), consensus and diversity are discussed in this light, as important considerations for the utopian.

Philosophy is understood in this project to be the underlying source of the field of psychoanalysis, shaping its modes of conception, impacting our understanding of sexual difference¹. Thus both the background of psychoanalytic discourse and philosophy are drawn upon in discussing works of art that are utopian. Particularly of interest is the physical – metaphysical divide. It is important to understand how utopian art might bridge that gap, in light of the concepts of the sensible, the transcendental and transitional phenomena.

¹ Luce Irigaray (2004b.) develops the term sexual difference, which she explains as not only resulting 'from biological and social elements, but from another way of entering in relation to oneself, with the world, with the other(s).'

Key Concepts and Biographies

Art research is an interdisciplinary endeavour, and this can lead to confusion in word usage. Vocabulary across disciplines varies regarding word meaning, change and nuance. The ways in which various terms are used in this project are by no means definitive. Word usages differ elsewhere. In this project, however, the terms utopian element or utopian aspect, transitional phenomena, sensible transcendental, patriarchy, liminality, and all terms with reference to sex and gender (woman, man, male, female, masculine, feminine) are used in particular ways explained below, to help explore the concepts, which are the basis of the research.

The utopian, the utopian element, and the utopian aspect of art is used in this project to mean the quality in art that expresses desire for a better way of being (Levitas, R. 2010), a better way of being that is not yet available in our culture. The utopian element can be identified with the utopian aspect in any person, place or thing – not just with art. It is here noted that the ‘desire for a better way of being’ is a loose and open definition, mentioned some 30 times in the thesis, and as such might be considered too broad for use as a critical tool. However, this project finds that by using it as a starting point, the many sided and open qualities of the art produced in the project can be in fact be incorporated into the developing taxonomy of the project, and analysed with very specific outcomes.

Transitional phenomena is understood in this project to refer to an area of human experience between inner reality and the outside world which provides a space of mediation, possible via the art object, between the self and other(s) (Kuhn, 2013). Originating in Winnicott’s theories of child psychology, such an area of experience can occur as a pre-symbolic imaginary, and is crucial to human development, for becoming a self (Winnicott, 1971). It is thought to be the source of art, religion, and the ‘not-yet’, according to Donald Winnicott (1969).

Winnicott's theory of object relations is critiqued in feminist thought. He is criticised for his conception of destruction of the mother as a basis for selfhood and the division of the world into two distinct realms 'that take for granted and encourage[es] the economic and political weakness of caregivers...[and]establishes gender as [an] inescapable and natural identity that involves social liabilities.' (Gerson, 2004a, p.771). His theory of object relations is nonetheless understood here as a strategy for self-becoming by facilitating a mediating factor between nature and social construction. The strategy of object relation's theory applies to art objects as objects of mediation bringing together sensible and transcendental realms, thus exhibiting the same liminal quality as the utopian element, and without which neither the sensible transcendental nor the utopian aspect could be put into play. In short, art can play a role in self-becoming, and object relations theory offers an explanation as to why.

According to Winnicott's theory (1969, 1971) , objects or objects of attention perform mediation between inner and outer reality, vital to human development. Social Scientist and MIT Professor Sherry Turkle (2008, p. 301) in her essay *Objects Inspire* explains that:

Developmentally, Winnicott believes that the objects of the nursery (the stuffed animal, the favourite pillow) mediate between the child's sense of being part of the mother and of being an independent self. These objects leave traces that will mark the rest of an individual's life. The joint allegiance of transitional objects to self and external world demonstrates to the child that objects in the external world can be loved. Winnicott believes that during all stages of life, we continue to search for objects we can love, objects that we experience as both within and

outside ourselves. As adults, we divide our experience into an inner and outer realm'

In this project transitional phenomena of object relations theory is considered in relation to other concepts: the art object, the sensible transcendental described by Luce Irigaray, and utopia understood as the desire for a better way of being.

Luce Irigaray's concept of the sensible transcendental is understood in this project as an idea bringing together embodied experience with becoming a self (achieving subjectivity, subject-hood). It is a critique of a patriarchal model that understands self-becoming as occurring from an immaterial realm, by way of transcendence, and by way of destruction of the (m)other (Rawlinson, 2011). Irigaray theorist Laura Green (2012) explains:

The "sensible transcendental" stands for a mode of experience which emphasises the corporeal origins and conditions of existence – particularly in relation to the body of the mother – which have been occluded by phallogocentric modes of representation (in philosophy, psychoanalysis and religion).

Simply put, our Western tradition prioritizes the head over the heart, and the body. According to Green, Irigaray's sensible transcendental is a critique of Kant, Freud and Lacan, for whom transcendence occurs via a split of body or nature and mind. Furthermore, for Green, Irigaray's sensible transcendental is a re-shaping of Heidegger's 'Ereignis'² (Heidegger, 1969) as the event in which

²Of interest to this project in relation to in-between states. *Ereignis* is translated often as "an event," but is better understood in terms of something "coming into view." It comes from the German prefix, 'er-', comparable to 're-' in English, and *Auge*, eye (Polt 2006, p. 73). It is also understood as an in-between state, "Enowning [Ereignis] occurs as a turning in-between being's enowning call and Da-sein's enowned belonging" (Vallega-Neu, 2001, p. 72).

understanding oneself as a subject occurs. In this project, Irigaray's idea of bringing the two, body and mind or spirit, together in a new way is considered a utopian process because it critiques patriarchy, and provides an imagining of alternatives. The studio process in this project imagines Irigaray's sensible transcendental through art.

Patriarchy is used in this project to describe a society predicated upon a masculine subject, as if such a subject is the only type of subject or self, as put forth in psychoanalytic discourse, which draws from the Oedipal model as a way of understanding human behaviour via unconscious desires (Mitchell, 1974, 2000), and philosophy, which renders epistemological, ontological concerns from a distinctly male viewpoint (Bar On, Bat-Ami, 1994) that influences laws, social policies, behaviour patterns, language, etc.

Liminality was first developed as a concept by Dutch folklorist and ethnographer Arnold Van Gennep and later taken up by anthropologist Victor Turner (1920 -1983). Liminality in anthropology is the middle stage of rituals in which actors no longer hold their pre-ritual position, but they have not yet transitioned into their new status (Turner, 1995). Recently, in social theory, a further understanding of liminality has been developed as political, as a state in which social changes can take place (Hovarth, 2009). According to social theorist Bjorn Thommassen (2016, p. 1) 'liminality refers to moments or periods of transition during which the normal limits to thought, self-understanding and behaviour are relaxed, opening the way to novelty and imagination, construction and destruction ... liminality has the potential to push social theory in new directions.' In this project a liminal quality emerges as in common amongst the concepts explored: utopia, the sensible transcendental, and transitional phenomena, via the art object. The role that art plays is understood in this project as a way to connect embodied (sensing) experience and imaginary experience joining the realm of ideas with embodied experience, as described by theorist Viktor Shklovsky (1965, p.2):

Art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stone stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known. The technique of art is to make objects “unfamiliar,” to make forms difficult, to increase the difficulty and length of perception because the process of perception is an aesthetic end in itself and must be prolonged. Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object: the object is not important .

Liminality refers then to a state of being that is in-between imagination and reality that cannot be clearly identified as the one, or the other. Liminality creates an ambiguous state in which change involving alternatives that are otherwise unthinkable becomes possible. Such changes occur in society or with an individual in relation to themselves and/or society. Van Gennep’s original concept of liminality as a state of change between two phases of life, such as childhood and adulthood, has evolved to include understanding of liminality as productive of change on a political level (Horvath et al., 2009; Thomassan, B. 2009, 2016), creating a fluidity in which something new can happen.

Art is another term used in a particular way in the project. Art can, of course, refer to a great many things. In this project, I discuss and analyse works of visual art: sculptures, paintings, drawings, happenings, and unrealised projects or plans. I use the term art to refer to all of these categories of the visual arts.

Female, male, feminine, femininity, woman, masculine, masculinity, and man: all of these terms are matters of debate³. The debate is not central to the project;

³ The debate centres on the question of gender, and whether or not gender is biologically determined or primarily a social construction. For example, Luce

however, themes emerge which require their use. For the purpose of clarity, in this project, a person is considered to be born male, female, or some combination of the two, but never neutral. In this project, a person is considered to grow into maturity, to become a man or woman (or some combination of the two) in a *biological* sense, and a person is *socially constructed* to be varying degrees of masculine or feminine. The feminine and femininity, as explained by Luce Irigaray, and also the masculine and masculinity, are used to refer to a hybrid of biological and socially constructed determinates, which often elude definition. The elusiveness is due to the presence of both spiritual or psychic and bodily qualities, which go beyond what can be measured or proved. There is always a body, but there is also always social construction. There is potential benefit then 'with spiritualizing the difference between the sexes' according to Irigaray (2004b, p. 10).

Thus the terms utopian element (or utopian aspect), sensible transcendental, transitional phenomena, liminality, patriarchy, art, woman, man, female, male, femininity, masculinity, feminine, masculine, are given definitions for the sake of using them in the project, to understand utopia and art. However, it is understood that these terms are interpreted and used variably elsewhere. Such nuances and variables are welcome according to the spirit of the project.

Irigaray (1993) emphasizes gender as stemming from the sexed body followed by social construction, and is concerned with respect and cultivation of difference. Judith Butler (2002) emphasizes gender as performativity, and is an example of a theorist whose conception of equality would de-emphasize difference.

Irigaray

Luce Irigaray (b. 1937) is a noted Belgian-born French feminist philosopher, linguist, psychoanalyst, and psycholinguist known for her work on sexual difference, a term which she developed. (deletion: Irigaray's oeuvre spans decades...) Irigaray's work includes critiques of major Western philosophers. Her interdisciplinary approach is drawn upon in this project, focusing on her idea of the sensible transcendental, as a part of her critique of patriarchy. Irigaray's idea of a sensible transcendental is considered in light of the utopian aspect of her work. Her thought is referred to, and used as a starting point in the studio, throughout the project.

Winnicott

Donald Winnicott (1896 – 1971) was a paediatrician and psychoanalyst influential in the field of object relations theory. Winnicott developed, transitional object theory⁵. Like Irigaray, Winnicott is concerned with intersubjective relations.

⁵ Gareth Stack (2016) notes: 'Playing and Reality (Winnicott, 1971) represents a compendium of papers published during Donald Winnicott's career as a paediatrician and psychoanalyst...Winnicott's theories relating to the development and use of the internalised evaluations of ourselves that lie at the heart of the object relations approach... the use of a symbolic transitional (substitute mother / breast) object (a favourite blanket or the like) as a midway point between infantile omnipotent egocentrism and individuation / instrumentalism (and later empathic relation with others). Thus Winnicott seeks to outline an area of experience / fantasy linking interpersonal reality with intrapersonal reality...Winnicott sees this transitional object as the first visible instance of symbolic (representative) reasoning (literally the transformation of an internal object into the illusory need fulfilling aspects of an external one) and thus key to a variety of intellectual developments'.

Utopian Theme and Strategy

Thomas More invented the term Utopia in 1516 in England as a book title by combining two Greek words meaning a ‘good place’ and also ‘no place’ to describe his novel about a better society. His entertaining, even playful story, part satire and part imaginative adventure, was in fact a serious critique of the times in which he lived. The word ‘playful’ is accurate here because, in this project, play is taken seriously, as a necessary activity for making the world better on personal, social, and political levels. In the book, a travelling friend, Raphael Hythloday⁶, describes a ‘better’ society that he had encountered, where things were handled in an unprecedented fair way. In this place called Utopia, the problems that plagued England of the time (1500’s) were handled brilliantly.

⁶ The word ‘hythloday’ in Greek means ‘talker of nonsense.’ Other character names in More’s *Utopia* refer to contemporaneous public figures including More himself. To some researchers, this indicates to readers that *Utopia* is fiction, and perhaps protected More from censorship or possible consequences for positing heretical views. Others point out that More, himself a political figure, censored heretical texts to ‘protect’ common folk from confusing texts that could insight heresies; *Utopia*, published first only in Latin, was meant for an elite, educated readership that More aspired to. *Utopia* was possibly a ‘part of More’s strategy for being invited to membership in the royal council.’ *Utopia* gained More attention and sparked dialogue with fellow scholars – it was not a source of trouble for him with authorities (Marius, 1999, p. 239). This is an example of the liminal quality of utopia; it resists clear analysis and classification into a single binary mode. It retains itself as a hard to define, in-between state: it is not one or the other, it is both, and also at the same time, possibly something else altogether.

Utopia uses the techniques of both satire and utopian imagining. More's Utopia abounded with untenable solutions for society's ills, which in fact mocked the contemporaneous social structure and values of More's day. The solutions were unrealistic because they defied entrenched conventions and laws: the people of Utopia did not own private property, there were no lawyers, clothing was designed and issued by the state, and so on – in fact every aspect of life was controlled (More, 2001, p.25, 34, 61). Such a high level of control would not be possible – or desirable - in reality. More's Utopia is not literal. Utopian theorist R. C. Elliot (1970, p. 5) points out:

We normally think of utopia as associated with the ideal, satire with the actual, which (man and his institutions being what they are) usually proves to be the sordid, the foolish, the vicious. In fact, however, the two modes – utopia and satire – are linked in a complex network of genetic, historical, and formal relationships...there is an inevitable double effect – longing as well as laughter

The studio-produced art works discussed in part three include both satire and utopia. The role of satire is to mock the system in place, and the role of utopianism is to imagine transformation into something alternative.

Utopia understood as a proposal for an alternate society, and the root stories of paradise from which utopias flow, are present throughout history. The history of imagining utopia-like possibilities pre-dates Thomas More, with stories such as the Garden of Eden and prophet Isaiah, as well as Plato's *Republic*. The earliest utopias, pre-utopias really, are stories of paradise serving as moral tales, myths, or fairy tales rooted in ancient civilizations, 'the result of humanity's attempt to carve out an ideal place...' (Giesecke, A. & Jacobs, N. 2013, p.9). *The Utopia Reader* edited by Claeys and Sargent (1999) lists twenty-one literary Utopias that pre-date Thomas More. After More, another 40

or so are presented. Also, the *Faber Book of Utopias* (Casey, J., Ed., 1999) further presents an additional 100, some lesser known, literary utopias. According to Sargent (2010), when people stopped believing in myths, a shift took place, around the time of Plato. These break from the mythic past with its religious ties and carry us through modern times concerning more material, political directions, as in George Orwell's *1984* or Ursula Le Guin's 'The Day Before the Revolution'.

Plato's *Republic* provides a narrative account of a dialogue, which considers what constitutes a just society. Desire, order, justice and hope, as referred to in Plato's *Republic*, are foundational principles of utopia, and theoretically would form a basis to think about society in terms of both imaginary ideals and realisable goals for the future. Plato's type of utopia however, if enacted, could run the risk of resulting in a dangerous totalitarian regime, as did communist Russia, which revered More's *Utopia*, erecting a monument to More as a communist hero (Durringer, R. 2016). It seems that the more defined the utopia, the more it becomes its opposite when realized. Nonetheless, even totalitarian regimes contain a utopian impulse, based on a current situation. That impulse is explored as capable of generating works of art in this project. In point of fact, utopia has proven both inspiring and valuable to me, as an artist, since I found my artistic impulse was always connected to alternatives to aspects of my life with which I struggled, and felt deeply dissatisfied.

The term utopia is sometimes used to discredit an idea or venture, dismissing it as unrealisable. Conversely, the term utopia is sometimes frowned upon, with a warning against utopias that might turn, as noted above, into dangerous, totalitarian regimes. Utopian Studies Professor Lucy Sargisson mentions critics such as Karl Popper, Edmund Burke, Leonardo Schapiro, and Jacob L. Talmon in this regard (Sargisson 2007 p. 30). However, recently, utopia's importance is now reconsidered as crucial for humanity, as an imaginary space in which

concrete change becomes possible.⁷ Ruth Levitas (1997, p. 65) (who specialises in utopian studies) comments:

Insofar as Ernst Bloch's work has been incorporated into utopian studies, it has been seen as a justification and a celebration of utopianism, and welcomed because of the ever-present need to defend utopia against those who regard it as trivial or dangerous.

The value of utopia, however, is only recommended if it is *not* treated as a blueprint for change because utopias are not blueprints for static perfection but are essentially imaginative acts. Lucy Sargisson (2007 p.30) points out:

Utopias are rarely static. More's utopia for example is not. *Utopia* is, amongst other things, a thought experiment, a polemic, and an exploration of alternatives. Moreover, many utopias are self-consciously flawed...the function of utopia is not its own realization.

According to the Ralahine Centre for Utopian Studies founding director Tom Moylan (2014, p. 10), utopias are a critical engagement to make the world better - a process generating a plan, which when achieved will call forth a new utopian process. He comments regarding literary works, which he analyses, 'A central concern in the critical utopia is the awareness of the limitations of the utopian tradition, so that these texts reject utopia as blueprint while preserving it as dream'. The theme of utopia as a critical dream emerges continually in this project.

⁷ Part of this trend may be the translation of Bloch's writings into English in 1986.

However, thinking of utopia as a dream begs the question, what is the point of it, if it is not real? Is it not real? What about realised utopias? Realised utopias in the form of intentional communities have worked well, such as the Lieshout sculpture community in the Netherlands (van Lieshout et al., 2009) where artists live together in a live/work community to facilitate building sculptures for the world stage since 1995, or the Cloughjordan eco-village in Ireland where a diverse group live together in innovative ways in Tipperary, building homes and managing the land in an eco-friendly manner, since the early 2000s (Winston, 2012). Some of these survive over the long term. Human efforts can and do to some extent succeed in making the world better.

Various positions should be clarified in the face of the controversy: the utopian position, the dystopian position, and the anti-utopian position. There are clear distinctions between anti-utopia, dystopia, and utopia, according to Sargisson (2007 p. 26). Anti-utopic concerns suggest that utopia is bad, and that things as they are must be accepted as they are, in order to deal effectively with reality. Dystopias, although they elaborate deep dark concerns, are not anti-utopian, but rather a form of utopia, still operating with a type of dream energy not constrained by practical concerns. Utopians and dystopians use the dream. Utopians and dystopians, as opposed to anti-utopians, argue that the utopian element is always crucial, and always with us.

In this project, the utopian element is considered at work in-between the real and the imaginary, operating robustly in both. It is never fully one or the other but rather operating in-between, such that it escapes any binary opposition. In this way, the utopian is capable of deep engagement with both: the far away dream and the immanent material experience, simultaneously. The answer is in a process that implies movement, not stasis.

In its broadest sense, utopia is theorised as a desire for a better way of being, and it is in this sense that it is used in this project. In part, Levitas' work aims at

an in-depth understanding of the various definitions of Utopia that have evolved over the years. In *The Concept of Utopia* she asks the question (2010, p. 179), what is the meaning of the term, utopia?

Within utopian studies one would expect both a more positive orientation to utopia and a greater degree of reflection on the use of the term. Although utopists are generally more sympathetic to their material than others are, they often manifest considerable ambivalence to utopia. And although some regard the question of definition as important, conceptual rigor is the exception rather than the rule. Many scholars work with a taken-for-granted view of what constitutes utopia.

She examines thoroughly the field of Utopian Studies, pointing out that the existence of this growing academic field itself is evidence that utopia is important and that in its aspirations there is much more than just fantasy, dreams, or a desire for wish fulfilment. This position that utopia is in fact powerful, and when attempted in practice, potentially dangerous – for good and bad reasons, is held by a number of utopian scholars. ‘Utopias are not necessarily places that the reader would find appealing...’ Levitas argues that utopia must always be analysed in terms of the desire for a better way of being. ‘The essential element in Utopia is not hope, but desire – the desire for a better way of being.’ (Levitas, 2010) This is Levitas' common denominator of all things utopian, and reflects her assertion that the broadest possible definition of utopia is best, and is the one used in this project. It is the desire for a better way of being, framed by current cultural experience, that influenced the evolving research question: ‘How can the utopian impulse operate in generating works of art that provide new understanding of utopia and art process and how may this activity lead to novel cultural understanding?’

Utopian Strategy, Forms, Functions and Types

What's so inspiring [about the art utopian artists offer] is their transparent impossibility ... These impossible dreams open up space to imagine new possibilities. By creating **impossible** dreams [there is no duplicity, people are not being sold a bill of goods]... utopian artists open up the possibility to say 'what if' without closing down the space by saying 'this is what'

-Stephen Duncomb, 'Utopia is No Place: The Art and Politics of Impossible Futures,' artist's talk, Walker Art Center, New York, August 2010

For me Utopia is primarily a critical tool, a kind of analytical tool, a lens that I use, to reveal what is lacking. The idea of a utopian end product is not very interesting...it's actually for me rather problematic...

-Nils Norman, Utopia Revisited
Conference, Arken Museum, Denmark,
2006

The utopian element in art, in this project, is considered through various interrelated and sometimes opposing viewpoints, as both critical *and* imaginative. The concept of utopia has developed over time, with various forms,

functions, and types; a number of ways of classifying and understanding the utopian element exist. Such classification and understanding applies to utopian art and artists.

Curator and art critic Marie Laurberg notes that the resurgence of interest in the utopian imaginary in art may originate from the notion of the end of art. ‘A striking tendency in the art and art criticism of the past decade is a renewed interest in utopian imaginary’. According to Laurberg (Gether et al., 2012, p. 17), the utopian impulse although repressed, is embedded in the so-called end of art that has characterised late modernism, or history: a resistance against the idea that history has come to an end, that the cycle of changes and visions for a different future are no longer needed.

Laurberg (Ibid.) describes three ways in which utopian art can function: a critical looking back, a critical construction and a utopian imaginary. All three are employed in the studio research of this project, and are explored through mixed media, drawing, painting, and sculpture, in the studio, as the basis of this research leading to an exploration of a utopian element in art as a strategy for creating alternatives in society that represent a better way of being.

Thomas More draws upon Plato’s principles, seeking for justice in his utopia. He was able to do this defensively, by locating Utopia in a geographically ambiguous location, playing on the fact that exploration of as yet undiscovered new lands was prevalent in his day. Thus, he avoided the problem of positing impossibilities, by placing them outside his contemporary society. The fictional aspect of utopia provides a space of play from which serious ideas, upon analysis, can be drawn. In this project, art works produced, sometimes playfully, in response to the utopian impulse, are also analysed in a serious way. They are examined to determine what they reflect about the society from which they emerge. They are considered as capable of generating a new understanding of

human experience. Thus the art works produced are a social critique: through art, social constructs are questioned and examined.

This is not to say that visual arts operate completely in the imaginary field. They position themselves there, tongue and cheek so to speak, feigning innocence, pretending to be fiction. They are thus able to comment more freely on the real issues at hand.

Utopia must set itself apart from everyday life in order to function critically, and yet, paradoxically, in so doing, it can be rooted firmly in the everyday. Different methods of doing this exist. Science fiction is often used as a utopian genre, making use of time travel in order to locate the utopia apart from everyday life in order to give it critical distance. The visual arts also operate in a location which, although it plays with the boundary between itself and everyday life, it nonetheless locates itself in a culturally constructed imaginary space. The visual arts today are structured from conception, to creation, through to audience and reception as set apart from everyday life – even while in the midst of it. In this respect art is like utopia in being liminal. This is where the project on utopia intersects with the transitional phenomenon of Donald Winnicott, and in the idea of the sensible transcendental of Luce Irigaray – the main concepts to emerge from the project. Such liminal spaces are important to utopia because of the critical distance they provide.

However, the critical distance provided by the utopia can be confounded by the desire to make the utopia real. The concept of transitional space (Winnicott), and the sensible transcendental (Irigaray), avoid this problem by creating a space of mediation. In such a space it becomes possible to create the new without being crushed. As soon as utopia is made real it loses its utopian function, and it becomes, according to Karl Mannheim (1936, 2003), an ideology. Others see the ideology as stemming from utopia's compensatory function. (Levitas, 2010).

To stay utopian, the utopia must remain in a liminal space, between reality and the imaginary, hovering at the threshold of attaining symbolic value. In other words, there is not yet a corresponding reality to that which the utopia would like to represent. This liminality of utopia is counter to ideology. In Manneham's definition, the ideology counter to utopia is always associated with a power structure that imposes its vision upon the masses. French philosopher Jacques Rancière explains the power structure as a social order of consensus, which he calls the "police," that categorises and controls all social units. Only those marginalised – escaping categorisation - may disturb and possibly re-configure this order. However, when one dominant regime replaces the former, it becomes the new police as in, for example, postmodernism, which overthrew modernism. This position is observed in the thought of American literary critic and Marxist political theorist Fredric Jameson (born 1932) who states 'postmodern or decentred thinking and art reinforce the new social and economic forms of capitalism more than they undermine it ... to strengthen and perpetuate trends in the infrastructure' (Jameson, 2005, p. 165). In other words, according to Jameson, decentred thinking has become a support for the current ideological structure.

In fact, Rancière's distribution of the sensible applies especially to the work of art, and how it is used to promote a particular ideal, norm, or design for society. Examples of this control of aesthetic design can be seen in the utopian visions driving regimes such as Euro-American Capitalism, Socialism, Communism, Fascism, etc., which, although different, share the commonality of a rigid distribution of the sensible through propaganda or media advertising. As Ruben Yepes (2014) explains, 'Art's collusion with propaganda reduces the necessarily open nature of art to the presentation of a "message" in a sense no different from that of advertisement.' All such rigid hegemonies have a variety of a core vision of utopia and thus, paradoxically, embody the utopian impulse. However, the restrictions placed on personal freedom sometimes extending to the

destruction of such freedom in totalitarian regimes contradict the critical spirit of Utopia. As German Marxist philosopher Ernst Bloch (1989, p. 165) in his 1972 essay *Art and Society* states, ‘Capitalism is capitalism all over, not only in its factory owners and export quotas. Feudalism is feudalism all over, not only in its ideas of loyalty, honour and adventure. It manifests itself in all its forms of relations and objects, with thousands of mediating figures from the tithe collector up to the lord of the castle’. In short, each regime will have its own totalitarian, freedom-restricting forces.

It is a paradox that utopia taken literally and made real, as exemplified in the well-known regimes mentioned above, ceases to be itself (it is no longer a ‘no place’ that is also a ‘good place’). In such cases utopia is crushed from outside. In contrast, utopia *as itself*, (a place that does not exist in reality, or in the socially constructed ‘symbolic’), exists rather in a place beyond, a space of freedom, a space of play, in order to maintain its critical stance and perform all of its functions. Utopia thus situates itself as an alternative to existing norms, making it seem that alternatives might be possible. Art critic and activist Stephen Duncombe comments, ‘Utopia is the world turned upside-down’ as seen in the gold in More’s *Utopia* used for chamber pots, priceless jewels used as children’s toys, and so on.’ (Gether et al., 2012, p. 40). The freedom offered in the imaginative utopian expression has a particular draw for oppressed individuals, who are not stakeholders per se in the existing social order. The use of utopia for the oppressed outsider is a motivating force in this project.

The imagining I undertake in the studio is not meant to propose a specific reality to be made real. It is a response to a failed social movement in which certain gains have been made for women, but inequality still prevails nonetheless, as indicated by worldwide reports and surveys, including in the art world (Reilly, 2015). It is an imagining that challenges a constrained or seemingly static situation in the stalled feminist movement, regardless of hopeless appearances. The utopian impulse in the artist thus observed is evidence that ‘any utopian

aspiration has a half-life' (Moylan, 2007, p. 216). However, unapologetically lacking a specific plan, the art produced in this project in response to the utopian impulse is fully available as a real critical tool, to evaluate society, the self, and creative process. The project is critical, in order to understand society and the self more deeply and accurately. It is creative to use an imaginary space where impossible alternatives are considered as if real, in a provisional manner, originating from personal lived experience, embodying the notion that the 'personal is political'⁹. As such the work is mindful of Kathy Weeks (2014 p. 250) imperative regarding utopia:

'The absolute necessity of a reflexive, provisional, dialogic utopianism, which will be effective only if it is organically related to and embedded in a transformative politics arising out of the present configuration of social forces'

Discovering provisionality in the work deepened the understanding of the value of the not yet achieved goal in any utopian expression. Furthermore, this provisional quality directed the scholarly research toward transitional phenomena and the sensible transcendental in art, which grew organically out of the research, in the light of their utopian function. Fredric Jameson (2005, p. 15) explains provisionality as regards social change:

'I believe that we can begin from the proposition that utopian space is an imaginary enclave within real social space. In other words the very real utopian space is itself a result of special and

⁹ The phrase "the personal is political" was popularised in second wave feminism and is the title of an essay written by feminist activist Carol Hanisch (2006, 1969). Hanisch reissued the essay recently and says it still is relevant. She argued that issues such as appearance, division of domestic labor, childcare, and emotional issues, which seem to get assigned to women, are not only personal, they are also political. She highlights tension between activist feminists and women who stay behind the scenes: women have to deal with whether or not to act in a given situation – sometimes there is no pay off.

social differentiation.’

It is in Jameson’s conception of utopian space that imagination can create something beyond what already exists. A utopian expression presents something not yet existing, going truly beyond what is already in place even to the point of silliness, as necessary to really make changes possible in society.

Levitas (2010, p. 219). finds three functions of ‘utopia’, which prove a helpful frame, understood to traverse three distinct but overlapping modes. And though the utopian element demands the *impossible*, its functions are what make real change, in reality, *become* possible:

It is possible [for a utopia]... to carry out any of the functions of *compensation, criticism* or *change* [emphasis added] without [the utopia] being possible... To function as criticism or compensation, utopia does not even need to be believed to be possible. Thus while the questions of whether alternative worlds are theoretically or practically possible, and whether they are believed to be so by those who produce, peruse or pursue them ... cannot be definitive ones. The problem of limiting utopia to the ‘possible world’ is that it conflates the categories of hope and desire. It limits utopia to the question ‘what may I hope?’, and refuses the question ‘what may I dream?’. It implies also that the function of utopia is necessarily that of change; ... for Bloch, hope was ... a means of grasping and effecting the hoped-for future.

Each mode - compensation, criticism, or change – are embedded in the works of the project, and shed light on the concepts of the utopianism, transitional phenomena, and the sensible transcendental all of which are liminal..

For example, in the 1960s ‘Herbert Marcuse’s utopian vision [was] inspired by the contemporaneous happenings of the aestheticisation of everyday life as such...’ (Jameson, 2005, p. 152). For Cvetkovich’s theories of utopia of everyday habit, a reconsideration of domestic labour via art practices as in practices of artists Sheila Pepe and Allyson Mitchell proves transformative (Cvetkovich, 2012).

According to theorist Lyman Tower Sargent (2010), Utopia has three distinct faces: literature, intentional communities, and political theories. Contemporary visual and plastic art practices sometimes push off first from the literary narrative form, taking from and transforming the narrative form, linking it back to its connection to oral tradition. At other times contemporary visual and plastic art practice develops the other of Sargent’s faces of Utopia.

Angelika Bammer, assistant professor of German and women’s studies at Emory University, has written numerous articles at the intersection of utopianism and feminism. Bammer makes further distinctions regarding utopian strategy for producers of utopias, which she applies to feminism(s) but which could be applied to utopia(s) of any specific source. The distinction describes two approaches. The first approach is to create a utopian vision where the history that we have, the written record of the past, is altered in such a way to imagine inclusion for the outsider. A second approach is a contradictory approach: to start anew, from nothing, so as to avoid any affirmation of the existing culture. Regarding feminist utopias Bammer (1991, p. 5) states ‘the debate was framed by two positions ... for a woman to “write herself into history ... “as did Cixous ... in ‘Laugh of the Medusa’ ... 1975 ... on the other end of the spectrum the “blank page” ... an act not of affirmation but of refusal’. Both approaches are used in utopian art practices. In literature, science fiction emerges as a favoured form for utopianism. This solves both problems. The link to the past is affirmed through the origin of the science fiction world – linked to a real history, giving utopia a place, but the science fiction aspect places it beyond the reach of our world, fulfilling the need for a blank slate.

Different Discourses

Utopia, Irigaray, Feminism(s)

Having considered the functions and form, I am now going to discuss the content. In this project a genuine daily struggle stemming from the experience of my being female in a patriarchal society, being a mother, a mother to daughters, a daughter to a mother, and an artist contributes to the content of my utopian imaginings. Frustration with current conditions in society suggests that *new* models for becoming woman, and for solving basic problems, are needed – if one is to take the utopian approach. The positing of something entirely new, which the utopian element facilitates, in relation to the existing social order (insofar as it impacts everyday life), is thus a point of departure (Bammer, 1991, Irigaray, 1985).¹⁰

My scholarly research was led by the work in my studio. The work in the studio was inspired by the need to engage anew with my dissatisfying life areas. The roles described above led to a critique of embodied experience of the female in patriarchy. Thus, research gravitated toward notions that the female in patriarchy has not been offered a symbolic order. I discovered that through a symbolic order self-hood is achieved. This is difficult in patriarchy for females, fundamentally because of the way the mother lacks positive symbolism in patriarchy – this could be the factor most needing symbolisation. As noted, the term ‘patriarchy’ is used in this project as it is used in psychoanalytic

¹⁰ Specifically, interest in alternatives to the current patriarchal approaches to family relationships, to depression (Ann Cvetkovich, 2012), to the study of utopia (Caitríona Ní Dhúill, 2007), to divisions of labor (Kathi Weeks, 2012), and to the becoming of a self (Irigaray, 2002) are themes to fuel imagination in the work of utopian art that desires alternatives: imaginative but firmly rooted in everyday experience. According to Ann Cvetkovich (2012, p. 159) utopia can be found in ‘the utopia of everyday habit’.

discourse. Psychoanalytic focus on unconscious desire reveals a complex part of human becoming, which in patriarchy – a society built upon the masculine subject as the norm, with family and social structure backing that up - is based on ‘the rule of the father’ (Mitchell, 1974, 2000) and the neglect of the mother. Laura Green’s (2010, p. 30) analysis upon reading of Irigaray’s *Speculum of The Other Woman* (1985, 19; 139; 141) suggests that:

The occlusion of maternal desire rendered necessary by the Oedipal account ... the mother’s body continues to remain a liminal, out of reach concept – aligned with the Lacanian Real – women’s subjectivity continues to suffer. Paradoxically, the tendency in western culture (including metaphysics) has been to reduce women to their maternal function whilst at the same time to deny this function any real symbolic value. The consequences of this ‘foreclosure’ of maternal desire has been that the mother-daughter relationship has become the dark continent of the ‘dark continent’ – the least understood and most inadequately symbolised familial relationship, most notably in psychoanalysis.

The male self-becoming based metaphorically on the destruction of the mother is thought in this project to reflect a social reality, reflected in psychoanalytic development. According to feminist scholar Elizabeth Grosz (2002, p. 14), the project of developing a culture that recognises two different genders (at least) is paramount, and Luce Irigaray’s project focus:

Irigaray makes it clear that feminism has just barely begun to fathom the intellectual depths of its project. To affirm in full positivity the existence and capacities of (at least) two sexes – the project of sexual difference – is to acknowledge two

things: first, the failure of the past to provide a space and time for women as women, with the consequence that all forms of prevailing practices and forms of knowledge ... represent the interests and perspectives of only one sex. Second, the necessity, in the future, of providing other ways of knowing, other ontologies and epistemologies that enable the subject's relation in the world, to space and to time, to be conceptualised in different terms ... they [time and space] are active ingredients in the making of matter and thus in the constitution of objects and subjects. A reconfiguration of the subject will, sooner or later, require that our understanding of space and time themselves undergo dramatic metamorphoses.

The concept of a utopian element with regard to subjectivity for females in patriarchy, raised by the studio process and the outcomes, and fleshed out through scholarly research, including the topic of essentialism within feminism, emerged. This occurred especially in terms of transitional phenomena and the sensible transcendental, an articulation imagined through the works produced within the utopian framework of the project.

Irigaray's work is not peerless in its engagement with psychoanalytic discourse that departs from and critiques Freud's theory of phallogocentric transmission. There are a number of female analytical theorists who departed from Freud's phallogocentric transmission theory who have been consulted for engagement in the project. The focus on the work of Luce Irigaray was found however, for most cases, to better address directly the concerns that emerged in the studio: the subjectivity of the mother and her struggle in patriarchy, the struggle of the girl becoming woman in patriarchy, the mother-daughter relationship, and the difficulty of woman to arrive at a positive identity in patriarchy. Significant to the project, these areas were considered specifically *in the light of utopia*,

resonant with the utopian aspect found embedded uniquely in Irigaray's work. Utopia is the cornerstone of the project.

Irigaray's approach also worked better with the holistic-reflexive method of the project. The holistic-reflexive method of research relies on subjective understandings of reality for thinking more critically about that reality. In the project, the lived experience of the artist as a mother, a widow, an unpaid domestic laborer all played into the generation of the work in the studio as well as the analyses of the works which lead to novel cultural understandings. Irigaray's work regarding the mother daughter relationship, and the woman in patriarchy, focused on subjectivity as such, and resonated with the project. Nonetheless, these other female theorists form a part of the back drop of the psychoanalytic discourse (one of several discourses used to analyse the studio outcomes). Their unique contributions are here noted.

They include: Anna Freud (1970) for example, in 'Problems of Psychoanalytic Training, Diagnosis, and the Technique of Therapy Diagnosis', pointed out the need for a broader, more holistic approach in the training of psychoanalysts, but fell short (likely because of the culture of her time) of identifying a concern for the patriarchal roots of the problem that emerged in the PhD research (lack of positive identity for mothers, and consequent problems for girls to achieve subject positions in culture); Bracha Ettinger's work on the Matrixial Gaze would certainly have been appropriate had it been discovered earlier in the project. Ettinger (2006) states 'psychoanalytic theory has struggled to overcome the limitations imposed on the understanding of the formation of subjectivity because of the reliance on the Freudian theory... the phallus as signifier', a struggle because the understanding is based on a male perspective. Ettinger will be considered for future research; Melanie Klein, whose work includes theorisations regarding symbol formation in children and its impact on the inner life of the adult (Klein, 1930) is of interest in relation to transitional phenomena, and object relations. However, her focus is on child analysis, without regard to

sexuate difference, and without critique on the conceptualization of the destruction of the mother – although she acknowledges it – her work is less applicable to the content of the project; Jacqueline Rose’s work on psychoanalysis and feminism does offer a nuanced angle, relevant to the project. Rose states (2005, p.80) ‘the refusal of the phallic term brings with it an attempt to reconstitute a form of subjectivity... a refusal of the notion of symbolization itself... the refusal of the phallus turns out once again to be a refusal of the symbolic...’ Counter to Irigaray, Rose speaks here of collapsing difference, with regard to the female subject, which Rose claims makes symbolization as we know it impossible.

Irigaray’s focus on building a culture for two highlights the same concern as Rose, that the prioritising of a masculine model causes problems that affect all people, not just women. Irigaray theorises how even our technology has developed per a distinctively male logic, beginning with the use of language, or the “logos” and the symbolic order through which selfhood is achieved, metaphorically, by destruction of the maternal origin. Irigaray’s work inspires and disturbs. Feminist and author Donna Haraway’s “ironic dream of a common language” draws from Irigaray’s call for a discourse alternate to patriarchy. Irigaray’s conception of woman as different to man is rejected by Haraway as essentialising (Haraway, 2006). Feminist author Diana Fuss (2013, p. 53) points out that although Irigaray’s engagement with the female body has resulted in her dismissal as “essentialist” by feminist constructivists:

Irigaray speaks a language of essence which participates in the very construction and symbolization of the female body; hers is an essentialism profoundly intricately [sic] with the grammar and logic of social constructionism.

As feminist scholar Margaret Whitford (1991, p. 14) explains ‘interpretations of Irigaray...have often been quite dismissive: Janet Sayers calls her a biological

essentialist (1982: 131) Lynne Segal calls her a ‘psychic essentialist’ (1987: 132); Toril Moi thinks that she is making the mistake of trying to give a definition of ‘the feminine’ (1985: 148). For Monique Plaza Irigaray is an anti-feminist who echoes patriarchy’s recuperation of feminist subversion’ (1978, introduction).’ As an artist exploring the utopian element as critique and re-imagining of the way things are, I find Irigaray’s discourse goes beyond the dichotomy of biology versus social construction, and beyond the idea of defining woman or speaking of woman. Rather, patriarchy is shown ‘at work in what has traditionally been taken to be the high discourse of universality and reason: philosophy...’ That is what is drawn upon in this project because it is utopian in that it ‘is an attempt to effect change in the symbolic order’ .

Irigaray (2004, p. xi) dramatises her critique in her poetic work about the archetypal man, and how technology develops as a caricature of masculine values:

He remains alone on his own, cut off from feminine people. Of course he can make sport or war with or against those like himself; he can even exchange with them, talk with them through a language, or logos, which has expelled from it feelings, flesh and meanings in harmony with feminine subjectivity. Speaking from then on corresponds to using a code defined in order to transmit information, as animal populations generally do. This does not yet reach communication between us with respect for our difference(s), transforming our instincts or drives, creating meaning, art, and alliances towards a world we can share – not only at the level of needs, and with the help of a neutral language or of money, but at the level of desire. That could finally correspond to a fulfillment of our humanity, but it requires an equivalent consideration

for feminine and masculine values, and a mutual respect
between man and woman.

Luce Irigaray's utopia as cited above, is critical of the way in which technology has developed in patriarchy, its impact on life, and imagines an alternative, which respects embodied, subjective experience, a culture of two (at least) and not of a repetition of the same.

Regarding a re-distribution of the sensible as utopian, a world of alternatives could be imagined. Irigaray's utopia hopes for a cultivation of touch as a move toward a non-hierarchical cultivation of all the senses, including our existence in a body, as an alternative to patriarchal modes of achieving an understanding of self. According to Irigaray, to arrive at this new culture, new models to reflect inter-subjective "sex-uately"¹¹ differentiated beings in the world are needed. In this project I have explored art making in a hands-on-way, creating painterly surfaces that seem to be alive, rather than images that are purely representational, with the intention of creating an art that expresses my desire for such a sensate world. In this case the material becomes a signifier.

The expressive qualities of painting are explored in the art work of the project as a way to imagine restarting self-becoming and beginning to build a new culture from a perspective of two, to re-think western civilization subjectively, starting from a pre-linguistic position. This is inspired in part by Irigaray's (1993, p. 6-7) idea in her book *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*:

A revolution in thought and ethics is needed if the work
of sexual difference is to take place. We need to reinterpret
everything concerning the relations between the subject

¹¹ In her talk "Ethical Perspectives" in 2014 in Warwick, UK, Luce Irigaray explained her term "sexuate" is an attempt to describe embodied sex difference without using the word "sexual" which has connotations towards eroticism that confuse her point. However, at times the word 'sexual' is used in English translations, perhaps due to translator choice.

and discourse, the subject and the world, the subject and the cosmic, the microcosmic and the macrocosmic ... In order to make it possible to think through, and live this difference, we must reconsider the whole problematic of space and time

The western world inherits western philosophy with its male perspective. Understanding the thinking on becoming a “self”, or transcendence, based on that male perspective is of interest for this project. Women’s Studies theorist Johanna Hodge (2003, p. 195) observes, regarding to the utopianism in the work of Kant’s transcendental aesthetic that:

Each sexual difference and...[Kant’s] transcendental aesthetic, proposes a determination of the relation between space and time. The former is a feminist critique of the utopianism of a transcendental aesthetic, a utopianism not locatable in relation to embodied human differences.

Multiplicity and plurality emerge immediately in this project. Imagining an alternative is a highly personal endeavour. Experiencing patriarchy, for any given man or woman, is also a highly personal experience. Your utopia is not my utopia. However, as already described in this paper, the imaginative space of utopia is crucial. Likewise, understanding feminisms¹² as a plural is also crucial: both feminisms and utopias must remain plural and acknowledge different perspectives from different times, places, and people (Bammer, 1991).

¹² For more on “feminisms,” (intentionally plural) and Utopias, see Angelika Bammer’s *Partial Visions* (1991) where she explains diversity within and amongst feminist movements and visions for the future, make it necessary to use these terms in their plural forms: feminisms and utopianisms.

Feminism(s) is understood to be plural and can be considered as numerous overlapping types.¹³ The art produced from the utopian impulse for this doctoral research, upon analysis, resonates with the concerns of many of these feminisms, most notably ‘psychoanalytic feminism’, Marxist and socialist feminism, and existential-ontological-phenomenological accounts of feminism, because these accounts provide the most suitable discourse within which to situate the particular art produced in the doctoral research project.

Not only are feminisms (and utopianisms) plural, but they are also partial as Bammer (1991, p. 46) elaborates: ‘The lesson for the 1970s that set the stage for the feminist debate in the 1980s was that feminism is partial, not only in the positive sense of being committed to a goal’ as in having a strong preference towards a particular cause, ‘but also in the negative sense of being constrained by the limits of its time and place in history. We can see no further into the future than our experience allows us to imagine ... we are daughters of our time.’ Thus, Bammer emphasises ‘partial’ as having two meanings. The personal experience feeding the project shows that as it was true in the 1970s and 80s, this is still true today. Additionally, it is true that we are also ‘daughters’ of our ‘place’ (or role) in a given society, a place determined by numerous factors. Our interests are influenced and shaped by circumstance.

It is a utopian desire that those who have something to say may say it in the way that tallies with their own experience. In fact, utopia is theorised as changeable and multiple in terms of its critical function, across disciplines, including in visual art. Multiplicity, plurality, and partialness are common threads among utopia, contemporary visual and plastic arts, and feminism, as emergent in this project. Thus the evolution of the concept of utopia in general, as well as specifically in art and in feminism, can be seen to reflect a

¹³ such as those cited in the following list: ‘liberal feminism’, ‘radical feminism’, (includes ‘radical libertarian feminism’ and ‘radical-cultural feminism’), ‘Marxist feminism’, ‘socialist feminism’, ‘psychoanalytic feminism’ and ‘care focused feminism’, ‘post-colonial feminism’, ‘existential feminism’, ‘ecofeminism’ and so on...(Grosz, 2002, intro.).

developing understanding of the multiple, changing and partial nature of all visions for change.

In the USA, problems with conceptions of feminist terms are explored in depth by Buschman and Lenart, 1996, Moi, 2006, and Marody, 1993. Stereotypes and failures to pass down programmes relevant to subsequent generations of women, can be problematic within American feminism. Women are told that the battle has been fought and won, by their own mothers, perhaps, or other women who have gone before them. The fight can erroneously seem over at first glance in the US, and the bad press toward feminists makes the label unappealing. It is then often a surprise for women to find that it is still very much a man's world (Grosz, 2002).

Johanna Drucker a feminist artist practitioner, illustrates this in acknowledging her former terror at the idea of becoming a feminist in the 1970s due to negative stereotypes of feminists as aggressive or unattractive, and as alienating toward men. However, Drucker in an *Art Journal* interview (Schor et al., 1999, p. 19) states firmly, feminism is important:

The issues that gave rise to feminism are still with us, and so is the need to re-conceptualise feminism so that it becomes viable again – not through some dreary sense of generational debt, but through a living demonstration of its benefit for our lives and our work.

My personal account of my experience of feminism is relevant to the argument of this paper. My concern in this project has been to take sincere dissatisfaction with life as a starting point, then to make visual art that transforms areas of dissatisfaction imaginatively. The work is analysed to see how it connects to broader concerns. Having once found the term 'feminist' problematic I did not

think the feminist movement was taking up causes I wanted to fight for. Through my research, I learned how in the USA it is common for women and girls across varied demographics to reject the label “feminist” even though they care about equality for women.

The utopian wish in several of the works discussed in part III connects the personal with the political. That utopian impulse instigated feminist concerns in the project that had not previously been present, making the studio practice the stimulus for scholarly research.

An area of utopian dreaming emerged clearly in the project, in an auto-ethnographic manner¹⁴, connected to feminism’s somewhat neglected wage- for-housework-movement. Activist and author Selma James in Padua Italy inaugurated International Wages for Housework Movement in 1972 aimed at raising awareness on the issues of exploitation of the workers who provide the work of caring in our capitalist society (James, 2008, p. 40-43). Such movements have not succeeded in bringing about justice in society regarding domestic labour. ‘The state thinks because we are carers and we often love the people we care for they can make all the cuts they like to services that help and support us. Eighty per cent, some say more, of cuts in jobs, in services and in pay have been at the expense of women. That is basic sexism. Not that they love men – they’ll exploit anybody’ (James, 2015, p. 1).

The situation stems from the exploitation of a mother’s natural caring bond to her child and family. It is an unsolved dilemma, the labour of raising children in capitalism, and movements to do something about it have not been effective as Kathi Weeks (2011, p. 229) confirms:

¹⁴ Auto-ethnography is well explained as useful in studying sensitive areas, based on personal stories and experiences. By studying one’s own experience as a member of a particular group, insights otherwise unavailable may be accessed and analysed. (Leavy, 2009)

One way to understand the wages for housework movement and analysis is as part of a larger effort both to map and to problematise the vexed relationship between social reproduction and capital accumulation. In the case of wages for housework, social reproduction was identified with the unwaged household labour necessary to reproduce waged work. One problem with this formulation was that, because housework was so closely identified with the institution of the family and associated with a limited range of domestic tasks the site of the conflict was too narrow... [The] remedies ... have served more to sustain the existing system than to point us in the direction of something new.

Thus, utopian re-imagining is needed in its broadest sense. We need something new.

Psychoanalytic Discourse as Technique

Irigaray's sensible-transcendental is not only a revision of the process of symbolisation that exists in patriarchy, but a move toward a new, different, symbolic to accompany the existing one. Irigaray's use of the term symbolic is taken from Lacan's psychoanalytic discourse. She explains that the setting of psychoanalytic discourse is used for the discussion of forming a culture for two because we are not able to have the discourse in a loving culture of two yet, and psychoanalytic discourse provides the best available vocabulary with which to have the conversation about creating a new culture (Irigaray, 2004, p. 151). The claim that psychoanalytic setting is the best place for the discussion is an important assertion, and it relates to the broader context of feminist discourse and how it uses psychoanalytic theory in spite of problems with sexism in Freudian analysis.

It is argued here that this position ascribed to psychoanalytic discourse may also be held by art whether additionally to the psychoanalytic setting or in place of it. For Irigaray (2004b, p.98) language and rationality are privileged as means to overcome our animality, and thus become human. It is beyond this project to comprehensively explore psychoanalysis, however, the key concepts as drawn upon by Luce Irigaray in her idea of the sensible transcendental, and Donald Winnicott in his theory of transitional phenomenon, as residing in a utopian liminal space, are the foundation for much of the discussion and the imagining in the studio, and the analytic framework is understood as follows: language is built on masculine selfhood, which is established first by visual means. With the emphasis on the phallus as a signifier for selfhood, the visual comes before language.

According to Irigaray (2004b, p.86), visual is given primacy in patriarchy, because subjectivity in patriarchy is achieved by visual means – not the best logic regarding female embodiment. This assertion can only be understood in terms of psychoanalytic discourse. It has nothing to do with visuality being any less important to females, or less accessible. It is addressing the assertion in psychoanalytic theory, that selfhood is achieved via phallic transmission, visually identifying. He defines selfhood, according to Freudian theory, by what he sees himself to have, in opposition toward his mother, who does not have one. Thus he achieves, according to psychoanalytic theory, selfhood by visual means (Mitchell, S. A. & Black, M. J., 1995). For a girl, the external visual for her sex is inadequate – her sexed self remains hidden. Does this mean she is not a self? No! But culturally speaking selfhood is difficult for her. To expect a girl to understand and recognize herself as a self via visual means is inappropriate, because her body is not made that way. The sense of touch is a more appropriate mode of recognition for the female body. Irigaray is concerned with taking down the hierarchy of the senses: both visual and tactile means are equal, as are all the senses – there need be no hierarchy. Again, this

logic is only useful when applied with psychoanalytic theory, to critique patriarchy.

To escape the enslavement to a disembodied way of being through art is nonetheless found embedded in the psychoanalytic source (Wollheim, 1968 p. 123):

It was just to distinguish art from this kind of case [an analogy between the artistic instinct and disordered mental functioning e.g. an obsession] that Freud classed it as sublimation, where ‘sublimation’ means the discharge of energy in socially acceptable channels.

Consensus, Dissensus, Diversity

Here a parallel between utopia and art practice in general can be drawn. Following Modernism and Post Modernism, contemporary visual and plastic art in its many manifestations is concerned with a diverse range of expressions, which have as their common bond that they share the same time – that is today, the present moment. There is no cohesion, no consensus – no signature style within contemporary visual and plastic art. This is in contrast to art of the past, which was frequently part of a signature style such as abstract expressionism of the 1940 – 1950s, or Pop Art as the signature style accepted by the art world in the 1960s. Both Abstract Expressionism and Pop Art traditions of appropriation are drawn upon in this project, along with some other styles such as Art Povera, chosen for their resonance with utopia, the developing understanding of transitional phenomena, and the sensible transcendental, as elaborated in part III, the studio process. These options are available because, today, in the absence of a signature style diversity is the signature of contemporary visual and plastic art.

The seeming lack of cohesion or consensus in contemporary visual art is important to this project; it is what Jacques Rancière (2013, p. 60) calls “dissensus”¹⁵. According to Rancière, dissensus is essential for creativity, and for political efficacy:

The play of heterologies always has an undecidable aspect to it...it undoes the sensible fabric... The politics of works of art plays itself out to a larger extent - in a global and diffuse manner – in the reconfiguration of worlds of experience based on which police consensus or political dissensus are defined. It plays itself out in the way in which modes of narration or new forms of visibility established by artistic practices enter into politics own field of aesthetic possibilities. It is necessary to reverse the way in which the problem is generally formulated. It is up to the various forms of politics to appropriate, for their own proper use, the modes of presentation or the means of establishing explanatory sequences produced by artistic practices rather than the other way around.

In other words, utopia understood as a good place that is no place, is the imaginative space from which real politics can draw, but it cannot be controlled and it cannot achieve consensus – it would then be merely propaganda. Examples of regimes, which used art as propaganda, to persuade, include advertising in capitalism, and social realism in communism. Diversity in contemporary visual and plastic art is itself a utopian attempt to escape propagandist tendencies. The forces of the market, or of totalitarian regimes, which would dictate a particular style for artists, are defied. The artist asserts autonomy by refusing one way as the right way. Consider how abstraction

¹⁵ dissensus, and his concept of the distribution of the sensible, are concepts first fully introduced by Rancière in *The Politics of Aesthetics*, 2004.

replaced strict rules on representation. Eventually, abstraction was the only accepted style and figurative art was not allowed. Today's diversity resists this constraint – that one or the other type of art is not allowed. Thus utopia may be seen as a common factor in the many and diverse artistic styles and strategies of our time.

Utopia, the “good place” that is “no place,” lends possibilities to the art object which always comes from an imaginary place as well as the material world. As this double meaning “good” and “no place” suggests, utopia is itself a paradox which forces its meaning into something beyond itself – it cannot be pinned down. Thus, works that are utopian demand something of the viewer in connection to the material world, not so much of rational thought, but of the imagination, even as they confront real political concerns. Thus utopia is both real, and a dream, without fully being either one, but deeply engaged on both counts. Somehow this defies rational thinking, as continental philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy observes, ‘It seems to me that Utopia does not make us think, for thinking never goes out of the real, but, on the contrary, penetrates deeper into the real... Utopia helps us to dream.’ (Nancy, 2012, p.3).

Utopia is complex, because it plays with the real, often presenting itself as if real, but in fact it is imaginary. On the other hand, it can influence the formation of the real, in a way that concrete, forced change making cannot - the imaginary as powerful in influencing the real and making change possible. Furthermore, this paradox shows how the layered meanings and qualities of a work of utopian art lend themselves to the qualities of play in utopia and the need to create new models – including impossible ones. Art can hold up a mirror of possibility to reality and in doing so it is intrinsically utopian.

This concerns the ‘functions’ of utopia described by Levitas as aligned with respect to ideology. The compensatory function – the dream that goes nowhere - aligns with abstract utopia (politically with ideology), and the critical and

transformative functions align with the concrete utopia (politically with change). How might dissatisfaction with housework, leading to a sculpture made out of crumpled laundry, lead to change? In Part III of this text, such art is considered the first step - to see things from a new perspective – that may lead to change. ‘The task is to recover the core of concrete utopia from the dross of the abstract elements in which it is embedded’ (Levitas, 1997 p. 71).

As several of the art works on exhibition discussed in Part III demonstrate, the imagining of a new reality for women in patriarchy gives the utopian method an alliance with feminist concerns. Imagine it first, and the forces of change can be mobilised.

The most important political concerns that utopia confronts are those of the disadvantaged, whether the marginalised or the exiled. To be marginalised or exiled is a negative experience. However, in such a state, the individual does not have any stake in the power structure that exists, for whatever the reason of their exile or marginalisation and therefore, they are free to imagine alternatives: ‘Disentangling himself from the logic of war and power contest, the individual is now free to move from the marginal to the liminal ... and unleash creativity.’ (Spariosu 2015, p. 17). Thus utopia is in one sense set apart from the power structure, but may have the potential to undermine it. In another sense, the utopia is deeply connected with the power structure. It is only in the sense of a lack of agency available to the outsider, that the utopia is stemming from a place set apart. In many ways utopia is more like a bridge, connecting the realm of the power structure with the disruptive forces that potentially can come from the outsider.

From this position, the work of art both escapes and subsumes the dialectic of change. Rancière describes the re-drawing of the boundaries between the practice of art and the practice of politics as what provides freedom for creativity. Rancière sees the goal of art thwarting expectations, and maintaining

a sense of play. For Rancière (2013, p.25) ‘The main enemy of artistic creativity as well as political creativity is consensus – that is conscription within given roles, possibilities, and competences [...]’. It is within this space of play that the “good” place that is “no place” can develop, and potentially undermine a static structure by its freedom – it has escaped though not by choice - to operate outside the borders but in such a way to make change possible.

Reacting to that risk of usage for propaganda, according to the classic work on play by Johan Huizinga (1950, p. 210) a view is proposed that ‘to be a sound, culture creating force this play element must be pure ... true play knows no propaganda; its aim is in itself, and its familiar spirit is happy inspiration’ is a warning against utilising play in a controlled way, and an argument for autonomy for the arts. In other words, the excluded outsider must be free from any intentional agenda imposed by the power structure.

However, contemporary visual and plastic art practices seem to hope to defy even this constraint, consistent with Luce Irigaray’s concept of touch, of a faithfulness to embodied experience, and hover on a line between “pure” play and vital, usable, work that nonetheless resists external control. Success on this is a matter of debate.

Especially significant is utopia’s playful ability to give agency to an outsider or alternative viewpoint, and its ability to effect change. The way change is effected is through an ‘imaginary’ which is considered in this project in relation to transitional phenomena and found in the sensible transcendental.

The desire for alternatives is found to connect to broader social concerns such as injustice on every level of society, from the practical – as approached in the wages-for-housework movement - to the theoretical – as approached by attitudes toward depression or as in lack of subjectivity for woman, by a type of modelling based on a male logic that stems from the male embodied experience, which is offered an appropriate symbolic order through which to achieve self-

hood, as if there is only one type of person, a model indifferent to difference. Irigaray (204, p. 86) notes:

The feminine only occurs within models and laws devised by male subjects [from a male viewpoint on experience], which implies that there are not really two sexes, but one. A single practice and representation of the sexual.

Given the feminist concerns emerging in the project, it is worth asking, what do Thomas More and the feminist Utopians share in common? Playful as they may be, they both come from a position of constraint. Thomas More was constrained by unjust laws and a powerful king, and women by patriarchal culture which views the female body as disabled. It is this capacity for creativity within constraint, explored in literature and in visual arts alike, that is the core of my art practice.

It is in the ability of utopia to escape constraint, within the space of play of art that a unique opportunity appears. Jameson (2005, p. xii.) states in *Archaeologies of the Future*:

Utopian form is itself a representational meditation on radical difference, radical otherness, and on the systemic nature of the social totality, to the point where one cannot imagine any fundamental change in our social existence which has not first thrown off Utopian visions like so many sparks from a comet.

For Jameson, utopia and its encounter with radical difference is an essential requirement for any society to move forward. Therefore, he views works of science fiction, in which humans confront alien situations, as utopia's most obvious form. This line of thinking is suggestive of another aspect of utopianism: that it gives a voice to the other and to the viewpoint of the outsider. Utopia is well suited to this purpose, because disadvantaged outsiders in a state of suffering for varied reasons have few resources other than their

own imagination, and their marginal status that disconnects them from the accepted norm.

Utopia has a role in the rise and fall of dominant ideologies. Jameson (2005, p. 64) explains the cycle and current activity of power structures in history, and how the creative efforts and what they produce get co-opted by those in charge: ‘the intelligence of and imagination of humanity have been hypostasised and subsequently appropriated and exploited like any other human product. The Great Schism of transition from religion to enlightenment is Jameson’s prime example of how human imagination focused on myth transitioned to focus on realisable ideals, but those in power in society put both to service.

The shift from myth to modern plays out as explained in his analysis and chapter in his book, ‘The Great Schism’. The Great Schism refers to an historical trend mirrored, according to Jameson, by the division between fantasy literature and science fiction. Jameson finds science fiction superior for utopian analyses, and explains how this breaking process, such as the break between mythical and scientific thought, can be identified at work in any ‘supra-structure’. In other words, with each successful rise of a dominant ideology, the imagination and desire, the utopian imagination, of a given people may be harnessed and put to use by those whose intentions may not be in line with the common good. So whether it is superstition, religion, enlightenment, or today’s neo-liberal economy, in any given situation the sense that how things are is how they must be, will correlate with the attitude of those in power. Against the power in place utopic figures imagine alternatives. Thomas More was a politician frustrated with unjust laws that he couldn’t change, and Paul Noble is an artist who is frustrated with land use policies in London and the treatment of animals. Both created imaginative utopian expressions that exist(ed) along or even beyond the margins of controlled

images and sounds allowed in public spaces, which Rancière describes as the “policed” distribution of the sensible (Ranciere, 2013).

Bridging the Physical and Metaphysical Divide

In phenomenology, specifically phenomenological feminism, which is evident in the analysis of several works described in part III of the doctoral research text, the ‘Not Yet’ of utopia is present, and shown to make way for consideration of the sensible transcendental. Elizabeth Grosz notes, ‘I think one of the beauties of philosophy is that it is like art to the extent that it celebrates chaos instead of attempting to tame it which is what science does. (Copeland et al., 2005). In this regard, the ideas found in Irigaray, and others are better suited to understanding art than are the sciences even in utopian scholarship. ‘Exploration of the unknown is an exemplification of what art research can be.’(McNiff, 1998).

Utopian Art and Artists

Visual Art continues as a natural and effective form for critical imaginings to take place. There is a long history of feminist literature that is utopian. Basic to these texts is ‘the assumption that alternative worlds are not just abstract fantasies, but concrete possibilities that emerge as the material conditions and the consciousness of a society change’ and ‘that this process is not automatic’ (Bammer, 2004, p. 97). This is why it is surprising that in recent discourse on utopianism in visual arts practices, there is very little explicit utopian discourse in terms of works of art re-imagining culture for women¹⁶, like there is in literary arts. Certainly, the art of women can be read as utopian, and women’s art often does address the desire for a better world for women such that the utopian impulse is obvious. Feminist utopias however, are underrepresented in art and critical discourse on utopia, unlike feminist utopias in literary criticism and discourse. Perhaps the work of studying feminist utopian expressions in the visual arts is simply not being done yet, in a public forum.¹⁷

¹⁶ The following events, exhibitions, and publications included no reference to or inclusion of feminist utopian visions: *Utopia and Contemporary Art* (Gether et al., 2012) which is based on a 3 year Utopia Project at the Arken Museum in Denmark; *Documents of Contemporary Art: Utopias* (Noble, 2009, p. 95) published by Whitechapel in the UK; and events such as *Utopia Study Days* at the Tate Modern in the UK, (TATE 2006), Steven Duncomb’s talk: ‘Utopia’ at in the Walker Center in NYC in 2012 (Duncombe 2012), Utopia and Art Conference, Denmark, 2007.

¹⁷ At the time of this writing, a book has recently been published, *The Feminist Utopia Project: Fifty-Seven Visions of a Wildly Better Future*, (2015), on feminism in visual art and utopia. It is not yet cited in academic literature, utopian studies conferences, or peer reviewed art critical journals. Perhaps a trend I have identified, where feminist utopian visions in visual arts are seemingly invisible in scholarly discourse on utopian studies, will correct itself through the renewed interest in the topic of utopia, evidenced by the project of *Fifty-Seven Visions*.

Lack of analytical discourse around utopian Feminism(s) in visual art notwithstanding, visual art utopias are present throughout history. In fact, ‘the Utopian strain goes far back – probably all the way back – projecting a visual form onto the idealism, futurology and critique of the utopian imaginary.’ (Rüsen, 2006, p 12). Likewise, disappearing from popularity for a time: ‘utopia came to be marginalized in the period after the second world war...’ (Weeks 2011, p. 191). However, Utopian studies re-emerged, including in contemporary art theorizations. This can be seen in publications and events throughout the world.¹⁸ All of these events help to situate this project, searching for ways the utopian impulse can function in the production of works of art, and to what end.

The Arken museum in Denmark is itself considered a utopian endeavour, built not to house an existing collection of a work of art, but rather, as a dream or a wish to bring the power of art to a community by first designing, then building the structure which would (hopefully) bring it to fruition.

The very establishment of Arken has something utopian about it. Normally one establishes a museum on the basis of an existing collection of a quality deemed worth preserving for posterity. In connection with the establishment of Arken in the Copenhagen Western Region in 1996, the situation was quite the opposite’. The project was made in the hopes that the public would be encouraged to use their imaginations, which is based on the notion that a ‘utopian endeavor exists in all good art (Gether et al., 2012, p. 10).

Categorisations of ‘utopian’ art are proposed by the above endeavours, both in terms of function, and of type, spanning the spectrum of the micro to the

¹⁸ such as *Utopia and Contemporary Art* (Gether et al. 2012) which is based on a 3 year Utopia Project at the Arken Museum in Denmark; *Documents of Contemporary Art: Utopias* (Noble, 2009, p. 95) published by Whitechapel in the UK; and events such as *Utopia Study Days* at the Tate Modern in the UK, (TATE 2006), or Steven Duncomb’s talk: ‘Utopia’ at in the Walker Center in NYC in 2012 (Duncombe 2012).

macro: direct political involvement such as accomplished by the situationists,¹⁹ alignment with progress as in the constructivist refusal of involvement with figuration as in the case of Kandinsky's spiritualization or 'theosophy' of art, etc. All share the common element of the desire for a better way of being, with a critical re-imagining. The areas developed in this project are both macro and micro: social critique and reimagining of the place of woman in society, the mother and mother-daughter relations, domestic labour, the position of artist, and the experience of becoming a self. In all of these areas, a better way of being is longed for and imagined.

The term 'utopian', it should be noted, cannot be applied to art or artists in an entirely strict manner, because there will always be a subjective element involved. Nils Norman (Norman, 2006) in his talk on utopia at the Arken conference *Utopia Revisited* concludes that any given work of art cannot be defined as utopian compared against other works, because all art is utopian. Ernst Bloch asserts in his book *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature* (1989) that all art can be viewed as either concretely utopian, or as abstractly utopian (containing utopia in a latent manner, as is the case with wishful thinking or even with propaganda). He claims that the utopian seeds of change, what Tom Moylan (1997) calls the 'half life' of utopia, are always present. The 'Utopia Project' in Arken, elaborated in Gether's *Utopia and Contemporary Art* (2012), argues in contrast to Norman, that utopian art has specific qualities, and that art can indeed be defined as utopian or not, in an objective manner. The PhD project at hand defines utopian art in reference to combined influences. The combined influences are: the intention or disposition of the artist, the material manifestation of the idea in the work of art – often this takes on an unexpected dimension - and the subjective experience brought to bear by the

¹⁹ The *Situationist*, a group of revolutionary artists, began as an artistic movement of the spectacle, but increasingly moved toward politics, re-working works of art to have political significance. They were influential in the political uprisings in France in 1968 (Plant, Sadie. 1992). Thus they are an example of a directly engaged form of utopianism.

viewer. These three areas come together to determine whether a work of art is utopian or not. Strict definition is thus a matter of case by case analyses. This project attempts to draw out and analyse the utopian aspect present in work that relates to the concept of utopia, topically guided by the auto-bio-ethnographic method of the research.

The delineation, in this project, that distinguishes art categorized as utopian from art categorized as propaganda (both represent something that is ‘not true’) concerns the position held in relation to a power structure. The delineation is not always easily identified. For practical purposes, propaganda can be identified in that it presents an image the imposition of which is desired by a government or otherwise controlling force, with an agenda authored by a few in power, which does not mesh with the lived experience of the receivers of the image (the masses). The utopian work of art conversely is sourced from the lived experience of the powerless, *constrained* individual. Luce Irigaray’s comment in response to my analysis of her work as utopian (2013) when she stated ‘I am utopic by constraint’ is a case in point.

The term ‘utopian’, when applied to art or artists, is not always a sub-category of politically or socially engaged, broadly critical or satirical work. Hence, a broad definition is most useful and appropriate. Art that relates to the concept of utopia might include wishful thinking on the part of a woman or man trapped in domestic servitude as a matter of circumstance. In their position of constraint, they might resort to creating a painting out of dish soap imagining a different life. Artist Sadie Murdoch (Murdoch, 2016, 2014²⁰) is one such artist, whose project began with washing up liquid, and then progressed to more broadly political content, referencing women artists who crossed the boundary to some extent into the white, male dominated modernist art world. The washing up

²⁰ Information regarding Murdoch’s work with washing up liquid was obtained at an artist’s talk in London in 2014, and is available in the studio notes of the project.

liquid work would not be overtly considered a political work of art, but, in the sense that the personal is political, it is indeed inclusive of a political element.

Examples of work that have moved through a liminal, transitional stage to the point at which change is actually effected exist, although evaluation of a work of art as such remains subjective. The change effected might be personal. For example, after viewing Duchamp's *Fountain* I became depressed. But upon further reflection, I was inspired to investigate what it meant, and the result of this reflection was a lived experience of inspiration, about what it could mean, leading eventually to the theorisation of how the ready made empowers individuals²¹. Bernard Stiegler (2011 a. & 2011b.) calls this quality, where the poison ends up containing the cure, the 'pharmacology' of art. On a more overt scale, the Situationists provide an example of a socially engaged art that relates to the concept of utopia that can be shown to overtly, concretely effect political change (Plant, 1992), as referenced earlier in this text (see footnote, no. 19).

Although the approach that the Arken Museum takes is new, utopian art is not new. Historically, the theme of utopia in its different forms and functions, is present in visual arts. The theme in visual art, as elsewhere, is a mode of critical imagining. Examples in this section include: Michelangelo (b. 1475), Hieronymus Bosch (b. 1450), Wassily Kandinsky (b. 1866), Arakawa (1936 – 2010) and Gins (1941-2014), Lenore Malen (b. 1952), Andrea Zittel (b. 1965), Francis Hegarty (b. 1963), Faith Wilding 1943, Miwa Yanagi (b.1967), Mary Kelly (b. 1941) and Paul Noble (b. 1963) are all artists working with utopian themes. They provide a range of historical examples over time.

²¹ A blog entry detailing this personal change and the resulting theorisation can be accessed at the Elizabeth Matthews utopianartblog.wordpress.com 20 Feb 2016 entry.

In the Christian era, paintings of paradise, and of the expulsion from the garden are utopian (Michelangelo, 1425). Like More's *Utopia* it expresses a critique of society (man's fallen state) and present an image of an alternative in the paradise that has been lost, and also it yet to come.



Figure 1 Michelangelo, *The Fall and Expulsion from Garden of Eden*, 1509.

Hieronymus Bosch's *Paradise* with its lush fantasy of earthly pleasures, or conversely its imagining of hellish torture, likewise has a functional relationship to More's *Utopia*. It imagines a better way, or its opposite: a better way that is desired due to dissatisfaction, and speaks directly with its own contemporary situation.



Figure 2 Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, 1490 – 1510.



Figure 3 Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VI*, 1913.

Kandinsky taught at the Bauhaus, is considered one of the first to develop abstract painting, and is a utopian artist which is somehow related to his idea of the artist as prophet. Kandinsky was fascinated by Christian eschatology. He believed that the Twentieth century was “the dawning age of the Great Spiritual” in which outworn ways of being and thinking would be transformed, under the guidance of the arts. One can see this assumption clearly in Kandinsky’s still figurative, but whirling and cataclysmic paintings, one of which, the 1913 *Composition VI*, he also called “the Deluge.” It depicts the world ending with the harmonious crash of a symphony. In his 1913 *Reminiscences* Kandinsky describes the original theme, the Biblical deluge, as dissolving into “purely pictorial, independent” forms whose reason for being derives entirely from the artist’s spiritual existence. As analysed by Yakov Rabinovich (2016) Kandinsky says:

What thus appears as a mighty collapse in objective [representational] terms is, when one isolates its sound [when

one understands the interior psychic mood it is meant to convey], a living paean of praise, the hymn of the new creation that follows the destruction of the world.

He imagined that his art would help society to transition to a new way of being, inspiring spiritual transformation, in parallel to a transitioning in art from representational form to abstraction. His writings and his work both allude to this intention. Kandinsky (1977, 2012 p.54) wrote: 'Painting is an art, and art is not vague production, transitory and isolated, but a power which must be directed to the improvement and refinement of the human soul—to, in fact, the raising of the spiritual triangle.'

In the 1960s art in general is characterised by minimalism and the death of painting is declared. This emphasis on form without content indicates a crisis with regard to meaning, made manifest in art.

The eclectic selection of artists that follow proceed roughly along a time line, but more importantly accord to a taxonomy which emerged via the exploratory method of the project.

1. The concept of utopia in relation to death: The project began with a self awareness of discontent regarding death. Adorno's essay in conversation with Bloch (1989) asserts that death is always in the shadows of utopian longing. Artist Lenore Malen and Arakawa and Gins are examples of artists whose work relates to the concept of utopia within the taxonomy of the topic of death.

2. The concept of utopia in relation to Capitalism: the next concern that arose came from the artist dealing with the detritus of consumer culture: used clothes, broken household items, and in general, too much stuff. Her response is to create minimal, alternative living spaces. Andrea Zittel is an example of an artist whose work relates to utopia, and engages with a critique of consumer culture.

3. The concept of utopia in relation to the mother daughter relationship in patriarchy: the next topic to emerge in the studio practice regards the mother daughter relationship. Artists Frances Hagarty and Miwa Ayanagi provide examples of artists whose work relates to concepts of utopia along the lines of mother-daughter relations.

4. The concept of utopia in relation to feminist concerns: the position of woman in patriarchy then emerged in the studio, and seemed to cry out for alternatives. Faith Wilding provides an example of an artist whose work relates to utopia in the area of contemporary feminist concerns.

5. The concept of utopia in relation to feminist concerns, particularly the area of unpaid domestic labour, the position of woman, and a female perspective in the art world, emerged in the studio practice. Mary Kelly is an example of an artist whose work relates to utopia and addresses such concerns.

6. Finally, in the project, the desire draw upon classical materials and techniques as a mode of expression, to reach into the past and transform or re-make it for today, and to engage with dystopia, emerged. Artist Paul Noble provides an example of an artist whose work exemplifies a re-imagining of past art, building upon/re-configuring those techniques, making a commentary (dystopian) upon the current era.

Thus a taxonomy of art in relation to concepts of utopia developed. It emerged in accordance with the auto-bio-ethnographic and holistic-reflexive research methods used in the project.



Figure 4 Arakawa Gins, *Bioscleave House*, 2008.

Arakawa and Gins are utopian artists who critique this state of affairs and propose an alternative in their series of paintings *mechanics of meaning* (1963-1972) and their *Bioscleave House* (figure 4). The paintings form the basis for a four-decade research project that resulted in the *Bioscleave House*: architectural designs aimed at the elimination of death. Arakawa says of himself: “I am an eternal outsider” and an “abstractionist of the distant future.” The previous utopian content – for example, that of the Christian God - has been replaced with something along the lines of an existential, experiential phenomenology, but the aim is still the same: the presentation of impossible desire (immortality, meaning), in critique of the current reality.

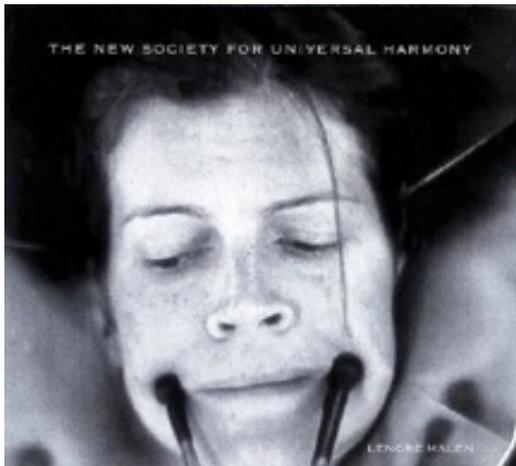


Figure 5 Lenore Malen, *Society for Universal Harmony*, 1985

Lenore Malen, New York artist and creator of the ‘society for universal harmony’, used ideas of a holistic alternative to conventional medicine using magnets parodying the ideas of historical figure Anton Mesmer (figure 5). Mesmer created ‘mesmeric’ communities in the 1800s, claiming cures for disease. Eventually he was investigated and exiled for his activities, but the hope and the utopian desires of his followers captivated Malen. Malen’s activities border on the spirit realm and the absurd:

Even the most casual photographs convey a spectral remove from quotidian reality, an involvement with things unseen ... And what it visualizes is more provocative than demystification. As Bloch might say, despite what we know to be true, we still have our wishes, which resist any documentary reality (Indiana, 2006, p. 117).



Figure 6 Andrea Zittel, *Wagon Station A-Z*. 2003.

Utopian art practices mobilise a sense of play. Wide ranges of artists create works exemplifying this. US artist Andrea Zittel created *Wagon Station A-Z* in 2003 (figure 6) in which participants design their own sleeping pods while they are staying in the open spaces of the American West. She has developed an “A-Z” label, by creating a label for her “product” the way a corporation creates a brand name, i.e. a label, in a strategy to make money. She creates an alternative “product” within capitalism that is not exploitive like capitalism but creative, world building, and productive of a space of play (Gether et al., 2012, p. 123). It is possible to book a stay in one of the pods via Zittel’s A-Z website. Zittel’s work overtly embodies Levitas’ concept of critical and compensatory functions of utopia: her branding is satire, in parody of Capitalist society (critique), and the experience of designing and staying in a Pod offers a ameliorative experience, a novel experience of living creatively, without all the stuff of consumer culture (compensatory). The utopian function of change is also embedded, but in a latent manner: those who experience her work will possibly be changed, inspired to live in an alternative manner to the current consumer culture. The critique thus falls into the realm of utopia as it straddles the modes of satire and re-imagining (Elliott, 1970), and embodies utopian functions (Levitas).

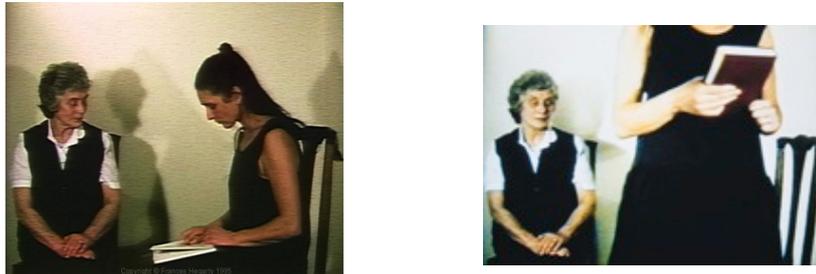


Figure 8. Frances Hagarty, *Turas (Return)*, 1993.

Another artist whose work takes another utopian angle is Irish performance artist Frances Hegarty. She offers an alternative to the logos of the masculine, as critiqued by Irigaray, by creating work in which a mother daughter dialog takes place. The mother and daughter speak the repressed Irish language, honouring and making visible a mother-daughter genealogy, creating a space of healing for the loss of separation experienced in emigration specifically, but applicable to all mother-daughter relations that have been severed (figure 7). This work highlights that healing is not available in patriarchal symbolic order which recognises father son genealogies only. This resonates with Luce Irigaray's conception of a pre-Socratic tradition in which women's histories and genealogies are accessible, and point to an alternative for mothers and daughters. 'The oral connection between her mother's voice, speaking the native language, and her daughter's ear reinforces the connection.' (Cronin et al. 2009, p.105).



Figure 8 Miwa Ayanagi, *My Grandmothers*, 2001.

Miwa Yanagi's work is utopian because it imagines a genealogy for mothers and daughters and grandmothers. This is also a critique of the absence of this in patriarchy. Artist Miwa Yanagi creates digitally manipulated photographs, which imagine a mother-daughter genealogy in reverse: in her "grandmother" project she puts girls in a frame with their imagined selves fifty years in the future (figure 8). This theme relates to Irigaray's critique of the lack of a mother-daughter symbolic order and provides a remedy in a fictional imaginative creation.



Figure 9 Faith Wilding, *Womb Tomb (Crocheted Environment)*, 1972, 2004.

Another example of an artist whose work is utopian by this project's criteria – a good place that is no place, imagining a place that does not exist, but is hoped for, is Faith Wilding. In 'Crocheted Room' (figure 9), she creates an environment that breaks the boundary between women's craft and formal spaces of gallery art, creating a space of play that critiques the masculinity of the art world, and the precarious situation of the woman artist (Cvetkovich, 2012, p. 123). Wilding turned 'one space into her 'Womb Room' by painting the walls black and filling the space with a dome-shaped spider web of white yarn and rope with various dangling protuberances. It's part shelter, part trap.

(The version here shown is a recreation of the 1972 original, and was made in 1995. It is now known as *Crocheted Environment*).

Craft culture is a sprawling version of ... a “little world”... crafting’s interventions in the art world are central to the reclamation of feminist cultural politics, as well as to crafting’s redefinition of what counts as politics to include sensory interactions with highly tactile spaces and with other people... [the] work embodies a reparative response to conflicts within feminism and between art and craft, but the utopian spaces of their large-scale installations produce a reparative experience of depression by literally engaging the senses in a way that makes things feel different (Cvetkovich, 2012, p. 177).

These works exemplify the way that utopia comes into play when individuals are marginalised or exiled by the power structure, as is the case for minorities, women, and others: the majority of the world’s population in the global south, who don’t fit the singular model of the Western world. It is in that sense political. However, this outsider position, the utopian position, has the benefit of its operation from the outsider position in relation to a power structure.

It should be noted, that the position of the outsider, and the notion of utopia as always outside of the power structure is not without contest.



Figure 10 Mary Kelly, *Post Partum Document*, 1975

Mary Kelly is another artist whose work relates to the concept of utopia, and addresses feminist concerns. Relevant to this project, her *Post Partum Document* (1975) re-imagines the work required of and the role of the mother. ‘These panels form one section of a larger six-part work that documents the relationship between Kelly and her son over a period of six years. Drawing on contemporary feminist thought, and in particular on psychoanalysis, it explores the contradictions for a woman artist between her creative and procreative roles. The work, says Kelly, traces the differences between ‘my lived experience as a mother and my analysis of that experience’. To make these panels Kelly recorded and then reflected on a number of conversations with her son, before finally allowing him to scribble across her carefully documented texts.’ (Tate, 2004) This is a work that re-considers the un-paid, taken for granted labour of mothering in an imaginative way.

Mary Kelly’s work relates to an unequitable situation in the artworld and in broader society that is still true today, and was made at the same time as she created a project documenting divisions of labour along gendered lines, including the women working in the factory and women who cleaned offices at night so they could care of their children during the day (Kelly, 1973-5).

Gender equality has not been achieved in the art world. Maura Reilly, author and curator based in New York, indicates that although progress has been made in the percentage of women represented in galleries and museums, because women now average around 30% of represented artists in commercial galleries (in New York and London in 2014) compared to less than 4% 30 years ago, that this measure is deceptive. Another statistic reveals that the percentage of women who have achieved success based on valuation in the marketplace, suggests similar inequality exists today as did thirty years ago, fuelled by gender disparity in auction sales, says Reilly (2015, p. 1):

Each year Artprice.com draws up an international report on the contemporary art market, as seen through the prism of auction sales, and presents the top 500 artists according to turnover. In its 2014 report there were just 3 women in the top 100...the more closely one examines art-world statistics, the more glaringly obvious it becomes that, despite decades of postcolonial, feminist, anti-racist, and queer activism and theorizing, the majority continues to be defined as white, Euro-American, heterosexual, privileged, and, above all, male. Sexism is still so insidiously woven into the institutional fabric, language, and logic of the mainstream art world that it often goes undetected.

This project seeks to engage with the notion of an artworld that has not yet accepted a feminine perspective with equitable recognition, and it aims to do this in a playful way, a way that keeps some of what the past has to offer while transforming it, and in a way that touches on dystopia.

According to Mihai I. Spariosu (2015), professor of comparative literature, the power structure today manifests play as violent contest, conceived as the favoured form of play in patriarchy. Spariosu claims that this has been the case since Plato at least, but now it is hidden. Such violence is discernible in art in its dystopian formations, warning of what might be if changes do not take place. ‘The modern dystopia crystallizes the anxieties that increasingly accompanied the onward march of progress.’ (Claeys and Sargent 1999, p. 3). Fear of possible futures, of what may happen if ameliorative action is not taken, drives the theme of dystopia.



Figure 11. Paul Noble, *Nobson Newton*, 2004.

Turner Prize winner Paul Noble’s work is a case in point. Over the last fifteen years, Noble has created an imaginary city he calls *Nobson Newton*, in which geographies are drawn in great detail, largely uninhabited by people, but filled with beautifully rendered architecture based on imaginary places such as heaven and hell. The continuous layering of highly naturalistic drawing refers

to disturbing things such as human excrement, bondage, and phallic symbols. He uses text that is purposefully difficult to read ‘in order to recover an intuitive experience that results in a rediscovery of primal realities.’ (Noble et al., 2004, p.37). In this way he comments upon the human effort to create societies, and exposes anxieties and problems.

Noble’s work is utopian by definition. In his work, utopia remains in the realm of “no place,” the fictional, where it still retains its identity, at the same time raising questions about the real world, which creates awareness that might inspire action towards actually improving things. Noble (2004, p. 34) states:

I use the devices of technical drawing. These devices help shine the sharpest light on the things I depict. I am against hierarchies and perspective. I arrange the objects of my drawings on a spatial plane using cavalier projection²². The origins of this projection lay in military cartography - fore, mid and background are got rid of and everything depicted is equally close and far. The viewer becomes the architect and the drawing, an architectural plan. He or she is no longer earthbound but hovers like an angel over the described scene, taking in the entire design.

Noble’s work thus makes manifest the liminal, sensible transcendental, and transitional qualities of utopia, via technical (use of perspective), contextual (imaginary places), and phenomenological (viewer experience) means.

Artists such as Noble who focus on dystopia still share what Ruth Levitas’ definition requires, that same desire for a better way of being. What Noble is doing regarding his use of hellish images is not new, nor is it peerless. Other examples spanning centuries include medieval depictions of hell such as Fra Angelico’s *The Last Judgement*, painted in 1425, Renaissance versions such as

²² Cavalier projection is an oblique projection, with lines of projection at a 45° angle to the plane of projection, creating a space without depth. (Merriam-Webster, 2000).

Pieter Breugel's *The Triumph of Death* painted in 1562, or, more recently, Jake and Dinos Chapman's sculpture, *Hell*, created in 2000. Like the colours on a colour wheel, opposites complement each other, making each other visible in a more vibrant way. Dystopia makes visible the social critique, and the hope for an alternative becomes more vivid, more urgent. In this project, the hidden violent play of dystopia theorised by Spariosu and embodied in the work of Noble is evident in several aspects of the studio practice. Examples include the disturbing aspect of the bondage of soft toys, and the enormous enlargement of classical images, one of a hand that appears to be holding a weapon.

In this section I have introduced artists whose work relates to the concept of utopia. I have introduced historical examples, followed by examples of contemporary practitioners working in various mediums.

Michelangelo and Hieronymus Bosch provided examples from the Christian era picturing interpretations of paradise, or of paradise lost. Fra Angelico, Pieter Bruegel, and Jake and Dinos Chapman are referenced as examples depicting Hell. Wassily Kandinsky provided an example of a modern take on spirituality, in which abstraction was developed to guide humanity towards a better way of being. Arakawa and Gins, Lenore Malen, and Andrea Zittel all create environments or social structures which critique and re-imagine the world. Frances Hegarty, Miwa Yanagi, and Faith Wilding critique and re-imagine the female experience in patriarchy. Finally, Paul Noble exemplifies dystopia and a re-imagining of traditional artists techniques. He critiques and re-imagines society and the Western tradition that influences it, by presenting a very disturbing "what if".

Taken together, these artists form the basis of the taxonomy of utopian art that is further developed in Part III, the studio process and outcomes, of this doctoral project.

Summary of Part II.

In Part II I discussed the historical and critical context within which this studio based doctoral project is situated. The key concepts rely on vocabulary needing definition, and biographies of the two main thinkers, Luce Irigaray and Donald Winnicott, whose ideas are central to the project. The theme of Utopia was situated in the scholarly research across several fields: psychoanalysis, philosophy, feminism and the politics of aesthetics. The different discourses used for the analysis of the work of the project were introduced. Finally, artists whose work relates to the concept of utopia were investigated, examining a selection of practitioners in the field of utopian art.

The key concepts explored in the project required the use of specific terms, however, the terms themselves are matters of debate. It is beyond the scope of the project to fully elaborate a position amongst these debates, which are respectfully acknowledged. However, the terms needed general definitions pinned down, for the sake of clarity in the project. The term utopian aspect or utopian element is used to describe the way a work of art can embody the desire for a better way of being.

Transitional phenomena is used to describe an area of human experience between inner and outer reality. The sensible transcendental is used to describe an area that brings together embodied experience (the sensible) with transcendence. Transcendence is understood as the event, more or less, of self-becoming, or achieving a subject position in culture. Patriarchy is used to refer to psychoanalytic approach to understanding self becoming based on a male viewpoint, evident in social structures. Liminality is used to describe a in-between state of being, where one way of being has been left, but a new way of being has not yet been achieved. The terms woman, man, female and male are used to emphasise biological sexed being, and the terms masculine and feminine, masculinity and femininity are directed more toward socially

constructed notions of gender. Art is used to refer to visual arts including, but not limited to, sculpture, paintings and drawings, and happenings.

Art is by its very nature interdisciplinary. In the course of this project, a variety of disciplines were explored, and an eclectic assortment of thinkers were drawn upon. Two main thinkers, both interdisciplinary, emerged as central, and therefor warranted biographical introductions. Luce Irigaray with fields of discipline including Philosophy, Linguistics, Psychoanalytic theory, Feminist theory, and existential phenomenology. Donald Winnicott, also interdisciplinary, spans the fields of Psychoanalytic Object Relations Theory, Philosophy and Paediatrics.

In addition to the two main thinkers, a number of other discourses, notably political theory and aesthetics, are drawn upon. Part II therefore explained the different discourses drawn upon in the project.

Finally, in Part II, a selection of artists whose work relates to the concept of utopia was explored, to situate the studio practice of the project within the field with such artists . These artists include a variety of time periods, mediums and techniques, sharing in common the theme of utopia for their given time and place. This provides the basis for Part III, in which the studio practice of the project is analysed.

Part III. Studio Process

Part III. Introduction

In Part III, the methods of the practice-based research are explained, including the strengths and the weaknesses. The research exhibition is analysed, explaining the three studio outcome groups which form the body of work: the selection of works that show the history of the project, the group of drawings and sculptures which enact the utopian strategy of re-imagining the past, and the group of paintings which enact the utopian strategy of imagining a new symbolic based on memories of key moments.

The first group, *Archaeology of the Project*, forms a commentary on the fact that the process in the studio brought forth information about utopia, about society, and about the self, and directed further research. Examples are highlighted from the years of the project which form commentaries on the fact that the work of caring goes unrecognised in our current social structure, that the mother-daughter relationship in patriarchy remains un-symbolised, that the art world speaks as if the masculine experience is universal, etc. Likewise, it demonstrates how the scholarly research informed the outcomes in the studio. Four select works from this group are included in the research exhibition.

The second group in the body of work, *Re-imagining*, forms two commentaries using transformation of the everyday combined with classical rooted, but much altered, traditions. The first commentary, embodied in drawings, is on the fact that disempowered woman has not been properly represented in patriarchy, and embodies the utopian impulse to make it otherwise; drawing from special consideration toward the exploitation that takes place at the division of labour, and at treating people as objects, in our culture. The second commentary *Re-imagining* enacts, embodied in sculptures, is on the problems of communication between two individuals who are different in our culture. The sculptures embody the utopian impulse as a wish for alternatives. Four drawings and seven sculptures are included from this group in the research exhibition.

The third group in the body of work, *Key Moments*, emphasises the embodiment of the sensible transcendental. The expressive paintings incorporating everyday objects form a commentary on the female embodied experience as not yet properly symbolised, imagining it to be otherwise. Four works from this group are included in the research exhibition.

Taken together the sixteen works from the three groups form the body of work in the research exhibition that embodies the contribution to new understanding. The understanding refers to utopia and art, showing that utopia, transitional phenomena, and the sensible transcendental share a common liminal quality.

The Methods, Practice Based Research

In this section I explain the studio process and the reflective/reflexive research method used. The method is explained and the purpose of its use, together with a full description of what has been going on in my studio, and how it draws on the theories already discussed.

One challenge of the project was combining the analyses of two types of research: academic and art. In any given work of art research, the outcome results in a visual form which can be evaluated according to multiple criteria, each criteria on having limits and specificities. The outcomes are both visual, and theoretical. The outcomes are evaluated in terms of how they answer the research question, including portions of the research question that do not pertain necessarily to visual art. However, analyses for this project include consideration of the visual form or the process of producing the visual form. Current researchers (Godin and Zahedi, 2014, p. 3) acknowledge:

Research through design is, by nature, embedded in the design process. In other words, while its main concern is to inform a research question, it also must be concerned with the end product of the design. As such, designers/researchers become concerned with the same [types of problems] the professional designers are, especially when using research through design. Moreover, they also add a new layer of complications that are inherent to research.

The main method used to pursue this aim is through a 'reflective' or 'holistic reflexive' approach. The combination of terms as such, best describe a form of Donald Schön's 'reflective practice'. Schön's 'reflective practice' is a mode of gathering information that uses both traditional observation and data recording techniques, but goes beyond mere scientific method, to include intuitive, experiential observations. He explains it as 'professional practice as an artistry (rather than a technique).' Schön describes four 'underpinning epistemologies for reflective practice: technical rational; humanistic emancipatory; postmodern deconstructive; and radical phenomenological.' Regarding artistic practice as research, these four form 'a complex, synthetic holistic reflexivity... distinguished from other kinds of reflection—as an aesthetic and ethical apprehension grounded in an ontological framework of radical phenomenology' (Bleakley, 1999, p. 1). In short, life experience, technical know-how, academic research, and embodied experience combine to produce the contribution to understanding embodied in the studio outcomes of the project.

Under the umbrella of holistic reflective practice, other methods are used such as autobiography, auto-ethno-bio-ography, and participatory practice. However, the primary method is holistic reflective. The choice of the holistic reflective practice is based on the hypothesis that the utopian element understood as a desire for a better way of being, is generative of works of art that in turn can reveal information about the self and about society. Upon reflection they can also provide a power source for change.

In using reflective practice, I examine specific experiences of struggle, dissatisfaction, and frustration in my life. These dissatisfactions include personal day-to-day experiences with housework, child-rearing responsibilities, artistic production, personal relationships, social roles, and personal finances. Works of art that embody imagined alternatives – or the wish for them - are created from the ground of this common experience. The works of art comprise expressive drawing, painting, or sculpting with mixed materials. The difficult

necessity of remaining close to the scholarly research while engaging with outcomes with an intentional degree of subjectivity, is considered. Donald A. Schön (1983, p. 150) in *The Reflective Practitioner* says of reflective practice:

Their [the reflective practitioner] hypothesis testing method is a game with the situation. They seek to make the situation conform to their hypothesis, but remain open to the possibility that it will not. Thus their hypothesis making activity is neither self-fulfilling which assures against the apprehension of disconfirming data, nor is it the neutral hypothesis testing of the method of controlled experiment, which calls for the experimenter to avoid influencing the object of study and to embrace disconfirming data. The practice situation is neither clay to be molded at will nor an independent, self-sufficient object of study from which the inquirer keeps his distance

The works that result from this approach can be analysed variously, like any other work of art, but given the end goal of understanding utopia, some approaches make better sense. For example, when evaluating pictorial composition there may be no or little attention to social context. This method does not serve the purposes of the project particularly well. When evaluating content, consideration of the audience may be lacking, which is problematic, because each audience brings their own experience, which may change the meaning of a given content. In this project, content is evaluated recognizing that context of viewer response is not available for most analyses, beyond anecdotal references: a disadvantage to the research aim. When viewing the work through the lens of semiology, attention may be given to primarily myth and meaning. This method of analysis appeals to the aims of understanding utopia, but in practice proved difficult. With a view toward psychoanalysis the emphasis may be on manifestations of unconscious desires. Such an approach emerged as extremely suitable to the work that emerged. Psychoanalysis emerged as a

primary method in the supporting text of the doctoral project. With text, intertextuality and linguistics, signs may be examined. Intertextuality and linguistics emerge as only as a side reference in some of the work.

A work of art could be evaluated differently by each of these methods, and this project involves different analytical approaches according to the goals of the research and the intention behind each work. In short, content analysis respectfully recognizing the lack of audience response evaluation, psychoanalytic discourse, followed by discourse analysis regarding political and philosophical thinking, are the main methods used in making and analysing the work in the project.

Because this project demonstrates art research emanating from individual experience, and connects that individual experience, on reflection, to the community or social structure: familial, local, national or global, it led to further consideration of the relationship between the personal and the political. The personal experience of the artist - in the private realm – is shown to lead to valid perspectives on society. Thus this research resonates with the viewpoint that the ‘personal is political’ (Hanisch 1969, 2006, p. 1) and finds its place in that particular problem: the problem of diverse viewpoints within experiences (i.e. the viewpoint of those who want to cope within the existing system as opposed to the viewpoint of those who want to work for a changed system) as contrary to any singular movement, a problem present in women’s movements ever since the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, and one that still exists today due to the private seemingly isolated nature of domestic experiences for many women: it is still true that ‘women are sometimes smart not to struggle alone [when]... the repercussions are worse than the oppression ... [and] individual struggle is always limited’ (Hanisch, 1969, 2006, p.1). Women who want to take action on some specific issue often dismiss those who are seen as opting out on action on that particular issue, and vice versa.

The problem of women respecting each other, as well as respect between all genders, is one that Luce Irigaray's 'sensible transcendental' addresses. On a philosophical level, Irigaray's project imagines an immanence (embodied experience) and transcendence (becoming a self) as present together, where two who are different in body are accommodated. This facilitation of how the becoming of a self occurs, respects the mystery of the other so as to find a way in which to share the world. It is similar to Winnicott's transitional phenomena. This project seeks to explore these ideas together, as a utopian process.

Therefore, in response to the research question 'how can utopia inform the production of works of visual and plastic arts?' I began with the hypothesis that the utopian element understood as a desire for a better way of being, is generative of works of art that in turn can reveal information about the self and about society.

Studio Process and Outcomes

The doctoral research exhibition comprises three groupings which form the body of work in the research exhibition. They are the results of three approaches to the hypothesis, that the utopian element understood as a desire for a better way of being, is generative of works of art that in turn can reveal information about the self and about society, through the production of art. Taken together, they form the principal outcome of the doctoral research, supported by a thorough engagement with the underlying theoretical issues, and together they and embody the new understanding arising from the research question.

The chronology of the art presented in the first group does not correspond to linear time; rather, the ideas emerged in an eclectically intuitive manner, and upon reflection have been ordered according to overlapping themes. Sometimes, the reading of theory inspired a particular approach in the studio, and sometimes the making of art inspired further reading of theory. The second and third groups were developed simultaneously, having grown out of the first group. The three groups in the body of work are *Archaeology of the Project*, *Re-imagining*, and *Key Moments*.

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

Archaeology of the Project

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

I. The installation *Archaeology of the Project* is comprised of a number of the works documented and explained in this section. It reviews the themes that emerged in the four years of PhD research. The themes represented developed in response to the desire for alternatives to areas of frustration, dissatisfaction and struggle in life needing imagination. They include the themes of transformation of the everyday, rethinking one in relation to other, being a mother, a daughter, and a woman, and artist, and consideration of the economic situation.

These themes in *Archaeology of the Project* provided a context for *Re-Imagining* and *Key Moments*. The work presents reflections on shared culture as experienced through an individual artist with a growing understanding of what the utopian element is or can be, and how it can inform the production of works of art. Often, with each successive work, the utopian impulse connected more clearly to its broader social context. Numerous works emerged on the themes.

Examples from each theme exhibited are analysed below, in terms of how they produce novel cultural or theoretical apprehensions, a more nuanced understanding of the 'utopian' and utopian art process. Understanding emerges of a similarity between transitional phenomena (Winnicott) and the idea of the sensible transcendental (Irigaray) as sharing a liminal space with the utopian element in art. In this way the themes produce new insights into the production of art through the intensive of scholarly and subjective modes of engagement.

The following illustrations are of the *Archaeology of the Project* series. Each work considered is introduced briefly. Then, several works are discussed in depth.



Figure 12 *Needle and Thread*, mixed media, dimensions variable.

This work was made from the utopian impulse to escape housework, and to question women's work. I had never sewed myself, and so it was curious to me that I was encouraged to use a motif relating to women's work just because I was a female raising a large family. My starting point was then to draw upon the lived experience of feeling trapped and overwhelmed by housework, and being stereotyped because of my gender, and my role as mother – expected as it were to identify with domestic tasks.

The fact that wives remain largely responsible for every day domestic tasks has fallen out of fashion as a subject for feminist philosophy even as empirically oriented literature on the division of labour continues to affirm and attempts to explain this fact (Veltman, 2004).

Needle and Thread is a project which explores utopian expression or re-imagining of this issue starting from the personal experience of the artist.

The strategy of making a small items extremely large transformed the everyday object, and metaphorically addresses the fact that the issue is 'out of fashion'.



Figure 13 *You missed my birthday* 152'x60'x60cm.

This work arose from the desire, channelled via a utopian intention on the part of the artist, for a deceased father to be able to spend his daughter's birthday with her. I began the project to create a monument for the huge event of the death of my husband that occurred when I was pregnant with our fifth child. The fact that he died one day before the birthday of our fourth child seemed to crystalize the enormity and grief of that moment. The piece was durational.

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

Constructed of a soft wire infrastructure, the monument began as a phallic form, resonant with the enshrining of the lost paternal figure of the family, draped in cut up clothing worn by the children during the early years, sown back together to form a tapestry. The monument gradually drooped over 48 hours, as if weeping, and became an entirely different form: metaphorically pointing toward an alternative future to the patriarchal structure. Ernst Bloch, in conversation with Theodor Adorno stated that death, or the fear of death, is the most legitimate root of utopian thinking. Early in the project, exemplified in *You Missed My Birthday*, the topic of death emerged, in resonance with the work of Lenore Malen and Arakawa and Gins, whose work address the two approaches to utopian dealing with death (Bloch, 1988): the medical utopia, and the elimination of death altogether. After this early project, although an embedded force, concern with death became latent in the research, as the topic of feminist critique rose to the surface. The work also formed a starting point for the auto-bio-ethnographic method of research in the project.



Figure 14 *You Missed My Birthday II* - see above



Figure 15 *Gift for Mother*, 215 x 8215 cm, ripped old clothing stretched and woven.

This work rose out of the utopian desire for a better way of being as a wish to be relieved of laundry duty, and contains an embedded critique of the mother-daughter relationship in patriarchy. In my woven pieces, I take strips of cloth gleaned from the excessive piles of throw away clothes that I must deal with as a non-paid worker in my household. This work is generative. I began work with the material not knowing exactly where I would go with it. As a result of experimenting with the material I began a reflection on the mother- daughter relationship, which is genealogical, and on the horizontal relationship between women – myself and those who made the clothes.



Figure 16 *stacked*, 121x60cm, mixed media.

Stacked grew out of the wish or desire for alternatives based on an increased awareness that the West still exploits developing countries for the cheap manufacture of goods. Reflection on *Stitched Piece* (figure 16) led me to make *Stacked*, in which I consciously give form to thought generated by previous work. In it I combine the romanticised image of the orient, represented by the enlargement of an exotic 1800's romantic painting from the era of colonisation, as a place to be exploited, with the mundane clothing now produced there: the result of export of labour to developing countries. As such the work creates an imagined alternative to things as they are, somewhere between what is, and what might be. The critique of consumer capitalism embedded in this utopian work resonates with Andrea Zittel's theme of re-imagining consumer capitalism.



Figure 17 *Stitched Piece* 121x91cm, mixed media



Figure 18 video still from *Stitched Piece*

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

Stitched Piece arose out of the utopian desire for a better way of being that wished for an alternative to piles of clothes and junk around the house, and forms an embedded critique first of the division of labour locally, then of the labour exploitation of developing countries that produce these goods. *Stitched Piece*, led to broader social connection to a child protection agency that gave permission to use video footage interview of an 11 year old child worker in a clothing factory. Video footage is collaged with direct animation on 16mm film and it is embedded in a painting/sculpture, which was made with clothes and shoes imported from developing countries, and sold at local stores such as Penney's.

In the midst of this project I learned on 24 April 2013 that *Rana Plaza*, an eight-storey commercial building, collapsed in Savar, Bangladesh. The girl in the video was not a part of the Bangladesh location thankfully, but worked under similar conditions in India. The discovery made personal as a result of studio guided practice is that the problem is global, and immanent. These connections show how art practice, through the process of engagement with materials on hand, can bring global concerns into conscious awareness to develop new understanding. The Bangladesh incident is reportedly the deadliest garment-factory accident in history, as well as the deadliest accidental structural failure in modern human history. Warnings to avoid using the building after cracks appeared the day before had been ignored. Garment workers were ordered to return the following day and the building collapsed during the morning rush hour. The immanent material critique in the art practice of the doctoral research thus connects to broader social concerns. The work *Stitched Piece* presents an object of mediation between what is and what a future yet to come might be.

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

Mother Daughter Letters arose out a state of grief at the mother-daughter relationship which, on a personal level, based on personal experience, seemed problematic to the point of impossibility. The personal experience emerged out of an event of miscommunication with my own mother, a type of event that seemed often to repeat itself with my own daughters. I began to resort to letter writing to my mother, in the hopes of creating a communication with time built in for reflection (the time it takes to post, read, reflect and respond inherent in communication via letters). Thus the desire for a better mother-daughter relationship formed first as a utopian wish. The letters accumulated. The utopian desire was then, on reflection expressed in water colour figurative painting, cutting excerpts of the hand written text from the letters, and collage technique. The un-readability speaks of the frustration caused by the problem of an incommunicative relation, where two people seem to have difficulty respecting the boundaries or spaces between them. This is what Luce Irigaray describes, and uses the image of the placenta as a mediating object, metaphorically (Irigaray, 2004b). The object of the artwork could stand in for the placenta. The engaging nature of the paint and collaging technique, inviting the viewer to solve the puzzle or, if they prefer, create new meaning, signifies hope. It contains an embedded critique of the problems with mother-daughter relations on a personal and cultural level. It provides an object to stand in-between what exists already, and what is wished for.

This piece offers an example of the transitioning through of the utopian (wishing for an alternative), through liminality (an in-between state enacted by the play of text and image, and the cut up and partially reconstructed letters), with the art object acting as transitional phenomena (the experience of the work by the viewer), to potential actualization of a new way of being, embodying the sensible transcendental: transitioning to a new understanding with a faithfulness to embodied experience of the mother-daughter relation. The embodied experience is facilitated by use of the actual hand written letters, mixed with artists materials, and the reconfiguring of words actually written by mother and daughter, to create new meaning.



Figure 21 *Are You My Mother* 121x91cm oil on canvas.

Are You My Mother grew out of the utopian desire for a better way of being which wished for a world in which mothers and daughters would have better relations, and in which role models in images for girls would be more ethical. The use of text and painterly marks render an ambiguous state for the reading of the object. It began when I heard a radio talk about the discovery of a diary of Martha Washington, premier first lady of the United States of America. This diary, the speaker claimed, showed a romantic, feminine, soft side of the first lady, unknown previously. It included a recipe for a facial mask made of natural ingredients, which would keep the skin looking young. This inspired me to think about the lack of relatable role models for girls in political life, which I consider to be an outcome of the problems with the mother daughter relationship in patriarchy. The painting constitutes a critical re-imagining as it literally pieces

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

together four different images of the first lady collected on the internet, and references the scattered experience of the women, mothers, and artists, who lack generational role models in patriarchy. Like the works of Miwa Aganyi and Frances Hegarty, this work is a utopian re-imaging for girls and mothers, making use of the auto-bio-ethnographic and holistic-reflexive method of the project.



Figure 22 *Ready made in the feminine* 152x91x91cm.

This work was created out of the utopian desire for a better way of being that wished for an art world that would be welcoming to women. *Ready made in the feminine*, responds to a Bernard Stiegler essay which takes Duchamp as a starting point, combined with an essay by Luce Irigaray, on building a culture in the feminine. Stiegler (2011) looks at the way in which the rupture in society by technological advancements brings about a loss of knowledge – something he terms the proletarianization of sensibility - and proposes that within this poison lies the cure i.e. the power of the technology can be curative regarding the stupidity of humanity that it causes. Here he champions the amateur: when we learn to do things with the technology rather than receive it in a passive way, we overcome the destruction out of love. He criticises the professional who does not love anything. This has a lot to do *ready made in the feminine*. It is at the first stage, rather stupid by choice, mocking the system that holds up Duchamp's ready-made as a universal, and suggesting an alternative.



Figure 23 *Back Pay*

The happening *Back Pay*, grew out of the utopian desire for a better way of being which wished for a world in which becoming a mother did not require unfair treatment, and forms a social critique of how mothers are treated in society. *Back Pay* is explained in more detail in the next section.



Figure 24 *Intersubjective Dialog 1*, plaster encased toy, 35x22x15 cm.

Intersubjective Dialog 1, and all the intersubjective dialogue pieces that follow, arose out of the utopian desire for a better way of being that wishes for people who are different to get along, and contains an embedded social critique of the difficulty of communication in our culture. The theme of the alien body, crossing the boundary between human and animal, and a search for holistic healing recur in the utopias in art that I have found. In this work, I respond to Luce Irigaray whose work shares a view that the multiple perspectives, such as those mentioned, form an effective metaphor for considering difference. Ultimately it is impossible to fully understand the mystery of another person.

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

The power and limitation in this is embodied as the utopian element in *Intersubjective Dialogs*, explored through artistic explorations in a unique way.



Figure 25 *Intersubjective Dialogue II* – See above



Figure 26 *Intersubjective Dialogue III* – see above



Figure 27 *Intersubjective Dialogue IV* – see above

Detailed Discussion of Select Work in *Archaeology of the Project*

Detailed Discussions of *Needle and Thread*, *Intersubjective Dialog Sculptures*, *Ready Made in the Feminine*, *Are You My Mother*, and *Back Pay*, serve to establish the main concerns, personal and political, that emerged in answer to the research question, how can a work of art be utopian? These discussions show examples of how the hypothesis is tested, and how the work in the studio guides the scholarly research.

The PhD project began in the studio with *Needle and Thread* (figure 11), which embodies the utopian impulse as a wish to be relieved from housework. The enormous enlargement in the size of the object, the layering of plaster and the gradual build-up of paint, contribute first to a visceral response of feeling very small and childlike, and then of being drawn into the texture and colour applied with hundreds of delicate layers to build up a vibrant but nuanced surface, contributing to a recovery of sensation. (deletion) The transformation of this ordinary every day object, embodied in the enlargement and organic transformation of the surface, connects to theories of Utopia and everyday life.

Through reflection on the utopian impulse in the studio, I find that my art production connects with others who share like concerns discussed in the field of utopian studies. The re-imagining of domestic work is also explored by Kathi Weeks whose contribution to utopian thought is discussed below under *Back Pay*.

Intersubjective Dialog Sculptures (figures 18, 19, 20, & 21) embody the utopian impulse as a wish for people who are different to be able to get along and respect difference. The encasing of soft toys in plaster bandaging connotes childhood experience where comforts are normally close at hand, and socialization leading to prejudices has not yet occurred fully. The use of plaster

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

transforms the soft toys into an enduring form as a work of art. The joining of the two toys, which are different, into a third form embodies the utopian longing for human connection despite difference. Utopia is necessary to change what is already in place (Whitford, 1991, p. xxxiii):

We need utopian visions ... imagining how things could be different is part of the process of transforming the present in the direction of a different future. Critique in itself is not enough, and leaves one in permanent opposition, where one does not have to take responsibility for ones mistakes.

Intersubjective Dialog Sculptures are utopian because they take on the task of imagination regarding these concerns.

In addition to the point of creation, the utopian emerges also at the point of reception. The viewer perceives the object in stages, when at first it appears as a singular entity, then as an uncanny anthropomorphic form, and then as two such forms locked together. '*Inter-subjective Dialog Sculptures*' act first as a mirror (a false one) onto which the viewer may project their own experience of childhood attachments, as well as their experience of connecting with others. Inner reality is exceeded, and external reality is preceded. *Intersubjective Dialog Sculptures* also act as a portal into a space that does not yet exist. 'But the term transitional object, according to my suggestion, gives room for the process of becoming able to accept difference and similarity' says Winnicott (1953, p. 89), explaining that the transitional phenomenon can be understood as actual, and as symbolic, or just as actual. Embodied, material experience is brought together with a timeless becoming of a new, unheard of type of dialog. Through this work a discovery of the transitional objects and phenomenon theorised by Donald Winnicott occurred, and connected with Irigaray's concept of a sensible transcendental. This connection is not evident in the literature on Winnicott and Irigaray and was an early innovation in this doctoral project.

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

One in Relation to the Other: *Ready Made In the Feminine* embodies the utopian wish that women would be considered as equal to men in the art world, and re-imagines the art canon by presenting a ready-made decreed by the artist as 'feminine'. Such a decree draws on the Duchampian tradition of the ready-made. The ready-made sculpture is a work of art solely because the artist has designated it as such, per Chilvers's *Dictionary of Modern and Contemporary Art* (Chilvers and Graves-Smith, 2009 p. 587-588). The work consists of a ceiling fan installed upside down on a plinth, and qualifies as a 'ready made aided' because it is then painted with images of mythic women. Originally the 'ready made' was not altered by the artist until Duchamp produced:

'a small number of ready made aided... a type of work ... invented consisting of a mass-produced article selected at random, isolated from its functional context, and displayed as a work of art ... a bicycle wheel, which he mounted on a kitchen stool. Strictly speaking, this was a 'ready made assisted', but other 'pure' ready-mades soon followed' (ibid. p. 587).

The knowledgeable art viewer easily identifies *Ready Made in the Feminine* as a 'ready-made-aided', with attendant connotations of the rebellious spirit of institutional critique,²³ but also in this case the object is somewhat dangerous in that the blades turn slowly and could cause injury. The engine whirrs and the images are blurred. This creates a transformation of an everyday object in an imaginative response to an art world avant-garde invention.

²³ It is debated as to whether or not a 'ready-made' can be an institutional critique when institutions art have long assimilated historical avant-garde art for its own purposes (Hobbs, 2000, p. 125). However, in this project, it is considered valid as it is appropriated and put to purpose for the creation of new meaning.

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

Marcel Duchamp's *Fountain* was presented as if it was gender neutral and was widely discussed as a universal object even though clearly it is a male-specific artefact. The fact that it is a masculine object presented as if neutral points to a central concern in this project: difference. *Ready Made in the Feminine* is a critique of male ideology in the art world where a urinal can be presented as an iconic work for humanity as if a universal object, but *Ready Made in the Feminine* is also a utopian gesture, imagining women's voices as more recognised in the art world. The utopian aspect, the sensible transcendental and the transitional phenomena explored in this project, are mobilised in *Ready Made in the Feminine*, which stands as a symbol for a culture yet to come. The culture imagined stems from desired alternatives to patriarchy, patriarchy that presents the male model as if universal. In keeping with the spirit of the 'ready-made' this symbolic value is assigned by the artist's decree.

It is unquestionable that *Fountain* is considered a pivotal moment in art history. *Ready Made in the Feminine* was created to imagine the sensible experience of an industrial object and bring it together with the utopian wish for something new in the art world.

In this context, *Ready Made in the Feminine* reveals art world functioning as if gender neutral when in reality gender specific, and simultaneously re-imagines the art world by appropriating the idea of a ready made and painted images of historical women leaders on the blades. Turning it upside down, and painting it transform the object, fan. The viewer engages with it in a new way. *Ready Made in the Feminine* exposes a blind spot in the art world, while at the same time creating a playful transitional space by transforming the everyday object of the ceiling fan into a purposeful experience for the viewer.

A urinal is clearly a sexed object even when not presented or theorised as such. *Ready Made in the Feminine* provides insight into how the utopian intention of an artist, and the liminal space of art can produce nuanced understanding of

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

culture. In this case, the nuanced understanding is a new addition to the existing awareness of how sexism occurs in the art world, which is in this project understood to be the result of an indifference to sexual difference, which prevents those who do not fit the male model from recognition in general, in the art world and in the broader culture. Embedded in the critique is an imagining of the utopian mobilisation of a change in the art world, at the level of imagination, to be respectful of a cultivated sexual difference in whatever form that may take.

According to Luce Irigaray (2004b, p.98), as stated in her essay 'A Future Horizon for Art', 'our culture, religious culture included, lacks models of woman's [love] relations, with herself, with her mother, with her sisters, natural or spiritual'. Further reading of theory of the transformative power of art where 'the task of artist rather is to transfigure the reality or even to create another reality which could allow us to live in a more beautiful and happy way' developed.

Are You My Mother instilled an interest in the role of the mother, and of the double bind that a girl child has in identifying with the mother, a mother who is not considered as a person in her own right in Winnicott's view, but rather is viewed only in terms of use value for the sake of infant development. Feminist scholar Allison Stone (2012) in her article points out this matter 'Against Matricide: Rethinking Subjectivity and the Maternal Body'. Per Winnicott (1953, p. 39):

The good-enough mother (not necessarily the infant's own mother) is one who makes active adaptation to the infant's needs, an active adaptation that gradually lessens, according to the infant's growing ability to account for failure of adaptation and to tolerate the results of frustration

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

The gaze is fixed on the infant perspective and benefit, but what becomes of the mother, and the relation between two who are different, if the transition to selfhood is made at the mother's expense, rendering her invisible?

This is an example of how the making of art directed further theoretical reading, and it marks the point of engagement in the project with philosopher Luce Irigaray on sexuate difference, transitional phenomena (Winnicott) that mobilises a utopian wish via an art object, and mobilization of Irigaray's idea of the 'sensible transcendental' that brings together the mind or spirit with the material. The painting is material, and the play with a symbolic woman is aimed at imagining alternatives for women or a spirit of woman – as if we could go back and connect with past generations in spirit. In looking for a theory to bring difference together, Carolyn Tilgham (2009, p. 40), interdisciplinary theorist and author of 'The Flesh Made Word: Luce Irigaray's Rendering of the Sensible Transcendental' states, 'Luce Irigaray's concept of the sensible transcendental ... paradoxically fuses mind with body while at the same time maintaining the tension of adjacent but separate concepts, thereby providing a fruitful locus for changes to the symbolic order'. This theme thus brings together an understanding of Irigaray's work in relation to object-relations theory, especially that of transitional phenomena and the concept of utopia.

To further explain: Winnicott proposed the idea of the 'transitional object' on representing an intermediary stage of 'Me and Not Me' in an infant's gradual development of an understanding of self and other. This in-between state of the transitional object also describes the point at which the desired object has been 'found' through a creative act, but it has not yet necessarily made its journey to the symbolic. It is this in-between state of transitional phenomenon that bears similarity to Irigaray's sensible-transcendental, and provides a frame-work for understanding how a work of art which takes as its starting point the desire for an alternative (in this PhD project a desire for an alternative to patriarchy)

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

mobilises the journey toward the new symbolic for woman, which also bears the hallmarks of the utopian dream which is embodied in the work of art.

In his work *Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena*, Donald Winnicott (1953, p. 2) explains it:

An intermediate area of experiencing, to which inner reality and external life both contribute. It is an area that is not challenged, because no claim is made on its behalf except that it shall exist as resting-place for the individual engaged in the perpetual human task of keeping inner and outer reality separate yet interrelated. It is accepted that the task of reality-acceptance is never completed, that no human being is free from the strain of relating inner and outer reality and that relief from this strain is provided by an intermediate area of experience (cf. Riviere, 1936) which is not challenged (arts, religion, etc.)... This intermediate area is in direct continuity with the play area of the small child who is 'lost' in play.

The Work of Caring As ‘Handed Down’

The house a woman creates is a
Utopia. She can't help it – can't help
trying to interest her nearest and
dearest not in happiness itself but in
the search for it.

-

Marguerite Duras

Women will fight for their kids – it's hard-wired in, and a capitalist system takes advantage and profits unfairly upon this. Bloch comments on the phenomena of the mother's intense drive to care for and protect her child as evidence that we are a complex of drives (as opposed to a hierarchy of drives such as Freudian theory popularised). These drives and/or desires can be educated and respected – not taken advantage of as they are by a capitalist system (Bloch, 1986, p. 64). The satirical work *Back Pay*, (figure 23) embodies the utopian wish to re-imagine the world as a world where parents would be treated fairly regarding the labour they perform to produce humanity.

Ethical treatment of parents remains unresolved in patriarchy, and emerged as an area of dissatisfaction in my life, as a widowed single mother to five daughters. *Back Pay* is a giant pay cheque mounted on a board connoting an award check, as if a contest has been won, or a fundraising effort has been a great success. The enlarged pay cheque advertises the event, in the manner of the lottery in Ireland and some other countries. Mounted on the wall next to the cheque is a template similar to a tax form with tables and graphs and blanks to be filled in. The template appears as a form any parent (or former parent) may fill out and submit to local authorities to be paid for all of the hours they provided care for the raising of children. The viewer is confronted with what looks like a government document with the tax form style, or a commercial

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

endeavour with the slick enlarged cheque. The large amount of the cheque is startling. Money gets attention in a capitalist or neo-liberal society, especially one experiencing economic difficulties. *Back Pay* uses a patriarchal capitalist value – money – to draw attention to an injustice in society by posing an alternative.

The trope of an award cheque connects with the concept of a “law and order” Utopia, using the language of capitalism in order to undermine capitalism’s hegemonic hold, by pretending that what it suggests could take place in an orderly, legally enacted way. Utopian dreaming? Yes. The personal and social dimensions of *Back Pay* qualify it as an autobiographical and auto-bio-ethnographic approach.

Back Pay often elicits criticism, annoyance, and dismissal from viewers, evidenced via anecdotal conversation. It shows how utopian dreaming is criticised on the grounds that it is impossible, and dangerous. This could be perhaps grounds for future study, and is an example of the difficulty of including context in analysing the results of the research. However, anecdotal evidence provides insight.

Viewers express concern at suggesting such a thing, that paying people for raising children would not be affordable, it would be unethical, encouraging people to have children for money, creating an upsurge in free loaders who live off the state. Viewers wave away the expression of utopia in *Back Pay*. Therefore, avoidance of the utopian method and its name might seem appropriate. However, Kathi Weeks (2011, p. 176) argues, ‘rather than deny the applicability of the appellation “utopian” to escape its pejorative connotations ... I want to accept the label, reconsider utopianism as a distinctive mode of thought and practice, and explore what a utopian demand is and what it can do ... it is a demand that raises eyebrows, one for which we would probably not expect immediate success’

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

Back Pay, a law and order utopia is one of two types of concept of utopia, according to Angelika Bammer (1991, p. 19), 'Of the two contending concepts of utopia inherent in the dialectic of progress and modernity – the ideal, on the one hand, of a state of peace and calm guaranteed by a benign and rational order, and the dream, on the other hand, of a state of freedom unbounded by regulating forces – the former has clearly been the prevailing model for the representation of utopia'. Accordingly *Back Pay* embodies Bammer's prevailing model for Utopia, and is also a work of satire that mimics US government's current tax refund system, which credits people for life activities that the government supports, but only after the fact. *Back Pay* critiques patriarchy, utilises 'law and order' utopian strategy (with humour), confronts negative connotations of the utopian aspect and engages with the utopian demand. It provides a liminal in-between space of transitional phenomena, and a material engagement with self-becoming of the sensible transcendental.

Bammer argues that achievement of calm and peace plays out - in actuality - not only against libidinal forces which need repression for the sake of order but, as happens in totalitarian regimes, the achievement of the calm and order plays out as against the "other" to the norm, which in contemporary and historical patriarchy, is woman. The point being, women are repressed in patriarchy for the sake of maintaining the prevailing order. Nonetheless it may be, and I argue without utopia it will be, that 'so deeply imbedded is this imperative [a state of peace and calm] in the social contract by which we are governed and by which we, in turn, govern ourselves, that in the end even freedom is generally considered worth the price of order' (Bammer, 1991, p. 18).

Studio process brought forth the utopian imagining where the task of caring for children would no longer deprive mothers (or those acting in that role) to remain free to develop themselves and control their lives by creating a law that would facilitate such a thing to happen. This occurs in the utopian art piece, by

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

imaginatively “paying” minimum wage for the hours of child-care provided, twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, until the child (or children) reaches school age. After school age is reached, the pay is for eighteen hours per day on school days, twenty four on weekends and holidays, up until the age when children are legally permitted to look after themselves – an age variable (normally ranging from twelve to eighteen years of age) according to local laws.

This utopian vision of justice established by law emerged in the studio and provides a dream of what Bammer calls a law and order type of Utopia, however ridiculous it may seem, that would work for women (or men) who provide the labor to bring children into adulthood. It may be relevant that I, as the author of this dissertation, am the mother of five children.

This work is satire, because first, it is comical to think that parents would demand pay for caring for their own children, and second, it is even more comical to think that in capitalism, pay would be given for a task which people are already doing at no charge. In *Back Pay*, the viewer is confronted with what looks like a an advertisement (the oversized cheque) and a few minutes are needed to process that this is in fact a work of art, a fiction. The work reveals the fact, upon viewer reflection, that the non-payment for the labour of child rearing constitutes a type of alienation of labour that still needs to be worked out in order to achieve a just society.

The parent does not benefit from the labour of childrearing in today’s economic system, in the way they would have from a feudal system. The child is trained to be a citizen, a worker, and the profit made on their work does not go to the parent.

Back Pay is playful in its utopian imagining, and it engages with the ‘sensible transcendental’ and ‘transitional phenomenon’ by creating a tactile, embodied experience and social interaction that delivers an object (the fake cheque)

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

acknowledging the participant/viewers real life efforts. It is fictional, embodying an unreal quality, in an inventive sort of way. In so doing, it brings together all three concepts that share a liminal quality, capable of effecting change in the sense of liminality as politically efficacious, such as elaborated by Thomassen (2009), without actually dictating how exactly, or what exactly the change will be.

Grouping One: Archaeology of the Project

Re-imagining



Figure 28 Re-Imagining: I - VII

Re-Imagining Comments on Disempowered Woman by Making the Everyday Strange, looking to the past by using classical images:

“Nostalgia is the engine of utopia; if you have a memory, you have a hope; if you believe that we do have a past you also believe that we have a future, and that the future is going to be more interesting than the past”

Francesco Clemente, artist²⁴

The installation *Re-Imagining the Past: A Utopian Strategy* emerged from the four years of research reviewed here. It is based on the enlargement of the Bague plates - lithographs by Charles Bague of selected examples of classical sculpture that were widely used for training artists in classical academic painting in the 1800s (Bague et al., 2003). The large size of the drawing creates the sense of strangeness for the viewer, who is made to feel small, smaller than even a child, when compared to the size of the figures of hands, or the torso. These classical images were combined with the everyday household object of bed-sheets, and humorous or strange contemporary imagery so as to enhance their strangeness, or what Victor Schlovsky (1950) calls ‘estrangement,’ sometimes translated as defamiliarisation.

The sculptures followed the drawings. The use of soft toys, laundry, and a laundry basket encased in plaster creates a sense of strangeness for the viewer, who is made to see common objects in a new way. The use of white plaster draws from the classical technique, exemplified also in the Bague plates, which are naturalistic lithograph drawings of plaster casts of classical sculpture. The sculptures combine the art with ordinariness: the western tradition of high art

²⁴ Artist Francesco Clement had an exhibition ‘Utopia/Nostalgia’ at the Mary Boone Gallery in 2012. This quote comes from the ‘Tate Studio Visit’ interview available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCVe7Fys74U>

with the world of childhood, and mothering. The sculptures enhance the feeling of strangeness created by the drawings.

This strategy of making the everyday strange is used as a function of utopian art. This use of it, in its regard to strategy for women in patriarchy, brings together Irigaray's idea of the sensible transcendental and Winnicott's transitional phenomena. The objects stand in between the world that we know, and a wish for a re-imagined past as part of making a future yet to come. As such, it is a work of utopian art. The size creates connotations of a god-like status in these classical figures, but the use of the bed sheets and the hybridization that occurs by combining the classical with contemporary material and imagery undermine association with the singular, male god of patriarchy. Instead, the drawings reference the dis-empowered woman, reconsidered. Her dis-empowerment becomes powerful by having been re-configured symbolically in the work.

These drawings both re-imagine women as not only having a place in history, but they imagine as visible the labour that makes society possible. They make the invisible visible. The use of the Bague plates in this manner is unique, and embodies the new understanding of utopian process as productive of works of art that can imagine alternatives. The idea that aspects of art become visible, made by viewer insight

‘makes the concept of art a discursive, contextual, historical and socially determined entity, just like utopia as a concept, when it is made a function of a particular gaze ... The analytical understanding inherent in the utopianizing [sic] gaze permits us to see aspects of art that would otherwise have remained invisible’ (Gether et al., 2012, p. 36).

The Bague plates are representative of utopian ideals of the past embodied in the idealised proportions of Greek sculpture, which have been brandished about

by utopian endeavours ranging from totalitarian regimes to bourgeois societies of elite ruling classes to their use in advertising and media, and are therefore often dismissed as propaganda or as kitsch. Thus partly through satire, partly through nostalgic fantasy, a new representation for woman is imagined, in a playful pseudo dangerous and humorous way, taking the place normally reserved for the male imaginary.

Key Moments

New Symbolic: Key Moments

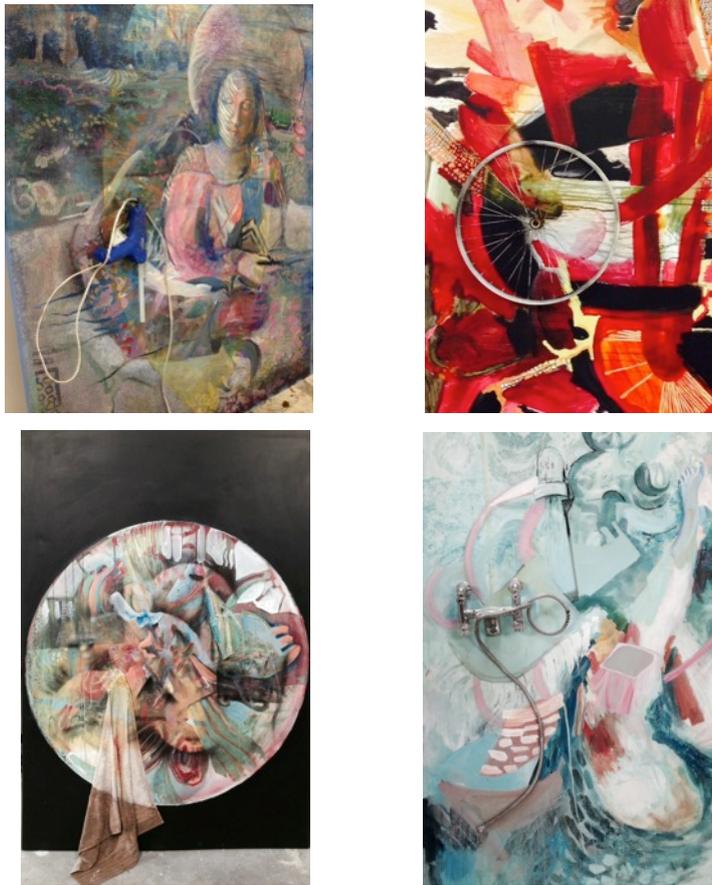


Figure 29 Key Moments I - IV

Key Moments comments on need for a new symbolic order for a culture of two by making abstract paintings. *Key Moments* grew out of the *Re-Imagining*, out of the feeling that it is not enough to re-imagine the past without also imagining a new future. The theme of *Re-imagining* sits within the utopian as a form of desiring a better way of being, as if the past could be re-written. While *Re-Imagining* transforms an historical imaginary, it does not yet imagine a new symbolic appropriate to women. *Key Moments* grew out of such a wish. The idea that significant memories which were at the same time ordinary emerged as a basis on which to create a universal symbolic – a woman’s story that could be

related to by anyone, male or female – but told from a female perspective. Such an act seeks to be a model for the viewers.

In this project, note is taken of the fact that symbolically, in patriarchy, women are associated with the earth, and nature while men are associated with transcendence and the intellect, including in utopian visions.²⁵ For example, God is imagined to be male, father and son, and the earth is imagined to be female: mother earth. Irigaray's idea of the sensible-transcendental is a utopian vision of a culture, mediated through art. There must be a way to transcend, in the sense of becoming a self, and at the same time remain equal with earth and nature of which the body is a part. In this project, art is considered a necessary third term, in which these associations along gender divisions could be overcome: women would take their portion of transcendence, and men would take their portion of the sensible. Culture would then become a shared space for two, at least, in a manner providing equality, but also respectful of difference.

The matter above, a culture 'for two', the ideal of the couple, man and woman, is not with reference to couples in any romantic sense. Love can be shared by any combination of types, including types ambiguous to gender identity: all types of couples offer gifts to humanity. The idea is that we have a symbolic based on the perspective of a boy becoming a man, and that's fine, but we also need a symbolic for a girl becoming a woman. Perhaps additional symbolisations will follow, to describe how one might become any number of combinations of the two, or something as yet undefined. It is a utopian wish to have two, man and woman, who are both properly symbolised.

The way forward to such a culture, for Irigaray (2004b, p. 98), is first through art objects, which communicate outside language, in a pre-linguistic manner:

²⁵ For an in depth analysis and exposé of how in traditional utopian visions woman is conflated with the earth and nature, see the essay 'One loves the girl for what she is, and the boy for what he promises to be' (Ni Dhúill, 2007).

Art cannot reduce itself to the capacity of observing and transcribing reality. This would correspond to a scientific work. The task of artists rather is to transfigure the reality or even to create another reality which could allow us to live in a more beautiful and happy way... it does not suffice to resort to language, but to become capable of using all languages in order to transform our desire(s) into a path for sharing ourselves, for sharing between us.

It is a bringing together of material and spiritual or psychic phenomena. Winnicott's theory of the transitional phenomena provides a theorization of such a combination:

In condensing the first symbol and the first possession, the ... transitional object gathers together a material object and a framework for thinking about it. This leads on to its implications for adult cultural life. For Winnicott, creative work involves the way psychic location and mental space shape relations with self, with others, in memory and in the work of culture. This is part of what the idea of transitional space develops" (Kuhn, 2013, xvi).

As a type of painting based on the desire to express inner experience (Chilvers and Graves-Smith, 2009), Expressionism and Abstract Expressionism, grounded in the materiality of paint (combined with ready-made and Art Povera), emerged as a hybrid technique in *Key Moments*. The goal of *Key Moments* was to imagine a new subjective becoming through paint, by expressing memories of becoming conscious and connecting to the sensible represented in the household objects of everyday life. The memories are paired with painterly gestures and imaginary, invented symbols. The ready-made or somehow transformed objects

are additionally embedded in the paintings, metaphorically bringing together the sensible and the transcendental.

Finding oneself in relation to an available way of becoming, but also forging out a way of becoming imaginatively that is new and a better fit for female subjectivity, is also a concern of this project. Thus, the understanding of space and time as a theme in western philosophy is considered in *Key Moments*: could a new understanding of space and time be imagined through these paintings, and how does it relate to subjective becoming?

As such, the works created for *Key Moments* include remembered moments of becoming conscious, chosen with the intention of universal appeal and tied to western philosophical discoveries understood as a result of the scholarly research guided by the studio practice, to be traditionally associated and reserved for male subjects. These developments of historical so-called enlightenment are understood in this project as created by and for 'white bourgeois male' subjects (Whitford, 1991, p. 16) in such a way that all others are left out. *Key Works* hopes for an extension of benefits for all, re-distributed to include different types of subjects. The heart-felt desire is embodied in four corresponding works of art.

The works retain the embodied or sensible aspect using the materiality of paint, and household objects associated with stereotypical women's work, or autobiographically inspired girlhood experiences of the artist, as metaphor. *Key Moments* embodies a new understanding that imagines an enactment of Irigaray's sensible-transcendental. Winnicott's theory of transitional phenomenon, and utopian studies bring a further perspective:; re-imagining culture to include a voice for women by creating art objects which are imagined to mediate the transition to a new way of being.

Early in the project the concern of sexuate difference was not a conscious one, but through utopian art practice, that is art practice focused on a desire for a

better way of being, the social problem of the male model for becoming a 'self' (transcendence) experienced personally, emerged and was researched.

Following this came a newfound belief in the importance of declaring 'in full positivity the existence and capacities of (at least) two sexes...' as described in *Feminist Futures*, by Elizabeth Grosz (2002). This shows that utopian art practice can serve as a critical or diagnostic tool, on the self and crucially by extension, on society, as demonstrated in the project and confirmed by the results.

In closing, the combination of found objects, everyday life experiences, with the making of high art (traditional techniques of painting, drawing and sculpture) based on the utopian desire for a better way of being, formed the basis of discovering a new understanding of theories of being and of transitioning from one way of being to another, through art.

Summary of Groupings:

To sum up the body of work: the four years of research were immensely varied in approach, experimenting with a wide range of techniques, materials, and strategies applied to the topic. I transformed my piles of dirty laundry into a sculpture combining reinforced plaster, household items, and paint. I transformed toys chronically scattered about my house into uncanny sculptures by encasing and sculpting them in plaster. I turned my own memories of becoming a conscious self into paintings with household objects embedded within them. I transformed my conflict with housework into drawings combining bed sheets with classical imagery. In so doing, I re-configured traditional representations of woman. Utopian imagining turned my frustration with housework, the task of child rearing, and the difficulty of achieving selfhood into guided scholarly research, emphasising reflection throughout the process. The research led to an informed critique and reimagining of the world. I believe that this is what is called Bloch's educated desire (Bloch, 1988, p.76).

Through the creation of these works the liminal quality of Irigaray's sensible transcendental was discovered as in common with a liminal quality in utopia and in transitional phenomena.

This research has changed my life by raising my own awareness of how my position as a female, a mother, and a widow, in society has impacted my experiences, my range of options and my decisions. It has allowed me to critique and understand my society, and dare to re-imagine it, where before I simply had dreams that kept me going in a more individualistic way. I pass this awareness to each of my five daughters. I have also taken on the theme of this dissertation, utopia and art as a way to build a better world, as a life work, having discovered others who share these interests. I hope to contribute by enacting changes inspired by utopian imaginings, having framed a manifesto as it were, demanding that the world become a fairer place, and raising awareness through art. The changes I hope for regard respect and appropriate support for the labour of producing humanity, and respect and support for different ways of being. But I also hope that the power of utopia, especially as it pertains to the importance of imagination, will be respected and enacted: the arts and creativity need to be prioritised throughout society. Humanity urgently needs imagination.

Summary of Part III

In part III the methods used for the studio basis of the doctoral research are explained. The three groupings of work drawn upon for the research exhibition, *Archaeology of the Project*, *Re-imagining*, and *Key Moments*, are documented and explained.

Studio based research takes place through a variety of methods. Of the available methods, Schön's reflective practice, further developed into a holistic reflexive method, was chosen as the primary method. Under that umbrella, other methods were used. These include auto-bio-ethnographic, autobiographic methods, and participatory practice.

The studio process is explained considering the methods applied to the research question, how can a work of art be utopian, and the hypothesis, if the utopian impulse, understood as the desire for a better way of being (Ruth Levitas) is focused by means of an imaginative utopian process in the studio, the result will be new understandings.

Three groupings of work comprise the outcome of the studio process and embody the new understanding: *Archaeology of the Project*, *Re-imagining*, and *Key Moments*. *Archaeology of the Project* is analysed as a comprehensive selection of works from the four years of doctoral research. Several works from *Archaeology of the Project* are selected for a more detailed analysis as they shed light on the process and outcomes of the project. A selection of these will be included in the August 2016 research exhibition.

Re-Imagining comprises a second grouping. Drawing from appropriation, Art Povera, and traditional, classical techniques, this group re-imagines a place for women in patriarchal history as a utopian endeavour.

Key Moments comprises the third grouping. Drawing from Expressionism, Abstract Expressionism, and other traditions, taken together with the groupings, *Key Moments* brings together the new understanding of utopia, the sensible transcendental, and transitional phenomena, as sharing a liminal quality, which it embodies.

Conclusion

This project began as an exploration of the concept of utopia in and through contemporary art practice. A thorough investigation of the history of the concept ensued, including interdisciplinary scholarship in the related fields of philosophy, literary theory, feminist thought, and art criticism. The importance of philosophy and psychoanalysis as discursive tools to explain utopia, art, and feminist thought emerged. Within that discourse, the work of Luce Irigaray, Donald Winnicott, and the concept of liminality were drawn together and an understanding of their relationship to utopia developed. The importance of the utopian element, in feminism and in ontological concerns with self-becoming, was elaborated. Social structures were critiqued, and their relationship to social roles, and restrictions placed on individuals, was considered, highlighting the tension and interplay between the individual and the collective.

Concurrently, work in the studio took place across a range of media and technique. The work in the studio guided further scholarly research. The project gradually focused more and more on feminist concerns on a practical and theoretical level, applicable to the lived experience of the artist. The reflective process raised awareness that utopia is not a blueprint to be followed, but a process. Therefore, the art inspired by the desire for a better way of being did not provide a set plan for that better way. The art produced in this project in response to the utopian impulse emerged rather as a real critical tool to evaluate society, understand it more deeply and accurately, and create an imaginary space where (impossible) alternatives could be thought of - as if real - in a provisional manner, originating from personal experience.

Summary of Contribution

This project contributes to understanding in the three disciplines that are interrelated in this project: the production of visual and plastic art, utopian studies, and the interpretation of the works of Luce Irigaray. It does this through a body of artwork that embodies and demonstrates perceptions of the utopian element as informing strategies for critique and re-imagining of self and society.

These contributions are centred on the discovery of a common liminal character in the concept of utopia as a desire for a better way of being (Ruth Levitas); the concept of transitional phenomena in object relations theory as applied to art (Donald Winnicott); and the idea of the sensible transcendental in considering twoness of being (Luce Irigaray). These contributions that are embodied in and represented by the body of work and explained in the written dissertation that accompanies and supports the body of work.

Utopian alternatives to “things as they are” as the central theme in a work of art are found in this project to perform a dual function: a critique of the present moment and the creation of an in-between state, hovering between reality and imagination, in which movement toward a desirable alternative, otherwise unthinkable, might be mobilised. The innovation of methods and reflection used to analyse the process of art production as utopian, and the works themselves provide new understanding that the quality of liminality is common across the concepts. This is of great interest to understanding liminality itself, and to understanding transitional phenomena, the sensible transcendental and the work of art.

In *Archaeology of the Project* it was discovered how the utopian impulse used as a starting point in making works of art acts as a diagnostic tool, providing critical distance. In *Re-Imagining* it was discovered that the attempt to imagine a

place for woman in history, where she has formerly been written out of it, is a utopian endeavour. The strategy of combining common objects with high art of the past, shed light on utopian desire, showing how it is an in-between state which mirrors the in-between state of transitional phenomena, and the sensible transcendental. In *Key Moments*, it was shown that the act of making art can provide an imaginative attempt to form the new world by creating an in-between state where, although the new symbolic is not yet achieved, it is imagined as if it is already so. This demonstrated a relationship between the concepts, showing the common liminal quality, drawing together the concepts in a new way to provide new understanding.

The new understanding is embodied in the art objects produced and made legible by an accompanying text. The resulting works of visual art can be considered to be significant contributions to the fields of contemporary visual art practice and Utopian Studies, and is likely to be of interest to artist-researchers interested in the concept of Utopia, and in Women's Studies.

List of Illustrations

1. Michelangelo, *The Fall and Expulsion from Garden of Eden*, 1509 – 10.
 Accessed June 2016:
http://www.wga.hu/html_m/m/michelan/3sistina/1genesis/4sin/04_3ce4.html
2. Hieronymus Bosch, *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, 1490 – 1510, Accessed May 2015: <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/the-garden-of-earthly-delights-triptych/02388242-6d6a-4e9e-a992-e1311eab3609?searchMeta=garden%20of%20earthly>
3. Wassily Kandinsky, *Composition VI*, 1913. Accessed September 2013:
<http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/wps/portal/hermitage/digital-collection/01.+Paintings/35744/?lng=en>
4. Arakawa and Gins, *Bioscleave House*, Accessed July 2013:
<http://www.reversibledestiny.org/bioscleave-house-%E2%96%91%E2%96%91-lifespan-extending-villa/>
5. Lenore Malen, Accessed January 2015: *New Society for Universal Harmony*, Available: <http://www.thenewsociety.org/>.
6. Andrea Zittel, *Wagon Station A – Z*, 2003, Accessed November 2013:
<http://www.zittel.org/work/encampment>.
7. Frances Hegarty, *Turas (Return)*, 1993. Accessed January 2015:
<http://brighter.org/franceshegarty/pages/turas.html>.
8. Miwa Ayanagi, *My Grandmothers*, 2001. Accessed February 2012: <http://db-artmag.de/archiv/2008/e/2/4/595-3.html>
9. Faith Wilding, *Womb Tomb (Crocheted Environment)*, 1972, 2004. Accessed February 2016: <http://www.wbur.org/artery/2014/10/01/fiber-ica>.
10. Mary Kelly, *Post Partum Document*, Accessed November 2016:
<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/kelly-post-partum-document-analysed-markings-and-diary-perspective-schema-experimentum-t03925>
11. Paul Noble, *Nobson Newtown*, Accessed May 2014:
<http://www.gagosian.com/exhibitions/paul-noble--november-10-2011>

12. Elizabeth Matthews, *Needle and Thread*, 2012
13. Elizabeth Matthews, *You Missed My Birthday*, 2013
14. Elizabeth Matthews, *You Missed My Birthday II*, 2013
15. Elizabeth Matthews, *Gift for Mother*, 2013
16. Elizabeth Matthews, *Stacked*, 2013
17. Elizabeth Matthews, *Stitched Piece*, 2014
18. Elizabeth Matthews, *video still Stitched Piece*, 2014
19. Elizabeth Matthews, *Mother Daughter Letters*, 2014
20. Elizabeth Matthews, *Mother Daughter Letters*, Detail 2014
21. Elizabeth Matthews, *Are You My Mother*, 2012
22. Elizabeth Matthews, *Ready Made in the Feminine*, 2014
23. Elizabeth Matthews, *Back Pay*, 2013
24. Elizabeth Matthews, *Intersubjective Dialog I*, 2013
25. Elizabeth Matthews, *Intersubjective Dialog II*, 2013
26. Elizabeth Matthews, *Intersubjective Dialog III*, 2013
27. Elizabeth Matthews, *Intersubjective Dialog IV*, 2013
28. Elizabeth Matthews, *Re-Imagining*, 2015 – 2016
29. Elizabeth Matthews, *Key Moments*, 2015 – 2016

Appendix A: Work With Luce Irigaray

Every summer Professor Luce Irigaray holds a seminar for PhD students who are focusing some aspect of their project on her work. In the summer of 2013, I was accepted as a participant, and I presented a longer version of the paper below. The shortened paper is also published on the Luce Irigaray website. On invitation I installed an exhibition of my work and presented a paper on my topic, at the Luce Irigaray conference ‘Ethical Perspectives’ in Bristol the following year, in June 2014.



PhD Seminar of Luce Irigaray 2013, Bristol, UK, Elizabeth Matthews, 9th from left, Luce Irigaray, in reflection (taking the photograph).

A Utopia of Difference:

A Sculptural Investigation in Relation to the Thought of Luce Irigaray

The aim of my project is to open up, through art practice, a new understanding or knowledge of the utopian impulse as present in the human experience, especially as it forms a compelling social critique. The first question addressed is thus, how can “practice” create knowledge, rather than the traditional academic method? Irigaray says of woman’s attempt to make something invisible appear, “this does not go without the risk of resorting to scientific perspectives or technologies instead of letting be and appear a part of us that our systems of representations, including our scientific systems, have considered irrelevant to their field.”²⁶ I have found that it is through a practice which attempts this, that Irigaray’s “third ground”²⁷ makes its appearance to me.

Utopia, in hibernation after World War II,²⁸ has reappeared. Often it is criticised. There are such criticisms against Irigaray’s writings.²⁹ I say these are a failure move forward from the patriarchal, humanistic tradition, which requires validation in accordance with masculine values. Utopias are the myths of our time, their contents a response to the present moment. Conceived in the wishful imaginings of the individual “such things show that however privately the dream rises, it contains the tendency of its age, *and the next age*”³⁰ In this way, utopia features in what art does: it imagines, longs, and creates movement toward a better way of being. Irigaray’s work also does this in a poetic, inspirational, *and* practical way, and is a starting point in my studio.

Irigaray states: “Men have become the only social subjects, and women are assimilated to objects of exchange between them.”³¹ Her inter-subjective

²⁶ Irigaray, Luce (2006). *How to Make Feminine Self Affection Appear*. Graz:Kunsthhaus

²⁷ Irigaray, Luce (2002) ‘Being Two, How Many Eyes Have We’, <http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/para.2002.2>.

²⁸ Levitas, Ruth. (1990). *The Concept of Utopia*, Great Britain: Phillip Allan

²⁹ Jacobs, Amber (2007). *The Potential of Theory: Melanie Klein, Luce Irigaray, and the Mother Daughter Relationship*. Hypatia, Vol. 22 no. 3, September 2007

³⁰ Bloch, Ernst. (1986). *The Principle of Hope, Vol. 2*, USA: MIT Press

³¹ Irigaray, Luce, (1994) *Thinking the Difference* (p.56). Great Britain: The Athlone Press Ltd

alternative (figure1) is a world in which the subjectivity of females would be legally, morally, socially and culturally respected - she offers suggestions toward this end. Of this aspect of her work she says, “It did not seem to be ethical to go into a more sophisticated exposé without proposing some simple and effective cultural modifications that might offer you a chance for life.”³² My personal life experience confirms what Irigaray speaks of as the lack of a genealogy for women in our patriarchal culture: “The between men culture excludes what the other sex brings to society.”³³

In my sculpture, “My Love to You” I ripped old clothing into strips and wove them together into a large, colourful wall piece (Figure 2). Through the process, layers of meaning, understanding, and questions emerged. How was this clothing made? What were the working conditions of the women/girls who made it? How did it affect my experience, my relationship with the women in my life, to have these goods available to me at such a low price?

I, then, began work with a video in which I imagined a wordless dialogue with an 11-year-old Indian girl, who produced the clothing in slave-like conditions (Figure 3). From there, I made another sculpture called “Absent Woman”(Figure 4). Finally, I framed figurative drawings with bread collapsing the boundary between public and private space (Figure 5). Questions about labour relations, and how women’s relationships to one another are affected by capitalism emerged, and dialogue was created.

My interest is in utopia as a strategy I can employ as a woman in a patriarchal culture; my hope is that my viewer will experience a sense of possibility when viewing familiar materials in an unfamiliar, transformed way. If “a tree gives us back our vision, gives us back to ourselves with a capacity for seeing, which we are deprived of by the familiar objects with which we are surrounded”³⁴ then perhaps the making and sharing of art can do something like what a tree does. The utopian gesture calls to mind Foucault’s notion of the

³² Irigaray, Luce, (1987) *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 207. New York: Columbia University Press

³³ Irigaray, Luce. (1993). *Je, Tu, Nous: Towards a Culture of Difference*. New York: Routledge

³⁴ Irigaray, Luce (2002) *Being Two, How Many Eyes Have We*,
<http://www.eupublishing.com/doi/pdfplus/10.3366/para.2002.2>.

freedom required for power relations to exist,³⁵ a freedom which is necessary and without which there really is no hope for change.

The process is somewhat akin to giving birth: “We bring many things into the world apart from children, we give birth to many other things apart from children: love, desire, language, art. Social things, political things, religious things, but this kind of creativity has been forbidden us for centuries. We must take back this maternal creative dimension that is our birth right as woman.”³⁶ In relation to the social totality, this process brings into focus the relationship of work to the *theory*, and the change that follows therewith.

The antithesis of dialectical change articulated by Hegel speaks to this.³⁷ “Hegel takes on how the *geist* of man functions as individual and citizen and the consequence of this to the whole society.”³⁸ Irigaray’s utopia offers a critique of the masculine order of things, of the scientific method insofar as it excludes other ways of knowing, and of the rational mind cut apart from the body-soul, mystical-earthly, ways of understanding. How else but through utopia can this critique be done? As Irigaray states, “I am utopic by constraint.”³⁹

³⁵ Rainbow, Paul (1997). *Michel Foucault, Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth* (p.166), USA:Penguin Group

³⁶ Irigaray, Luce, (1987) *Sexes and Genealogies*, p. 207. New York: Columbia University Press

³⁷ O’Neill, John. (1996). *Hegel’s Dialectic of Desire and Recognition*. Albany: State University Press

³⁸ Irigaray, Luce. (1994). *Sexes and Genealogies*. New York: Columbia University Press

³⁹ Irigaray, Luce. (2013) quote from direct commentary at PhD conference, Bristol

Bibliography

- Ackerman, G. M. et al. (2003) *Charles Bague Drawing Course: With the Collaboration of Jean-Léon Gérôme*. Paris: ACR Internationale.
- Audi, R. (1999) *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barrett, E. & Bolt, B. (2014) *Practice as research: Approaches to creative arts enquiry*, London: Ib Tauris.
- Bat-Ami Bar On. (1994) 'Mediations on National Identity' *Hypatia: A Journal of Femenist Philosophy* 9(2).
- Bammer, A. (1991) *Partial Visions*. New York: Routledge.
- Bishop, C. (2006) *Participation* (ed.) *Claire Bishop, Documents of Contemporary Art*. London: The MIT Press..
- Bleakley, A. (1999) From reflective practice to holistic reflexivity. *Studies in higher education*, 24(16), 315-330
- Bloch, E. (1986). *The Principle of Hope*. vol. 1, trans. Plaice, N., Plaice, S. & Kinight, P., Cambridge: Mit Press.
- Bloch, E. (1989). *The Utopian Function of Art and Literature: Selected Essays*. Cambridge: Mit Press.
- Bourriaud, N., et al. (2002) *Relational aesthetics*, Paris: Les presses du reel Paris.
- Brennan, T. & Jay, M. (1996) *Vision in context: historical and contemporary perspectives on sight*, UK: Psychology Press. Buschman, J. K. & Lenart, S. (1996) "'I Am Not a Feminist, but...
" College Women, Feminism, and Negative Experiences', *Political Psychology*, 17(1), pp. 59-75.
- Butler, J. (2002) *Gender trouble*. New York: Routledge

- Camfield, W. A. (1987) 'Marcel Duchamp's fountain: Its history and aesthetics in the context of 1917' *Dada/Surrealism* 16, pp. 64-94.
- Candlin, F. & Guins, R. (2008) *The Object Reader*, New York: Routledge.
- Casey, J., (ed.) *The Faber Book of Utopias*. London: Faber & Faber.
- Chilvers, I. & Glaves-Smith, J. (2009) *A Dictionary of Modern and Contemporary Art*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Christian, D. L. (2003) *Creating a life together: Practical Tools to Grow Ecovillages and Intentional Communities*. Canada: New Society Publishers.
- Claeys, G. & Sargent, L. T. (1999) *The utopia reader*, New York: NYU Press.
- Claeys, G. (2010) *The Cambridge companion to utopian literature*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Copeland, J. a. G., Elizabeth. (2005) *The Creative Urge: Elizabeth Grosz* [Online]. Melbourne, Australia: Radio National. Available: <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/legacy/programs/sunmorn/stories/s1381964.htm> (Accessed July, 2014).
- Cronin, N., Crosson, S. & Eastlake, J. (2009) *Anáil an Bhéil Bheo: Orality and Modern Irish Culture*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Cvetkovich, A. (2012) *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Daniel, J. O. & Moylan, T. (1997) *Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*, Verso.
- De Beauvoir, S. (2011) *The Second Sex*. trans. Borde, C. & Malovany-Chevallier, S. New York: Vintage Publishers.
- Deri, S. (1978) Transitional phenomena: Vicissitudes of symbolization and creativity. *Between reality and fantasy*, 45-60.
- Duncombe, S. (2007) *Dream: Re-imagining progressive politics in an age of fantasy*. New York: New Press.
- Duncombe, S. (2012) *Utopia is No Place* [Online]. The Walker Center. Available: <http://www.walkerart.org/magazine/2012/stephen-duncombe-utopia-open-field> (Accessed March 22, 2016).

- Duringer, R. (2016) *World Examiner*. Available:
<https://worldexaminer.com/2009/04/13/lenin-erected-monument-to-thomas-more-as-communist-hero/> (Accessed: 2 July 2016)
- Eisenstein, Z. R. (1988) *The Female Body and the Law*, Oakland: University of California Press.
- Elkins, J. (2009) *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art*, Connecticut: New Academia Publishing, LLC.
- Elliott, R. C. (1970) *The Shape of Utopia: Studies in a Literary Genre*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Ellis, C., et al. (2011). *Autoethnography: An Overview* [Online]. Available:
<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>
 [Accessed October, 2014 2014].
- Ettinger, B., (2006) 'Matrixial trans-subjectivity' *Theory, Culture & Society* 23.2-3: 218-222.
- Foss, K. A. & Foss, S. K. (1994) 'Personal experience as evidence in feminist scholarship' *Western Journal of Communication (includes Communication Reports)*, 58, 39-43.
- Foucault, M. (1997) *Ethics: Subjectivity and truth* (vol. 1), New York: New Press.
- Freud, A. (1971) 'Problems of Psychoanalytic Training Diagnosis, and the Technique of Therapy' *The Writings of Anna Freud. Volume VII*. Michigan: International University Press.
- Frayling, C. (1993) *Research in art and design*, London: Royal College of Art London.
- Fuss, D. (2013) *Essentially Speaking: Feminism, Nature and Difference*. New York: Routledge.
- Gerson, G. (2004a) 'Object Relations Psychoanalysis as Political Theory' *Political Psychology*, 25, 769-794.
- Gerson, G. (2004b) 'Winnicott, Participation and Gender'. *Feminism and Psychology* 14(4), pp.561-581

- Giesecke, A. & Jacobs, N. (2013) *Earth Perfect?: Nature, Utopia, and the Garden*. London: Black Dog Publishing.
- Gerhard, J. F. (2013). *The Dinner Party: Judy Chicago and the Power of Popular Feminism, 1970-2007*, Georgia: University of Georgia Press.
- Gether, C. et al. (2012) *Utopia and Contemporary Art*. Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz.
- Godin, D. & Zahedi, M. (2014). 'Aspects of Research Through Design' Paper presented at: *Design Research Society DRS, 2014*, Umeå Institute of Design, Sweden. Available at: <http://www.drs2014.org/media/648109/0205-file1.pdf>. (Accessed September 2015)
- Green, L. K. (2012) *Tracing the 'Sensible Transcendental': Luce Irigaray and the Question of Female Subjectivity*. Doctor of Philosophy, University of Liverpool.
- Griffin, M. J. & Moylan, T. (2007) (eds.) *Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utopian Thought and Practice*, Bern: Peter Lang.
- Grosz, E. (1990) A note on essentialism and difference. *Feminist knowledge: Critique and construct*. 332-44.
- Grosz, E. (2002) 'Feminist Futures?' *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 21 (1), 13-20.
- Hanisch, C. (1969, 2006) 'The personal is political: The women's liberation movement classic with a new explanatory introduction'. [online] Available: <http://www.carolhanisch.org/CHwritings/PIP.html>. (Accessed May 2016).
- Haraway, D. (2006) 'A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-feminism in the Late 20th century', in *The International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments*. Wiess J. et al. (eds.), Netherlands: Springer, pp. 117-158.
- Harris, A. S. (1973) 'Women in College Art Departments and Museums', *Art Journal*, 32 (4), pp. 417-419.
- Harrison, C. & Wood, P. (2003) *Art in theory, 1900-1990: an anthology of changing ideas*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Heidegger, Martin (1969) *Identity and Difference*. Trans. by Joan Stambaugh. New York: Harper & Row.

- Hodge, J. (2003) 'Feminism and Utopia: Irigaray Reading Kant' *Women: A Cultural Review*, 14 (2), pp. 195-209.
- Horvath, A., Thomassen, B. & Wydra, H. (2009) 'Introduction: Liminality and cultures of change', *International Political Anthropology*, 2 (1), pp. 3-4.
- Huizinga, J. (2014) *Homo Ludens IIs*. New York: Routledge
- Irigaray, L. (1993) *Je, tu, nous: Toward a culture of difference*. *Trans. Alison Martin*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Irigaray, L. (1993) *Sexes and genealogies*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Irigaray, L. (1993) *An ethics of sexual difference*, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Irigaray, L. (1996) *I love to you: Sketch for a felicity within history*, UK: Psychology Press.
- Irigaray, L. (2001) *Thinking the difference: For a peaceful revolution*, London: Continuum.
- Irigaray, L. (2001) *To Be Two*, UK: Psychology Press.
- Irigaray, L. (2002) 'Being Two, How Many Eyes Have We?' *Paragraph*, 25, 143-151.
- Irigaray, L. (2002) *Between East and West: From Singularity to Community*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Irigaray, L. (2004a) 'To Paint the Invisible'. *Continental philosophy review*, 37, 389-405.
- Irigaray, L. (2004b) *Luce Irigaray: Key Writings*, London: Continuum.
- Irigaray, L. (2006) 'How to Make Feminine Self Affection Appear' in Catalog of the exhibition, *Two or Three or Something: Marie Lasnig and Liz Larner*. Graz: Kunsthaus Graz am Landesmuseum Joanneum.
- Irigaray, L. (2012) *In the Beginning, She Was*. London: A&C Black.
- Irigaray, L. & Green, M. (2008) *Luce Irigaray: Teaching* London: A&C Black.
- Irigaray, L. (1985) *Speculum of the Other Woman*, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Irigaray, L. (1993) *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, New York: Cornell University Press.
- Jacobs, A. (2007) 'The Potential of Theory: Melanie Klein, Luce Irigaray, and the Mother-Daughter Relationship'. *Hypatia*, 22, 175-193.

- James, S. (2008) 'Is Transformation Possible? They say we can't. We say we must', *Off Our Backs Inc.*, 38, 40-43.
- James, S. (2015) *The Way I Work* [Online]. Available: <http://www.bigissuenorth.com/2016/05/the-way-i-work-selma-james/18437-sthash.Hrw24vgT.dpuf> (Accessed May 2016)
- Jameson, F. (2005) *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions*. New York: Verso.
- Kandinsky, W. (1977, 2012) *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. North Chelmsford: Courier Corporation
- Klein, M. (1930) 'The Importance of Symbol-Formation in the Development of the Ego. *Int. J. Psycho-Anal.*, 11:24-39
- Koehler, K. (1998) Kandinsky's "Kleine Welten" and Utopian City Plans. *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 432-447.
- Kuhn, A. (2013) *Little madnesses: Winnicott, Transitional Phenomena and Cultural Experience*. London: IB Tauris.
- Krisham, K. & Bann, (eds.) (1993) *Utopias and the Millenium*. London: Reaktin Books.
- Kuspit, D. B. (1970) Utopian Protest in Early Abstract Art. *Art Journal*, 430-437.
- Leavy, P. (2009) *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Levitas, R. (1997) 'Educated Hope: Ernst Bloch on Abstract and Concrete Utopia' In: *Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*. Daniel, J. O. & Moylan, T. (eds.) London: Verso, pp. 65-79.
- Levitas, R. (2010). *The Concept of Utopia*, Bern: Peter Lang.
- Levitas, R. (2007) 'The Imaginary Reconstitution of Society: Utopia as Method, *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*, 1, 47.
- Maclean, M., Russell, W. & Ryall, E. (2015) *Philosophical Perspectives on Play*, New York: Routledge.
- Malen, L. (2006) *New Society for Universal Harmony* [Online]. Athole Springs, New York: Lenoremalen.com. Available: <http://www.thenewsociety.org/> (Accessed January 20 2015)
- Malen, L. (2012) *I Am the Animal*. Medford: Tufts University Art Gallery.

- Mannheim, K. (1936). *Ideology and Utopia*. New York: Routledge. Reprint, New York: Routledge, 2003.
- Marcuse, H. (1970). 'The End of Utopia' *Five Lectures*, pp. 62-82. Boston: Beacon.
- Marder, M. & Vieira, P. (2011). *Existential utopia: new perspectives on utopian thought*, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Marius, R. (1999). *Thomas More a Biography*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Marody, M. (1993). 'Why I Am Not a Feminist: Some Remarks on the Problem of Gender Identity in the United States and Poland', *Social Research*, 60, (4), pp. 853-864.
- McNiff, S. (1998) *Art-based Research* London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- McNiff, J. & Whitehead, J. (2009) *You and your action research project*, New York: Routledge
- Mitchell, J. (1974) *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: A Radical Reassessment of Freudian Psychoanalysis*. New York: Pelican Books, Reprinted in 2000 with a New Introduction by the Author, New York: Basic Books.
- Mitchell, S. A. & Black, M. J. (1995) *Freud and beyond: A history of modern psychoanalytic thought*, New York: Basic Books. Moi, T. , (2006). "'I Am Not a Feminist, but..." How Feminism Became the F-Word'. *PMLA*, 121 (5), pp. 1735-41.
- More, T. (2001). *Utopia*, trans. Clarence H. Miller. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Moylan, T. (2007). 'Realizing Better Futures: Strong Thought for Hard Times'. *In: Moylan, T. & Baccalini, R. (eds.) Utopia Method Vision: the Use Value of Social Dreaming*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Moylan, T. & Baccolini, R. (2014) *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*, Bern: Peter.
- Murdoch, S. (2016) *Sadie Murdoch Sss-Mm*, curated by Schaschi, S., Available: <http://www.hauskonstruktiv.ch/enUS/exhibitions/exhibition-archive/2016/-/events/archives-2016/2016/sadie-murdochbrssmm-et233.htm>, [Accessed 15 Nov. 2016].

- Nancy, Jean-Luc, 'In Place of Utopia' In: Viera, P. & Marder, M. (eds.)
Existential Utopia. New York: Continuum International, pp. 3-14.
- Ní Dhúill, Caitriona (2007) 'One Loves the Girl for what she is, the Boy for
 What He Promises to Become' In Griffin, M & Moylan, T (eds.)
Exploring the Utopian Impulse: Essays on Utoian Thought and Practice.
 Oxford: Peter Lang. pp. 273-292.
- Noble, P. et al. (2004) *Paul Nobel*. London: Whitechapel Gallery.
- Norman, N. (2006) 'Utopia - its Here if Not Now', *Utopia Revisited*, Conference:
 Arken Museum of Modern Art. Available:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7cOw0pctu9E> (Accessed November
 5, 2016)
- One Review (2016) *Review of Speculum of the Other Woman by Luce Irigaray*,
 Available:
https://books.google.ie/books/about/Speculum_of_the_Other_Woman.html?id=cZX3HfxO9XkC&redir_esc=y (accessed: 2 June 2016)
- Phillips, A. (2007) *Winnicott*, UK: Penguin.
- Plant, S. (1992) *The Most Radical Gesture*, New York: Routledge.
- Polt, R. (2006) *The Emergency of Being: On Heidegger's Contributions to
 Philosophy*, Ithica: Cornell University Press.
- Rabinovich, Y. (2016) *Kandinsky: Master of the Mystic Arts*. Available:
<http://www.invisiblebooks.com/Kandinsky.htm> (Accessed: August 2011)
- Rancière, J. (2013). *The politics of aesthetics*. Rockhill, G. (ed.) London:
 Bloomsberry.
- Rawlinson, M. C. 2011. *Thinking with Irigaray*, New York: SUNY Press.
- Reilly, M. (2015) 'Taking the Measure of Sexism: Facts, Figures and Fixes'
ARTnews [Online], June 2016. Available: www.artnews.com/2015/05/26
 (Accessed 2 June, 2016).
- Robinson, H. (2006) *Reading art, reading Irigaray: The politics of art by women*, IB
 Tauris.
- Rodman, F. R. (2004) *Winnicott: Life and work*, Cambridge: Da Capo Press.
- Rose, J. (2005) *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. (Vol. 9). Verso

- Rüsen, J. 2006. *Thinking Utopia: steps into other worlds*, Oxford: Berghahn Books
- Sargent, L. T. (2010). *Utopianism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sargisson, L. (1996) *Contemporary feminist utopianism*, London: Psychology Press. Schön, D. A. 1983. *The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action*, New York: Basic Books.
- Sargisson, L. (2007) 'The Curious Relationship Between Politics and Utopia' In: Moylan, T. A. & Baccoloni, R. (eds.) *Utopia Method Vision: The Use Value of Social Dreaming*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Peter Lang.
- Schor, M. et al. (1999) 'Contemporary Feminism: Art Practice, Theory, and Activism: an Intergenerational Perspective', *Art Journal*, 58(4). pp. 8-29.
- Seago, A. & Dunne, A. (1999) New Methodologies in Art and Design Research: The Object as Discourse. *Design Issues*, 15, 11-17.
- Shklovsky, V. (1965) 'Art as Technique' In: *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays*. Trans. Lemon, L. & Reis, T., Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Smith, T. (2009) *What is contemporary art?* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Spariosu, M. I. (2015) 'Exile and Utopia as Liminal Play' In: Maclean, M., et al. (ed.) *Philosophical Perspectives on Play*. London: Routledge.
- Stack, G. (2016) *A Detailed Look At Winnicott* Available at: <https://garethstack.com/2013/03/30/a-detailed-look-at-winnicott-book-review-playing-reality/> (accessed 2 June 2016)
- Stiegler, B. (2011 a.) 'Pharmacology of Spirit' *Theory After Theory*, 294.
- Stiegler, B. (2011 b.) The Proletarianization of Sensibility. Text of Lecture 1 of 3, Spring 2011, California Institute of the Arts, Spring 2011, Translation by Arn De Boever.
- Stiegler, B. (2011 c.) Suffocated Desire or How the Cultural Industry Destroys the Individual: Contribution to a Theory of Mass Consumption. *Parrhesia*, 13, 52-61.

- Stone, A. (2012) 'Against Matricide: Rethinking Subjectivity and the Maternal Body' *Hypatia*, 27(1), pp. 118-138.
- Sullivan, G. (2010) *Art Practice as Research: Inquiry in Visual Arts*, SAGE Publications.
- Tate, S. W. (2004) *Mary Kelly* [online]. London UK: Tate. Available: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/kelly-post-partum-document-analysed-markings-and-diary-perspective-schema-experimentum-t03925> accessed (November 20, 2016)
- Tate, S. W. (2012) *Turner Prize 2012: Paul Noble* [Online]. London, UK: Tate. Available: <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/turner-prize-2012-paul-noble> (Accessed January 15 2016)
- Tate, S. W. (2006) *Utopia and Avant-Gardes Study Day video recordings* [Online]. UK: Tate Modern. Available: <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/video/utopias-avant-gardes-study-day-video-coverage> [Accessed MARCH, 2013 2013].
- Thomassen, B. (2016) *Liminality and the Modern: Living Through the In-between*. London: Routledge.
- Thomassen, B. (2009) 'The uses and meanings of liminality', *International Political Anthropology*, 2(1), pp. 5-27.
- Tilghman, C. M. (2009) 'The Flesh Made Word: Luce Irigaray's Rendering of the Sensible Transcendental' *Janus Head*, 11(1), pp. 39-54.
- Tong, R. (2013) *Feminist thought: A comprehensive introduction*, New York: Routledge..
- Turner, V. (1995) *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Van Lieshout, A. et al. (2009) Joep Van Lieshout Atelier Van Lieshout. [online] Available: http://prod-images.exhibite.com/www_friedmanbenda_com/Atelier_van_Lieshout_BIO_FINAL.pdf [Accessed June 15, 2016].
- Velthuis, O. (2013) *Talking prices: Symbolic meanings of prices on the market for contemporary art*, Princeton University Press.

- Veltman, A. (2004) The Sisyphean Torture of Housework: Simone de Beauvoir and Inequitable Divisions of Domestic Work in Marriage. *Hypatia*, 19, 121-143.
- Vallega-Neu, D. (2001) 'Poietic Saying' in: *A Companion to Heidegger's 'Contributions to Philosophy'*, Brogan, W., Crownfield, D. et al. (eds.) Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Wallin, J. (2013) Arts-Based Research Otherwise. In *Arts-Based Research*. (pp.111-157). Canada: Sense Publishers.
- Weeks, K. (2011) *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Weeks, K. (2014) 'Timely and Untimely Utopianism' In: Bacaloni, R. (ed.) *Demand the Impossible: Science Fiction and the Utopian Imagination*. 2nd ed. Bern: Peter Lang.
- Whitford, M. (1991) *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the feminine*. New York: Routledge.
- Williams, R. & Wittig, M. A. (1997) "I'm not a feminist, but...": Factors contributing to the discrepancy between pro-feminist orientation and feminist social identity' *Sex Roles*, 37, 885-904.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1953) 'Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena' *The International Journal of Psycho-analysis*, 34(1), p.89.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1969) The use of an object. *International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, 50, 711-716.
- Winnicott, D. W. (1971) *Playing and Reality*. Kent: Tavistock reprinted in 1999, New York: Routledge.
- Winston, N. (2012) 'A Case Study of the Cloughjordan Eco-Village, Ireland' in: Davies, A. (ed.) *Enterprising Communities: Grassroots Sustainability Innovations* (Advances in Ecopolitics, Volume 9). Bingley UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited, pp. 85-103.
- Wollheim, R. (1968) *Art and its Objects*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Reprinted in 1980 Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

- Wright, A. L. et al. (2003) 'Gender Differences in Academic Advancement: Patterns, Causes, and Potential Solutions in One US College of Medicine' *Academic Medicine*, 78(5), pp. 500-508.
- Yepes, Ruben. (2014) Aesthetics, Politics, and Art's Autonomy: A Critical Reading of Jacques Rancière. *Eventual Aesthetics* 3, 1, 40-64.
- Young, I. M. (2005) *On female body experience: "Throwing like a girl" and other essays*, Oxford: Oxford University

