Embroidering and the Body Under Threat: Suffragette Embroidered Cloths Worked in Holloway Prison, 1911-1912

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Abstract:
Between 1911 and 1912 hundreds of suffragettes were incarcerated in Holloway Prison for participating in the window breaking campaign. Denied political status, some suffragettes used the hunger strike as a political tool and were forcibly fed. Whilst in prison some of the women hand-embroidered small, intimately scaled cloths.

This research asks why, in cramped, isolated and physically threatening circumstances did the women choose to embroider through cloth?

By approaching the artefacts as material objects and through a material practice, a new epistemic space is examined, where a more textured understanding of the experiences of suffragettes under threat and a reconfiguration of what it means to embroider can ensue. By focusing on the practice of embroidering as the basis for the study and grounded in the ontology of 'New Materialism', this research positions the significance of the matter of the body, thread and cloth and the material process of embroidering, in the representation and making of knowledge.

The research contends that embroidering is an embodied practice, which articulates the thinking-feeling body beyond and in excess of symbolic language and visual imagery. Underpinned with the psychoanalytical writings of Didier Anzieu and Nicola Diamond, cloth is asserted as a projected 'cloth-skin-body' where the embroidering thread can negotiate the formation and repair of the self and engender thinking.

In addition, the study probes how the tactile and material act of embroidering by suffragettes was a subversive, dangerous and micro, proto-political practice.

The research has been carried out through the creation of a body of hand-embroidered textiles for exhibition and through archival and theoretical investigation. The submission takes the form of a public exhibition of the textiles and a written thesis that also includes a full visual record of the textile works.

Keywords: embroidering suffragette material practice skin body politics imprisonment

Contents

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Author's declaration

I declare that the research contained in this thesis, unless otherwise formally indicated within the text, is the original work of the author. The thesis has not been submitted to this or any other university for a degree, and does not incorporate any material already submitted for a degree.

Signed: Denise Jones

Dated: 24/06/2020

Abbreviations

ALC	Autograph Letter Collection
HO	Home Office
ILP	Independent Labour Party
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
MoL	Museum of London
NPG	National Portrait Gallery
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
PCOM	Prison Commission
RSN	Royal School of Needlework
SFC	Suffragette Fellowship Collection
TNL	The National Archives
TWL	The Women's Library (London)
WSPU	Women's Social and Political Union
WFL	Women's Freedom League

Introduction

> You might send me some easy embrodiary [*sic*]. Not traced so that I can invent the pattern myself…
>
> (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7/KGG/2/1)

On 4th March 1912, Katie Gliddon, an artist, teacher and suffragette from Croydon wrote to her mother from Holloway Prison asking for her embroidery to be sent to her. She had been sentenced to two months' hard labour for causing 'wilful damage' to property having broken two plate glass windows, valued at £4.00, in Wimpole Street Post Office, London. She wrote to her mother, 'It really was about a 4/- [four shillings] window I should imagine. I expect we shall get about 5 days.' After her sentencing she wrote home again, 'We are all in for two months hard. Ten of us, all small Government post office smashers' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1).

Gliddon was one of hundreds of women involved in the window breaking campaign of 1911-1912 orchestrated by the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), the organisation associated with the suffragettes and their position of militancy in order to gain the vote for women. The *Daily Mail* created the term 'suffragette' in January 1906 to distinguish WSPU actions from those of the more constitutional 'suffragists' (The *Daily Mail*, 10/01/06: 3). The WSPU leader Emmeline Pankhurst advocated 'Deeds, not Words' as the motto of the Union.

For Gliddon, arrested with '300 or 400 of the best women in the world', the extensive window breaking campaign marked a radical turn in suffragette action, one which she believed may be 'the last protest ever necessary, so thank goodness, I am in it' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7/KGG/2/1). In fact, more darkly for suffragettes, it marked the beginning of more destructive attacks on property by arson and bombing and the prolonged use of the hunger strike as a political tool in prison.

Days after her arrest Gliddon wrote to her mother requesting that her embroidery might be sent to her in Holloway. She later transcribed and inadvertently altered the

word ‘embroidery’, to read as ‘embrodiary’. Unwittingly, Gliddon made a link between embroidery and self-documentation, and more than that, referred to inventing a new embroidery pattern. She did not want to embroider over pre-inscribed tracings already laid out for her to follow but to invent the pattern herself.

Fig. 1 *Katie Gliddon* (s.d.)

Gliddon kept a secret prison diary written inside a copy of *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1908) that she had smuggled into her cell (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/1). In this rare diary comment was made on life as it was lived, on life as a process.[1] The Gliddon diary and the prison embroideries of this study record with immediacy and in micro detail the unfolding of events and the lived experiences of Gliddon and other suffragettes in prison between 1911 and 1912. The embroideries and the experiences of the women are local, grounded and situated in this particular time frame.[2]

[1] Anne Schwan refers to the diary in this vein (Schwan, 2014: 155).

[2] Only the two embroideries by Mary Aldham have not been verified as dating from between 1911-1912. Aldham was imprisoned at least five times between 1910-1914 (see Appendix III). Lockdales Auctioneers described the embroideries as having been worked in Holloway Prison.

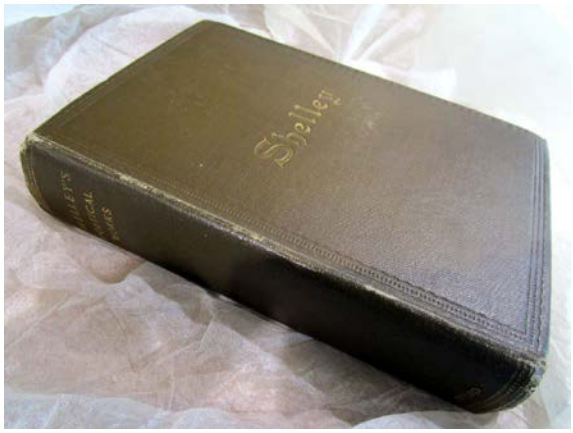

Fig. 2 *Katie Gliddon's prison diary written in 'The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley' (1908),* (1912)

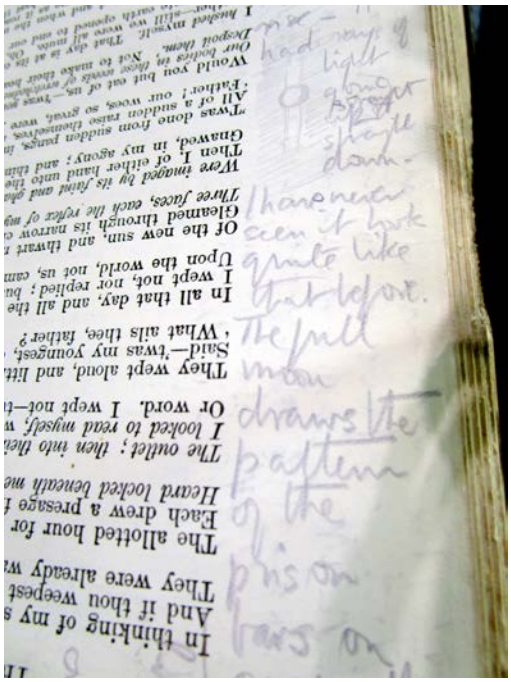

Fig. 3 *Detail of Katie Gliddon's prison diary written in 'The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley' (1908),* (1912)

Gliddon's diary indicated that she felt her imprisonment intensely. She was acutely aware of the potential physical and mental threats to her wellbeing. She implied in her letters home that she was under some expectation to go on hunger strike and told her mother that she would not get involved in the 'rows' in Holloway Prison because of her fear of the consequences (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1).

Unfortunately, whilst Gliddon's prison writings and drawings have survived, her embroidery has slipped through the archival net into oblivion.[3] However, other small, intimately scaled cloths embroidered in Holloway Prison between 1911-1912 have survived. This research scrutinises eleven of these hand-embroidered cloths (see Figures 4-14):

- A small panel embroidered by Cissie Wilcox in 1911 (as part of a small package)
- A handkerchief embroidered by Cissie Wilcox in 1912
- A panel embroidered by Janie Terrero in 1912
- A small bag named 'Grace', dated 1912
- An embroidered shield with the initials 'ASC', dated 1912
- A white brush and comb bag embroidered by Mary Ellen (Nellie) Taylor, dated 1912
- A small white tablecloth embroidered by Alice Jane Shannan Stewart Ker, dated 1912
- A handkerchief of suffragette signatures (the West Hoathly handkerchief), dated 1912
- An undated panel of suffragette signatures (the Women's Library Panel)[4]
- A small sampler embroidered by Mary Aldham, undated
- A small bag embroidered by Mary Aldham, undated.

This research questions why Gliddon and the other suffragettes were compelled to embroider in Holloway Prison in confined, dirty, isolating and corporeally threatening spaces that were bereft of materials? Why did these political women create embroidery that was ideologically associated with decoration, the domestic and the feminine? By investigating the embroideries through my own practice of embroidering, combined with historical research into their context and the experiences of their makers, this study asks whether more nuanced and textured

[3] The diary and later transcriptions of it were donated to the Women's Library, LSE in 2008. The only textile submitted was the ribbon bookmark (not embroidered) in the book of poetry (TWL.7KGG/3/23).

[4] It is highly likely that this panel was worked in March 1912 in Holloway Prison (see pages 133-4). It created the initial spark for this enquiry.

understandings are to be had? Crucially, the research gives precedence to the process of embroidering rather than only the outcome, a completed piece of embroidery.

The research has three trajectories: it explores embroidering as an autobiographical, embodied and resistant practice grounded in the situated experiences of the suffragettes in Holloway Prison; it probes the act of embroidering as a 'language' that exceeds the discursive and is connected to the tactile, relational, affective and psychical 'cloth-skin-body'; and it explores how the process of embroidering for suffragettes could articulate the subversive, dangerous and proto-political.

The study focuses on a small number of embroideries that have survived in public collections or as treasured family objects.[5] It is likely that there were other embroideries worked in Holloway and regional British prisons between 1905 and 1914 but these have disappeared from the historical record.[6] The biographical life of the West Hoathly handkerchief illustrates how undervalued these textiles have been regarded in the past. It was fortunately saved from a bonfire of remnants after a jumble sale in the 1970s (Miller, 1977: 10-13).

Embroidery still tends to be marginalised as a cultural product. Despite the fine art/craft debates of the late twentieth century, it is still overlooked because of its association with women, domesticity and amateur craft. It is persistently dismissed as worthless, superficial, superfluous and devoid of significant meaning. It is perceived as decoration and embellishment *on* the upper surface of cloth and it is usually described as being colourful and about making attractive patterns. Writing in the popular press, *The Guardian* journalist Alex Clark, in an article entitled, 'The Hell of Handicrafts' (2011), singles out embroidery as 'part of the current modish incarnation of doing things with your hands'. She asks, 'Why do women want to embroider when they could be reading Hegel?' (Clark, 2011). Clark reiterates the *doxa* concerning embroidery linking it to the Cartesian separation of mind and body, identifying it as

[5] Most of these embroideries are kept alongside letters and written accounts of imprisonment and deposited at the Suffragette Fellowship Collection at the Museum of London or are held at the Women's Library, now at LSE.

[6] Sarah Laughton discovered that her relative, the suffragette Eileen Casey (one of the signatories on the West Hoathly handkerchief and TWL panel) embroidered a handkerchief in Winson Green Prison, Birmingham in 1914. The textile was confiscated by the prison authorities and not kept (Laughton, 2018).

manual craft rather than of the intellect and as hobbyist and ideologically feminine. The catalogue of the V&A exhibition, *Power of Making: The importance of being skilled* (2011), despite being lauded for celebrating craft and 'challenging preconceptions around craft and craftsmanship' nonetheless gives a very stereotypical definition of embroidering in the glossary as, 'Sewing patterns onto fabric with thread to create a decorative pattern' (Charny, 2011: 75). The curator, Daniel Charny confuses the actions of sewing and embroidering and equates craft with the masculine, using the term 'craftsmanship'. He shows that he has a cursory understanding of the practice of embroidering and that he attributes the skillful making of craft to men.

The linguistic terms used with reference to embroidery and embroidering can also be evasive. Many contemporary practitioners prefer to use the more utilitarian and 'acceptable' term 'stitching', which conflates the processes of sewing and embroidering, whereas in fact the intentions of these practices are not the same. Sewing usually involves working towards an end product that can be used, whilst embroidering explores what is in excess of function. Embroidering allows for a freedom to express oneself with a needle and thread that is unfettered or prescribed by utility. Needlework manuals of the time period under study do distinguish between functional sewing and the more expressive making of embroidery.[7] Making embroidery involves endless choices regarding materials and the marks and lines that can be worked. One can ask then, why do we not embrace and affirm the term 'embroidery' and the practice of embroidering? What lies at the heart of its disavowal? Of what are we afraid? Can embroidering be dangerous?

This research focuses on the process of embroidering in order to probe the ideological walls that surround embroidery and get at the meanings concealed within and behind it. In fact, embroidering reveals that rather than being of the surface of cloth it engages with the both the front and back of the cloth and it passes *through* the cloth structure.

[7] See chapter three, section one.

The cultural baggage associated with embroidery is so engrained that when thinking about the process of embroidering, it is all too easy to slip back into preconceived ideas about embroidery. I have found that it is helpful to think that embroidering through cloth is a *thread act*, where the embroidering thread, as a third thread adds and passes through the first and second threads of warp and weft and that this thread is as significant as the warp and weft.[8] In this research, I have continuously asked what is this third thread doing?

As an historical document, embroidery is typically described in terms of what it visually represents, as figurative imagery or symbolic language. Scholarly writing about embroidery continues to approach it as a textual practice and concentrates on the 'reading' of its script, as with a paper document. These aspects neglect the tactile and material possibilities evident in embroidering and they reinforce the visual framing of it as the subject of an ideological 'gaze', whereas as a material process it may be negotiating that very 'gaze'. The seminal text on embroidery, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* ([1984], 2010) by Roszika Parker, broke new ground by asserting that embroidery was meaningful within the parameters of cultural discourse, claiming that women (including suffragettes) appropriated the received cultural meanings of embroidery to create meanings of their own. In doing so however, Parker fixed her argument within a discursive framework. She emphasised the text and imagery both written and pictured on the embroidery rather than give meaning to its making.

This research focuses on the material process of embroidering, as well as the discursive 'readings' of embroidery and relates this to the material objects of this enquiry. It examines both the material and discursive aspects of embroidering and embroidery. Through practice as research in dialogue with critical theory it probes the subtle nuances of the materials and their qualities and the material process (used by myself and the suffragettes) to investigate how the practice is embodied, and has the potential to be subversive, political and dangerous. It seeks to augment Parker's contentions through exploring the suffragette embroideries from a material

[8] I call embroidering a *thread act* to describe the overall process of embroidering. In fact it is a series of many small thread acts worked with short strands of thread that are formed into stitches and worked over a period of time.

perspective. From this vantage point, the material, implicit and tacit textures of understanding conveyed by the suffragette embroideries can be explored.

The argument of the thesis crosses academic disciplines. To aid with clarity, this hybrid argument has been structured so that chapters three, four and five have a different disciplinary emphasis. The structure and organisation of the argument of the thesis has evolved from the practice as research, which underpins the study throughout.

The thesis firstly positions the research within the existing field: it analyses the relevant literature and the work by creative practitioners who embroider and/or use cloth and thread. Chapter two provides the methodological framework for the study and outlines the methods employed. The suffragette embroideries are historically contextualised in chapter three with specific reference to the text *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977) by Michel Foucault. Chapter four builds the argument that the suffragette embroideries should be regarded as embodied, relational and psychical, and draws on the writings of Lisa Blackman in *The Body* (2008) and particularly on the psychoanalytical writings of Didier Anzieu in *The Skin Ego* ([1989], 2016) and Nicola Diamond in *Between Skins* (2013).[9] Chapter five explores how and why embroidering can be regarded as a subversive, political and dangerous practice. This chapter leans primarily on the writings of the political theorist Jane Bennett in *Vibrant Matter* (2010) and those of the anthropologist Mary Douglas in *Purity and Danger* ([1966], 2002).

[9] Chris Turner translated Anzieu's *The Skin Ego* in 1989. Naomi Segal translated it again in 2016. Each version of *The Skin Ego* offers a subtle difference in emphasis and both are referred to in this thesis.

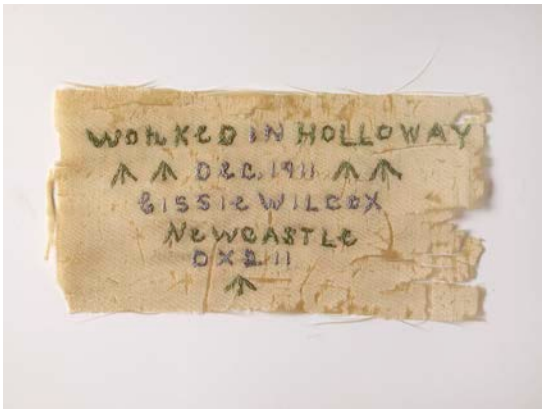

Fig. 4 *Cissie Wilcox, the embroidered panel* (December, 1911)

Fig. 5 *Cissie Wilcox, package fragments* (December, 1911)

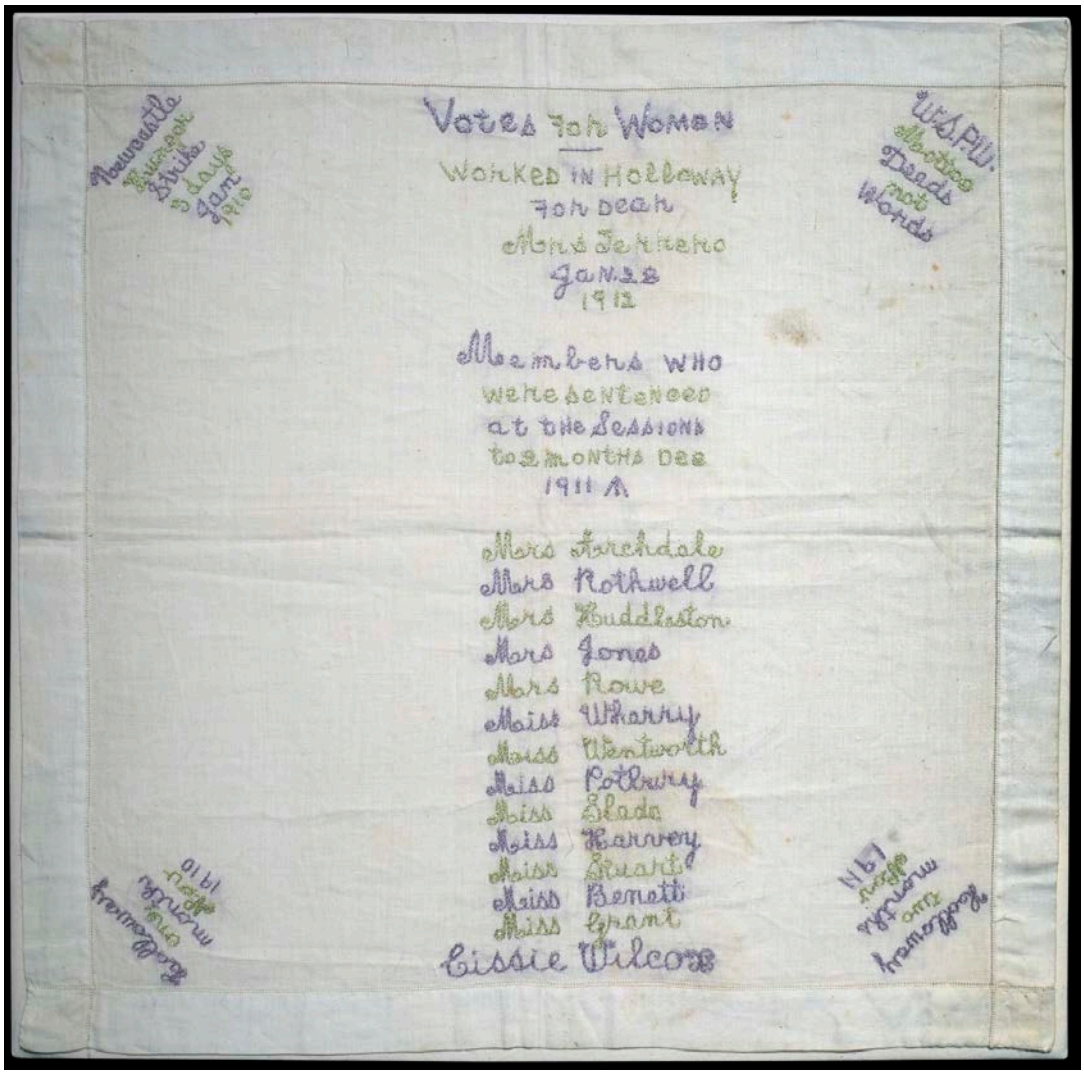

Fig. 6 *Cissie Wilcox, the embroidered handkerchief* (January, 1912)

Fig. 7 *Janie Terrero, the embroidered panel* (1912)

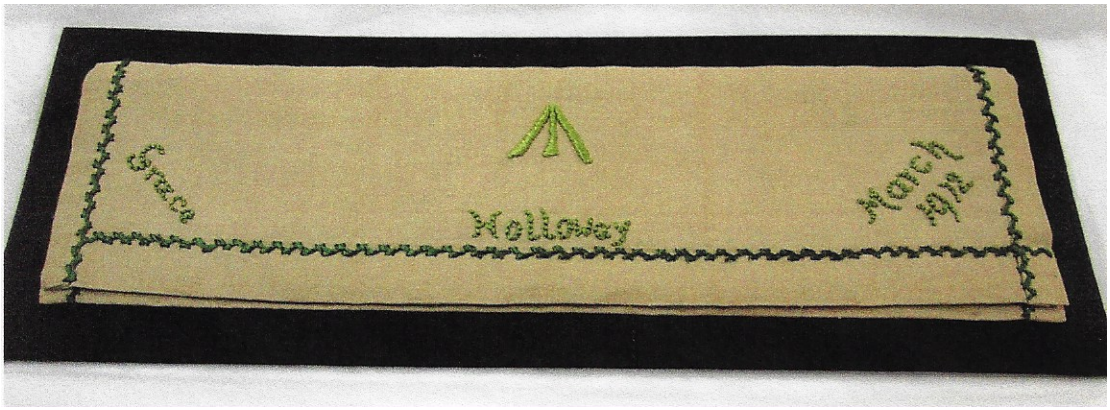

Fig. 8 *'Grace', the embroidered bag* (March, 1912)

Fig. 9 *'ASC', the embroidered badge* (1912)

Fig. 10 *Mary Ellen Taylor, the embroidered 'Brush and Comb' bag* (March 5th, 1912)

Fig. 11 *Alice Jane Shannan Stewart Ker, the embroidered tablecloth* (1912)

Fig. 12 *The West Hoathly handkerchief with suffragette signatures* (March, 1912)

Fig. 13 *The Women's Library panel with embroidered suffragette signatures* (1912)

Fig. 14 *Mary Aldham, sale lot from Lockdales Auctioneers catalogue showing an embroidered bag and a small, embroidered sampler* (2015)

1. Literature Review and Review of Work by Creative Practitioners

1.1. Literature Review

To date, a single account of all eleven hand-embroidered cloths made by suffragettes in Holloway Prison between 1911-1912 has not been made. Neither have the embroideries been approached from the tangent of process or analysed as embodied objects. There has not been a detailed analysis of the relationship between these textiles and how they are all situated in the context of 1911-1912.

The seminal text on the subject of embroidery is Roszika Parker's, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* ([1984], 2010).[10] This ground-breaking book investigates the cultural ideology that frames embroidery as feminine, amateur and domestic and going beyond this, gives credence to embroidery as being embedded with meaning. It insists that embroidery has the capacity to be subversive and that in the past women have knowingly appropriated the cultural ideology attached to embroidery, to make meanings of their own. Parker importantly links embroidery to the lived experiences of women stating that 'To know the history of embroidery is to know the history of women' (Parker, [1984], 2010: ix).

Parker makes specific references to suffragette cloths (Parker, [1984], 2010: 191, 197-201). She compares suffragette banners to trade union banners and mentions the pictorial and symbolic content of embroidery. She specifically comments on the Terrero panel made in Holloway Prison in 1912 and a second handkerchief dedicated to Terrero (which I attribute to Cissie Wilcox) (Parker, [1984], 2010: 200-201).[11]

In her writing, Parker considers embroidery as an outcome rather than as a process (Parker, [1984], 2010: 197-199). She concentrates on the explicit text and imagery of the Terrero panel – such as the embroidered violets – rather than exploring the material practice of making the panel and connecting it to the suffragette body.

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[10] The original text was republished in 2010 with an updated 'Introduction'.

[11] Parker dates the hunger strike as being in 1911 rather than 1912. She also states that the Terrero embroidery is a handkerchief rather than a panel and named Janie Terrero as 'Janie Terreno' (Parker, 2010: 200).

Firmly situated in second-wave feminism, she iterates how subjected suffragette women asserted their resistance using the discursive, cultural and ideological meanings associated with embroidery.

In fact, Parker was unclear as to how these two embroideries were made. She implies that the women all embroidered their own signatures, which was not the case (Parker, [1984], 2010: 200). Close handling reveals that the women wrote their signatures in pencil for Terrero to embroider, and that Wilcox wrote and embroidered the names on the handkerchief herself. In these two instances, Parker does not notice, nor give weight to the subtle nuances of making and the material, authorial, organisational and relational information that is evidenced. She does not note the connections between the embroideries, nor the significance of the materials used. For instance, she overlooks the properties of the cloth and thread, the re-appearance of similar threads, and the relevance of the cloths (and threads) being passed between the women.

Nevertheless, this text is germinal for this research in insisting that embroidering is a practice of meaning making and that it has the potential to be defiant and transformative. Parker's text paves the way for a more expansive study of the connection between embroidery, subversion and politics. She also lays the foundations for embroidering to be examined through psychoanalytical thinking (Parker, 2010: xviii-xx).[12] Her psychoanalytical approach however, gives precedence to the visual, to the idea of 'mirroring', rather than premising the tactile qualities of the practice or seeking a model of psychoanalysis which avows the corporeal body (Parker, 2010: xix-xx). Parker's argument rests on a discursive framing of embroidery and the employment of embroidery as a cultural sign.

Four more academic texts specifically discuss the Terrero panel (Goggin, 2009a; Wheeler, 2012; Adamson, 2013; Purbrick, 2014).[13] In 'Fabricating Identity: Janie

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[12] In the new 'Introduction' to the 2010 edition of *The Subversive Stitch*, (pp. xi-xxii), Parker connects embroidery, psychoanalysis and the body. She refers to the works of Louise Bourgeois, writing that '…fabric is associated directly with…the unconscious and the body' (Parker, 2010: xviii).

[13] These texts refer to the Terrero panel as a handkerchief whereas in fact it is not square and the ground cloth is of a silk and wool mix, an unusual cloth for the making of a handkerchief. Defining the object is important as it can convey a particular set of signs: handkerchiefs are more closely associated with wiping the body, whereas a cloth panel might be more suggestive of commemoration.

Terrero's 1912 Embroidered English Suffrage Signature handkerchief' (2009a) the rhetorician and scholar of material culture Maureen Daly Goggin acknowledges the relationship between this embroidery and 'identity performance'. She writes of the performance that will 'exceed our focus of attention and our language' (Goggin, 209a: 18). She also explores the contextual background of Terrero's imprisonment in detail and uses the words 'tension' and 'anxiety' in her description. In 'The Political Stitch: Voicing Resistance in a Suffrage Textile' (2012), the textile historian Eileen Wheeler also states that the Terrero panel is an example of material culture that references female histories and the construction of the female 'voice.'[14] For Wheeler, the 'handkerchief' reveals a hidden history of rank and file suffragettes. It shows that women grouped together to 'petition', and it evidences political resistance and agency (Wheeler, 2012: 4, 11). In the *Invention of Craft* (2013) craft and object theorist Glenn Adamson refers to suffragette needlework in the making of banners, and specifically to the Terrero panel (Adamson, 2013: 222-225).[15] Following Parker and Goggin and intertextually drawing on their writings, Adamson acknowledges that the Terrero embroidered panel (he also refers to it as a handkerchief) allowed women to 'invert' their marginalisation using the very means that symbolised their subjugation (Adamson, 2013: 223). As with Goggin, Adamson recognises the embroidery's historical importance calling the panel an example of 'memory work', of craft worked to commemorate and to aid remembering and adds that the 'handkerchief' connects beyond its time frame in a temporal web of continuity. He also acknowledges that it marks a 'traumatic site' (Adamson, 2013: 223). The art and design historian Louise Purbrick refers to the Terrero 'handkerchief' in the article 'Cloth, Gender, Politics: The Armagh Handkerchief 1976' (2014). Purbrick compares the embroidered Terrero 'handkerchief' with a handkerchief inscribed with felt pens and biro worked in Armagh Jail during The Troubles in Northern Ireland in the 1970s.

Whilst Goggin, Wheeler, Adamson and Purbrick all make notable and foundational contributions to the analysis of these suffragette embroideries, a research gap emerges from their writings. They all place their focus on the visual and discursive interpretations of embroidery and do not give credence to the significance of the

[14] Wheeler also refers to the Terrero 'handkerchief' in her MA thesis (Wheeler, 2005).
[15] Adamson also mentions the 'Hunger Strikers' Banner' (1910) constructed by Ann Macbeth (Adamson, 2013: 223). See pages 71-73 for a fuller discussion of this banner.

materials and the material process of embroidering. Goggin significantly opens the debate about the materiality of textiles but uses linguistic terms to theorise her argument. She refers to 'discursive and extra linguistic social performances', 'rhetorical praxis' and 'word order' in her text.[16] She also writes, 'Even more significant than the background fabric of Terrero's handkerchief are the words and motifs she embroidered onto it' (Goggin, 2009a: 22). She adds that, 'For Edwardians, identity was inscribed by the pen' (Goggin, 2009a: 28).[17] She does not explain why it was necessary to embroider over what was already written or drawn on the Terrero panel. Wheeler also emphasises the symbolic 'reading' and 'content' of the panel and views embroidery as linguistic inscription. She conflates the terms 'stitch' and 'embroidery' when writing of the 'political stitch' and does not elucidate how the act of 'stitching' can become political other than it signifies the political (Wheeler, 2012: 11).

Purbrick draws analogies between the Terrero panel and the Armagh handkerchief as political and gendered objects. In describing and accounting for the differences in their 'decoration' – embroidering on one as opposed to drawing and writing on the other – she places emphasis on the significance of the cloth itself. She claims that it is cloth that consistently and essentially 'remains materially feminine' as well as social and political (Purbrick: 2014: 117). She essentially locks cloth and the feminine together and does not register the significance of embroidery, or embroidering and its relationship to the political.

Both Goggin and Wheeler also refer to the two Wilcox embroideries included in this research but they do not explore the relationship between these embroideries and the Terrero panel further. However, in a footnote to her paper, Goggin makes obvious a key epistemic gap, where the relationships between these material objects could be examined. She states, '…no one as far as my research has been able to discover, has

16 Goggin's text is discussed again in chapter five, section one.

17 Heather Pristash, Inez Schaechterle, and Sue Carter Wood state that the needle compares to the pen in 'The Needle as the Pen: Intentionality, Needlework and the Production of Alternate Discourses of Power' (2009). Victoria Mitchell connects textiles with text in 'Textiles, Text and Techne' (2012).

focused on Terrero's needlework or that of other Holloway prisoners' (Goggin, 2009a: 39).[18]

Thus, the important foundational work of previous historians concerning the suffragette embroideries leaves a space for this research. This study can contribute to existing knowledge by analysing the embroideries from a new perspective, one that avows their materiality and the process of embroidering them, as well as acknowledge their discursive readings.

1.2. Review of Work by Creative Practitioners

Selected contemporary and historical creative practices are reviewed in this section in order to position my own practice and inquiry within the existing field of research. These practitioners use or have used cloth and thread to make embroidery. Their works have been singled out because they highlight particular aspects of the research argument of this thesis. They specifically deal with cloth, thread, embroidery and the connection to women's suffrage, activism, incarceration, the autobiographical, the presence of the body, and the concept of 'in-between-ness'. Whilst these works do not scrutinise the material process of embroidering, they set important practical precedents for exploring embroidery and embroidering. By being drawn together they produce both the foundations and a gap for this research to explore.

Embroidery and women's suffrage

During 2018, to mark the one hundredth anniversary of the passing of the Representation of the People Act (1918), there was renewed interest in banner

[18] Some of the embroideries are also referred to by the following sources. In, *Fray: art + textile politics* (2017) Julia Bryan-Wilson refers to Goggin's paper in footnote eighteen in the 'Introduction' to her book, and in, *Suffrage and the Arts: Visual Culture, Politics and Enterprise* (2019) editors Miranda Garrett and Zoë Thomas also refer to Goggin's paper in note thirty-six of the 'Introduction' (Bryan-Wilson, 2017: 280; Garrett and Thomas, 2019: 19). In, 'Smashing Handkerchief' (1977), the journalist Barbara Miller writes short biographies about some of the suffragettes named on the West Hoathly handkerchief and she describes how the cloth was found (Miller, 1977). Diane Atkinson refers to this handkerchief again in *Rise Women: The Remarkable Lives of the Suffragettes* (2018). The craft scholar, Sandra Markus mentions the Terrero panel in 'Craftism from Philomena to the Pussyhat' (2019) (Markus, 2019: 19). Janice Helland refers to the Goggin paper and the collection of signatures on the Terrero panel in '"From Prison to Citizenship," 1910: The Making and Display of a Suffragist Banner' (Helland, 2020: 105).

making, embroidery and their links with women's suffrage. The *Processions 2018* project organised workshops with communities to make one hundred centenary banners for processions in Belfast, Cardiff, Edinburgh and London to celebrate the diverse voices of women and girls across the UK. The workshops focused on text and textiles echoing the practices of the women's suffrage campaign (Artichoke, 2018). In, *Craftivism: The Art and Craft of Activism* (2014) Betsy Greer writes of the collective *Suffragette Banner Project* by Sian Lile-Pastore and Sara Huws (Greer, 2014: 172-173). In this project, the names and images of women were embroidered or painted to contribute to International Women's Day (08/03/2013). Lile-Pastore and Huws write how, 'In keeping with the craftiest ideology', the act of 'stitching' becomes 'intrinsic to the project, allowing for the time to meditate on the women we love and why' (Lile Pastore and Huws, 2014: 173). This work thus specifically links 'stitching' to the political voices of women.

A number of exhibitions incorporating cloth, thread and political statements about suffragettes were also organised in 2018, including a textile banner *Home and Away* (2019) by artist Connie Flynn at Goldsmiths College, London, and *Suffrage: Textiles Celebrating 100 years of Women's Suffrage* (2018) at Llantarnam Grange Art Centre, Cwmbran, Wales. At Llantarnam Grange, the artist Ruth Singer linked suffrage, embroidery, imprisonment and the passing of time in *Prison Apron* (2018). Each chain stitch on the broad arrow on the apron represented a day in prison. In the exhibition catalogue Louise Jones-Williams acknowledged that embroidering was 'a way of resisting and memorising [memorialising] their personal and political struggle' (Jones-Williams, 2018: 26). More specifically related to this research, the exhibition *Motive/Motif: Artists commemorate the Suffragettes* (2019) held at Vestry House Museum, Waltham Forest, London, specifically referenced the Women's Library embroidered cloth of 1912 (one of the embroideries of this research), as a starting point for creative work. Twenty artists were inspired to design and embroider handkerchiefs with slogans and images such as, *ALWAYS A REBEL NEVER A SLAVE* (2018) by Sage Townsend and *Deeds Not Words* (2018) by Anthony Burrill. In these works the emphasis was placed on the visual and textual 'readings' of embroidery rather than their materiality. This was reinforced by the fact that all the embroideries were encased in vitrines and the historical embroidery was framed and hung on the wall. Whilst the work does connect embroidery to the historical suffragette panel it

once more reinforces the *doxa* concerning embroidery, that it is to be looked at but not handled nor felt.

Contrastingly, the embroidered work of Elizabeth Loveday imaginatively interprets the physical and emotional states of imprisoned suffragettes by showing their vulnerable, bruised and haggard faces. This work is illustrative but also importantly draws attention to the material pain of the body. Loveday utilises old fabrics and handkerchiefs that contain bodily stains and mends. She notes, 'I enjoy the inherent history of the material often finding connections between subject matter and material' (Loveday, s.d.). Loveday specifically uses the word 'dangerous' to describe her work, stating, 'I like things to be a bit dangerous and I want to challenge people's ideas about what textiles should depict' (Woolf, 2015: 48). This work begins to connect the pain and stains of the body with embroidery.

All of these embroideries evidence that there is an enduring connection between embroidering and women's political expression and they open up the questioning as to why that should be so. Loveday's work in particular, draws attention to the suffragette body, which is materially and affectively depicted in her work.

Embroidery and activism

Betsy Greer writes of 'quiet activism' rather than that of protest marches, believing that it is in the small shifts of behaviour afforded by craftivism, that the political lies. She states that in '…activating communities we see how craftivism can aid communities and foster strength and empowerment.' She asserts that creativity can improve 'your own life as well as the lives of others' (Greer, 2014: 8). In her anthology, Greer includes an interview with Sarah Corbett of the 'Craftivist Collective'. Corbett writes that global issues such as poverty and human rights can be tackled through the power of craft and public art, 'through provocative, non-violent creative actions [such as embroidering]' (Corbett, 2014: 205). The anthology gives an account of the 'Arpilleristas' in Chile and the women of the Adithi Collective in Bihar, India (Strycharz, 2014: 132-140). These embroideries call attention to dark subjects such as torture, female infanticide, Aids or imprisonment. Importantly Strycharz writes that they invite the viewer to recognise lived (corporeal) experiences that are difficult to talk about (Strycharz, 2014: 133). The arpilleristas refer to the

disappeared, imprisoned or tortured subjects during the repressive Piniochet regime in Chile between 1974 and 1990. The appliquéd embroideries became documents of human rights abuses and they often carried secret messages sewn into the back of them (Strycharz, 2014: 134). Greer also referred to the Adithi Collective, which worked to empower women living on the poverty line through the making of appliqued and embroidered quilts. The women embroidered images from daily life, which drew attention to female infanticide and repressive patriarchy. The project allowed women to address their fears and their hopes and losses and enabled their disavowed voices to be heard (Strycharz, 2014: 139). These works demonstrate that embroidery has been and is connected to politics, subversion, danger and bodily trauma and that embroidery offers the possibility of transformation and empowerment. The works set up precedents for this research to build upon.

Embroidery and imprisonment

There are numerous examples of embroidery worked in prison or during confinement, as with the suffragette embroideries of this study. The charity Fine Cell currently encourages embroidery in British prisons as it is seen to have therapeutic qualities for the prisoners (Fine Cell, s.d.). Particular historical examples also begin to open up theorising about why and how embroidering has been associated with incarceration, and these are relevant for this research about imprisoned suffragettes and embroidering.

The scrolled embroidery by Lorina Bulwer, worked in the Norwich workhouse between 1901-1905, and the embroidered jacket by Agnes Richter, worked whilst she was incarcerated in an asylum in eastern Germany, are both examples of an excessive and intensive outpouring of expression during confinement (Hornstein, 2018) (see Figures 15 and 16). Richter's secret embroidery worked on the inside of her tightly worn jacket – and thus close to her skin – is also memorable for its inability to be 'read'. It communicates something imperative and disturbing, that she needs to bodily communicate.

Prisoners of conscience or prisoners of war also embroidered cloth, as exampled by the embroideries made by women and children interned in Changi prison after the fall of Singapore in 1942 (Archer, 1997; Pritchard, 2012). Johanna Bergqvist Rydén

poignantly describes how the making and keeping of material objects proximate to the body, including embroideries, were amongst the most vital coping strategies against dehumanisation in Ravensbrück concentration camp. She describes these objects as holding 'symbolic and existential density'. She writes that in these cases, in the context of obliteration, the limits of the interpretation of material culture were 'stretched to the extreme'. Bergqvist Rydén describes a small 'sabotage bag', a flat bag embroidered with the initials 'LP' on the front, which was a gift to Ludwika Broel Plater. Carried close to the body it was used to deliver secret messages, hence its name (Bergqvist Rydén, 2018: 518). This small bag shows how embroidery was and can be employed to mask and deflect attention away from other subversive activities.

Fig. 15 *Lorina Bulwer, embroidered panel* (*c.*1901-1905)

Fig. 16 *Agnes Richter, embroidered jacket* (1895)

Bergqvist Rydén also mentions two embroidered badges in the form of shields (Bergqvist Rydén, 2018: 525). They record the block numbers where the women lived and on one, the date of liberation. It is of comparative note that small bags and a shield are amongst the suffragette embroideries covered in this study.

Fig. 17 *'Sabotage Bag' owned by Ludwika Broel Plater, Ravensbrück* (1940s)

Fig. 18 *Embroidered shield from Ravensbrück* (1940s)

Some of the embroideries by prisoners of war are also noteworthy in that the prisoners tell something of their motivation for embroidering them. Major Alexis Theodore Casdagli (1906-1996) worked a series of embroideries, some as gifts to his son and wife, whilst interned in POW camps in Germany between 1941-45. They historically documented time, place and events and his imprisonment. He spatially recorded the room in which he was incarcerated including the site of a hidden radio (Casdagli, 2011: 19). Thus, he simultaneously draws attention to the cramped space of life in the camp and one of the secrets this room holds. Casdagli was also clearly being subversive when he embroidered *God Save the King – F*** Hitler* (1941). The title of this work is hidden in embroidered Morse code in the borders of the work. His embroidery was worked on the regular grid of canvas (suggestive of the grid of discipline) with unravelled wool from a jumper that clothed his body. In his diary, Casdagli elaborated that the men faced assaults on their bodies: constant starvation, dashed hopes, over-crowding, poor sanitation and physical discomfort (Casdagli, 2011: 2, 23, 89). He claimed that the Red Cross had materially saved his life from the privations experienced by his body, and his embroideries had saved his sanity (Casdagli, 2011: 2). His embroideries also evidence that embroidering was not and is not, solely the domain of women and that embroidering had and has resonance for the male body under threat.

Fig. 19 *Antony Casdagli, 'God Save the King – F*** Hitler'* (1941)

Embroideries worked by two women in the Dutch resistance between 1941-45 are also of note because the embroiderers give a rare insight as to why and when they began embroidering them. Joke Folmer (1923-), in Vught concentration camp in the Netherlands explained:

> [They were] denying me the moments that marked the regular passage of time. Time eventually became a vague notion, as if I was living in a time warp… Every day as dusk set in, I had a moment of melancholy. This was when I felt a deep longing to be outside. Hot meals were often laced with camphor… to stop the prisoners from becoming agitated…On May 30th [1942] I was transferred to Vught. This was when I started to embroider texts on a hankie. I used pieces of thread pulled from my clothes to stitch important dates and names of prisons[ers] I'd been with. They obviously didn't supply pen and paper so this was a good alternative and it kept me busy. I hid the needle in the calluses on my hands.
>
> (Folmer, 2013)

Folmer iterated that embroidering helped her to monitor the passage of time. It was important for her to record the dates and names of those she was with and embroidering was used to recount these relational details. Folmer also told of the

needle being hidden under her skin, thus directly linking the needle to skin and the body. She was so compelled to embroider that she pulled threads from her clothing and as with two of the cloths in this study of suffragette embroideries, she embroidered a handkerchief, a cloth intimate to the body yet apart from it and associated with bodily leakages.

Diet Eman (1920-2019), also a member of the Dutch resistance imprisoned in Scheveningen Prison and Vught concentration camp, recorded with the author James Schaap her drive to embroider on a handkerchief and of the perilous secrecy that it involved. He narrated that:

> At the time of her arrest, Diet like everyone else, carried a handkerchief…At the Vught concentration camp, the women passed around a carefully hidden needle at night so that they could embroider under the blankets. Each woman could use the needle for about seven minutes; thread was scavenged from clothing. Diet's handkerchief is embroidered with the date of her arrest; her barrack and cot numbers; various symbols, including a clock showing the time they were awakened each morning; German words that were frequently yelled at the prisoners; the title of the camp song composed by inmates ('We don't lose our Courage'); a Bible verse ('Our Trust is in You'); and 'Long Live the Red Cross.'
>
> (Eman and Schaap, 1994: 246)

The needle, thread, clothing, the handkerchief and Eman's body under threat were all assembled together at a specific time and place, and her embroidery became linked with her hopes, courage and refusal to comply. For Folmer and Eman, embroidering was an existential, autobiographic, embodied, situated and subversive act, an outpouring of the lived body and its intensely felt experiences. Unlike the graffiti that prisoners scratched on their cell walls, the prison embroideries were documents that could be carried with the body, in close proximity to it, and hidden about it.

Embroidery as autobiography

In 2009, the historian and embroiderer Jean Baggott published *The Girl on the Wall: One Life's Rich Tapestry*, a personal account of living in the West Midlands in the changing twentieth century. The book elaborates upon an embroidered cloth worked to record her everyday experiences across seven decades. Baggott's 'tapestry' is an example amongst many harking back to the Bayeux Tapestry, showing the continuity

of embroidery as documentation, of histories both personal and collective.[19] Baggott embroidered text and imagery to communicate autobiographical and cultural information on cloth. Likewise, the contemporary embroiderer Tilleke Schwarz also makes obvious the connection between embroidery, autobiography and documentation. She draws on the textile culture of historical European samplers (Schwarz, 2012: 11,15, 31). Revere McFadden, calls this 'adapting embroidery's rich history to their [her] own purpose' (Revere McFadden, 2007: 11). Textile academic Jessica Hemmings, notes that, 'A stitched scribble sits beside what looks like figures sewn centuries earlier – powerful reminders that despite the chaos of today, embroidery on cloth is an ancient tool for recording life' (Hemmings, 2006).

Schwarz also recognises the emotional content in her work. The embroidered cloth *Always* (2007) draws attention to contemporary security issues and anxieties as well as hope embroidered in the caption, 'AlWAYS BEliEVE THAT YOU Will BE RESCUED' (Schwarz, 2012: 19). She also recognises that embroidery has playful qualities. She states that, 'she enjoyed playing with the sequence of …information' contained in *Always* (Schwarz, 2012: 19).

[19] Baggott's work is described as a 'tapestry' as is the Bayeux Tapestry, whereas both are technically embroideries.

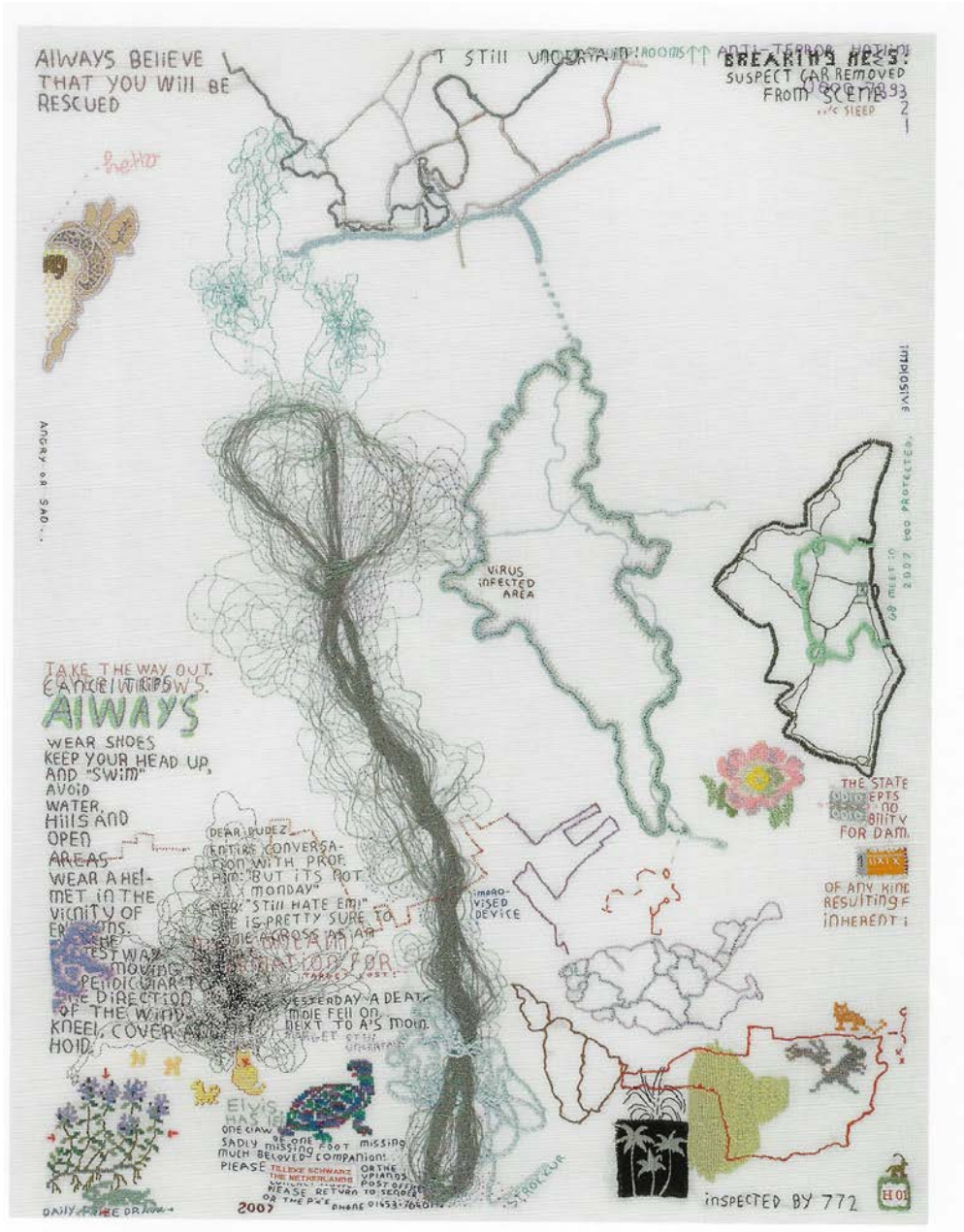

Fig. 20 *Tilleke Schwarz, 'Always'* (2007)

Similarly, Primmy Chorley connects art and life, recording her private lived experiences in cloth and thread. Writer and curator June Hill claims that Chorley has developed a practice that 'resonates with both folk and fine art', making domestic objects such as embroidered and appliqued tea cosies and small panels (Hill, 2017: 18). Chorley shies away from public attention preferring to make 'because making is a means of being' (Hill, 2017: 18). For Chorley being inside and outside of her cloths, and threading through cloth with the needle helps her to make sense of the world she inhabits, to order and control it. Textile curator Jennifer Harris states that

Chorley sees her work as ‘vehicles for story-telling and self-expression’ as well as possessing the ‘therapeutic quality of the stitching itself’ (Harris, 2001: 11). Harris hints at a process of emotional repair in their making. She notes that Chorley is aware of work produced in art therapy sessions in psychiatric hospitals and ‘was profoundly affected by the art made by some of the residents’ (Harris, 2001: 11). Thus, the tea cosy *The Garden of Love – for Lin* from *The Paradise Garden Tea Cosies* (1996-2001) quietly and unobtrusively commemorates the brutal murders of her best friend Lin Russell and Lin’s daughter Megan. Other panels record life events such as the birth of her children, and her deep feelings of loss with the breaking of close ties with her neighbours and friends by moving house. Chorley is emotionally attached to her work. It is of ‘things deeply felt by self and others on which she reflects and then intuitively responds’ (Hill, 2017: 18). According to Hill, the visual simplicity of Chorley’s practice is deceptive and the making process is long (Hill, 2017: 18). She slowly and repetitively works through the cloth: the visual imagery and text mask the complex emotional and relational attachment behind her work. Her work thus becomes private documentation akin to a diary. She crucially claims, ‘I make because I need to make it, for myself. It’s like my diary’ (Audas, 2019: 68). Hill also writes, ‘There is something profoundly moving about someone whose very life is their practice; someone who will not sell work, but who will freely give it to close friends’ (Hill, 2017: 22). Hill draws attention to the autobiographical in Chorley’s work and her gifting of it. Crucially for this research, the work begins to explore the meanings embedded in the making of embroidery.

Fig. 21 *Primmy Chorley, ‘The Garden of Love – for Lin’ tea cosy* (1996-2001)

Cloth, thread, embroidery and the presence of the body

The link between embroidery and the presence of the body is implicit in the textile work of Julian Walker. Walker, an entomologist, describes his work with old samplers as an, 'intervention' (Walker, 2016). Collecting unwanted samplers online, he unpicks some of their embroidered text and re-works the cloth with his own contemporary statements. His work disquiets the viewer, not only because of what is 're-written' in thread and can be 're-read' but because of the act of unpicking the work of the previous maker. His 'undoing' unsettles because it is as if the voice of the previous maker is being negated, un-threaded and made absent. This notion is compounded by the practical decision Walker makes to use a scalpel to take out the threads. Walker admits that what may also be unsettling is the fact that as a middle-aged man he is dealing with the work of (usually) adolescent girls (Walker, 2016). Walker's embroideries highlight that power relations are at play in the work. Writing of his pathway towards making embroidery he commented that he was unaware of the 'gender minefield' he was entering (Walker, 2016). His route had been paved by his interest in language, transcription and coding. Walker's perturbing practice draws attention to: the juxtaposition of symbolic language and the material practice of embroidering; the nuanced presence of the body in embroidery; and relations of power. His work helps us to question what being is conveyed beyond the explicit text written on the cloth.

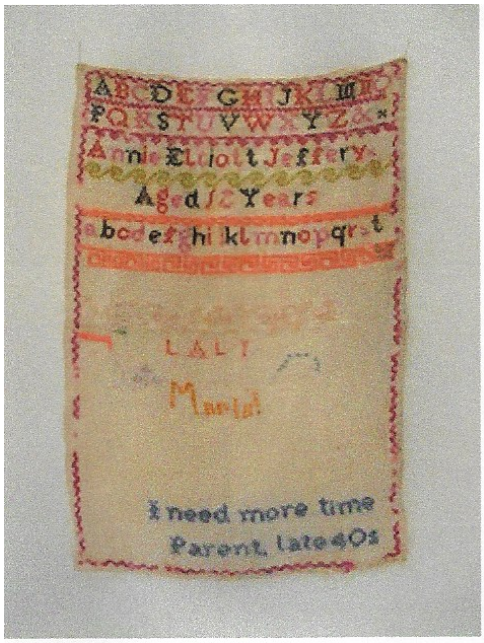

Fig. 22 *Julian Walker, 'Dialogue with Annie'* (2003)

In her fabric works, Louise Bourgeois also made connections between the body, skin, cloth and thread. Bourgeois did not specifically acknowledge the practice of embroidering in her work but she did make important connections between the body, skin, hair, cloth and thread. She had a strong and enduring connection to textile, writing, 'I am suspicious of words…I am a very concrete woman (Bourgeois, 1998: 16). She states, 'Tapestry was the family tradition, the family business. The idea of tapestry was in my family for generations' (Celant, 2010:29, Bourgeois, 1998: 118).

Bourgeois recognises the relationship between cloth and the body, and the needle and thread as a means of repair, a way to piece together, to assemble the body, to form the self. She claims, 'My mother would sit out in the sun and repair a tapestry or petit point. She really loved it. The sense of reparation is very deep within me' (Meyer-Thoss, 1992: 187). And:

> I've always had a fascination with the needle, the magic power of the needle. The needle is used to repair the damage. It is a claim to forgiveness. It is never aggressive, [*sic*] it's not a pin.
>
> (Bourgeois, 1998: 222)

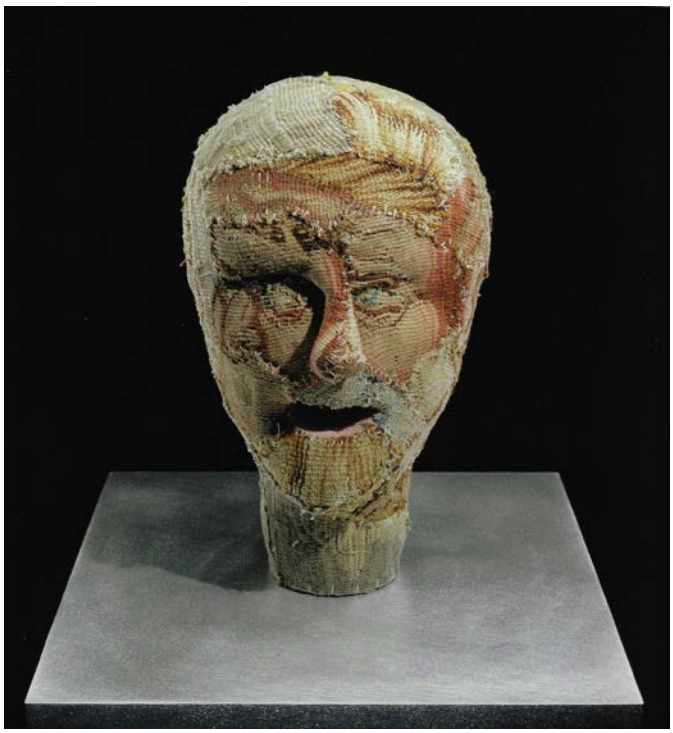

Fig. 23 *Louise Bourgeois, 'Untitled'* (2002)

Bourgeois' work provides a supportive base on which to develop ideas about embroidering the cloth-skin-body, especially with reference to psychoanalysis. In the work, *Untitled* (2002) Bourgeois uses old tapestry fragments to form the head and construct the skin. In this work, the mouth is open and the form is earless as if Bourgeois was also registering silent and tactile communication. The head form appears to receive and transmit information through the skin. Bourgeois explores the nexus between cloth and skin and the body in all her cloth and thread works. Cloth is a shelter, a home in *Femme Maison* (1983). Cloth bears the imprint of the body in works using clothes. In *Pink Days and Blue Days* (1997) she uses the coloured clothes of children, spools of thread, a hanging mechanism and bones to reference cloth, thread and the absent body.

Bourgeois' works traverse from the body clothed to the body as cloth. Cloth is used to signify the first skin as well as the second skin of clothes. She sewed cloth skins that unlike clothes cannot be removed. In the embracing *Couple* (2001), the surface of the cloth-skin is textured, almost hairy and references the intimacy of touch between skins.

Fig. 24 *Louise Bourgeois, 'Pink Days and Blue Days'* (1997)

Fig. 25 *Louise Bourgeois, 'Couple'* (2001)

In *Untitled* (1998) Bourgeois portrays damaged cloth-skin that exposes a soft textile stuffing, thus suggesting that skin erodes and that the body is vulnerable (Celant, 2010: 98). She also suggests emotional and psychical damage. Emphasising the emotional rather than representational content of her work, she writes:

> It is not an image that I am seeking. It's not an idea. It is an emotion you want to recreate, an emotion of wanting, of giving, and of destroying.
>
> (Meyer-Thoss, 1992: 194; Celant, 2010: 114)

Bourgeois also explores the intimacy of the body, the body as a vessel, a carrier, a bearer of imprints. In another work called *Untitled* (1998), a hollow human torso is sculpted from semi-transparent cloth stretched over a wire frame. Her sewing together of fragments of cloth with a needle and thread is suggestive of sutures, the accumulated scars of life that require repair. The headless form also attests to the significance of the corporeal body.

Fig. 26 *Louise Bourgeois, 'Untitled'* (1998)

Thus, Bourgeois uses textile to explore abstract concepts of the body and skin. She invites a material, emotional and psychical view of it, giving credence to the link between body and mind, cloth and skin, in the formation of the self.

Bourgeois uses striped and checked fabric in *The Child* (2003). Here the fabric emphasises the two-dimensional, binary logic of weave formed around the body of three dimensions. In this work the body disrupts the grid of cloth. Bourgeois also links the topography of the body with the lie of the earth, writing that 'I'm on all these landscapes, unconscious landscapes…' (Bourgeois, 1998: 126).

Fig. 27 *Louise Bourgeois, 'The Child'* (2003)

The artist Catherine Heard also links embroidery, thread, cloth, skin, hair and the body in *Efflorescence* (1997).[20] The practitioners Eliza Bennett and David Cata make a more overt connection by embroidering their own skin (Cata, 2015; Bennett, 2015). Bennett embroiders patterns into the palms of her hands and along her fingers in *A Woman's Work is Never Done* (2014). Cata embroiders images of his relatives in the palm of his hand in *The Over Exposed Emotions Project* (2014). Both artists vitally use skin as a ground cloth and permeable membrane for embroidery, a concept that is germinal for this research.

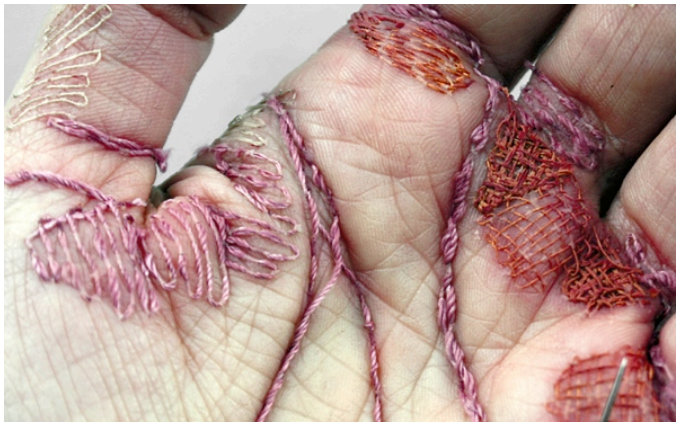

Fig. 28 *Eliza Bennett, 'A Woman's Work is Never Done'* (2014)

[20] Pages 147-148 give a fuller account of this work.

Fig. 29 *David Cata, 'Over Exposed Emotions Project'* (2014)

Cloth, thread, embroidery and 'in-between-ness'

The fact that embroidery is a process that passes through cloth, rather than being on the surface of cloth, is made evident in work commissioned by Cornelia Parker and exhibited at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester in 2015. Worked by inmates of HM Prisons (through the charity Fine Cell), the embroideries show dictionary definitions of binary opposites: life/death; conscious/unconscious; war/peace; love/hate; light/dark; and past/future. Each polarity of meaning has been embroidered either on the front or back of a cloth. This work shows that the cloth acts as a boundary that the needle and thread can cross. It hints at the in-between-ness that can be found through embroidering through cloth. It suggests that embroidering can help to find negotiated and interstitial meanings between these opposite words (Thorpe, 2015: 74-79). Thus, the work begins to make the case for regarding embroidering as a site for negotiation and knowledge making. However, it also reinforces the received idea that embroidery is a discursive practice rather than a material process of the mind and body.

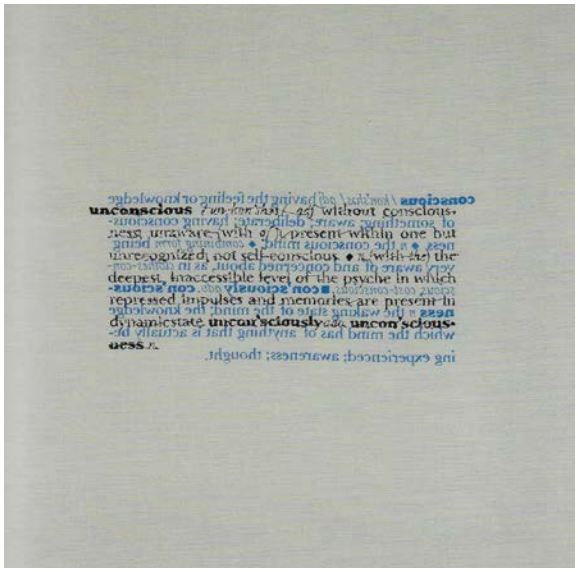

Fig. 30 *Cornelia Parker, 'Unconscious, Conscious (verso)'* (2015)

The artist Chiharu Shiota also draws attention to 'in-between-ness' in her large thread works that connect objects and bodies across space and time. In *Other Side* (2013), an installation at the Towner Gallery, East Sussex, she explored the spaces between consciousness and unconsciousness. Signifying the five senses and the perception of the corporeal body, Shiota installed five doors that opened into tunnels created by a matrix of threads. She made the link between thread and the biological threads of the body. Threads are used as a metaphor for the skin-body. She materialised an imaginary inside and outside of the body. She drew an analogy between actual thresholds and the permeable, sensing skin-body. This work helped me to materially and conceptually expand my thinking about the possible meanings of thread and about theorising thread, skin and the body. It helped me to consider embroidering as a micro and macro act, and to think of the embroidering thread as a third thread between the warp and weft of cloth. In *Other Side* (2013) the thread structure could be imagined as being a large, taut, three-dimensional, open cloth matrix composed of multiple threads that the viewer could pass through.

Shiota's work is an intensely material practice that explores the relationships between people and objects with thread and cloth. Her work continuously returns to the absence of the body. In *Making of Memory of Skin* (2001) she hung an oversized dress signifying the absent skin-body, on the outside of a building in Berlin. In *Memory of Skin* (2001) she used dresses showered with water and 'dirt' linking cloth,

skin and the body with the existential dirt of life. Other works, such as *Dialogue from DNA* (2004) and *Over the Continents* (2008), which consist of collected and worn shoes all attached to red wool thread, also implicitly reference the traces of the absent body left on these objects.

Fig. 31 *Chiharu Shiota, 'Other Side'* (2013)

In 2018, Shiota installed *Me Somewhere Else* at the Blain/Southern Gallery in London. In this exhibition, she used thread to explore another 'in-between' state: the idea that human consciousness could exist independently of the body, somewhere beyond – somewhere else. As part of the exhibition, Shiota created a thread work that comprised of three panels of canvas partially covered with red thread. Thread passed across the canvas surface and penetrated through the minute spaces of the canvas, creating an additional, web-like, red, thread structure. Shiota would have needed to use a needle to do this. She called this work *Skin* (2018) and although not recognised as such, the work was embroidery. The work fits with the definition of embroidery as freely and expressively adding lengths of thread that pass through the cloth canvas structure. In this work she made a link between skin, the body, the psyche, cloth, thread and embroidering.

Fig. 32 *Chiharu Shiota, 'Skin'* (2018)

The juxtaposing of this literature review and review of work by creative practitioners produce both a framework to build upon and an epistemic gap for this research to fill. The literature review surveys the existing textual field of research and shows that it can be augmented through examining the material process of embroidering and the materiality of the suffragette embroideries. The review of practice reveals that there are installed lines of enquiry regarding the meanings of embroidery and embroidering for this study to draw together and augment both practically and theoretically. The intersection and interaction of the established literature and practice thus conjointly create an opening where embroidering for suffragettes in Holloway Prison might be explored as a material practice – as well as a discursive practice – that is connected to the body. Together they begin to unlock a space where the material process of embroidering through cloth can be explored as autobiographically expressing confinement, empowerment, boundary crossing and political thinking.

2. Methodology and Methods

2.1. Methodology

The ontological framework and conceptual methodology for this research is grounded in theories associated with 'New Materialism'. In *Nomadic Theory: The Portable Rosi Braidotti* (2011), the philosopher Rosi Braidotti asks '…what is the best way to access ideas today?' Briadotti is in favour of an unfolding, materialist and vitalist structure of thinking, what she terms 'nomadic theory' (Braidotti, 2011: 11). She writes:

> It is urgent to both explore the need and to provide illustrations for new figurations, i.e., alternative representations and social locations for the kind of hybrid, sexualised nomadic subjects we are becoming. Figurations are not figurative ways of thinking, but rather more materialistic mappings of situated, embedded, and embodied positions.
>
> (Braidotti, 2011: 13)

Braidotti argues for the ontology of movement that embraces flows, interconnections, transformations and processes. For her, nomadic theory exceeds the present frames of thinking that perpetuate the replication of sameness. Referring to the writings of Deleuze and Guattari ([1987], 2013), she prefers to navigate, to de-territorialise, dogmatic and hegemonic exclusionary power structures based on difference, and that lie at the heart of deconstruction theories associated with 'melancholia' and 'lack' (Braidotti, interview in Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012: 27-37). For Braidotti, what needs to be set in motion is an affirmative 'becoming', whereby new paths of thought are noted, ones that are pragmatic and praxis orientated and located in the here and now. She writes of cartographies of 'becoming', for subjects-in-becoming, rather than the dialectic social constructivist theories of the subject-object. The new approach outlined by Braidotti is known as New Materialism.[21]

[21] Susanne Witzgall writes that the author, artist and philosopher Manuel De Landa developed this concept with Braidotti in the 1990's (Witzgall, 2017: 14).

Nick. J. Fox and Pam Alldred state that New Materialism has 'become a collective term used to denote a range of perspectives that have in common what has been described as a "turn to matter"' (Fox and Alldred, 2017: 3). It foregrounds the idea that our existence depends on dynamic materiality and that we need to acknowledge the primacy of matter in our theories rather than focus on textual 'idealities' (Coole and Frost, 2010: 1- 2).

This way of being in the world references the new understanding of materiality in the natural sciences, which considers matter as complex, chaotic, sticky, vibrant, flowing, indeterminate, nomadic, contingent, and having agency. For the political theorists Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, matter emerges as an active process of which humans are an integral part and it is always in 'choreographies of becoming' (Coole and Frost, 2010: 10). Thus, forces, energy, intensities and rhythms, complex random processes are the 'new currency' rather than substances (Coole and Frost, 2010: 13). Coole and Frost offer the conceptual idea of boundaries, geographical boundaries, the boundaries of the body and the digital as being open, interactive and complex systems that are porous, blurring the idea that each are discrete entities. The human becomes less distinctive and is constituted as an open organism that is interrelated with the life world (Coole and Frost, 2010: 16).

In terms of politics and power negotiation the political body may be a 'visceral protagonist within political encounters' (Coole and Frost, 2010: 19). The body and bodily processes thus matter in new materialist politics and will show corporeal capacities. Fox and Alldred refer to Jane Bennett's *Vibrant Matter* (2010), concurring with her view that, 'New materialism emphasizes matter's capacity for self-organisation (or *autopoēsis*) or even its 'vitality' (Fox and Alldred, 2017: 23; Bennett, 2010). It can be studied in terms of 'what it does: what associations it makes, what capacities it has to affect its relations or to be affected by them, what consequences derive from these interactions' rather than 'what it is' (Fox and Alldred, 2017: 24). For this research, the concepts of material agency and nomadic thinking are crucial in exploring embroidering as a material process that is embodied, situated, and proto-political.

Coole and Frost add that there are always capacities and possibilities for change in the small and molecular and a 'vulnerability to ruptures and transformation' in more enduring structures (Coole and Frost, 2010: 36). Local events and the micro (such as suffragettes in prison) are assembled in a dynamic understanding with the macro and a more entangled aggregation of relationships, and events assume importance because they allow bodies to resist these aggregating forces. Thus, resistance becomes a disaggregation, 'a de-territorialisation' or a 'line of flight' (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987], 2013: 227; Fox and Aldred, 2017: 33). It can be a disruptive thread line passing through a metaphorical cloth territory. Fox and Alldred state that, 'power and resistance operate at a local level, "acting on actions" in the myriad of events that make up the social world and produce the flow of history' (Fox and Alldred, 2017: 29).

The theories associated with New Materialism offer crucial tools for analysis in this research as they challenge and blur binary dualisms, the models that have persistently been used in the humanities and social sciences: structure/agency; culture/nature; objective/subjective; mind/body; micro/macro; and inside/outside. New Materialism also 'radically extends the scope of materialist analysis beyond both traditional concerns with structural and "macro" level phenomena and post-structuralism's concern with construction' (Fox and Alldred, 2017: 6; Dolphijn and van der Tuin, 2012: 159). It offers a multimodal methodology, 'a multimodal materialist analysis of relationships of power' (Coole and Frost, 2010: 32, 36). This ontology can enable a framework of thinking that acknowledges that the suffragette embroideries are material objects entangled and assembled in a world of matter and that the world cannot be explained in its entirety by language and discourse. The emphasis on nomadic movement and process fits with the idea of twisted strands of fibre, embroidering thread lines endlessly passing through the micro spaces of warp and weft and travelling from one cloth to the next in movement, as with the handing on of thread between suffragettes whilst in prison.

Crucially, these theoretical tools allow for conceptualising about matter, the matter of the suffragette bodies and the matter of cloth and thread. They allow for new possibilities, of considering that cloth and thread can express and shift thinking and for feeling and thinking to become transformative and produce new outcomes. It aids

thinking about an engagement with power and politics on a micro scale and politics in-formation. A new materialist approach to this research can provide the tools for recognising the importance of touch and the idea of what I term a *cloth-skin-body*. It helps in acknowledging the sensing and feeling corporeal body engaging with material structures, forms and patterns and how these might be made present as thread, cloth and embroidering. It endorses the significance of materials in re-forming and creating different interlocking systems.

The theories of New Materialism also offer a framework for understanding the more nuanced material articulations of the suffragette embroideries and of situated suffragette experiences in Holloway Prison between 1911-1912. These dynamic, material and conceptual tools are useful for examining why the women chose to use thread and to embroider and how the thread act of embroidering could possess agency and become affirmative, subversive, dangerous and political for suffragettes.

This study has made use of the text *Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationship between Humans and Things* (2012) by Ian Hodder. Grounded in archaeology and anthropology, it provides further tools for analysing the complex interplay between the human and material objects. Hodder writes that our being in the world is within a sticky 'entanglement' of matter. As biological beings, we are enmeshed with the cultural and with material objects. Humans and 'things' co-constitute each other. They co-respond. For Hodder, the world is fundamentally linked together in relational and complex networks or assemblages. He writes that an object can never stand alone, but is always in a heterogeneous mix with other objects and with the human. Objects are assemblies of incorporated knowledge, of thoughts, technologies and tacit 'know how'. They can fall apart and become unstable, even unruly and in breaking down objects flow back into matter. Objects are 'flows of matter, energy and information' (Hodder, 2012: 4).

Hodder's writing is in accordance with approaches in the humanities and social sciences that have explored the social dimensions of things and the ways in which things and society co-produce each other (Appadurai, 1986; Miller, 2005). The philosopher, anthropologist and sociologist Bruno Latour posits the concept of actor networks between and behind things and humans. He sees the boundaries between

objects and humans as liminal, as *quasi*-object, *quasi*-human. His theories make the break away from subject-object dualisms and pursue the idea of a more fluid approach to the human and non-human (Latour, 1993).
Thus, according to Hodder, through a focused attention to things, we may shift our analysis from 'how things make our society, to the thing itself and its multiple connections' and realise that things are interdependent with other things and with humans (Hodder, 2012: 3). A micro examination of the suffragette embroideries, together with a microanalysis of my own practice can thus yield a relational network of connections, flows, information and ideas.

Following Latour, Hodder examines how transformations are brought about in entanglements. He highlights ideas of movement and ensnarement. Entanglements accommodate and realign according to events and encounters. In their openings (as in the gaps between the warp and weft of cloth and sought by the embroidering thread), there is a possibility for change (Hodder 2012: 166). Hodder's theories offer the idea of an endless tension between the tied-up web of relations and untying moments. He uses the term 'Cataclysis' to describe what is going on all the time as things fall apart and events happen. The outcome of the untying or unleashing can result in very small-scale change or very large-scale disruption. He argues that, 'often something emerges contingently and unpredictably from the complex interactions of variables in the moment, that is new and enduring (at least for a time)' (Hodder, 2012: 166).

Relating back to the embroidered suffragette cloths made in prison, Hodder's threadlike model could be inserted into our thinking about them. We might consider that for suffragettes, cloth and thread materialised an entanglement with events and encounters. Suffragettes materially worked through these 'intensities', intense flowing moments of being. Using Hodder's thinking it can be posited that embroidering by suffragettes might express movements of untying and re-tying, a thread cataclysis.

Embroidering and the theory of entanglement are thus in sympathy. Suffragettes embroidering in prison were using themselves, object-things, cloth and thread to explore possibilities, their resistance to enmeshed and relational lived experiences of power, dominance and subordination.

New Materialism and Hodder's writing draw heavily on the philosophical writings of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. In, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* ([1987], 2013) they introduce the concept of 'multiplicities', 'becoming', micro-politics, the rhizome, the importance of creative 'lines of flight' that 'deterritorialize' and blaze a new trail or open a road and they offer the idea of ordered and gridded space, which they term 'striated' (with cloth its metaphor). Specific mention of the limits of the binary *logos* of weave and of embroidery as 'addition' with complex 'variables and constants, fixed and mobile elements' is mentioned and importantly, they directly reference embroidery (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987], 2013: 553-554). They almost connect embroidery to nomadic thinking but do not have the tacit understanding of the process that comes from being a practitioner.

Although not directly referring to suffragettes, this text enables thinking about suffragette embroidering in a radically new way. Deleuze and Guattari help in thinking of suffragette embroidering as materialising an historical plateau of 'intensity'. They offer the idea of a horizontal rhizome network (an embroidery) as an assemblage, which interlinks with semiotic chains as well as the symbolic-discursive. Rhizome thinking is relevant in that it is decentred and concerned with micro-politics. It is of expanding abstract lines that flow, multiply connect, map, rupture and start up again. Lines de-territorialise and re-territorialise, explode into 'lines of flight', enter through multiple entry points, over turn codes and 'become' (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987], 2013: 11-22). I argue that close analogies can be made here to the practice of embroidering together with Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'territorialisation' and 'de-territorialisation', which enable thinking about embroidering as a 'mapping' and 're-mapping' of the body. Passing through cloth, the embroidering thread interrupts, disrupts and overturns the reading of the ordered binary code of weave. Each cut and fragmented thread is inserted into cloth horizontally, where it can explode into a line of flight in any direction.

2.2. Methods

This study is grounded in practice as research (embroidering), historical methods regarding material culture enquiry, and archival research, in dialogue with supporting critical theory. It seeks new insights and hypothesis and embraces creative thinking.

Material object enquiry in historical research

Historians and social scientists increasingly endorse the study of material objects as an integral form of evidence gathering and as the starting point for historical research. The historian Adrienne Hood claims that material objects are no longer props but are 'turning into a star pupil' (Hood, 2009: 187). According to Hood, historians have tended to rely overwhelmingly on textual evidence at the expense of material culture and have assumed that the absence of objects makes very little difference to our understandings (Hood, 2009: 177). This is despite the fact that we live amongst objects and rub alongside them on a daily basis. Thus, for Hood objects can 'lead to unique, often inspired questions about the past' and have the power to 'open up new avenues of historical thinking and provide insights into the past not possible with documents alone' (Hood, 2009: 176).

Hood recognises that object enquiry facilitates a seamless crossing between disciplines. Cultural questions can therefore be explored across the humanities and social sciences, science and technology and the arts. In this research for example, textile culture intersects with history, psychoanalysis, anthropology, archaeology, sociology and politics. Object research thus becomes what Victor Buchli describes as 'effectively an intervention within and between disciplines; translations from one realm to another' (Buchli, 2002: 13).

The study of material objects and the micro histories that surround them also become ways of learning about humans who were not part of the written record (Barber and Peniston-Bird, 2009; Harvey, 2009). Thus, in the analysis of details surrounding objects a 'more nuanced and holistic approach' with more open dialogues about gender, race, ethnicity and class may be found (Hood, 2009: 188). Hood refers to the historiographical links between material culture research, micro histories and Marxist 'history from below'. Glenn Adamson's adds that the study of a material object '"registers" the larger patterns around it' and enables us to 'draw interpretative connections across hierarchical boundaries' (Adamson, 2009: 205). According to Adamson, 'Big Ideas', meta-narratives, 'need to be tested constantly, and in every

way available. And perhaps this is the job of the material culture historian' (Adamson, 2009: 205). For Adamson, such study can help us to 'create a more nuanced picture of history, one with multiple registers – something more like a full symphony than a single line of melody' (Adamson, 2009: 205).

Importantly, researching embroidery can give access to women's histories and aspects that have been overlooked. Embroidering, in this research includes the body that thinks and feels. Thus, a pathway begins to open where the emotions of women might become historically recognised.[22]

Adamson elaborates, that it is in the ambiguous details, 'the accumulation of not quite explicable facts along the way' that 'material culture provides in infinite variety' (Adamson, 2009: 205). Thus, a micro examination of the interaction of materials and process may reveal: an insight into how the women felt; what they believed; how they expressed their corporeal experiences of prison life; how they worked together; how they became empowered; and how they may have shifted their thinking.

Objects can be grasped, felt, turned over, turned inside out, prodded and considered in relationship to the body. Studying objects allows a closer acquaintance with the past. It enables a more proximate negotiation between what the historian John Tosh calls the familiar and the strange (Tosh, 2015: 90). Momentarily the same concrete sensations that our predecessors experienced (the suffragettes in this instance) can become ours too. Objects can temporarily and empathetically become 're-inhabited' and thus, object analysis allows for personal, intuitive and proximate encounters.

The art and material culture historian Jules David Prown has suggested that historical artefacts might in fact allow us to interpret the 'dream' world of the past, the hidden world of past cultural beliefs that to Prown are 'encapsulated in the form of things' (Prown, 1993: 14 cited in Adamson, 2009: 202).

[22] See Doan and Holloway (2016).

A voice can also be given to overlooked suffragettes such as Cissie Wilcox, a working-class woman from Gateshead.[23] Embroidering the cloth, *Where Are You Cissie Wilcox* (2016-2019) registered my difficulty in gathering information about her in the received historical record. In this embroidery, I worked multiple weights of thread through an open linen evenweave cloth and used a pulled-work embroidery technique that opened further the gaps in the weave. Lengths of thread with their needles were left to drop from the cloth like incomplete workings. They materialised my search for her over three years. Every stitch made a hopeful, positive cross on one surface of the fabric as if I was one step nearer in finding her.

Fig. 33 *Denise Jones, 'Where are you Cissie Wicox?'* (2016-2019)

The embroideries in this study have brought to the fore the suffragettes Cissie Wilcox, Mary Aldham, Janie Terrero, Mary Hilliard, Mary Ellen (Nellie) Taylor, Alice Jane Shannan Stewart Ker, 'ASC', 'Grace', Zoe Proctor and Katie Gliddon, as well as the names and signatures of the women that were recorded on the embroidered cloths.

[23] See Appendix III.

Thus, the material objects in this study act as portals of inclusion as well as holding the potential for reconceiving ways of knowing.

Hood suggests that an appropriate approach for the study of the historical object would be to, '…work outwards from the object, or from text to object and back to text' (Hood, 2009: 193). She sees this as a 'symbiotic relationship between traditional, textual evidence and its material counterpart as each informs and improves the interpretation of the other' (Hood, 2009: 187). In my sketchbooks and notebooks I described the suffragette embroideries in detail. I then followed an iterative process between the objects, their historical context, critical theory and my own studio practice. The textual and visual information recorded on them was important in that it enabled me to locate the embroideries within the wider (and entangled) historical landscape. I could then pinpoint the time frame of their making, the names of the embroiderers and determine whether they had been worked in Holloway Prison or not. I also noted all the representational imagery: hammers, prison windows, grilles, the broad arrows, and ribbons and flowers, to begin to make sense of what the women were consciously thinking about when they embroidered. I then pushed the research further through using my own tacit knowledge of embroidering to reflect on the material practice of embroidering by the suffragettes.

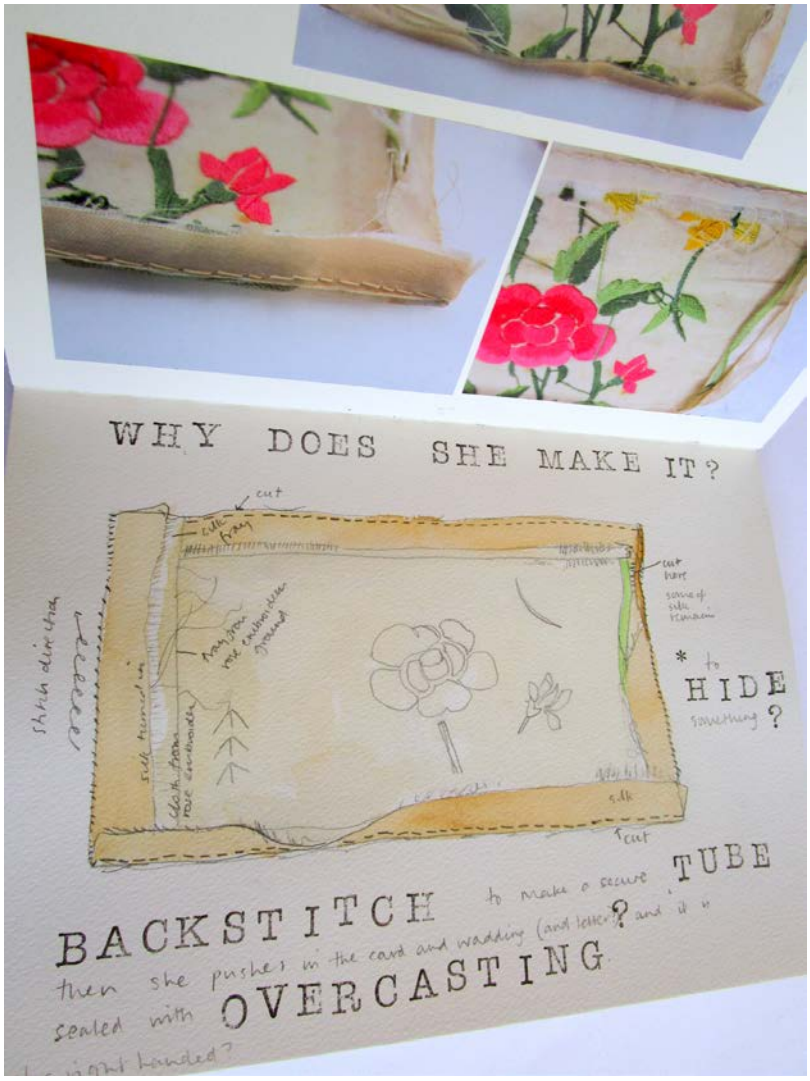

Fig. 34 *Denise Jones, an example of drawing the historical embroideries* (2015)

Practice as research

> …I would argue that art can be seen to emerge in the involvement with materials, methods, tools and ideas of practice. It is not just the representation of an already formed idea [the words and images on the embroidery]. In this formulation [,] a praxical engagement with tools, materials and ideas becomes primary over the assumed theoretical – cognitive engagement.
>
> (Bolt, 2004: 65)

All the studio practice in this research has focused on scrutinising the material process of hand-embroidering through cloth in order to explore what may be above and beyond the accepted preconceptions associated with it. All the practical work was made in correspondence with the suffragette embroideries and their historical context. It could be said that research as practice has allowed me to dwell for a time with the

object and has enabled me to move into the object, to get under its skin and directly engage with the decision making of the maker and the making process. The philosopher Martin Heidegger describes this as the object's 'coming into being' and it's 'bringing forth' (Heidegger, 1977: 10 cited in Bolt, 2011: 80).

Artist and visual arts academic, Barbara Bolt writes that it is important to focus on systems of fabrication rather than discursive systems of signification and representation (Bolt, 2004: 7). Creative arts academic, Estelle Barrett emphasises a relationship between material process and text rather than one between image and text, as referred to by Paul Carter in *Material Thinking* (1993) (Barrett, 2010: 5). According to Bolt, practice as research, the focus on the process of making works of art, allows for an overlooked '*poiētic* revealing'. *Poiēsis* is described as being 'an openness' before what-is, a 'presencing', a bringing forth of something out of itself, where a radical 'un-concealment' above and beyond representation can occur (rather than an 'enframing', which is concerned with ordering, mastering and reproduction) (Bolt, 2004: 59). For Bolt, representation is a picturing that fixes, is hegemonic and relies on a subject-object mode of thinking (as well as being concerned with the creating of an end product, or being instrumental). Practice as research, as *poēisis*, can therefore take into account the matter of bodies and objects, the dynamic movement of bodies and things, and can take up what it is to be (Bolt, 2004: 17, 26). Leaning on Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, Bolt reiterates that we are always being-right-there in the middle of possibility, situated in the drama of things and that it is in use, and doing and not in consciousness that we have access to the knowledge of things (Heidegger, 1962: 243; Bolt, 2004: 48).[24] Thus, 'We come to know the world theoretically, only after we have come to understand it through handling' (or through embroidering) (Bolt, 2004: 49). She draws attention to the importance of handling materials and knowing them, 'how they work', to deduce how a work of art has been produced (Barrett and Bolt, 2010: 27-34). She states that 'Drawing on material perspectives, including Martin Heidegger's notion of '"handlability", our exploration of artistic research demonstrates that knowledge is derived from doing and from the senses' (Barrett and Bolt, 2010: 1). Therefore, the new contingently emerges from

[24] The German word *Dasein* translates to English as, 'being there' or 'presence'. It is often translated as 'existence'.

methods that cannot always be pre-determined and outcomes are 'necessarily unpredictable' (Barrett and Bolt, 2010: 3). She explains that life gets into the work of art through performativity and thus, particular experiences (such as suffragettes embroidering in prison) rather than generalised discourses can become important (Barrett and Bolt, 2010: 5). An exploration of practice as research can thus reveal knowledge that is further to what we consciously expect and it can tap into sensual and affective experiences.

In what she terms this 'monstrous performativity', Bolt contends that, 'the body becomes language rather than merely inscribed by language' (Bolt, 2004: 149). This is of significance in the discussion within this thesis about embroidering as an embodied process. Practice as research provides the tools for positing that embroidering can be considered as a language that performs (or acts) the body as well as one that represents or reproduces what is inscribed on the body.[25]

For Bolt, the matter of the body and materials are transformed in the exchange between objects, bodies and images (Bolt, 2004: 150). Thus, she contends that rhythms and pulses of the body become like a 'language' in motion and the somatic rhythms of human labour produce intensities, energies and utterances 'in carnal form' (Bolt, 2004: 184).

I probed the historical textiles to discover the tacit knowledge embedded in the process: I considered which materials and tools had been selected and used; what embroidery techniques had been chosen; the order of the procedures of making and what decisions had been taken; the material connections between the embroideries; and then asked why had they been made in such a way? I handled the embroideries, turned them from back to front and inside out and scrutinized the construction of seams, the finishing and casting off of threads, the skill and deftness of the embroiderer, the signature hand or style of the embroiderer, the placement of the embroidery on the cloth and its construction, and noted which stitches had been employed.[26] I placed my work and images of the suffragette embroideries with other

[25] This is referred to more fully in chapter four, section five.

[26] It was not possible to handle the two embroideries worked by Mary Aldham, the West Hoathly handkerchief and the Terrero panel. The Aldham embroideries were only available on-line.

objects to create connections, links, alignments and disjunctions. Embroidering was put into play in what Deleuze and Guattari would describe as 'machinic assemblages' with free relations to create new ideas (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987], 2013: 90; Bolt, 2004: 81). I compared the materials and I noted the subtle changes in the colour of the threads used. I imagined how I would have made them and how this fitted with the material and textual evidence before me. I homed in on tiny details. I photographed and drew the textiles extensively from different angles, singly, and where possible, together. I enlarged the photographs in order to observe how the thread passed through the cloth. Finally, in some of my own work I selected similar cloth(s) and thread(s) and appropriate tools to embroider in correspondence with the historical embroideries.

The research followed Bolt's methods of enquiry in that it focused on a material and discursive questioning of the suffragette embroideries. It dug beneath their easily accessible discursive 'readings' whilst also taking these into account. My methods acknowledged Bolt's claim that a crucial interrelationship exists between theory and practice, and 'that artistic knowledge must be viewed as the production of knowledge in action' (Barrett and Bolt, 2010). Therefore, the research emphasised the role of practice – that is often left out of the picture. It accepted that 'practice has a flexible and generative logic of its own' where situated life can get into the image or text, or embroidery (Bolt, 2004: 1).

Primary and secondary historical research

The suffragette embroideries have been historically contextualised with primary textual sources and other material objects from the archives held at the Women's Library, the Museum of London, the British Library and The National Archives. These comprise Home Office documents and sentencing records, letters, prison diaries, autobiographies, picture postcards and photographs.

The unpublished writings of the suffragettes Katie Gliddon and Janie Terrero have been rich sources of information. The prison diary of Katie Gliddon, written in a volume of *The Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1908) and kept in her prison

cell in Holloway between March and April 1912 provided one of the most immediate accounts of suffragette prison experiences.[27]

Newspaper archives have been used as primary source material to locate fragments of information about the embroiderers, most notably, *Votes for Women*, *The Suffragette* and the provincial press. Secondary texts about the suffragettes have been drawn on to contextualise their experiences. References to embroidery have been searched for throughout all the primary and secondary texts.

3. 'In a Language They Understand': Bodies Under Threat

On the 12th December 1911, Cissie Wilcox, a single working-class woman of twenty-six from Gateshead, County Durham was sentenced at Newington Sessions to two months' hard labour in Holloway Prison for breaking the plate glass windows of Lyons and Co. Ltd. and the London and South Western Bank in the Strand, London (*Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 179).[28]

[27] Anne Schwan describes her original diary as 'likely to be one of the most extensive records of life in Holloway actually compiled within the prison that is known today' (Schwan, 2014: 150). Schwan writes that in contrast with some representations of suffragettes as 'martyr-saviour[s]' written post-release, Gliddon was one of twelve suffragettes in E wing not hunger striking in April 1912 (Schwan, 2014: 182).

[28] Wilcox used the alias 'Cissie'. Her birth name was Mary Ellen Wilcox, sometimes spelled 'Willcocks' or 'Wilcocks' (see Appendix III).

According to *Votes for Women*, the newspaper of the militant Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU), two hundred and twenty-three women were arrested in November 1911 and the majority were charged with wilful damage to private property (*Votes for Women*, 24/11/1911: 123; 1/12/1911: 144-148). The women had smashed windows with hammers and stones because of the proposed introduction of a Manhood Suffrage Bill, which would enfranchise more men and no women (Raeburn, 1973: 164). The window breaking campaign escalated into 1912 and *The Times* estimated the financial scale of the damage of Friday 1st March 1912 alone, as close to five thousand pounds (Rosen, 2013: 157). According to Sylvia Pankhurst, by Monday 4th March 1912 nine thousand policemen were assembled in Trafalgar Square in anticipation of further suffragette action (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 374).

At her trial Wilcox referred back to the violence of the year before (on what came to be known as 'Black Friday') as being the turning point for her. She was charged before a jury, as the cost of the damage allegedly exceeded five pounds. On refusing to pay her fine she was sent to Holloway Prison as a Second Division prisoner together with nineteen other women (*Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 179). In the dock, she stated:

> I broke the windows as a protest against the introduction by the Government of a Manhood Suffrage Bill. I should not have done so if the Government had not driven me to do it, but we are compelled to speak to them in a *language they understand* [my italics]. We have to win our liberty as your forefathers in the past won theirs.

She amplified:

> … Last year when I went in a perfectly peaceful way to the House of Commons, to present a petition to Mr. Asquith, I was obstructed by the police. One policeman took hold of my head and forced it back as far as it would go. Another one got hold of my arms and twisted them. I was kicked until I became unconscious and had to be removed to the police station on an ambulance. My feet and ankles were bruised and one wound was still open, certified by a doctor who saw me six weeks afterwards.
> …I broke these windows simply as a protest, and as one who has no constitutional defence [*sic*] open to her. We are filled with confidence as it is always blackest before dawn, and God will defend us for our cause is just.
>
> (*Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 179)

Wilcox was the embroiderer of two of the embroideries worked in Holloway Prison: a small silk fragment of cloth, hand-embroidered in silk, dated December 1911 and a linen handkerchief also embroidered in silk, with a list of suffragette names and a record of her own prison sentences, dated January 1912.[29]

What was significant about Wilcox's statement was that she emphasised how compelled she was to use a 'language' that the Government 'would understand', a language of the body as the political tool of last resort. Wilcox knew the implications of her actions: that she would be arrested and imprisoned and that her physical and emotional body would be put under duress.

The suffragette corporeal body became an important political site where the militant push for women's suffrage was played out. Suffragettes met with visceral symbolic misrepresentation and escalating physical assaults on their bodies as well as imprisonment, hunger striking, and forcible feeding.[30] In turn, suffragettes used their own bodies as spectacle and sacrifice and they asserted their material presence in new and emerging social spaces.[31]

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[29] The embroidery on these two embroideries was formed in the same way, indicating that it was likely to have been worked by the same hand. The dates recording her imprisonment and the informal appearance of her name also strengthen the argument that she was the embroiderer of this handkerchief (see pages 88-89).

[30] The suffragette Marion Wallace Dunlop was the first suffragette to adopt the hunger strike in Holloway Prison in July 1909 (Nym Mayall, 2003: 3). Denied treatment as a political offender and transference to the First Division, she went without food for ninety-one hours and was then released (Purvis, 1994: 169). From September 1909, at Winson Green Prison, Birmingham, the Government responded to suffragette hunger striking with the euphemism of 'hospital treatment', which was forcible feeding (Radzinowicz and Hood, 1979: 1468). It meant that suffragettes could no longer expect early release from prison by adopting the hunger strike.

[31] In, *The Spectacle of Women*: *Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign* (1987) Lisa Tickner collates and analyses the cultural production of women with specific emphasis on its visual imagery and 'spectacle'. *Suffrage and the Arts: Visual Culture, Politics and Enterprise* (2019) by Miranda Garrett and Zoë Thomas also analyses the variety and breadth of visual culture and its meanings and explores the links between suffrage and professional women finding new spaces for expression in the arts and applied arts, thus redefining the artistic and political landscape. In, *Spectacular Confessions: Autobiography, Performative Activism and the Sites of Suffrage* (1997) Barbara Green adds that suffrage women's writing, being autobiographical and confessional was a form of spectacular performance that 'catered to' and challenged a masculine public gaze, and thus sought to feminise modern public space (Green, 1997: 5-10). In, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women, 1850-1920* (1985) the historian Martha Vicinus writes that during this time period women 'sacrificed themselves in order to gain access to new spaces, public and spiritual, within themselves and the wider world' (Vicinus, 1985: 262, 279-280). In, 'Lilies and Lavatory Paper: The Public and the Private in Public Archives' (2010) Cheryl R. Jorgensen-Earp asserts that suffragette writing was a negotiation between public and private social spheres.

By 1910, imprisonment was the usual consequence for window breaking and arrested suffragettes often opted for imprisonment rather than pay their fine. The years 1911 and 1912 marked a turning point in the scale of militant involvement with the imprisonment of many rank and file members of the WSPU during the orchestrated window smashing campaign. From 1912 until the outbreak of war, the concerted assault on property by suffragettes intensified and more underground strategies were employed. Militant suffragettes destructively targeted public infrastructure, railways, schools, buildings and offices, sports facilities, the post office and letterboxes (Rosen, 2013: 189-202, 214-245).

This chapter opens with an overview of embroidery in the early twentieth century to show how women and the suffragettes were schooled in its techniques and materials, and how it was a 'language' that they tacitly understood. The chapter then proceeds by giving an insight into the context of the suffragette embroideries. It discusses how the push for women's suffrage in the early twentieth century was complicated and intersected by other factors that put the body politic under threat. The chapter then examines how suffragette bodies were under threat particularly as part of the prison regime and how suffragettes defied the prison system. The women's experiences of imprisonment are analysed with reference to Michel Foucault's writing on the modern prison, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1977).

3.1. Embroidery in the Early Twentieth Century

> Wise-hearted also let us be, and the wisdom may come in the doing of these things, and we may leave behind us a fairer heritage for our daughters, for in the works of our hands they shall know us when we ourselves have gone.
>
> (Swanson, Macbeth, McMillan, 1911: 130)

Fig. 35 *Jessie Newbery, design for a pulpit fall, the Glasgow School of Art* (*c.*1905)

In, *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* ([1984], 2010) Roszika Parker explains how embroidery became identified with a specific set of cultural characteristics and was consigned to the hands of women. Through needlework she contends that women were educated to be delicate, sedentary, submissive, obedient, competent, patient, pious and pure and yet were aware of its possibilities so that it 'provided a weapon of resistance to the constraints of femininity' (Parker, 2010: ix).

For Edwardian women and girls, the know-how of embroidering was powerfully reproduced via the family through female relationships and a significant amount time in a woman's life was devoted to it. Parker maintains that 'decades of skill developed for ecclesiastical banners, altar cloths, drawing-room drapery and smoking caps' lay behind the making of twentieth-century suffrage banners (Parker, 2010: 198). The range of early twentieth-century embroidery was enormous. Caulfield and Saward's *Dictionary of Needlework* (1882) listed hundreds of techniques and stitches.

Embroidery was implicated in the creation of femininity across social classes. All women and girls in the early twentieth century were schooled in it. Embroidery was a designated subject in the National Schools' curriculum and in 1902 the curriculum for all girls in secondary education included needlework (whilst boys did woodwork) (Parker, 2010: 188). Victorian attitudes towards needlework persisted, reinforcing the

idea that it was a natural activity for women. According to Parker, by the twentieth century, embroidery and femininity were being transformed but not separated: working-class girls made needlework as preparation for a future of domestic work whilst middle-class girls were increasingly taught embroidery as an art form, following principles such as those established at the Glasgow School of Art (Parker, 2010: 188).

By 1900, colleges of art offered courses in embroidery as an expressive art form and in response to the burgeoning decorative arts movement. Since 1894, embroidery could be taken at the Glasgow School of Art as a specific art subject. When the suffragette Ann Macbeth became head of the Decorative Art Studios there in 1911, a revolutionary approach to teaching embroidery was instituted, recommending explorative learning rather than emphasising draughtsmanship.[32] A.F. Kendrick claimed that both Jessie Newbery (Macbeth's predecessor) and Macbeth believed that design 'should grow out of the materials and technique used' and that it should be 'completely of its own period, owing nothing to past forms' (Kendrick, [1910], 1933: 198). The women helped to develop what came to be known as the 'Glasgow Style'. From being a minor subject in the Glasgow Art School curriculum, embroidery rapidly became recognised as the most important craft taught there (Macfarlane and Arthur, 1980: 5). In 1911, Ann Macbeth, Margaret Swanson and Margaret McMillan published *Educational Needlecraft: Instructresses at the Glasgow School of Art*, to structure the learning of needlework in schools. The Glasgow School of Art was thus instrumental in transforming thinking about embroidery and its possibilities. Needlework manuals and instruction books of the time sought to standardize and name stitches so that they could be worked 'properly' and according to their structure. Importantly and relevant for this research, is the fact that they distinguished the making of embroidery from plain sewing. Commercially, magazines, printers and craft suppliers also promoted embroidery. *The Studio* was first published in 1893 and reported on art embroidery exhibitions. Penny weeklies and popular women's magazines gave advice such as the *Woman's Magazine* and the *Girl's Own Paper* edited by Flora Klickman (Ledbetter, 2012: 89-94). The Queen was a patron of 'The

[32] Macbeth was imprisoned and forcibly fed in 1912 (see Appendix III).

Royal School of [Art] Needlework' (RSN).[33] Ex-students of the RSN founded the Embroiderers' Guild in 1906.

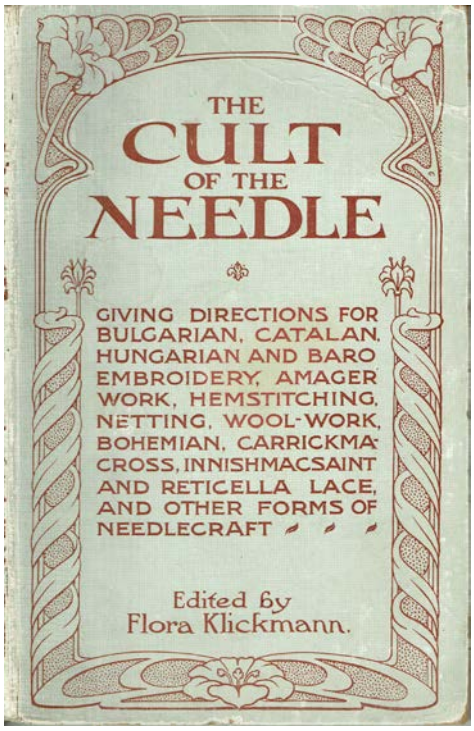
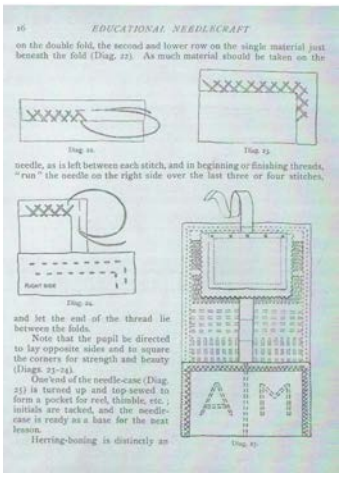


Fig. 36 '*The Cult of the Needle', edited by Flora Klickman* (*c.*1914)

Thus, embroidery was part of the everyday life of Edwardian women and it was not surprising that suffragettes turned to embroidering as an expressive form in prison, as well as outside prison. Suffrage women would have possessed enormous tacit knowledge. They would have implicitly known about selecting the most appropriate materials and techniques. They would know how stitches worked and which size needle and thickness of thread to use with certain fabrics. They would know about textures, fraying, fastening, carrying threads, tension, the procedure of work, where to start, where to finish, which stitches took the most time, which stitches best filled the upper surface of the cloth and which stitches and threads were suitable for strengthening the cloth and adding weight. Embroidering was a material 'language' that they implicitly understood. A chapter in *Educational Needlecraft* was called 'Decorative Stitchery in Relation to Material' (Swanson, Macbeth and McMillan, 1911: 88-94, 97-100).

[33] *The Royal School of Needlework: Handbook of Embroidery* was published in 1880.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on the double fold, the second and lower row on the single material just beneath the fold (Diag. 22). As much material should be taken on the needle, as is left between each stitch, and in beginning or finishing threads, "run" the needle on the right side over the last three or four stitches, and let the end of the thread lie between the folds.

Note that the pupil be directed to lay opposite sides and to square the corners for strength and beauty (Diags. 23–24).

One end of the needle-case (Diag. 25) is turned up and top-sewed to form a pocket for reel, thimble, etc.; initials are tacked, and the needle-case is ready as a base for the next lesson.

Herring-boning is distinctly an

Fig. 37 *A page from 'Educational Needlecraft' showing herringbone embroidery worked along the seam, similar to the embroidered bag worked by or for 'Grace'* (1911)

Suffrage embroidery

Throughout the suffrage campaign, embroidery was employed in the making of garments, insignia, fundraising items for bazaars and banners. Of all the suffrage embroidery it is the embroidered banners that are most usually referred to, but there were other embroidered objects made by suffrage women and undoubtedly many of these have not survived.[34] Unlike the embroidered banners, the prison embroideries in this study were not made for showy display but were worked to express the women's more personal experiences. Although small in number these embroideries give a very precious and overlooked insight into the first-hand experiences of these suffragettes in prison. They are as meaning laden, immediate and autobiographical as the diaries or letters written there.

However, the banners do give an indication of the levels of skill possessed by the women and how integral embroidery was to the political campaign. Tickner estimates that at least one hundred and fifty banners were made between 1908 and 1913

[34] There are other embroidered suffragette objects in the Women's Library, such as a silk embroidered handkerchief (TWL. 2003.666) and an embroidered apron *c.*1913 (TWL. 7EWD/M/02) but they are not recorded as being worked in prison. As already referred to, an embroidered handkerchief was discovered amongst the washing of Eileen Casey sent out of Birmingham Prison in July 1914 (see note 6 on page 12). A prison report stated that she had embroidered the message 'Health A1. Feeding Painless'. The Governor was directed to retain the handkerchief. Its whereabouts are unknown (Laughton, 2018).

(Tickner, 1987: 69).[35] Both the Artists' Suffrage League and The Suffrage Atelier organised women in large numbers to make them and according to the historian Elizabeth Crawford, the embroiderers of the banners were on the whole unknown and were not professional (Crawford, 2018: 15).

Fig. 38 *WSPU banner making* (1910)

[35] Suffrage women did not make all of the banners. Ten WSPU banners were commercially made either by Tuthills, the most important maker of trade union banners, or Toyes (Tickner, 1987: 169).

Fig. 39 *Banners of the Artists' Suffrage League for the NUWSS procession* (1908)

The WSPU banner (made originally as a quilt and now called the 'Hunger Strikers' Banner') bearing the signatures of imprisoned hunger-striking suffragettes, was designed and constructed by the professional embroiderer Ann Macbeth, at the Glasgow School of Art in 1910.[36]

[36] Janice Helland writes about the organisation behind the making of this quilt-banner. She states that it was probably called a quilt because of the piecing involved in its making but it was never intended to cover a bed (Helland, 2020: 103).

Fig. 40 *The 'Hunger Strikers' Banner' worked by Ann Macbeth* (1910)

It provides a prime example of embroidery and the imprisoned suffrage community coalescing.[37] In this embroidery-quilt-banner, as in the more personal prison embroideries, suffragettes showed that embroidery and cloth could entwine with community and the politics of life, as a material politics of practice.

[37] The banner was made prior to the embroideries of this study (*Votes for Women*, 8/04/1910: 442). Textile historian Janet Rae writes that it harked back to the ideas behind 'friendship quilts' and signature tablecloths that were embroidered as mementos and a gathering of community (Rae, 2016: 77). These ideas were sequestered in this embroidered textile towards a more militant and political purpose.

Fig. 41 *The 'Hunger Strikers' Banner' at the WSPU procession 'From Prison to Citizenship'* (1910)

3.2. Pushing for the Vote

At her testimony at the Sessions quoted in the introduction to this chapter and through her embroideries, Wilcox gave a micro insight into events that carried enormous political weight and had a prior political history to which she referred. Acknowledging the long struggle for democracy of the nineteenth century, she recognised that the push for women's suffrage was part of that violent continuum.

Wilcox alluded to the extension of suffrage, which had led to the enfranchisement of sections of the male population (and no women) and was manifested in the three Great Reform Bills of 1832, 1867 and 1884. The historian Caroline Morrell points out that disenfranchisement was not peculiar to women and that over forty per cent of men were without the vote in 1911 (Morrell, 1981: 5).

Inconsistently, women were allowed to campaign for the Parliamentary vote for men but they were not entitled to vote themselves for a Parliamentary candidate nor stand for Parliament (Powell, 1996: 77). However, by the early twentieth century it was

estimated that ten to twelve per cent of women were local electors and increasingly women were putting themselves forward and being elected as Poor Law Guardians, members of School Boards and as district councillors. Thus, at the outbreak of war in 1914 over two thousand women held elected office in England and Wales, proving that they were engaged in political processes and were responsible voters and elected representatives (Powell, 1996: 77-78). The push for the Parliamentary vote therefore seemed a logical demand.

By the late nineteenth century the position of women was in flux. Women were finding financial independence in an expanding labour market (Powell, 1996: 71; Morrell, 1981: 10). They were becoming better educated. The Education Act of 1870 had made elementary education universally free and compulsory for boys and girls, resulting in improved literacy levels. Women's colleges opened at the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and women were admitted to the degree courses at the University of London (Powell, 1996: 73-74). By the end of the nineteenth century, the legal position of women had also changed, challenging the view that a woman's body and property belonged to her husband. A series of acts regarding property, marriage, and the guardianship of children gave women individual rights before the law (Powell, 1996: 75). Thus, by the end of the nineteenth century women were increasingly aware of their 'anomalous' status as women, who might be working, taxpayers, educated, professional, unmarried, property owners, holding public office, engaged in political organisations and yet denied the vote in national elections. Obtaining the vote came to signify the key to female representation and emancipation.

Towards militancy

By 1903, disillusioned with the hope of gaining the vote for women through the Independent Labour Party (ILP), Emmeline Pankhurst set up the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) in Manchester with her daughter Christabel and local ILP women (Rosen, 2013: 30-31). It was a society consisting entirely of women and concerned with injecting new vigour into the movement (Morrell, 1981: 14-15).

The WSPU adopted orthodox strategies in its early years (Rosen, 2013: 31-32). However, in 1905 Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney were arrested, charged with disorderly behaviour and on refusing to pay their fine were sent to Strangeways

Gaol, Manchester (Rosen, 2013: 52). It was a huge propaganda coup. The suffragette Hannah Mitchell wrote that, 'Twenty years of peaceful propaganda had not produced such an effect' (Mitchell, 1968: 90-91).

From 1906, the WSPU extended its scope to London and concentrated its efforts on demonstrations and deputations to Parliament. (Rosen, 2013: 71). Between 1906 and 1907 WSPU membership, financial support and national organisation grew (Rosen, 2013: 79-85). The historian Andrew Rosen writes that in October 1907 the language of the WSPU (as well as in their newly published monthly newspaper *Votes for Women*) increasingly took on a military tone (Rosen, 2013: 93). Recognising the power of visual and public presence, the WSPU organised spectacular marches, processions and pageants (Tickner, 1987; Green, 1997). They showed their own members, the public and the Government that large numbers of women wanted the vote. In February 1908, the First Women's Parliament was held at Caxton Hall and a spectacular and propagandist great mass meeting, 'Women's Sunday' was held in Hyde Park in June 1908 with insignia in purple, green and white, the newly adopted colours of the WSPU (Atkinson, 2018: 95-101).[38] The historian, Diane Atkinson describes how the women saw the event as a 'battlefield' with 'marshalls' organising seven processions. The WSPU adopted sashes, badges, costume and pageantry and manufactured posters, platforms, enormous banners and flags (Rosen, 2013: 103-104).[39]

[38] Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence decided the WSPU colours for the event (Tickner, 1987: 93). She explained: 'Purple, as everyone knows, is the royal colour. It stands for the royal blood that flows in the veins of every suffragette, the instinct of freedom and dignity…white stands for purity in private as well as public life…green is the colour of hope and the emblem of spring' (Hawksley, 2013: 144).

[39] There followed 'The Pageant of Women's Trades and Professions' in April 1909, 'From Prison to Citizenship' in June 1910 in association with the Women's Freedom League (WFL). At the procession in July 1910, with the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS), emblems of prison gates were carried (Tickner, 1987: 115-120). 'The Women's Coronation Procession' in June 1911 was the most spectacular of all the processions and one in which all the suffrage societies participated. The last major procession organised by the WSPU was the funeral of Emily Wilding Davison in June 1913 (Tickner, 1987: 139).

Fig. 42 '*Women's Sunday', Hyde Park* (1908)

According to Tickner, what the processions and pageants made evident was that women could work together, organise and were capable of rational argument and responsible employment. They could also deploy the trope of the decorative 'womanly' woman and the use of embroidery to their own ends as propaganda and become visible on the streets and in public spaces that were traditionally seen to be a male domain (Tickner, 1987: 58). Focusing on the visual aspects of the processions, Green states, '"Who wins the eye wins all" – as long as that eye had been properly trained to see' (Green, 1998: 7). However, in the aftermath of 'Women's Sunday' (1908) Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence wrote that, 'We have touched the limit of public demonstration…Nothing but militant action is left to us now' (*Votes for Women*, 02/07/1908: 280)

The historian Sandra Stanley Holton states that in the early days the distinction between 'militant' tactics associated with the WSPU and the 'constitutional' approach of suffrage societies such as the much larger National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (the NUWSS), formed in 1897 and led by Millicent Garrett Fawcett, was not so pronounced. Some groups such as the Writers' and Artists' Franchise League provided aid to both 'wings' of the struggle (Stanley Holton, 1996: 290). Stanley Holton maintains that by the end of 1908 the term 'militant' usually associated with

the WSPU had become ‘a complex category’, which might apply to the members of any of the suffrage organisations. She writes:

> It encompassed those prepared to endure violence and to go to prison for the cause, but who were not themselves willing to commit acts of violence; those increasingly designated ‘fighting’ or ‘warrior’ militants who were prepared to throw stones, and worse; and those somewhat unkindly described by one sceptic as ‘clapping militants’. These included many who were members of the National Union (NUWSS), but who also attended WSPU meetings and demonstrations, and contributed to its funds, while not themselves engaging in any direct confrontation with the authorities.
>
> (Stanley Holton, 1996: 292)

The embroiderers in this research: Cissie Wilcox, Janie Terrero, Nellie Taylor, Mary Aldham, Alice Jane Shannan Stewart Ker, ‘ASC’, ‘Grace’, and the women named on the embroideries would all be categorised by Stanley Holton as ‘fighting’ militants. These women anticipated going to prison and were not at odds with breaking the law and destroying property. They all fervently believed in direct action and were ardent supporters of the WSPU.

The historian, Laura E. Nym Mayall describes suffragette militancy as a ‘political idea’ and a ‘range of practices’ (Nym Mayall, 2003: 3). Thus, militancy may be undertaken at different times and places, in response to various events (Morley and Stanley, 1988: 153). Following Wilcox’s statement at her trial we have some inkling that her militancy developed as a response to her lived experiences. Morley and Stanley describe the importance of the relational networks of the women and how this affected their militant responses. They argue that it was largely reactive (Morley and Stanley, 1988: 153). They suggest that tactics were contingent, emergent and dependent on changing situations.

3.3. The Body Politic Under Threat

In March 1912, Gliddon wrote to her sister Gladys that she felt sorry for the syndicalist Tom Mann, the trade union leader convicted for urging troops not to fire on striking workers (Hansard, 20/03/1912: 35/1895-1897). She was sympathetic

towards Mann as a political prisoner and a captive.[40] Syndicalists, as with the WSPU with their slogan 'Deeds not Words', advocated 'Direct Action' by the workers for political as well as industrial ends (Powell, 1996: 118).[41]

Gliddon also wrote in her Holloway diary in April 1912, 'The coal strike is still on. Things have got very bad' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/8). She referred to the industrial unrest in Britain that had reached a high pitch in the years preceding the First World War, which has been termed the great 'Unrest'.[42]

Fig. 43 *Miners and Suffragettes* (*c.*1912)

From 1908, a series of massive strikes in the docks, coal and transport industries were manifested on the streets as demonstrations, public unrest and riot. In 1911, the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith asserted that he would 'employ all the forces of the crown'

[40] The syndicalist, Tom Mann (1856-1941) was one of the leaders of the 1889 London Dock Strike and active in many of the industrial disputes between 1910-1914 (Powell, 1996: 123).

[41] Janie Terrero's husband, Manuel wrote to the syndicalist Social Democratic Federation (SDF) journal *Justice* on more than one occasion indicating some sympathy (Letters in *Justice*, 21/08/1909; 18/03/1911).

[42] In, *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935) the historian George Dangerfield introduced this term to describe the proliferation of industrial disputes at this time.

to keep the railways open (Powell, 1996: 126). Large numbers of police and troops were deployed during 1910-1914 and in 1911 gunboats and armoured cars were sent to Liverpool where rioting was threatened (Powell, 1996: 126). Troops lethally fired on demonstrators in South Wales in 1910 and during the Liverpool and Llanelli riots of 1911 (Powell, 1996: 126-130). According to the historian David Powell 'New Unionism' showed that combination and concerted political pressure on the Government could produce concessions.[43]

George Dangerfield wrote in *The Strange Death of Liberal England* (1935) that there was a weakening of compromise and the social harmony of 'liberal England' by the end of the nineteenth century.[44] Increasing violence and political extremism showed a lack of respect for the rule of law and the institutions of government (Powell, 1996: viii). Powell writes of three more crises marking the time period. These were: the constitutional dilemma; the Irish question and nationalism; and the question of welfare provision to alleviate abject poverty (Powell, 1996: 1-9). The push to enfranchise women was thus positioned within a turbulent, political, economic and social time frame and alongside the political vulnerabilities of the Liberal government.

For the whole duration of the time it has taken to complete this research I worked on an embroidered cloth called *Entangled* (2015-2020). It explores the idea that the women were entangled in complex and intensive political, economic and social networks. The packages were threaded together and linked by a double loop that passed through the centre of each bundle. Like an umbilical cord passing through multiple textile navels this embroidery materialised human (and object) interconnectivity and that cloth and thread have relational qualities.

[43] The Trades Disputes Act of 1906 and the Mines Eight Hour Act of 1908 came about as the direct response to trade union pressure (Powell, 1996: 125).

[44] Dangerfield's accounts have been referred to as more journalistic than academic (Bew, 2012: 9-14).

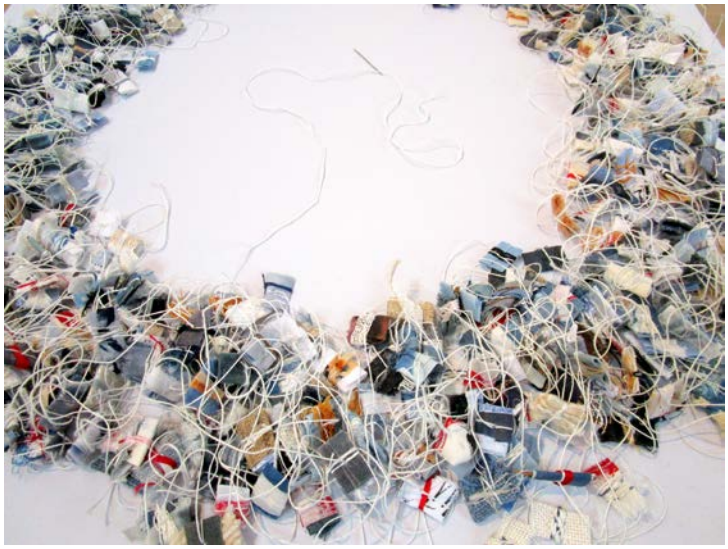

Fig. 44 *Denise Jones, 'Entangled'* (2015-2020)

Fig. 45 *Denise Jones, passing the needle through cloth, 'Entangled'* (2015-2020)

The work was inspired by a passage written by the historian Jill Liddington about the dissemination of the idea of women's suffrage. She states:

> It spread out into every town; it walked down every street; it entered every home; it was discussed – and argued over – across kitchen and dining tables up and down the land.
>
> (Liddington, 2006: xi)

3.4. Suffragette Bodies Under Threat

Suffragettes experienced physical violence. They were 'manhandled' by the police and the crowd – what the historian Martha Vicinus calls the 'pawing and pushing' of women when they entered public space – and faced the coercion of forcible feeding by the prison authorities in response to the hunger strike (Vicinus, 1985: 278). Suffragettes were also exposed to visual and textual misrepresentations in printed media and the wider popular culture. This 'deep-seated prejudice' particularly directed at militant suffragettes is described by the art historian Lisa Tickner as an enormous mass of material akin to David facing Goliath (Tickner, 1987: 162).

The battle for symbolic representation

In March 1912 Sir Almroth Wright, a distinguished and extremist anti-suffragist physician wrote a letter to *The Times* disparaging the idea of female enfranchisement and he placed the female corporeal body at the forefront of his argument. Wright championed the physiological and phrenological case levelled against women's suffrage and in doing so revealed deeply embedded cultural attitudes towards women in the early twentieth century. Wright's case was 'essentially' biological.[45]

He claimed that women experienced mental disorders that were linked to their sexuality and that militant suffrage was due to some inability to find a mate, writing:

> …No doctor can ever lose sight of the fact that the mind of woman is always threatened with danger from the reverberations of her physiological emergencies. It is with such thoughts that the doctor lets his eyes rest upon the militant suffragist. He cannot shut them to the fact that there is mixed up with the women's movement much mental disorder; and he cannot conceal from himself the physiological emergencies which lie behind. The recruiting field for the militant suffragists is the half million of our excess female population – that half million which had better long ago have gone to mate with its complement of men beyond the seas…
>
> (Wright, *The Times*, 28/03/1912: 7)

Wright asserted that women possessed bodies that were 'naturally' incapable of voting, unlike the biological attributes of their male counterparts. The zoologist

[45] See chapter four, section one.

Walter Heape also added, in his book *Sex Antagonism* (1913), that if women were given the vote, the mothers of the nation, the nation itself would degenerate and be usurped by 'unsatisfied' spinsters, 'these waste products of our Female population' (Heape 1913: 206-214 cited in Vicinus, 1985: 264). The historian Brian Harrison claims that the 'natural' biological argument of the body was the 'trump card' of those who opposed women's suffrage. It was 'the jewel in their *apologia*'. Harrison writes that what united most of the anti-suffrage gestures was this central belief, that a 'separation of spheres between the sexes had been ordained by God and/or by Nature', and that there was disgust at the ways in which suffragists might blur any clear distinction between the sexes (Harrison, 2013: 56). Tickner concurs, explaining how anti-suffragists bolstered by the anti-suffrage leagues formed in 1908, drew heavily on the 'natural' demarcation of women and men. The two sexes were seen to have different and particular virtues and temperaments and so must be accorded different activities, which included politics.

Anti-suffragists used these 'essential' differences to counter the suffrage argument, basing their reasoning on two positions: the 'right' to vote and the expediency of giving women the vote (Tickner, 1987: 154). Their stance claimed that most women did not want the vote, did not need it and would not gain by it. Women did not have the right to the vote because they were considered to be unfit due to their inferior capacities, their educational lack, physical frailty and their economic dependence on men. It was maintained that society would be harmed and put at risk by women voters because women would become diverted from their domestic duties regarding the home and family, the very fabric of the nation (Tickner, 1987: 154).

Following this argument, suffragists and especially militant suffragettes were considered to be 'unwomanly' and deviant and did not conform to what was culturally assigned and expected of them as 'normal', feminine women. In *Discipline and Punish*: *The Birth of the Prison*, (1977) the philosopher Michel Foucault explains how his concept of the disciplinary mechanisms of the prison system extended beyond the prison and into social institutions, social life and the law (Foucault, 1977: 298). Thus, for Foucault invisible disciplinary mechanisms, as networks of incarceration, reinforced cultural conformity and imposed 'normalization' on bodies.

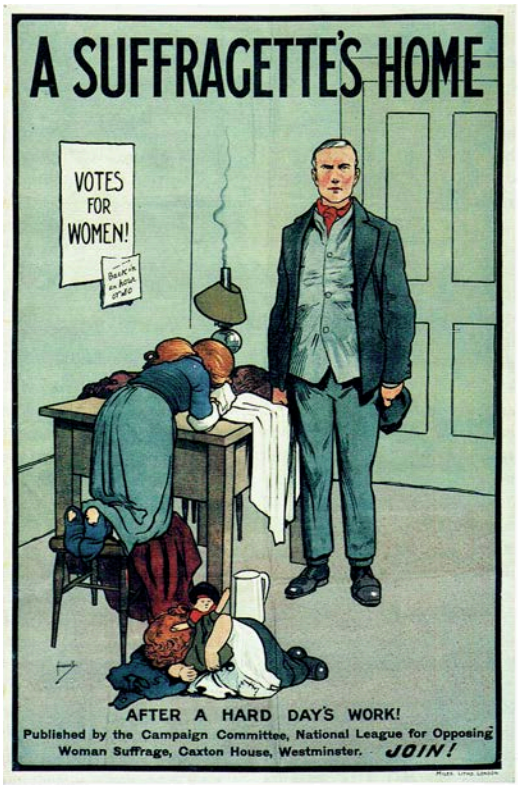

Fig. 46 '*A Suffragette's Home'* (1912)

For Foucault, the 'examined' deviant, in this instance the suffragette, could become a nonconforming delinquent, an illegality. Consequently, the suffragette could more easily 'fit' as a criminal rather than a political prisoner.

Fig. 47 '*Votes for Women*' ('*Always make room for a lady*') (1910)

Additionally, the suffragette, as 'the social enemy' may bring with her 'the multiple dangers of disorder, crime and madness' (Foucault, 1977: 300). Social deviants such

as suffragettes were thus dangerous to the body politic and as a consequence the power to punish, decry and criminalise her could become 'natural and legitimate' (Foucault, 1977: 301).

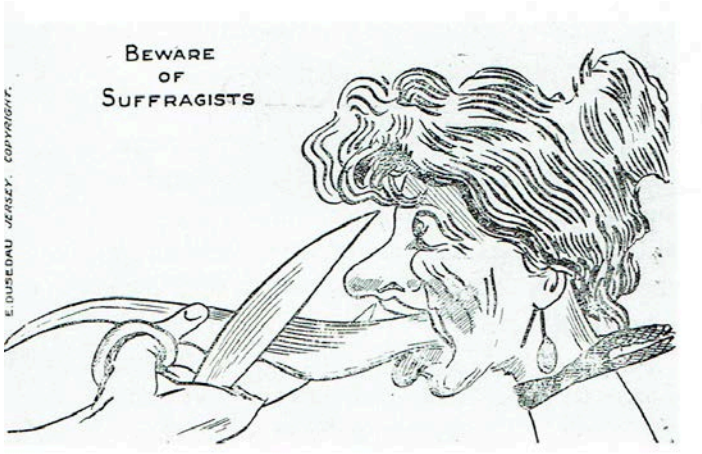

Fig. 48 '*Beware of Suffragists'* (1909)

Women who campaigned for the vote therefore met with intimidation and defamatory rhetoric in the print media and in popular culture as 'abnormal', delinquent and criminal women. Often caricatured, suffragettes were ridiculed as stereotypes: unsexed creatures; unmarriageable, vinegary, surplus spinsters; severe, dowdy man-haters; neglectful wives and mothers; and noisy, hysterical viragos. The militant suffragette became the butt of what Tickner (following Freud) regards as 'tendentious' jokes, that were outlets for repressions manifested on a plethora of postcards and in cartoons (Freud, [1905], 1976: 140, 147 cited in Tickner, 1987: 163). Tickner argues that hostile and obscene jokes had a rich sub-text that exorcised men's dislike and fear of women and that this was 'simultaneously impelled by an idealisation of feminine purity which was at its most intense in the Victorian and Edwardian period' (Tickner, 1987: 163).[46]

In turn, artists such as those from the Suffrage Atelier and the Artist's Suffrage League sought to re-present suffrage women. Tickner argued that suffrage

[46] The anthropological significance of purity, dirt and cleanliness are discussed further in chapter five, section six.

propaganda was a ‘discourse of opposition’, ‘an iconographic shorthand’ and that women had to negotiate this set of ‘inherited and interdependent categories: the womanly woman, the shrew, the slut, the strong-minded woman, the hysteric, “the girl of the period”, the “shrieking sisterhood”’ (Tickner, 1987: 167, 169). She claims that social ‘types’ were already laid down, such as the domineering and nagging wife and the embittered spinster (Tickner, 1987: 163-164). Thus, ‘No new “type” was needed for the militant in representation: she simply filled out an old one in a new way’ (Tickner, 1987: 164).

Suffragists unpicked, contested and to some extent appropriated these cultural invocations. The idea of ‘womanliness’ was redefined beyond the private and homely and taken into the public sphere. Notions of ‘womanliness’ by suffragettes were utilised as being for the public good. Newspaper reports of processions of women wearing ‘pure’ white dresses, carrying embroidered banners and massed bouquets thus mixed the representation of women as ‘womanly’ with their more purposeful political intent (Tickner, 1987: 166). And, this negotiation was especially at play in the use of embroidery. Used in public spaces for political ends, on suffrage banners and insignia, embroidery and embroidering were used to publicly signify the ‘womanly-woman’, synonymous with decoration and attraction, ‘meeting the eye’, ‘taking the eye’. Tickner places her emphasis on the battle for the visual representation of women in the early twentieth century. She claims that there was a contest for ‘hegemonic order’ in visual imagery and texts (Tickner, 1987: 161). There was thus an ideological and discursive battle where what it meant to be a woman: to be a ‘womanly’ woman, ‘new’ woman or to be a ‘modern’ woman was being culturally questioned, negotiated, shaped, reconfigured and played out in visual and textual representations rather than being materially played out or simultaneously voicing a quiet, tactile, material, bodily and even unconscious negotiation with this norm.

Fig. 49 '*Convicts, Lunatics And Women! Have No Vote For Parliament'* (*c*. 1908)

Physical 'manhandling'

The corporeal suffragette body was deeply implicated in the push for women's suffrage. It became both a contested political site and a political weapon. It met with violence as it entered the public (and predominantly male) forum and suffragettes in particular, faced physical assaults because of their advocacy of militancy.

The working-class suffragette and socialist Hannah Mitchell wrote in her autobiography of the vigorous early campaign, describing the assertive politics in Lancashire, where:

> …the fiercest verbal battles were fought every night of the week on every subject under the sun…large crowds became even larger when it was known that Suffragettes were holding a meeting there, which we often did …
>
> (Mitchell, 1968: 128)

Fig. 50 *Arrested Suffragette* (s.d.)

At the arrest of Christabel Pankhurst and Annie Kenney in October 1905, both women were bodily removed from the Free Trade Hall in Manchester. According to Sylvia Pankhurst, Christabel was 'thrust into an ante room' and 'pinioned' (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 189-190).[47] The incident registered the use of the suffragette body as propaganda for the cause.

Black Friday

By early 1910 the WSPU had called a 'truce' with the Government, suspending their disruptive activities in the hope that the cross-party Conciliation Bill of that year would enfranchise women. In November 1910, Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, stated that it there would be insufficient time for the complete passage of the Bill that session. The WSPU saw this as a refusal of facilities for the Bill and announced that a demonstration would take place when Parliament reconvened in November (Rosen, 2013: 137-138).

The political manoeuvrings of the Government regarding the Conciliation Bill were seen as a significant breach of faith by the WSPU. The women sent a deputation of over three hundred women to the House of Commons on the 18th November 1910 and were met with unprecedented violence in Parliament Square. In her statement at her

[47] Both women were classed as Third Division prisoners in Strangeways Gaol, Manchester and degradingly wore prison dress and ate only prison food (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 190).

trial for stone throwing in 1911 Wilcox drew attention to this violence. The day was later named 'Black Friday'. Wilcox noted the event because her powerlessness culturally, physically and politically had been made apparent. She also implied that the Government had orchestrated the police brutality towards the women.[48]

Wilcox had been arrested in the days after Black Friday and pleaded guilty to breaking windows at the Post Office in Wimpole Street, London valued at three pounds. She was ordered to pay damages and a fine of five pounds or, in default, to serve a month in prison (*Western Daily Press*, 25/11/1910: 10). This term of imprisonment was autobiographically recorded in embroidery on the Wilcox handkerchief as 'Holloway one month Nov 1910' alongside her sentence in 1911 for two months and her sentence in Newcastle, recorded as 'Newcastle Hunger Strike 3 days Jan 1910'.

[48] Manuel Terrero wrote that Wilcox and four others stayed at the Tererro's house after Black Friday and that Wilcox was the most injured. Dr. Jessie Murray and Janie Terrero both examined her (*Justice*, 18/03/1911: 6). The letter also indicates that the Terrero's already knew Wilcox.

Fig. 51 *Detail of the Wilcox Handkerchief* (January, 1912)

Fig. 52 *Detail of the Wilcox Handkerchief* (January, 1912)

Fig. 53 *Detail of the Wilcox Handkerchief* (January, 1912)

Wilcox's experiences were mirrored in other statements about police cruelty on Black Friday and the days that followed. Policemen were accused of sexual indecency, of tearing at under clothes as well as inflicting bruises and wounds. The journalist Henry N. Brailsford and Dr. Jessie Murray collected evidence in an official memorandum, from 'witnesses and sufferers' who testified to:

> …deliberate acts of cruelty, such as twisting and wrenching of arms, wrists and thumbs; gripping the throat and forcing back the head; pinching the arms; striking the face with fists, sticks, helmets; throwing women down and kicking

> them; rubbing a woman's face against the railings; pinching the breasts; squeezing ribs.
>
> (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 343-4)

The historian Caroline Morrell states that one hundred and thirty-five statements were included in the report of 1911 (Morrell, 1981: 34). Brailsford and Murray requested an inquiry into the conduct of the police but the Home Secretary, Winston Churchill (appointed when the Government took office in February 1910) refused. It was also asserted that orders had been given to make as few arrests as possible, which had resulted in the women's bodies being subjected to more rough treatment than usual (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 344). It was alleged that policemen from the East End of London had replaced the men who usually handled suffragette demonstrations (Rosen, 2013: 141). The battle continued for six hours and at the end of the day one hundred and fifteen women and four men were arrested (Morrell, 1981: 33).

There were further violent demonstrations the following week (Morrell, 1981: 34). Sylvia Pankhurst described seeing women return to Caxton Hall 'exhausted with black eyes, bleeding noses, bruises, sprains and dislocations' (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 343). Pankhurst also recorded that some of the women did not recover from their injuries and that for many the charges were dropped in view of the coming general election, thus avoiding police methods being exposed in court (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 344).[49] Only the women accused of window breaking or assaults on the police were proceeded against. At the end of the furore, Sylvia stated that only seventy-five women eventually went to prison for window breaking (including Wilcox) and ten women for striking a policeman in defence of other women. Only two women went on hunger strike (Rosen, 2013: 144).

Black Friday highlighted that violence directed towards the bodies of the women was escalating and that as a consequence WSPU tactics had to change. Thus, Sylvia Pankhurst stated, 'The violence of the police on "Black Friday" had caused an extension of window breaking as a painless method of securing arrest' (E.S.

[49] Emmeline Pankhurst's sister Mary Clarke was arrested and died two days after release on Boxing Day. Sylvia Pankhurst implied that her death was as a consequence of the violence of Black Friday (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 346).

Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 359). Thus, the shift towards breaking windows between 1911-1912 emerged as a way of dealing with prolonged attacks on the suffragette body and the need for speedier and less painful arrests.

Breaking windows not bodies

> Since we must go to prison to obtain the vote, let it be the windows of the Government, not the bodies of women, which shall be broken, was the argument; for a window smasher was at once taken quietly into custody.
>
> (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 309)

The first windowpanes had been broken in several government offices in 1909 (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 308-309). All of the thirteen women listed by Wilcox on the handkerchief, dated January 28th 1912 were arrested and sentenced in December 1911 for window breaking.[50] Wilcox formally and deferentially recorded the titles and surnames of the women and named the married women first. She wrote their names in pencil and then embroidered over the pencil lines. Wilcox and eleven of these suffragettes were discharged from Holloway on Saturday 10th February 1912 (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, 10/02/1912: 5).

Seven days later, at a speech to welcome the released suffragette prisoners, including Wilcox and those listed on her handkerchief, Emmeline Pankhurst declared that if, 'that time honoured political instrument [window-breaking] proved to be strong enough they would never use any other' and that, 'The argument of the broken window pane is the most valuable argument in modern politics' (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 372). Emmeline Pankhurst thought that more progress could be made using this 'simplest', 'easiest' and 'most readily understood' political tool than when suffragettes allowed the authorities to 'break our bodies' (*The Manchester Guardian*, 17/02/1912: 7). Sylvia Pankhurst recorded that this moment marked the turn to militancy.

A day earlier, the Liberal MP Charles E. Hobhouse had delivered a speech to an anti-suffrage meeting in Bristol, which ramped up the rhetoric of violence further and was

[50] See Appendix II.

seen to be particularly inflammatory by the WSPU. Sylvia called the speech 'a match to a fuse'. She claimed that Hobhouse had denied that there was a popular desire for women's suffrage and he belittled the women's efforts by contrasting them to the popular uprising for electoral reform in 1832 and 1867, which had led to the enfranchisement of more men (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 373).

Emmeline Pankhurst wrote to Ethel Smyth that 'On Friday there will be an unannounced affair, a sort of skirmish, in which some of our bad, bold ones will take part' (*Votes for Women*, 22/03/1912: 389). These words are echoed in the panel embroidered by Janie Tererro. She embroidered 'Mrs Pankhurst's "Bold Bad Ones"' and the signatures of twenty women (including herself) that she categorized as such.[51]

The window smashing of early March 1912 was orchestrated and dramatic. WSPU member Zoe Proctor stated that the women were given precise locations and exact times for the undertaking (Proctor, 1960: 100). Sylvia Pankhurst described motorcars driving to the country to obtain sharp flints, and meetings where 'would be' window breakers were furnished with hammers or black bags filled with flints (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 359). Katie Gliddon described her hesitation and trepidation. She was anxious about the shame that would be felt by her family as a result of her first arrest and therefore she adopted the pseudonym Katherine Susan Gray or Grey (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1).

On the first day, Friday 1st March, in the early evening, windows were broken in Piccadilly, Regent Street, Bond Street, Whitehall, Parliament Street, Trafalgar Square, Oxford Street, Regent Street and the Strand, as well as districts in Chelsea and other prominent thoroughfares in London. The women broke the windows of shops and cafés in the West End of London, as well as government minister's houses and government buildings, commercial and business offices and well-known department stores (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 373-4). Sylvia Pankhurst enthusiastically commented:

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[51] Terrero embroidered their forenames and surnames implying some familiarity. Some of the same suffragette names appear as those recorded on the Wilcox handkerchief indicating that less than a month later these women were re-arrested (see Appendix II).

> There is nothing like a hammer for smashing plate glass; stones, even flints, are apt to glance off harmlessly. The hammers did terrible execution. Shop assistants rushed out; traffic was stopped. Policemen blew their whistles and called the public to aid them. Damage amounting to thousands of pounds was effected in a few moments…In fashionable Bond Street few windows remained. Police reserves were hurried out, shopkeepers were warned all over London, police stations were besieged by complaints.
>
> (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 373)

Emmeline Pankhurst and two other women broke windows in Downing Street (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 373-374). The WSPU were referred to as Mrs Pankhurst's 'Maenads' (Rosen, 2013: 157). Window breaking continued on Monday 4th March in Knightsbridge (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 374).

Fig. 54 *Broken windows at Swan and Edgar Ltd., London* (1912)

The response by the courts of justice was to increase the terms of imprisonment for all concerned. Women were given sentences of four months, and longer for repeated convictions compared to sentences ranging from seven days to two months for similar

offences in November 1911. Hence, Gliddon expressed surprise on a postcard to her mother, writing '2 months hard labour' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/4/1).

For the suffragette and embroiderer Janie Terrero, it was the first time she had broken the law. She threw stones at four windows at Stedhall's, an engineering firm on Oxford Street causing damage valued at one hundred and fifty pounds (*Votes for Women*, 13/03/1912: 382). She wrote to her husband from court on the 2nd March 1912, '…Do not worry. I am quite all right, and we are to refuse bail, so I suppose I shall be sent to prison to-day' (Fulford, 1956: 250).

Fig. 55 *Janie Terrero* (*c*. 1912)

Window breaking set a precedent by extending the suffragette protest towards private property. The WSPU had never before attacked property that was not connected to the Government or the Liberal Party (Rosen, 2013: 154). Property in general (as opposed to people) thus became a legitimate target for the WSPU from 1911 onwards. Gliddon noted, 'But you must choose *a language understood* [my italics] by the enemy and the enemy has made property its God so we must attack property' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/1).

At her trial for window smashing the year before in 1911, Wilcox's colleague Vera Wentworth stated that, 'History has proved that this is the only possible way of procedure' and that compared with men demanding the vote in 1832 'we are mild in comparison' and Mrs Frances Rowe threatened, 'We may have to use stronger weapons… We are out to destroy other things than windows. We are against worn out ideas' (*Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 179).

3.5. Inside Prison

Between 1905 and 1914 over a thousand women went to prison for women's suffrage and thousands more were arrested.[52] Most were members of the WSPU and the less militant Women's Freedom League (WFL) (Purvis 1995: 103). The historian Martha Vicinus states that it is impossible to know exactly how many women went to prison in total as the police seized WSPU documents when it raided the headquarters in March 1912 (Vicinus, 1985: 355).

During the window-breaking campaign suffragettes were arrested and imprisoned *en masse*. The women were initially sent to Holloway Prison but some were transferred on, to Aylesbury Prison, Winson Green Prison, Birmingham, and Maidstone Prison on the 16th, 26th and 27th March so that the prison authorities could deal with the great influx of women and their disruptive behaviour.[53] These suffragettes were already aware of the brutish conditions of prison life and the experiences of those who had been imprisoned before them.

Holloway Prison was originally designed to imprison both men and women. It became an entirely female prison in 1902. The majority of the women inmates in the early twentieth century served sentences for prostitution or drunkenness, and recidivism was high (Camp, 1974: 61). It was designed as a 'New Model Prison' and based on cellular confinement and 'the radial principle, allowing maximum visibility

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[52] Members of the militant Men's Political Union for Women's Enfranchisement were also arrested and imprisoned. Hugh Franklin went on hunger strike and was forcibly fed in 1910, 1911 and 1913 (Crawford, 1999: 230). There was indignation at the forcible feeding of the suffragist William Ball and his committal to an asylum in 1912 (*Votes for Women*, 08/03/1912: 365).

[53] Documents TNA. HO.220.196/154 and TNA. HO.220.196/247 show that some of the women were separated and moved to other prisons.

and supervision by prison staff' (Camp, 1974: 17-20). It was a huge Victorian gothic structure 'in its most overpowering form' (Camp, 1974: 21).

Historian June Purvis researched in depth the experiences of suffrage women in prison between 1905-1914, with the focus on WSPU women (although not entirely) and included the experiences of suffragettes imprisoned in Holloway (Purvis, 1995). Purvis acknowledges the inconsistencies the women faced with regard to prison conditions and privileges. She recognises that the year of imprisonment and the place of imprisonment had a bearing on what the women underwent (Purvis, 1995: 107). She describes the demeaning physical circumstances of prison life and how the women's bodies were subject to reductive treatment. Life in prison assaulted the senses of the body and its affective capacities. Suffragettes felt their experiences there intensely and recorded them in numerous diaries and publications written in subsequent years. Testimonies document that the imprisoned suffragette (body) suffered and was angry, humiliated and subject to pain. The texts also reveal that imprisoned suffragettes experienced playfulness, joy, comradeship, loyalty and love.

Purvis writes that from admission, prison procedures stripped away the identity of the prisoners (Purvis, 1995: 107). In 1908, upon entering the prison the women lost their material possessions and their privacy. The women were called to silence by the wardresses, locked in reception cells and then sent to the doctor for examination. They were searched, ordered to undress and their clothes and possessions were removed. Details were taken and then the prisoners bathed in cubicles that were overlooked by the wardresses (Purvis, 1995: 107). In *Prison and Prisoners*: *Some Personal Experiences* (1914) Constance Lytton described the cubicles in Holloway as being like a cowshed and that the much abused dirty bath 'surpassed all expectations', the colour of it failing to conceal the scum in the crevices (Lytton, 1914: 76-77).

Suffragette prisoners in 1908 had worn the humiliating prison dress marked with the prison broad arrow, signifying that the cloth and their bodies were the property of the Government (Ash, 2010: 22-23). In 1912, Gliddon recorded that the broad arrow marked most of the objects in the prison. She wrote that 'The prison arrows on the sheets are a great joy to me. They are exactly like badly drawn swallows that fly by'. And humorously, 'The bath has not got an arrow on it. What an oversight on the part

of the Home Office!!' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/1). Suffragettes were fully aware of the humiliation of wearing the broad arrow and what it implied even though between 1911-1912 they were allowed to wear their own clothes. They were also aware that privileges could be rescinded. Dresses for the rest of the prisoners were hierarchically graded: Second Division prisoners wore coarse green serge dresses and Third Division prisoners wore brown dresses. All had white caps, blue and white check aprons, and a large blue and white handkerchief given once a week. Stockings were thick and shapeless and without garters. Purvis describes underclothing as 'course and ill fitting' (Purvis, 1994: 171).

Fig. 56 *Suffragette prisoners in Holloway Prison uniform* (c.1909-1910)

Each inmate had to wear a yellow badge made of wool felt and printed with the number of her cell and the letter and number of the block in the prison: thereafter, the prisoner was only known by her prison number (Purvis, 1994: 171). These numbers classified, homogenized and dehumanised the women.

In 1912, the prisoner ‘ASC’ embroidered her initials on a small shield made out of a stained woollen prison blanket.[54] The shield is similar in size to the regular prison badge. With this embroidery ‘ASC’ defiantly stated that she was not a criminal with a prison number but had a personal identity. Using purple and green threads to signify that she was a suffragette, she embroidered her initials ‘ASC’, the broad arrow and the date, 1912, as well as the edges of the badge to ensure that the cloth edge would not fray away.

Fig. 57 *Replica prison badge* (*c.*1909)[55]

[54] From the list of arrests Aileen Connor Smith was the only suffragette in Holloway with the initials ‘ASC’ in 1912, so it is likely that she made the embroidered shield. The middle letter was enlarged which may indicate that it was the first letter of her surname (TNA. HO.220.196/16).
[55] This badge is likely to be a copy of those worn in Winson Green Prison, Birmingham (MoL, s.d).

Fig. 58 *'ASC', the embroidered shield worked in Holloway Prison* (1912)

The cells were cramped and they separated the women from each other. Gliddon made drawings of her cell in 1912 showing the spare conditions and the limited space (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/6/1).

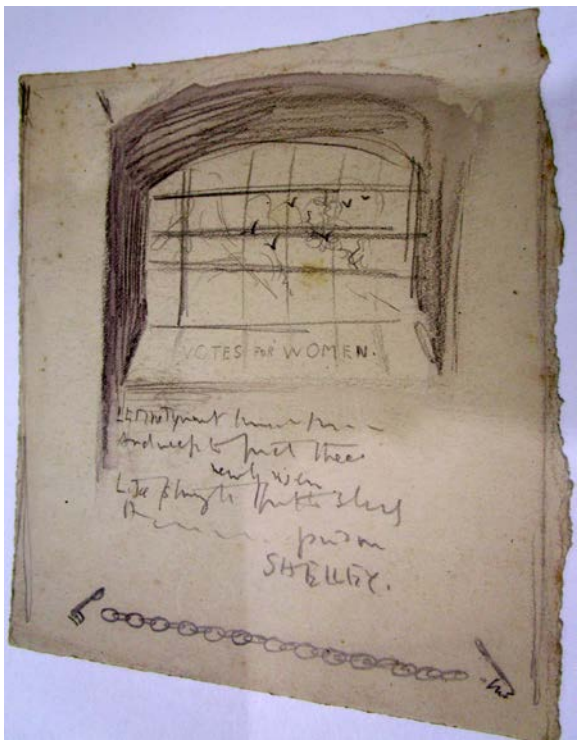

Fig. 59 *Katie Gliddon's drawing of her cell window in Holloway Prison* (1912)

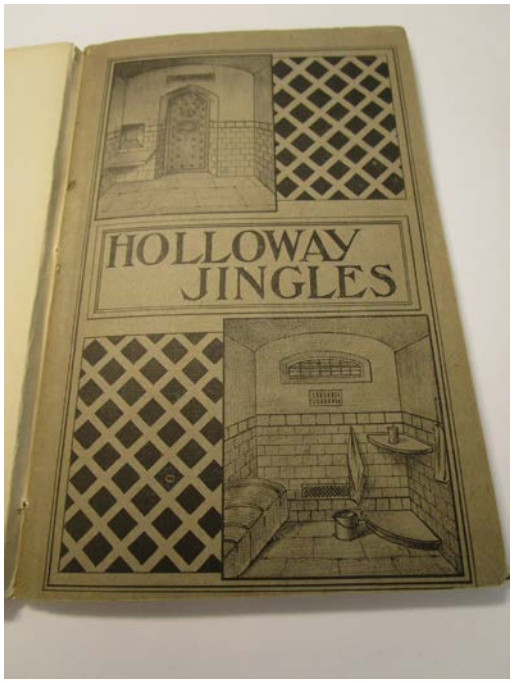

Fig. 60 *The front cover of 'Holloway Jingles' showing drawings of the cells* (1912)

During the first four weeks of imprisonment suffragettes spent most of their time in the cell apart from chapel, exercise and 'associated labour'.

Gliddon wrote home:

> I spend hours at my window…Being at the window means I am breathing good air as well as the chance of waving to them (Mrs Pankhurst, Mrs Pethick-Lawrence, Mrs Tuke or Mrs Marshall).
>
> (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1)

Suffragettes were kept apart for lengthy periods especially if they had broken the prison rules. In Holloway, prisoners were confined to their cells from the 3rd to the 5th March 1912 and were not allowed to go to chapel or to exercise until the fear of mutiny was over (TNA. HO.22.196/474). Afraid that this situation might become out of control the Governor of Holloway wrote, 'It must be remembered that in the case of women the powers of punishment for misconduct in Prison are very limited and amount to practically nothing more than close confinement' (TNA. HO.220.196/154). Gliddon wrote in her diary on the 7th March 1912 'They are only letting a few out at a time because they are afraid of mutiny' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/1).

Suffragettes complained of the cells being airless, suffocating and claustrophobic especially in the summer (Purvis, 1995: 109). In March 1912, Terrero wrote of the lack of ventilation in the cells and in the chapel and that it was through smashing the windows in the former, that sliding panes of glass were introduced (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.15/13).

According to Foucault modern prisons such as Holloway were constructed to keep prisoners in individual cells and under constant surveillance. Incarceration was used to isolate, divide, regulate and discipline the prisoner's body. Prison ordered space and spatially arranged prisoners within it. According to Foucault, the enforcement of solitude was 'the primary condition of total submission', the silence of isolation 'providing an intimate exchange between the convict and the power that is exercised over him [or her]' (Foucault, 1977: 237). The solitude and silence suffragette prisoners faced were thus meant to be corrective, allowing the prisoner time to reflect on her transgressions. Foucault asserts that this helps to render the prisoner docile. For Foucault, the modern prison and its carceral system is constructed in line with the 'Panopticon', an architectural blueprint created in the late eighteenth century by the philosopher and social theorist Jeremy Bentham. The prison building separated inmates and facilitated constant observation from a central tower. It was designed to prevent contact and to break dangerous communication between prisoners so that there was 'no danger of a plot, an attempt at collective escape' (Foucault, 1977: 200-201). In a letter dated 9th March to the Home Office, the Governor of Holloway James Scott specifically used the word 'combined', associated with trade unionism, writing, 'Some of them have threatened another combined disturbance for Sunday (tomorrow) the 10th instant [March 1912]' (TNA. HO.220.196/20).

Foucault emphasises the eye of supervision, inspecting and maintaining order in minute ways to keeping the prisoner under control. He writes that 'Visibility is a trap' (Foucault 1977: 200). Vicinus writes of 'isolation without privacy' in Holloway and states that warders could enter the cells at will and that this sense of powerlessness regarding privacy was particularly overwhelming for middle class women (Vicinus, 1985: 269). The suffragette Mary Ann Rawle wrote of the round hole of glass in the prison door with an iron cover that moved 'when they want to see what you are doing' (Rawle, 1907: TWL.7MAR/04/01). Between 1913 and 1914 suffragettes were placed

under surveillance in Holloway Prison without their consent when the Home Office commissioned undercover photographs to be taken in the yard during exercise.[56] Two of these photographs were of the embroiderers Mary Aldham and Mary Ellen (Nellie) Taylor.

Whilst in Holloway Prison, Aldham, a woman in her fifties, completed two embroideries, a sampler and small bag (Lockdales, 2016). Her embroidered signature also appeared on the Terrero panel, the West Hoathly handkerchief and the Women's Library signature cloth. Mary Ellen Taylor embroidered a white cotton bag for her brush and comb and she is referred to in Gliddon's diary. She was on E wing of the prison and not DX wing where Terrero worked her embroidery.

[56] These photographs were displayed in public buildings, art galleries and museums so that the women could be identified and attacks on artefacts prevented.

Fig. 61 *Surveillance photograph taken by New Scotland Yard of Mary Aldham* (1914)

Fig. 62 *Surveillance photograph taken by New Scotland Yard of Mary Ellen Taylor as Mary Wyan* (1914)

The Panopticon extended the power of surveillance beyond what was actually seen, and into the mind of the prisoner so that the inmate would never know when or if she or he was being looked at. Discipline was thus internalised in the mind of the prisoner and physical control was almost unnecessary. For Foucault, prison is therefore more than a building. It is a system, a mechanism of power and control. It produces 'homogenous effects of power' as it attempts to separate, classify, train and correct bodies. Foucault calls it a 'pure architectural and optical system' (Foucault, 1977: 205). It fixes, distributes, arranges and locates bodies in its geometry and relies on isolation, visibility and the gaze. This is important to note, as I argue that embroidering for prisoners was about tactility and deceiving the gaze, disrupting the regular system of the prison, and affirming the togetherness of the women.

Purvis writes that the suffragettes serving one month or less in the Second Division with hard labour were not entitled to any visitors or correspondence. In March 1912, numerous letters of complaint were sent to the Governor of Holloway from concerned relatives unable to see their family and friends (TNA. HO.220.196/474). Those with sentences exceeding one month were entitled to a visit at the end of the month, when no more than three friends could visit. Gliddon recorded in her diary a touching visit from her father explaining how isolated she had become from events happening outside of prison (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/4).

Suffragettes were given writing materials for correspondence after one month (Purvis, 1995: 109). Prior to this, prisoners wrote on slates with slate pencils given on admission (Purvis, 1995: 109). Slates would be wiped clean leaving no trace. Prisoners were thus visible to the authorial gaze yet simultaneously made invisible in terms of their own expression. Sylvia Pankhurst recalled this experience in her collection of poetry *Writ on Cold Slate* (1922). She implied that wiping the slate clean was like erasing her prison voice and any trace of her prison existence.

When suffragettes embroidered their names and those of others, as well as the details of their imprisonment, they were ensuring that they would not be so easy to expunge from the historical record. Embroidering through cloth might ensure that their stories could endure beyond their lifetime and could be retold.

Nellie Taylor wrote in a letter to her children:

> I might be able to do some fancy work. I could do a bit of work for each of you. When the Vote is won you might like to keep it in memory of this fight
>
> (Taylor, 1912: TWL.9/26/002)

Terrero was also fully aware that she was documenting history on her panel. She specifically recorded the time, place and events for posterity and surrounded her embroidery with commemorative ribbon in suffragette colours. In February 1913, Terrero wrote to May Billinghurst, a disabled woman who had been subject to forcible-feeding, 'Your name will go down in history and I am very proud to think I once shared prison with such a brave woman' (Terrero, 1913: TWL. ALC/9/29/50).

Terrero may have purposefully taken the cloth and threads into Holloway with this intention. It is also possible that Terrero had already embroidered the central motif of the panel before her imprisonment. The names of the twenty suffragettes, who were forcibly fed between 13th and 19th of April 1912, are squeezed into the space above the central motif of violets and were probably added after it had been embroidered.[57] In July 1911, with thanks for the 'At Home' held at her house, Terrero had received a letter from Constance Lytton mentioning 'the collection of prisoners' signatures'. This indicates that Terrero already had a similar project in mind before she was imprisoned in 1912. Lytton wrote, 'I have a frilly conscience about a little parcel I noticed on [your] dressing table – marked "for signatures of prisoners only" or some such appeal' (Lytton, 1911: TWL. ALC/9/21/19).

[57] Goggin also acknowledges this (Goggin, 2009a: 24).

Fig. 63 *The 'At Home' in the Terrero's garden at Rockstone House, Pinner* (July, 1911) [58]

In a letter home, Alice Ker asked for her partially embroidered tablecloth to be sent to her along with crewel needles, linen thread and a book about embroidery stitches (Ker, 1912: TWL.9/29/62). She later added 'I must have some handiwork. I can't read all the time' (Ker, 1912: TWL.9/29/65).

Foucault claims that prisoners were disciplined so that they would become docile and useful (Foucault, 1977: 137). For Foucault, the discipline imposed was a 'political anatomy of detail', a 'detailed political investment of the body' and a 'new micro-physics of the body' where small bodies, small movements, small actions are controlled (Foucault, 1977: 139). Small regulatory procedures such as the cleanliness inspection, punishment of minor offences and perpetual assessments kept the deviant in line and enforced hierarchical, vertical power relations (Foucault, 1977: 238, 294, 300). Foucault's description of small regulatory acts in prison that keep the body in-line can be juxtaposed alongside the small acts of embroidering, that were worked horizontally, disrupted the disciplinary grid of the woven cloth and made use of the needle, a very small tool, and short lengths of thread.[59]

[58] Manuel Terrero presided and is seated to the left.

[59] The significance of the grid of cloth and the micro spaces between warp and weft are discussed further in chapter five, section three.

Foucault emphasises the importance of examination, to lay prisoners open to the power of the controlling gaze in the smallest of ways and on a daily basis (Foucault, 1977: 187). Prison routine emphasised inspection and cleaning, but not necessarily the cleanliness of the body. Gliddon wrote, 'I am envied by all in Holloway for I have had two baths this week!' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1). There was usually a weekly bath, a daily visit to chapel and daily exercise of an hour in the prison yard. The electric light was controlled from outside and turned off at eight pm (Purvis, 1994: 171). Purvis writes that each prisoner was provided with a small book on 'Fresh Air and Cleanliness', a tract entitled 'The Narrow Way' and the Bible, a prayer book, and a hymnbook (Purvis, 1994: 171). Gliddon noted that if prisoners were considered well behaved they were allowed library books or books from home after the first month. Despite this, she smuggled her copy of Shelley's poetry into her cell on admission (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/1).

Foucault describes how work formed an important role in correcting the offender, writing, 'it is a principle of order and regularity'. Work would train, reform, shape and rehabilitate the prisoner's body. He writes that '...it bends bodies to regular movements' and it is 'a remedy against the wanderings of his [her] imagination' (Foucault, 1977: 242). It establishes rhythms and the division of time (Foucault, 1977: 149-151). Work-time thus 'penetrates the body' (Foucault, 1977: 152). Work would enable an, 'instrumental coding of the body' as it broke down gesture into usefulness (Foucault, 1977: 153). For Foucault, enforced work is therefore like a 'religion of the prisons' as penal labour would turn prisoners into docile workers (Foucault, 1977: 242-3). It helps to normalize dangerous deviancy. Delinquent persons such as suffragettes could be amended and made 'normal' through work. Foucault writes 'That is why discipline fixes; it arrests or regulates movements; it clears up confusion; it dissipates compact groupings of individuals wandering the country in unpredictable ways; it establishes calculated distributions' (Foucault, 1977: 219).

For the imprisoned women, enforced work or 'hard labour' took the form of needlework, or more specifically utilitarian sewing and knitting. Purvis writes that women sentenced with hard labour were expected to undertake 'associated labour', which included sewing garments such as nightgowns and knitting socks (Purvis,

1995: 109). Gliddon wrote that they sewed undergarments for Borstal boys (Gliddon, 1965: TWL.7KGG/1/8). Of this sewing, which she termed 'needlework', she wrote, 'All of the hard labour people had to do needlework. I hate needlework. I resolved to do it in the letter and not in the spirit' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/1). She described how the women sewed in doorways on different balconies (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/1). However, she requested that her embroidery should be sent in from home, not equating enforced prison needlework with her own embroidery. Terrero also noted that an elderly magistrate or visiting commissioner spoke with the women as they 'all sat at needlework' indicating that they were out of their cells at the time and would have had the opportunity to furtively communicate (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.15/13).

Thus, prison needlework was regarded as corrective work for women prisoners. It might order and control messiness, wildness, nomadic and dangerous collective leanings and it would nurture compliancy and utility. Prison needlework was enforced labour for the women, whereas their own embroidering was a voluntary activity. Additionally, the women could defiantly work at their embroidery without necessarily drawing attention to it when occupied at prison needlework in their cells or when they gathered together to sew. The imposition of prison needlework also helps to explain how the embroiderers had access to needlework tools such as needles and scissors.

The accounts of everyday prison life emphasise the assault on the senses of the women. They were aware of the noise of prison: the slamming of prison doors, the rattle of feeding tins, of women screaming and crying, and of banging on walls to communicate. A poem written in *The Hammerers' Magazine*, from Winson Green Prison, Birmingham drew attention to the incessant noise of the prison (Vicinus, 1985: 273). The women ate poor food. Gliddon wrote to her sister Gladys that 'We get a prison apple a day but they are not up to much' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1). She noted that 'The people who don't have any food smuggled in look so ill. But I think everyone in this wing [E wing of Holloway] will manage to get someone else to get things for them' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1). The smell of prison was also referred to, and the lack of hygiene. In a petition to the Governor, Leonora Tyson complained that the lavatories were 'entirely inadequate

and indecent' because of the lack of privacy they afforded (TNA. HO.220.196/104). The women would have been sick in their cells after forcible feeding and slops would be kept inside the cell. The feeding apparatus was often used from one woman to the next without being cleaned (Purvis, 1994: 178). The women would be aware of the harmful physicality of touch by the warders and prison doctor during forcible feeding. Gliddon described her joy at wearing a colourful blouse that broke the dull visual monotony of the prison (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1). She described how she longed to see the natural beauty of the world outside, writing 'Being here was just like not existing' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/6). She also intimated that her prison experiences were a battle for her mental health writing:

> If anyone discovers the book and pencil I shall die of sorrow. It is my only chance of getting through these days at all.
>
> (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/1)

I made the embroideries *A Dark Bloom* (2015-2020), *The Spirit Level* (2015) and *The Waning of the Light* (2017) in response to the physical and emotional experiences of the suffragettes in prison. *A Dark Bloom* consists of a series of bag-like containers. The 'bloom' of ink appears like mould on the surfaces of the cloths and alludes to the bloom of violence that was ever present for the women. It also references the embroidered rose bloom on the front of the Wilcox package. Some of the inked surfaces are embroidered with dark threads that pass into and out of the cloth. I roughly cut open one of the containers and let shrivelled dead rose petals spill out.

I thought that Wilcox was probably desperate to read a letter from outside and that the front of her package (an embroidery of a vibrant red rose) would have masked her anxieties. I wanted to connect this rose to the withering darkness of prison life, especially the fear of the hunger strike. Through making this work I became aware of the hopes, fears and anxieties felt by the women that were conveyed through their embroidering. From my practical responses to the Wilcox package I felt that Wilcox was afraid, lonely and felt powerless, and yet was proudly defiant.

Fig. 64 *Denise Jones, 'A Dark Bloom'* (2015-2020)

Fig. 65 *Denise Jones, 'The Spirit Level'* (2015)

I printed black stripes on fine linen cloth for the work *The Spirit Level* (2015) thus associating the cloth with the stripes of imprisonment (Ash, 2010). I embroidered threads loosely through the cloth in fine thread as if they were unravelling. I noted the tight finishing of threads on the suffragette embroideries and how the women had ensured that the threads would not become undone. Metaphorically, the threads I embroidered on this work referred to the fear of pain and the potential for psychological 'undoing'. I hung the cloth on a rose briar, partly because the Wilcox package had a red rose embroidered on one of the pieces of cloth and partly because the thorns referenced the pain of the body in contact with the briar. A viewer asked if the cloth had religious significance because of the thorns at the top of the work. It was suggested that the briar had inadvertently referenced the fervour of the suffragettes and Christian martyrdom. I was also told that the cloth resembled a wall, with the briar conjuring the idea of a barbed wire at the top.

Fig. 66 *Denise Jones, detail of 'The Spirit Level'* (2015)

The Waning of the Light (2017) was made in response to a speech to suffragettes, given by Constance Lytton in January 1910 at the Queen's Hall, London. Lytton referred to two women still in Walton Gaol, Liverpool waiting to be forcibly fed as the light waned.

She stated:

> …there are two women in the prison from which I come, who are now being treated like that; two women who, as I did, are watching the waning of the light, and knowing that when the light fades it is only a question of minutes before this torture – one can call it by no other name – is inflicted on their helpless bodies at the bottom of a prison cell, where there will be no witnesses and no appeal.
>
> (Lytton, *Votes for Women*, 04/03/1910: 292)

I embroidered the cloths to recognise the empathy between Lytton and these women. The work consisted of three embroidered cloths, which slot together. I felt that I was repetitively conjuring a primitive animal-like darkness as I embroidered, drawing black threads through the cloth towards myself. Lytton used dark-light metaphors to emphasise that it was in the 'dark and hidden places where black deeds were done' (Jorgensen-Earp, 1999: 136). I used black thread through cloth to convey this bleak powerlessness and the shadowy unseen places to which she referred.

Fig. 67 *Denise Jones, 'The Waning of the Light'* (2017)

Through embroidering these works, I posed the idea that embroidering might relate to concerns with their emotional and mental wellbeing, with psychically becoming 'undone' and 'unravelling'. I had read in Gliddon's letters home where she wrote that she 'was not depressed at all' thus indicating that there was some expectation that she could be (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/4/1).

Purvis acknowledges that the social class of suffragettes had a significant bearing on their treatment in prison (Purvis, 1995: 118). Incidents highlighted that working-class women were treated more harshly and prison rules were circumvented in their treatment. Two working-class women who were members of the WSPU, Selina Martin and Leslie Hall, were forcibly fed in Walton Gaol, in December 1909 (Purvis, 1994: 176). Sylvia Pankhurst wrote that the doctor told Leslie Hall that she was 'mentally sick' and that feeding her was 'like stuffing a turkey for Christmas' (E. S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 329). Constance Lytton cited this case as the motivation for disguising herself as a working-class woman named Jane Warton in January 1910, in the most well known case of class differentiation regarding the treatment of suffragettes in prison (Lytton, 1914: 234). In Walton Gaol as Jane Warton, Lytton told of how neither her heart had been examined nor her pulse taken before she was forcibly fed. She compared this to a previous imprisonment in Newcastle Prison, where as Lady Constance Lytton, these procedures had been undertaken.

Fig. 68 *Constance Lytton as Jane Warton* (1909)

Unknown working-class women without significant connections like Wilcox were more vulnerable than women of social standing. The prominent WSPU leaders were also treated differently since the death of these women in prison would afford them instant martyrdom. Both Emmeline Pankhurst and Emmeline Pethick Lawrence were given preferential treatment as First Division prisoners in Holloway Prison in 1912. Emmeline Pankhurst was never forcibly fed although she came close to this in Holloway in June 1912. Emmeline Pethick Lawrence was forcibly fed in a cell close by (E. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 390).

Terrero was also acutely aware of the injustices felt by working-class women. As spokeswoman for DX wing in Holloway Prison and before the second hunger strike in June 1912 (when the women again demanded to be classed as political prisoners in the First Division) Terrero recorded:

> It is shameful to put our leaders in the First Division and leave us out. We are *all just women together* [my italics], and ought to have the same treatment for the same offence.
>
> (Terrero, 1912: SFC.57.116/39)

The women also experienced prison life in different ways depending on their age, their physical and mental capabilities and their circumstances and duties outside of prison: as employees, mothers, daughters, wives and friends (Purvis, 1995: 113). Older women might have found the assaults on their bodies more keenly and more tiring whilst younger women might have found coping with menstruation difficult. The women worried about their lives outside of the prison and were anxious about their families, particularly their young children (Murphy, 2020). Nellie Taylor wrote in a letter home, 'When you are in a cell, no one to talk to, every little worry grows until it seems ten times the size' (Taylor, 1912: TWL.9/26/015). Women who worked were anxious about their employment being kept open and loss of income. Gliddon wrote in a letter home that she was pleased that her teaching job was still available, as she didn't expect that her sentence would be as long as two months (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1). The suffragette and embroidery instructress Ann Macbeth wrote to the Glasgow School of Art that she was too unwell to resume teaching because of imprisonment and forcible feeding (Macbeth, 1912: Glasgow School of Art

Archives). The Glasgow School of Art were fully supportive, allowing her to return to work on her recovery (Rae, 2016: 79).

The anomalous 'political status'

> We keep on agitating about our privileges as political prisoners. Dr Garrett Anderson says we are demanding our rights and instead we are being given chocolate creams.
>
> (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1)

Between 1905 and 1914 the prison system evaded giving suffragettes political status and this had a direct bearing on their treatment. The women claimed political status for politically motivated offences but this was inconsistently translated into prison procedures. For the criminologists and academics Radzinowicz and Hood, this poses two questions: were suffragettes to be regarded as political prisoners like the Fenians and Chartists and given the status of the First Division in prison; and who should decide what regime they should be subjected to once in prison, the courts or the Home Office (Radzinowicz and Hood, 1979: 1458)? They state that the difference in the treatment of prisoners in the Second and Third Division was small, but that between the Second and First Division was enormous (Radzinowicz and Hood, 1979: 1459). Due to the persistence of their offences and despite the growing demands by suffragettes for political status, stipendiary magistrates increasingly sent suffragettes to the Second and Third Division (Radzinowicz and Hood, 1979: 1461, 1467). The suffragettes, along with convicted Fenians, were thus faced with the ambiguity of what constituted a political offence and what treatment in prison was appropriate for such an offence. By February 1909 the women were making demands such as: no searching, exercise in pairs, and the right to talk at exercise (Radzinowicz and Hood, 1979: 1467). By July 1909 the women in Holloway refused to be searched or wear prison clothes and demanded political status in the First Division, forcing the Home Office to abandon the strip search. 'Some were left covered only by a blanket' and there was a riot with the prison Commissioners wishing to prosecute those showing the most violence – 'biting, scratching, kicking and punching'. It was at this point that the women first went on hunger strike and as a result thirty-seven women were released in September 1909.

Privileges for imprisoned suffragettes were improved when Winston Churchill, as Home Secretary, instituted Rule 243a in March 1910. Terrero claimed that Churchill was responsible for what occurred on Black Friday and that consequently he was 'bound to do something for the suffragettes' (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.15/13). The new rule allowed for 'ameliorations' of prisoners' conditions in the Third and Second Divisions, dependent on their type of conviction and 'good' character. Using the discretion of the prison authorities Churchill effectively improved the conditions of women whilst still denying the women political status as First Division prisoners. Whilst prison conditions improved with regard to the admission procedures – most notably not enforcing bathing and the allowance of the prisoners own clothes – for some it was still arbitrary regarding what was allowed and not allowed.

Home Office files indicate that due to the overwhelming intake of suffragettes into prison in March 1912 the privileges for prisoners needed to be re-clarified and standardised (TNA. HO.220.196/247). Terrero's writings about her experiences in Holloway and the contentious application of regulations in the prison give some insight into the grounds for the hunger strikes and the resultant forcible feeding in April and June 1912. After her release from Holloway on medical grounds on the 25th June, Terrero wrote a paper for Kilburn WSPU describing the beginning of the April hunger strike and prison irregularities regarding privileges:

> When the judge refused to place us under rule 243a and when after sending our petitions to the Home Office Mr McKenna [the Home Secretary], after keeping us a fortnight also refused, there only remained one thing to be done. We had been told we were not to have any privileges for two months, and this we had no intention of putting up with. We all felt the strike was in the air, and quite suddenly one day on April 13th we heard our comrades at Aylesbury were hunger striking. I shall never forget it! Some of the younger ones began immediately to hunger strike, but most of our members decided to begin on Tuesday April 16th. I took Saturday night to consider the matter and then threw in my lot with the young ones.
>
> (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.87/62)

What Terrero indicated is that the status of suffragettes in prison in 1912 was still inconsistent. They were neither political prisoners and in the First Division, nor were they in their own estimation common criminal prisoners. They were situated 'in-between'. Some suffragettes were sentenced with hard labour and were required to

work whilst others were not. And, if the women did not conform immediately to the discipline of the prison, privileges were not awarded. In early March 1912 Charlotte Marsh had all privileges rescinded because of her behaviour.[60]

On hearing about the hunger strike in Aylesbury Prison Terrero felt that this was the only way to achieve their demands. She began her hunger strike the next day hiding her food for three days to 'baffle the authorities' and prevent victimisation. Forcible feeding began on Wednesday 17th April (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.15/13). She indicated that she did not take the decision lightly, and wrote in another account of her prison experiences:

> This idiot Mc Kenna, for I can call him nothing else, chose to do away with that rule, and instead of a visit once a fortnight, a letter once a fortnight, fresh food if desired sent in daily, exemption from all work etc. he made a set of rules by which he doubtless thought to break down our spirit, instead of which, we broke down his rules.
>
> (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.15/13)

In a letter to *The Pinner Gazette* in May 1912, Janie's husband, Manuel Terrero declared that the withdrawal of privileges 'seemed a needlessly cruel and vindictive, not to say mean, deprivation of the privileges accorded under the Churchill regulations, and for which the women had fought so hard, and suffered so severely a few years ago' (M. Terrero, 1912: SFC. File Group A.Z6084). This letter and Janie Terrero's own accounts praised the effectiveness of the hunger strike as a powerful political weapon. She wrote of the agency it afforded stating:

> To those of you who intend to be actively militant, I want to say this; you cannot imagine how strong you feel in prison. The Government may take your liberty from you and lock you up, but they cannot imprison the spirit. The suffragette, too, is armed with the strongest of all weapons: I mean the hunger strike, and by showing absolute determination and fearlessness she must in the end win. You can have no idea how the authorities dread the hunger strike. And may I here say that everything we won, including our ultimate release, was won by hunger striking.
>
> (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.15/13)

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[60] She was subsequently removed to Aylesbury Prison as she was thought to be a ringleader (TNA. HO.220.196/247).

What followed from the hunger strike in April 1912 was the reinstating of some of the previously denied privileges such as visits once a month and a letter once a fortnight on the condition that food was taken 'properly'. A further announcement allowed a weekly parcel of food weighing not more than eleven pounds for each prisoner. Terrero continued with the hunger strike until it was confirmed that the strike at Aylesbury had been called off. The MP for Bow and Bromley, George Lansbury, who was sympathetic to the cause, visited Holloway and was instrumental in drawing it to a conclusion (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.15/13).

A second hunger strike in Holloway began on Wednesday 19th June over the request for the rank and file to be placed in the First Division alongside their leaders. Terrero acted as a spokeswoman for the women's demands as early as the 14th June (Terrero, 1912: SFC.57.116/39). Her petition to the Governor asserted a renewed belligerency. She recorded:

> There was a time when we asked for Rule 243a and we only left off hunger striking because we believed we were under that Rule – now we wouldn't look at it, so it is useless for the Government to offer us that – what is the matter with this Government? …Is it mad, or drunk, or both? They pretend to be democratic and yet there is all this picking and choosing, I don't understand it at all.
>
> (Terrero, 1912: SFC.57.116/39)

3.6. Hunger Striking and Forcible Feeding

Many of the women in Holloway between 1911 and 1912 did not go on hunger strike. Gliddon wrote that she did not intend to participate in the hunger strike and indicated that others were not doing so. However, she did hint at being expected to take part (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/ 4/1; TWL.7KGG/1/6).

According to the historians Kevin Grant and Martin Pugh two hundred and forty women went on hunger strike in British and Irish prisons prior to the war (Grant, 2011: 137). Terrero's embroidery accounts for twenty of these women (including herself).

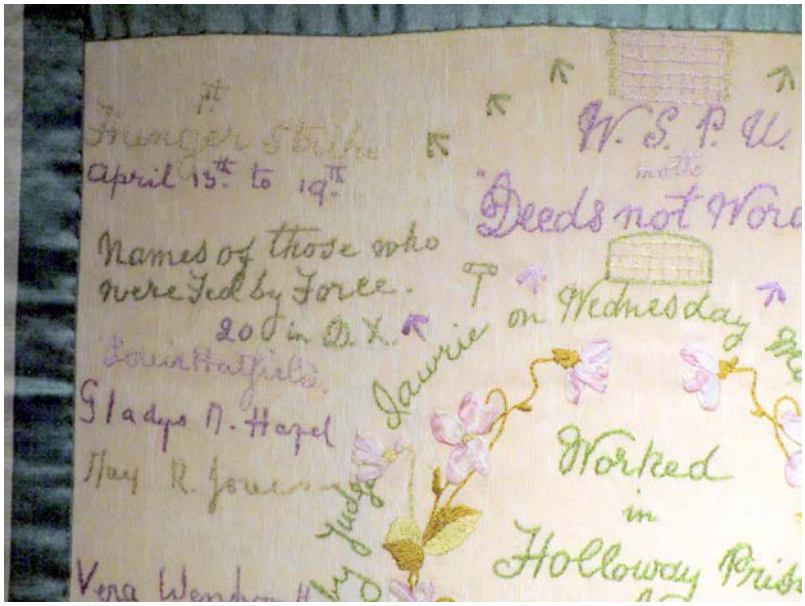

Fig. 69 *Detail of the Terrero Panel* (1912)

The political theorist Amanda Machin writes that the hunger strike involves a 'peculiar form of violence, a violence that is seized from the state by an individual who then wields this violence upon themselves' (Machin, 2016: 175). It is a 'self-directed violence' (Feldman, 1991: 220 cited in Machin, 2016: 175). It uses the body as a weapon and can be adopted for highly strategic and rational reasons because of its affective value (Machin, 2016: 157). It deftly interiorises the violence of the opponent within the body of the protestor (Machin, 2016: 157). For Machin, it highlights, demarcates, delineates the concept of victim and oppressor, the non-violent and the violent on and in the body and it places embodiment at the heart of politics. The hunger strike therefore made present the suffering political body of the suffragette. It 'challenges [challenged] the prioritisation of deliberative discussion over embodied protest' (Machin, 2016: 157). The body thus creatively contributed to political protest and it became an important form of resistance 'for those who lack[ed] vote, voice and status' such as the suffragettes (Sutton, 2007: 143 cited in Machin, 2016: 159-161). For Machin, through the hunger strike the corporeal body could serve as a political actor as well as a political text. The sociologist, Fran Lisa Buntman writes that:

> Hunger strikes…are very much about power. It's the attempt of powerless people to exert some power over their circumstances, and states don't like – governments don't like people contesting their power, particularly if they're

> prisoners who they want to have complete control over…Part of the point of imprisoning people is to have control over their bodies, and the last thing the administration wants is for their detainees to take that power back.
>
> (Buntman, 2013)

Hunger striking therefore indicates that all verbal communication is failing, leaving a space to be filled by the 'language' of the body that exceeds discourse. It is in this space that an opening for considering suffragette embroidering can be made, if we regard embroidering to be an embodied 'language' that expresses the sensing-feeling bodies of the suffragettes.[61]

Machin claims that there are three ways in which the hunger strike is politically significant: it facilitates non-verbal communication; it embodies collective identifications; and it disrupts the dominant order. The body is used to communicate both rational and non-rational meanings and affects. For suffragettes, alienated from the wider public because of their militancy, the hunger strike helped them to galvanise a strong political and collective identity (Machin, 2016: 172). Machin states that the hunger strike also disrupts the dominant order because the body fails to be a docile subject. It breaks down 'the technology of normalisation' of Foucault's model and undermines 'rational deliberative discussion over passionate embodied protest' (Machin, 2016: 160).

For suffragettes, whose bodies were decried as being weak and disorderly, the corporeality of the hunger strike carried a powerful political message. It showed that the female body had a political physicality to be reckoned with. It also helped to stoke the rhetoric of the stoic and organised female rebellion against tyranny. It helped suffragettes to use to their advantage the received view that women were self-sacrificing, altruistic and self-abnegating. This narrative also fuelled the idea that that the women were martyrs for the greater good, tapping into Christian sentiments of sacrifice, purity and spiritual transcendence.

[61] See chapter four, section one for a further discussion of the concept of 'embodiment'.

In September 1909, the Government instituted the forcible feeding of imprisoned suffragettes on hunger strike in order to curtail their early release. It was already in use in mental asylums and with the incapacitated (Miller, 2013: 229).

According to Purvis the forcible feeding of suffragettes who refused food 'became common practice over four and a half years until the outbreak of war in August 1914, when the WSPU ceased all militant action' (Purvis, 1994: 169). In a graphic account of forcible feeding, written in 1909, Mary Leigh described the power relations at play regarding the ownership of her body:

> I then said: 'I refuse, and if you force food on me, I want to know how you are going to do it.'
> He said: 'That is a matter for me to decide.'
> I said he must prove I was insane, and he could not perform an operation without the patient's consent.
>
> The feeding by the mouth I described as an operation, and the feeding by the tube as an outrage…I was then surrounded…
>
> (Leigh, 1909)[62]

Leigh indicated that different methods were used: the feeding cup; and the rubber tube, which passed through the mouth or the nose and was painful and intrusive. The latter often involved the use of a gag inserted into the mouth so that liquid could be poured into a funnel and tube and then into the throat and stomach. Sometimes an anti-vomiting agent would be used (Vicinus, 1985: 270-271). Prisoners were left with sores, nausea, cramps and headaches (Vicinus, 1985: 271). The other prisoners with Leigh complained of 'mouths prised open, lacerations, phlegm, vomiting, pain in various organs, loss of weight, and so on' (Rosen, 2013: 124).

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[62] The case of Leigh's forcible feeding was taken to court. It was claimed that the Home Secretary and officials of the prison had 'resorted to torture' (Rosen, 2013: 124). One hundred and sixteen doctors signed a petition against forcible feeding and two journalists H.N. Brailsford and H.W. Nevinson resigned from the *Daily News* in protest at the newspapers support of the procedure (Brailsford and Nevinson, 04/12/1909 cited in Rosen, 2013: 125). Leigh had been 'handcuffed for upwards of thirty hours, her hands fastened behind her during the day and in front with the palms outward at night. Only when the wrists had become intensely painful and swollen were the irons removed' (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 318-319).

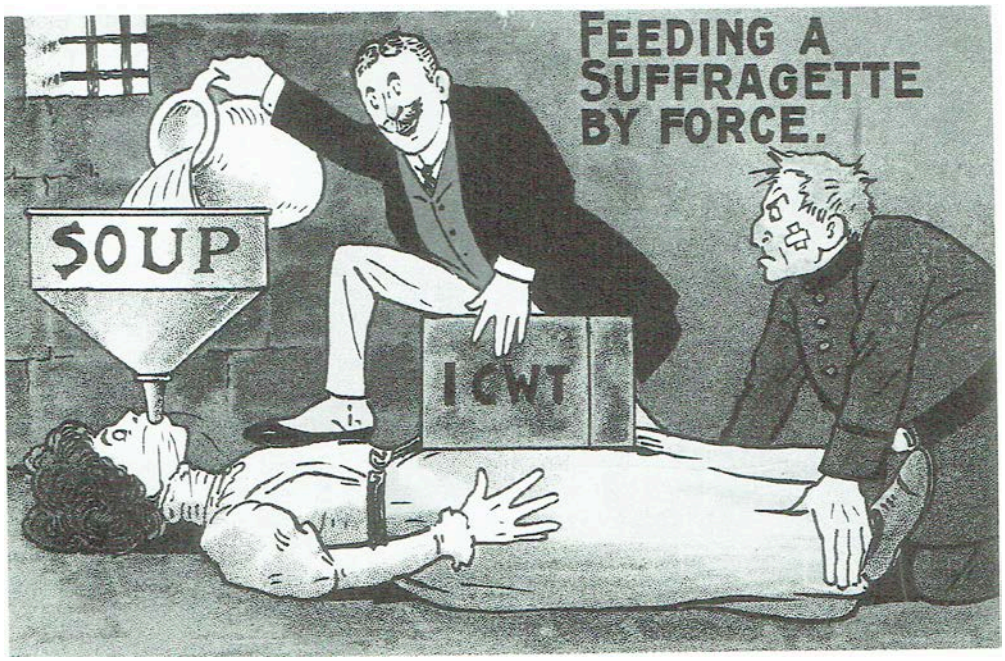

Fig. 70 '*Feeding a suffragette by Force*' (s.d.)

Charlotte Marsh was tube-fed one hundred and thirty-nine times during her three-month sentence in 1909 (E.S. Pankhurst, [1931], 2010: 318-319). The women endured the procedure two to three times a day (Vicinus, 1985: 270).[63] Continuous and daily forcible feeding wore the suffragette body down both physically and mentally. Purvis referred to the plight of Rachel Peace, an embroideress, who had already experienced several nervous breakdowns.[64] During a period of prolonged hunger striking and forcible feeding between December 1913 and January 1914, she wrote that she felt psychologically damaged by her ordeal remonstrating, 'I'm afraid I shall be affected mentally. I feel as if I should go mad. I have had nervous breakdowns before and now feel sensations of an impending crisis' (Peace, s.d.: SFC.84 cited in Purvis, 1995: 113).

Suffragettes complained of permanent damage to their bodies (Gordon [Liddle], 1911: 58). In 1913, Lilian Lenton suffered from double pneumonia and pleurisy after the

[63] In April 1913, the Prisoners' Temporary Discharge for Ill-Health Act (known as 'The Cat and Mouse Act') was introduced whereby suffragettes weakened by the hunger strike were released under licence and then rearrested to serve out their sentences once their health had improved (Purvis, 1994: 169). Some suffragettes resumed the hunger strike on their return to prison and some women were forcibly fed (Atkinson, 2018: 441).

[64] She spent the rest of her life in and out of asylums (Purvis, 1995: 113).

tube was wrongly inserted into her trachea and over fifty years later could not speak of the experience (Lenton, 1960: SFC [unpublished transcript] cited in Raeburn, 1973: 190). Gliddon noted that women who were forcibly fed were often left alone in their cell overnight with only one wardress in charge and that this put their health at risk (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/4). She wrote that three unconscious women were taken to hospital from DX wing in 1912 (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/4).

According to the medical historian Ian Miller, the debate over the medical ethics of forcible feeding called into question the role of the state in regulating the body and quelling 'political rebellion in non-constitutional ways' (Miller, 2013: 230). Miller amplifies, 'The Edwardian period was also one where the boundaries between what was ethical and what was yet to be fully decided upon as medicine found itself increasingly embroiled in debates about vivisection and the potential of human experimentation' (Miller, 2013: 230). Forcible feeding by the Government for political reasons or as a life-saving procedure as 'artificial feeding' was such an act that blurred ethical and medical boundaries. It has been likened to oral rape and torture and described as a punitive rather than a restorative measure (Purvis, 1995: 123). There is evidence that in 1914 imprisoned suffragettes were drugged with bromide to facilitate forcible feeding (Raeburn, 1973: 220). Frances Parker, whose signature appears on the West Hoathly handkerchief and the Women's Library panel was fed rectally and vaginally in Perth Prison in July 1914 (*Votes for Women,* 07/08/1914: 681).

The English scholar, Elaine Scarry describes the pain of torture as 'unmaking' the self and the voice, and having the ability to destroy learned language and obliterate the contents of consciousness (Scarry, 1985: 50-54). Miller claims that it had damaging psychological and emotional effects on the nervous system (Miller, 2013: 242). As a form of torture, it creates feelings of insecurity and exposes the body to 'an almost obscene conflation of private and public' (Scarry, 1985: 53). According to Scarry, the 'dissolution of the boundary between inside and outside' occurs (Scarry, 1985: 53). Thus, it is in repairing the damaged and dissolving boundary of the skin-body,

where cloth as cloth-skin-body and embroidering as the passing in and out of this cloth, can take on significant and potent meanings.[65]
Forcible feeding evoked a series of cultural signs: sacrifice, powerlessness, torture, repressive government and courageous women. The writings of suffragettes, especially those written after the events, presented the women as docile victims and the state as subjugating. The prison testimonies provide what Barbara Green calls 'spectacular confessions' and were used by suffragettes as propaganda. However, the accounts, especially those written within the prison as with the writings of Gliddon, also reveal the visceral shock the women felt regarding the abuse of their bodies. Forcible feeding was a shocking and intensely felt act of intrusion into the suffragette body. It was a political act blurred with a medical act, without precedent.

We can juxtapose embroidering alongside all of these experiences, as an autobiographical and embodied process and as a series of acts and re-enactments that continuously cross the boundary of cloth with the needle and thread. We can posit that embroidering evidences what was materially and *bodily* felt by the women (in these instances their intensely felt and threatened bodies) and that embroidering communicated and still communicates what was and is in excess of the written record.[66]

3.7. Small Acts of Refusal

Following Foucault's model of the disciplinary prison system we can deduce that acts that insert the presence of the corporeal body, increase community and reduce isolation, avoid the homogenisation of the individual through 'normalization' and conformity, avert vertical hegemonic structures, deceive the gaze and diminish the utility of work, can all be configured as acts of 'Refusal'.

In *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (1979) Dick Hebdige writes of small acts of 'Refusal' as expressions both of 'impotence and a kind of power – the power to

[65] This is discussed more fully in chapter four.
[66] Chapters four and five develop this argument further.

disfigure' (Hebdige, 1979: 3). They become gestures or objects of defiance or contempt. As a smile or a sneer, refusals can expose 'the darker side of sets of regulations' (Hebdige, 1979: 3). Hebdige uses as his starting point the memoire of Jean Genet. Genet, imprisoned for being homosexual, held onto a tube of vaseline as an object of refusal, 'a symbol of his "triumph"' (Genet, 1967 cited in Hebdige, 1979: 3). Small acts of refusal are where tensions and power are played out. In prison, suffragettes defied and subverted the prison system with such acts, including embroidering, and in doing so consciously and unconsciously refused the disciplinary mechanisms of the prison system. Suffragettes were sentient bodies who responded to their lived experiences.

Despite the restrictions of the prison system, the women found strength in knowing that there were other women and some men who supported the cause in the same circumstances as themselves.[67] Imprisoned suffragettes maintained that there was a sense of camaraderie and community. Purvis writes:

> …time and time again suffragette prisoners testified that they endured the hardships of prison life because they believed in the women's movement, the feeling of collectivity was fostered, the common bond that united all women and the dignity of women to stand up and fight for what they believed in.
>
> (Purvis, 1995: 110-111)

In a leaflet printed in 1909 called 'My Prison Experiences', Daisy Solomon wrote that the women were a 'sympathetic family helping each other to endure' (Solomon, 1909: 7 cited in Purvis, 1995: 111). Witnessing the first hunger strike in April 1912, Gliddon stated in her diary that the women cared for each other, writing:

> Those of us who were not hunger striking carried chairs out into the garden, fetched water for the others, made their beds and did everything we could so that their weakness might not be apparent.
>
> (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/4)

Gliddon's diary entries show that the women created a suffragette network within prison to help each other and offer support. The women shared food parcels sent in

[67] See note 52 on page 95.

from outside. Margaret Thompson recorded that in June 1912 they shared shortbread and Miss Allan gave cake, strawberries and cherries. 'A parcel of pressed beef and a large veal roll were also shared' (Thompson and Thompson, 1957: 49, 51). English scholar, Jill Rappoport writes of women's lateral gift transactions between friends and equals as distinct from top down gifts of charity (Rappoport, 2012: 6). She argues that Victorian women 'imagined, constructed, and galvanized communities' through gift practices which 'developed into the burgeoning women's movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' (Rappoport, 2012: 8). They operated exchanges with underlying contracts of a more social form of exchange spread over indeterminate time, and with 'returns' that 'may be asymmetrical and indirect' (Rappoport, 2012: 8). Women exchanged gifts to create ties and networks of their own and importantly these exchanges provided 'alternative structures, for women's kinship and community construction' (Rappoport, 2012: 12). Through gift giving women developed alternative exchanges to market economies that were about love, 'doing good' and encouraging 'kindness instead of self-interest' (Rappoport, 2012: 12). Rappoport claims that women thus negotiated the competing value systems of gift and market economies 'to secure, sustain, and reproduce communities' (Rappoport, 2012: 14). Gifts of embroidering materialised this lateral, rhizomatic way of thinking. Rappoport adds, that women also symbolically gave their bodies sacrificially as a calculated 'purchase of pain' through imprisonment, hunger striking and forcible feeding (Rappoport, 2012: 168).

On her embroidered handkerchief Wilcox embroidered the slogan, 'Votes For WoMEN' and that it was, 'WorKeD IN HollowAy, For Dear Mrs Terrero JaN. 28 1912'. It is likely that the handkerchief was made as a gift for Janie Terrero. *Votes for Women* had appealed for money and food for hampers to send to the prisoners in Holloway for Christmas and New Year in 1911 (which included Wilcox and the other women named on the handkerchief) (*Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 172). There was a thank you notice in appreciation of the response in a subsequent issue. The list of contributors included Janie Terrero, who sent items for a hamper (*Votes for Women*, 29/12/1911: 215). This handkerchief could therefore have been embroidered by Wilcox to thank Terrero for her kindness. It affirmatively materialised the connection between these two women and the other women represented on the cloth and it represents a gift exchange that fostered relational ties.

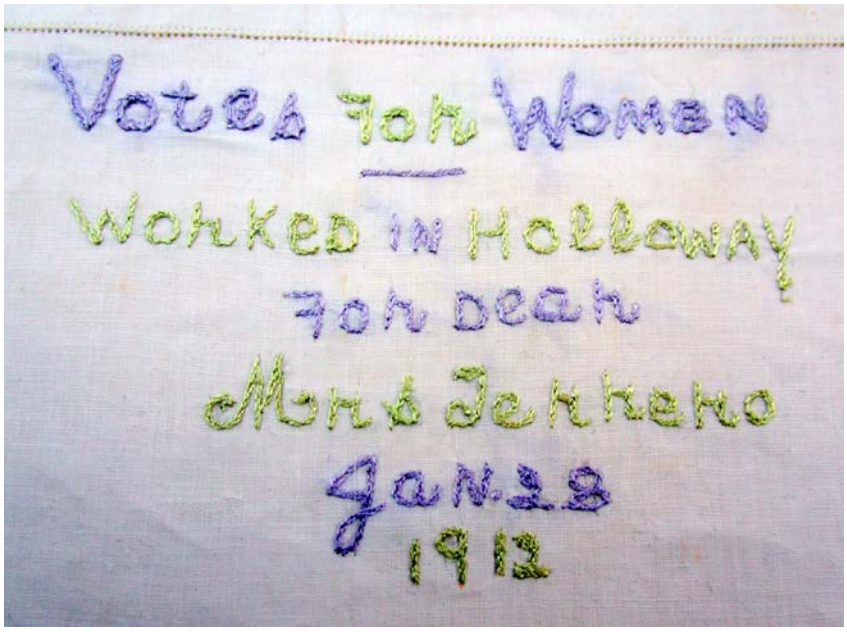

Fig. 71 *Detail of the Wilcox handkerchief showing that it was a gift* (1912)

The suffragette Zoe Proctor wrote of making embroidered bags, which may have been for distribution in prison. She stated:

> I was allowed… a large piece of Russian crash with silks for embroidery…From the crash I made several handkerchief bags embroidered in green and purple silk, with the words, "Holloway, March 1912".
>
> (Proctor, 1960: 110)

The small bag embroidered with the name 'Grace' and 'Holloway Prison March 1912' may have been one such gift from Proctor, or worked by a woman named 'Grace'. It was embroidered on a base cotton fabric with green silk.[68]

[68] 'Grace' could have been one of five women listed with this name in Holloway in March 1912: Grace Stuart, Grace Chappelow, Grace Tollemache, Grace Cook, and Grace Branson (TNA. HO.220.196/16). However, there is a connection between Zoe Proctor and Grace Chappelow. Proctor met Dorothea Rock in Holloway in 1912 and lived with her for the rest of her life. Proctor wrote 'I very soon made special friends with Dorothea and Caron Rock (the poet) and Grace Chappelow' (Proctor, 1960: 110). On the West Hoathly handkerchief the names Dorothea Howlett Rock, Zoe Proctor, Grace Chappelow and Madeleine Rock (Dorothea's sister) are all listed together, one after the other. They are also in very close proximity on the Women's Library panel.

Fig. 72 *Bag, embroidered with 'Grace'* (1912)

There are examples of women prisoners making and giving embroidered gifts such as those of the Dutch resistance in the camps during the 1940s (Bergqvist Rydén, 2018). Threads and cloth were also likely to be exchanged in Holloway. Exchange was about bonding and the creation of alliances, what Rappoport called a 'politics of generosity' (Rappoport, 2012: 171).

All the embroidered cloths worked with multiple names – the West Hoathly handkerchief, the Women's Library panel, the Wilcox handkerchief and the Terrero panel – materialised in thread the alliances between the women. The embroidered names are metaphorically and literally threaded together. When Wilcox embroidered the names of suffragettes imprisoned with her on the handkerchief she moved beyond recording for herself – as in the small panel fragment of December 1911 – and embroidered herself in relation to others.[69] These women were *all* sentenced to two months at the Sessions. The implication being that they were in it together. The women were united under the union and motto of the WSPU, 'Deeds not Words'. Wilcox registered the importance of this motto by embroidering it in the fourth corner of her handkerchief.

[69] Wilcox wrote the names. They were not signatures.

Fig. 73 *Detail of the Wilcox handkerchief showing the WSPU motto, 'Deeds not Words'* (1912)

That embroidering has relational qualities was at the heart of a participatory embroidery project I set up to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of some women gaining the vote in 1918. I called it *The Here, Hear Project* (2018-2019). For the contributors, the project provided a linen cloth, red threads, needles and scissors, my notebooks about the suffragette embroideries and a space to work together. I provided red thread as I understood that it symbolised life, as in the embroidered cloths of European folk textiles. The writer Sheila Paine states that 'Red is the most powerful, the most vibrant, the most exhilarating of colours: it is the blood of life and death…It is the predominant colour in all tribal and peasant embroidery, but is used in two entirely different ways – to protect and to mark' (Paine, 1990: 148).

The project visited various sites.[70] Participants could embroider a mark on the cloth to register the significance of the vote and make their bodily presence felt. It was a sociable, engaging and interactive activity with multiple and diverse responses, which

[70] The project was at: *The Archive Project Exhibition* (2017), The Cello Factory, Waterloo, London; *Women's Suffrage: MAP event for museum professionals* (2018), The London School of Economics and Political Science; *Suffrage in Bloomsbury: Writing Women in Bedford Square* (2018), Bedford College, London; *International Women's Day at The Watts Gallery* (2018), The Watts Gallery, Compton, Surrey; Haslemere Educational Museum (2018), Haslemere, Surrey; Godalming Museum (2018), Godalming, Surrey; *The Festival of Crafts* (2018), The Maltings, Farnham, Surrey; and *Threads* (2019), The Maltings, Farnham, Surrey.

to some extent depended on the venue and timing. Venues directly connected with suffrage events elicited conversations about the suffragettes, whilst at the craft events the project wrested more emotional responses. Participants at the latter made marks that were of autobiographic and emotional significance (see Figures 74-79).

The 'doing' of embroidery encouraged conversation and an exchange of ideas and feelings. By 2019, the project increasingly shifted into becoming a portal for talking about contemporary political issues most notably the Me-Too movement, Extinction Rebellion, Brexit, democracy and the vote. The project highlighted the connection between lives lived, the relationships between people and their feelings, micro-politics, cloth, thread and embroidering.

Fig. 74 *Denise Jones, 'The Here, Hear Project'* (2018-2019)

Fig. 75 *Denise Jones, 'The Here, Hear Project'* (2018-2019)

Fig. 76 *Denise Jones, 'The Here, Hear Project'* (2018-2019)

Fig. 77 *Denise Jones, 'The Here, Hear Project'* (2018-2019)

Fig. 78 *Denise Jones, 'The Here, Hear Project'* (2018-2019)

Fig. 79 *Denise Jones, 'The Here, Hear Project'* (2018-2019)

Many of the participants (mostly women but not exclusively) who embroidered in the project wanted to make a mark in recognition of the women who had fought for the vote. Embroidering thus became a mode of acknowledgment and of giving back. As a response to this and knowing that the suffragettes had been given medals for hunger striking with commemorative bars for forcible feeding, I decided to create a series of small object-embroideries, which played on the idea of a medal for courage but subsequently developed into small gifts of grace. I called these embroideries *Grace* (2018-2019).

Fig. 80 *Denise Jones, 'Grace'* (2018-2019)

I embroidered the object-gifts to materialise ideas about: contract, alliance, treaty, pact, understanding, affinity, kinship, ties and connection. I decided that these embroideries were like a horizontal and sympathetic social contract that had circulated across time. Hidden within these embroideries are also reminders of the presence of the body and the body in pain. The embroideries contain hair cuttings, pins, a suturing needle, a hook, as well as connectors such as buttons, fasteners, thread ties and hooks and eyes.

Because of the mass arrests between 1911-1912, women of different social classes and experiences were imprisoned together in Holloway. Ethel Smyth commented on the mix of women (Smyth, 1933: 211). The signatures of Lord Kitchener's niece

Frances Parker, and Janie Allan, the daughter of a Glasgow shipping magnate appear on the Women's Library panel and the West Hoathly handkerchief, along with working women such as Mary Hilliard, a nurse and Vera Wentworth, a teacher (Crawford, 1999). The signature cloths incarnate the sense of unity and friendship between the women and their need to gather together. They testify to the fact that the women communicated with each other and would have passed around the pencil and cloth to write their names. Through embroidery, the women registered on the cloths the community that prison life sought to destroy.

The philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* ([1987], 2013) would describe these inclusive connections as horizontal and 'rhizomatic'. The embroideries would have been worked horizontally. Terrero might have known that the violets of her central motif on her panel spread prolifically, by seed and as rhizomes, like the rank and file women she represented. In the language of flowers, Terrero's motif of violets also symbolised faithfulness, to the cause, to the women whose names she had embroidered, and loyalty to Emmeline and Christabel Pankhurst as seen in the accompanying photograph.[71] According to Gliddon, Mrs Pankhurst carried a bunch of violets when she left Holloway to go to trial in March 1912 (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/6). Violets would have been prolifically in flower at this time in spring.

The West Hoathly handkerchief, dated March 1912, contains sixty-six embroidered signatures and two initials of suffragettes imprisoned in Holloway. Some of the same names and threads appear as on the Terrero panel. Sixty-four of the signatures on the West Hoathly handkerchief are duplicated on the Women's Library panel, indicating that both of these cloths may have been signed at the same time in pencil in March 1912 in Holloway. This was likely to have been after some suffragettes were removed to Aylesbury Prison, Winson Green Prison, Birmingham and Maidstone Prison. The removed women are not recorded on these cloths (TNA. HO.220.196/154; TNA. HO.220.196/247). The women may have created these embroidered cloths because some of their comrades had been assigned to other

[71] 'The Cause' was like a religion and the women were like a 'spiritual army' (Purvis, 1995: 111).

prisons and their prison community was under threat. The embroiderer of the Women's Library panel, a single hand, tightly bound thread around the signatures that were already written in pencil, overcasting other threads in suffragette colours, hidden under the stitches. Symbolically, the embroidering of this cloth bound, protected and concealed a suffragette thread core.

Fig. 81 *Detail of the Women's Library panel showing the thread 'core' bound with embroidery* (1912)

Suffragettes created illicit diaries, drawings, letters, poetry and newsletters for themselves and to communicate their experiences to an audience outside of prison (Vicinus, 1985: 273). Letters – so vital for maintaining connections with the outside world – were defiantly smuggled in and out in washing parcels or via visitors (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1). In Holloway in 1912, the suffragette Leonora Tyson recalled that letters were either concealed in the prisoners' clothing or somewhere in the washing box. She recalled folding letters as small as possible to drop out of windows for those leaving prison to go on trial and remembered writing letters in German to circumvent censorship (Ward, 2005: 18). Gladys Roberts recorded that as the suffragette Mrs Marshall left:

> …she went round [*sic*] the yard in a red dressing-gown saying that she was a pillar-box. The sleeves were turned inside out so that letters could be slipped in.
>
> (Raeburn, 1973: 172)

Gliddon wrote to her sister about the smuggled letters in March 1912 noting:

> …There are a lot of things I do not say in these letters that are smuggled out. Because two – not mine – of them have been found by the authorities so it is safer not to say things as you never know your luck. After this you will not be able to hear again until the end of the first month, – if it is able to be smuggled out safely then.
>
> (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1)

It is likely that Wilcox and an accomplice purposefully toyed with the cultural meanings of embroidery (as harmless and superficial) to subversively conceal a folded letter in the small, embroidered package. The fragile panel embroidered by Wilcox in December 1911 was worked on silk and formed the back of the package. The package contained two pieces of card to stiffen it and a small piece of padding.[72] A letter could have been slipped in between the card. The front of the package is of a decorative hand-embroidered rose that has been taken from a larger piece of embroidery. The silk backing of the package was cut away very quickly, indicating that there was some impatience to get inside it. Wilcox could have embroidered the fragment of silk cloth (the panel) after it had been cut away from the package and after she had found a letter inside the package, or she could have constructed the package to conceal a letter to be sent out of Holloway. It is also possible that the small sampler made by Mary Aldham was the front of a package used for the same purpose. The Aldham embroideries have not been handled and so this cannot be confirmed but there are red overcasting stitches at the edge of the embroidery indicating that it might have been a package. These become visible when the image from Lockdales Auctioneers is enlarged (see Figure 82).

[72] The cardboard was from a box containing 'Frunut' from Shearn's Stores, a vegetarian restaurant and shop in Tottenham Court Road with a branch in Bedford Square (Nicholson, 2002: 173).

Fig. 82 *Mary Aldham, the embroidered sampler* (*c.*1908-1914)

Fig. 83 *Parts of the Wilcox package* (1911)

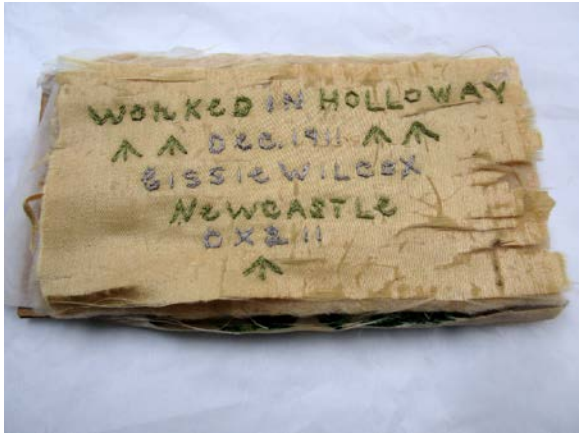

Fig. 84 *Parts of the Wilcox package* (1911)

Hebdige writes that discursive signs such as embroidery are not only read but can be written, appearances are subverted as the imposter 'slips behind them to have a joke at their expense' (Hebdige, 1979: 138). According to Hebdige humble objects (such as embroidery) can assume 'double meanings', 'signs of a forbidden identity, sources of value' (Hebdige, 1979: 2-3). Wilcox knowingly used embroidery for such purposes. Concealing, hiding and smuggling letters and especially under the guise of embroidery were playful, underhand ways of disobeying the prison rules. Terrero wrote about the importance of being deceitful, 'The more skilful you are at deceit the better for you'. She hid her watch (so that she could gauge the passing of time) on admission to Holloway in 1912.[73] Gliddon wrote to her sister Gladys that when being denied a visit, 'be very dense and pretend you don't understand' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1).

The women passed notes, made up games and were playful in other bodily ways (Vicinus, 1985: 269; Purvis, 1995: 112). Gliddon recorded women playing hopscotch. The prize was a bottle of lime-juice (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/6). Margaret E. Thompson recalled Vera Wentworth wearing a button as a monacle, when impersonating Lord Cromer in 1912 (Thompson and Thompson, 1957: 50). Embroidering was an activity that also captured their mirth and defiance. Significantly, Gladys Roberts recalled that when forced to sew at associated labour the women embroidered the convict under wear. She stated:

> We had associated labour and we all sat in the body of the hall and were allowed to do needlework or knitting-convicts' clothing. We used to put embroidery on the convicts' knickers!
>
> (Raeburn, 1973: 172)

The women sang and danced and tapped rhythmic messages with hairbrushes on the walls (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/6). Gliddon wrote home that Miss Moore was getting quite a reputation as a singer. 'She sings beautifully to us every night' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/2/1). Gliddon also described that the suffragette Phyllis Keller danced for the women and that the warden stopped it 'for no other reason at all save that it was a thing of beauty and therefore out of place'. She wrote, 'we had

[73] She recorded that they took all her other possessions (Terrero, 1912: SFC.50.15/13).

enjoyed it with all the rhythm that was in us' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/1/6). Expressing themselves through their bodies made the women feel alive. Embroidering also involved a rhythmic tapping on the fingers and captured the gestures of the hand, arms and upper torso. Foucault wrote of the discipline of work as enforcing an ordered rhythm of the body and that work regulated the body through time. For suffragettes, embroidering reinstated the body's own rhythm and time. It helped to counter the prison work-time-discipline imposed on it.

Thus, embroidering, the very act that culturally symbolised the 'womanly' woman challenged the disciplinary system of the prison *par excellence*. Suffragettes were very aware of its potential to deceive, defy and conceal. They knowingly used embroidery to subvert and challenge, to playfully undermine prison rules and to galvanise their community.

4. Embroidering the 'Cloth-Skin-Body'

> I had decided to write the words 'Votes for Women' on my body, scratching it in my skin with a needle, beginning over the heart and ending it on my face… My skin proved much tougher than expected and the small needle supplied to me for sewing purposes was quite inadequate. I procured another and stronger one for darning my stockings, but neither of them produced the required result. I thought of a hairpin but had only three left of these precious articles and could not make up my mind to spare one. I had the good luck, however, while exercising, to find one, the black enamel of which was already partially worn off…The next morning before breakfast I set to work in real earnest and, using each of these implements in turn, I succeeded in producing a very fine V just over my heart. This was the work of fully twenty minutes, and in my zeal, I made a deeper impression than I had intended.
>
> (Lytton, 1914: 164-165)

In Holloway Prison in March 1909, in an astonishing act of bodily harm, the suffragette Constance Lytton punctured the membrane of her skin with two needles and a hairpin in order to inscribe the words 'Votes for Women' on her skin-body. She used her own skin as the ground-cloth for the inscription. The needle, hairpin, skin, body, cloth and pain were all implicated in her act. Instead of using the needle to work cloth, Lytton used it to probe the boundary of her skin-body. Her skin-body became a cloth where she materially wrought and wrote the beginnings of a visceral and political suffrage message. Her *quasi*-cloth-skin-body became a political site.

This chapter establishes the connection between cloth, skin and the body to offer grounds (and the ground-cloth) for a different way of thinking about why suffragettes embroidered in prison. It inserts the corporeal body into the discussion and therefore avows the body that senses, feels and is relational to others. Drawing particularly on the writings of the psychologist Lisa Blackman and the psychoanalytical writings of Didier Anzieu and Nicola Diamond, thread, cloth, skin and the body are pulled together in order to expand our understanding of the cloths embroidered by imprisoned suffragettes.

Cloth is examined as a projected skin-body, and embroidering is explored as being autobiographic and concerned with the continuous making and remaking of what I term the *cloth-skin-body*. The concept of a cloth-skin-body is probed as a projected,

plastic and permeable cloth membrane that registers the lived, thinking-feeling body. The hyphenated words cloth-skin-body, are conjoined to imply a relational synthesis.

Cloth is ubiquitous. It is proximate to the lived body in that it covers, wraps, protects, wipes and cleans it. It traces our passage through life and contains in its stains, marks and fissures the memory of that life. It also has a heightened presence in ceremonies that mark the significant and transitory rituals and intensities of life: birth, coming of age, marriage and death. Thus, the close relationship between cloth and the body has been referred to as a 'second skin'.[74] Referring to the work of the artist Louise Bourgeois, Germano Celant writes of cloth as 'a tactile and substantial element that can be taken as "epidermis", as carnal epiphany of a fluidity or a rigidity' (Celant, 2010: 13). It is 'almost a skin' in its flexibility, textures, thicknesses and pliability (Celant, 2010: 13).

How can the body and skin be theoretically connected to cloth? And how do disputed theories of the body fit with the framework of this thesis? How can touch be of significance in this discussion? To answer these questions, it is necessary to examine different theories of the body in order to arrive at a model that draws away from the enduring 'dualisms' of body theory as: mind/body, culture/nature, object/subject, the biological/social, internal/external. A body model that can explain how bodies are embodied, felt and lived entities, interconnected, expansive, thought creating, both consciously and unconsciously, and forever in process can provide a critical framework for this research into the complex meanings of the suffragette embroideries worked in Holloway Prison.

4.1. Theories of the Body

Avoiding dualisms

The human body has been historically locked into dichotomous thinking where the mind and corporeal body have been separated and where one term, the mind, has been

[74] The psychoanalyst Esther Bick refers to 'second skin' (Bick, 1968). Textile academic, Claire Pajaczkowska connects 'second skin' with textile culture (Pajaczkowska, 2016: 83). *Textile: The Journal of Cloth and Culture* (2008) 6 (3) focuses on cloth as 'second skin' (also, see Howey, 2008).

hierarchically privileged over the other, the body. The psychologist and cultural theorist Lisa Blackman refers to this view of the corporeal body as 'an absent present': it exists but is disavowed (Blackman, 2008: 6). This split in body theory is associated with the seventeenth-century philosopher René Descartes and is referred to as Cartesian dualism. Descartes argues that the rational: our cognitive ability to think, reason, argue, reflect, debate and write, is the key determinant of human existence and that this is distinct from the fixed set of physiological processes of the body (Blackman, 2008: 4). The psychoanalyst and philosopher Elizabeth Grosz claims that Descartes separated the rational and conscious soul from nature by asserting that the mind was a thinking substance whereas the body was an extended substance, a mechanical 'self-moving machine...functioning according to causal laws and the laws of nature' (Grosz, 1994: 6). Thus, following Descartes, 'The mind, the thinking substance, the soul, or consciousness, has no place in the natural world' (Grosz, 1994: 6).

The mind and body opposition has also become linked to what is considered to be the foundations of knowledge itself: the voluntary and conscious mind that is over and above nature, including the nature of the body (Grosz, 1994: 6). Grosz writes, 'The body is thus what…the mind must expel in order to retain its "integrity"' (Grosz, 1994: 3). The submerged body is implicitly defined as unruly, messy, directionless and without judgement. Moreover, the mind/body opposition has become correlated with other oppositional pairs. Grosz lists these as 'the distinction between reason and passion, sense and sensibility, outside and inside, self and other, depth and surface, reality and appearance, mechanism and vitalism, transcendence and immanence, temporality and spatiality, psychology and physiology, form and matter, and so on' including culture and nature (Grosz, 1994: 3). The body seen through these binary configurations is implied as organic, passive, inert and intrusive to the operation of mind. It is coded in terms that are devalued, of animal and nature, and these require transcendence (Grosz, 1994: 4). Crucially for Grosz, what has been associated with the dualism of mind and body is the opposition between male and female 'where man and mind, and woman and body, become representationally aligned' (Grosz, 1994: 3). What follows is the idea that knowledge production is rooted in the masculine mind and woman as a body is problematized as a 'mysterious and inscrutable object' (Grosz, 1994: 4).

According to Blackman, we 'need to move beyond thinking of bodies as substances, as special kinds of *thing* or entities, and explore bodies as sites of potentiality, process and practice' (Blackman, 2008: 5). The physical and corporeal body matters, and is not closed off from the cultural, and thinking is not the prerogative of the mind. The boundary between thought and what is voluntary and involuntary is fuzzy. Thought can be reformulated as being both conscious and unconscious and we need to be aware of the bodily basis of thought and the cognitive component of bodily processes and vice versa (Blackman, 2008: 5).

Embodiment

The body is a site of contentious theory and of conflicting models of what it is that makes us human. Nineteenth and early twentieth-century accounts, and particularly at the time that the suffragette embroidered cloths were made, regarded it as a natural 'essential' biological body drawing on theories of evolutionary social Darwinism and eugenics. This model presents the body as a pre-given entity and reduces the complexity of human life to the biological make up of individuals and groups. Following this model, women can be allotted specific roles that fit with their 'natural' and 'biological' capabilities. The social and cultural model of the body contests this viewpoint.

The socially constructed body is inscribed with cultural signs, codes, symbols and discourse and is the mode through which the human becomes a 'subject'. This model emphasises that the body is not unified, nor unique but one that is constructed through our encounters with others (Blackman, 2008: 23). Others thus reflect (mirror) back to us our body image and our performance of identity. Identity is thus, 'always the expression and manifestation of our incorporation of how we are positioned and responded to by others' (Blackman, 2008: 23). Language plays a central role as a force that subjugates and culture as a series of texts becomes paramount in knowledge making and understanding.

One of the key proponents of this body model was the poststructuralist philosopher Michel Foucault. Foucault wrote of power that controls in micro and macro situations, at personal and societal levels. Particularly in his study of the prison, he showed how powers were at play through self-performing practices that became

norms and regulatory ideals (Foucault, 1977). For Foucault, contemporary power relations were imposed via cultural practices, through inculcation, rather than physical imposition. Bodies were docile, passive, willing, and malleable subjects. This disciplinary power worked more efficiently in hierarchical institutions such as the prison, where life was extensively regulated and prisoners were under total surveillance.[75] Blackman writes that this body model is 'stimulated into being, rather than repressed by brute force so that its physicality or materiality becomes the raw material for cultural processes to take hold. The body is there but…becomes inert mass' (Blackman, 2008: 27). The corporeal body becomes eclipsed and hidden behind discourse and sense making reverts to being a cognitive activity rather than of thinking related to the bodily felt senses, the somatic-affective. The model therefore once more taps into the enduring dualism of mind and body (Blackman, 2008: 24). It fails to draw on the idea of disciplinary power as a lived practice, which would have an impact on the mind but would also 'permeate, shape and seek to control…sensuous and sensory experiences' (Blackman, 2008: 28). When referring to the bodies of imprisoned suffragettes, this model of the body does not take into account their sensory, somatic and affective experiences, how they sensed and felt, or their physicality – the matter of their matter.

Sociologist Chris Shilling argues that with this model we 'get little sense of the [actual] body reacting back and affecting discourse' (Shilling, 1993: 81). We have no room to explore how bodies, such as those of the suffragettes in prison, might protest, react or refuse to participate in the workings of disciplinary power. The physical and social body become a 'tight fit'. This model is crucially without the space to theorize agency, the ability to resist, refuse or negotiate the workings of disciplinary power (Blackman, 2008: 28). The dynamic corporeal body is silenced whereas what is needed is a realignment of the body as 'simultaneously social [and relational] and biological [and material]', without resorting back to the essential and reductionist model (Shilling 1993: 100 cited in Blackman, 2008: 29).

Crucially for this research, Blackman advocates bringing these separate viewpoints together. She suggests the adoption of a model of 'embodiment', where the

[75] See chapter three, section five.

somatically felt body is given its due and where the aliveness of the body, its rhythms, energy and vitality and what can be sensed but not necessarily verbalised can be given credit (Blackman, 2008: 30-31). Thus, the embodied model of the body offers the possibility for re-examining the meaning of embroidering on the cloth-skin-body beyond an entirely discursive and visual reckoning. It opens up a space where an articulation of the corporeal body of the suffragette can be acknowledged and where embroidering can become cogent.

The body is explicitly registered in the suffragette embroideries. The text on them locates suffragette bodies in time and place. Nellie Taylor's brush and comb bag records her exact cell number in Holloway and Terrero specifically documents that twenty women were forcibly fed in Holloway in April 1912. I argue that the corporeal body is also implicitly configured in these embroideries and that embroidering for suffragettes was an embodied process.

Blackman writes that the embodied body model, being between polarities, can overthrow the 'perennial contrasts' between the culturally determined body or the body existing prior to social and cultural processes and those of 'structure and agency, mind and body, nature and will, the individual and society' (Blackman, 2008: 32-33). The embodied body shows how the distinction between nature and culture is 'impossible to disentangle' and that they are not 'two separate entities, but rather exist in a complex relationality that is contingent and mutable' (Blackman, 2008: 34). They produce each other. Physical, corporeal bodies that sense and feel are relational entities and are not singular. Bodies do not have contained edges, hard borders, but are porous and permeable and are inter-corporeal. It is for this reason that the sociologist Nikolas Rose refers to the 'fiction of the autonomous self' (Rose, 1989, 1996).

Inter-corporeal and affective

Theresa Brennan introduces the idea of the transmission of affect that passes between bodies. She argues that we are not singular in terms of our energies and that affects, feelings and emotions can be conveyed between the self and others (Brennan, 2004: 6). Bodies encounter, can affectively exchange moods and can be emotionally contagious. We experience gut reactions and we feel more than we reveal through

verbal language. Bodies can be permeated non-linguistically. Blackman dispels the idea that a mind can exist without a body and offers a place for non-conscious perception and 'the threshold of conscious thought and deliberation'. Following this line of thinking much of human life is lived in a non-cognitive mode (Blackman, 2008: 58).

The mind and body are thus collapsed together within a complex relational process. There may be no words or language to communicate some of our sensed, felt and lived experiences and encounters, but these can contribute to how we feel about ourselves and others. Grosz writes that the body is 'a site for the circulation of energetic intensities' that might be difficult verbalize or see (Grosz, 1994: 138). Thus, the body is connected and within a 'discontinuous, non-totalisable series of processes, flows, energies, speeds and durations', which 'may be of great value to feminisms attempt to re-conceive bodies outside [the] binary oppositions' (Grosz, 1994: 164). The body is therefore not a visual map, a cartography that is mirrored back to us, but a collection of 'felt intensities' derived from bodily sensations (Grosz, 1994: 32; Blackman, 2008: 77). We are 'crosscut' with 'different logics and rhythms' that are felt through the 'lived body' (Grosz, 1994: 105: Blackman, 2008: 77). Our awareness of how the world is lived and felt is not simply registered cognitively and visually.

The concept of bodies that extend out into the world, and mingle with other bodies, of bodies that become attuned to other bodies and communicate non-verbally, moves body theory forward, in that feelings, affect and emotions are included. This model allows for the idea of body leakage, of allowing the body to 'speak' through body language and the unconscious (Blackman, 2008: 42-44). And, it creates an opening for embroidering to be reconsidered as such an articulation.

Following this thinking, the suffragette embroideries can be understood to hold more than a linguistic record. The somatic-affective-relational suffragette body can be included in their consideration. Embroidering through cloth can be seen to conjure the body and its senses and sensibilities and materially transmit that which is beneath and above the surface of language.

Blackman writes that this body model:

> …points towards a more gestural form of communication that is enacted through minimal forms of bodily communication that do not respond to universal codes or patterns. Rather they are situated in a shared experience and understanding of what it feels like to be positioned and to have to negotiate a cultural realm of social difference and its articulation.
>
> (Blackman, 2008: 65)

Bodily affectivity is literally felt and expressed in and through the body (Blackman, 2008: 66). It can be extrapolated that it can be transmitted through the embroidered cloth-skin-body and that cloth and thread can conjure a felt relation to the world and other human beings.

The Wilcox panel is a case in point (see Figure 4). Written and embroidered on the panel in a mix of upper and lower case letters are the words: 'WOrKeD iN HoLLoWAY Dec. 1911 Cissie WiLCoX, NewcAsTLe DX 211' along with the embroidered images of five broad arrows. They record where Wilcox was currently located – in Holloway Prison as a criminal on DX wing – as opposed to where she considers home to be, in Newcastle. Beyond this textual and visual reading, the embroidery imparts more nuanced material information. The fine silk cloth was embroidered in chain stitch with a relatively bulky thread and this would have made the embroidery difficult to work. Wilcox would have had to guard against the fine fabric puckering or pulling too much. Chain stitch also puts the weight of the thread on the upper surface of the cloth and so the embroidering of the small letters (such as those on this panel) seems to be clumsy and ungainly. The panel quietly, implicitly, ambiguously and materially communicates abjection and insecurity, and it elicits empathy.[76]

[76] The abject is a term associated with the writings of the feminist psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva in *Powers of Horror* (1982). She described it as threatening, and disturbing identity, system and order. Blackman writes that the abject is commonly associated with bodily fluids and waste products, a category that is neither self nor other. It connects us to, and conjures that which is viewed as 'more animal-like and more primitive: what is considered lower, vulgar, defiled and disgusting' (Blackman, 2008: 93-94).

We can posit that suffragette embroidering in prison communicated a felt relation to the world and that this was, and still is, subtly communicated through the embroidered cloths.

The sociologist Simon Charlesworth adds:

> The silences and ellipses in people's speech are their implicit, unknowing recognition of the background; those moments when the unsaid, shared, unspoken, passes between people, manifesting in knowing silences and appropriate gestures.
>
> (Charlesworth, 2000: 113)

The 'knowing silences' and 'appropriate gestures' of embroidering can be posed as articulating non-rational sensing and feeling between bodies: the unsaid, unspoken, shared and embodied experiences of the suffragettes in Holloway Prison.

4.2. Skin

The sociologist Sheila L. Cavanagh, and scholars of women's and gender studies, Angela Failler and Rachel Alpha Johnston Hurst describe the embroidered dolls entitled *Efflorescence* (1997) created by the Canadian artist Catherine Heard. Made from antique fabrics, wood, wool, wire, and human hair, they write that their embroidered 'skins' captivate (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2013: 1). They highlight the 'resemblance to reddened pustules, scabs or bleeding sores: skin disease in bloom' (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2013: 1). For Cavanagh *et al.*, the work emphasises the potential of skin to manifest both abjection and beauty. It shows the propensity for skin to elicit a potent affective and visceral response and become 'a site for the projection and exposure of deep seated cultural, political and psychical investments.' The skin of the dolls festers and flowers (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2013: 1-2).

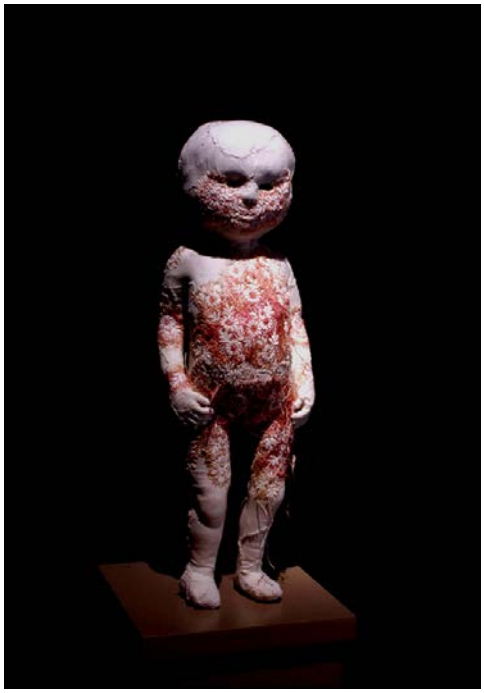

Fig. 85 *Catherine Heard, detail of 'Efflorescence'* (1997)

Figs. 86 *Catherine Heard, detail of 'Efflorescence (Atavism)'* (1997)

My work, *Tablecloth* (2018) explores a similar connection between the cloth surface, embroidering and the skin. The screen-printed markings on the surface of an old tablecloth were over washed with ink to reveal the resistant inscriptive marks (akin to

imaginary marks written on skin). I waxed the cloth to fix the ink and in doing so the cloth became semi-transparent and greasy, like pigskin. I folded the cloth and embroidered part of it with chain stitch (the same stitch used by Wilcox and Terrero). I then unpicked the chain stitch so that it left loops, making the surface more tactile and dimensional. The thread looped in and out of the cloth and passed between the cloth surfaces and it was not fixed. It could shift, be unpicked and be repositioned. I hypothesised that embroidering through this cloth (-skin-body) was an on-going autobiographical act. Embroidering was a material language rather than an inscribed symbolic language. In *Tablecloth*, the signs of inscription *on* the cloth-skin-body as print and ink do not override the materiality of embroidering *through* the cloth. Embroidering through the cloth is what the artist and academic Barbara Bolt would term 'matter's insistence' (Bolt, 2004: 171). It expresses more than sign making and representation. It becomes a 'dynamic interplay' between the material and discursive, played out on a projected cloth (-skin-body). I folded the tablecloth on completion of the work to create enfolded (skin-body) spaces.

Fig. 87 *Denise Jones, 'Tablecloth'* (2018)

Cavanagh *et al.* claim that skin enfolds and is made meaningful through the enfolding of cultural, psychical life and embodiment. Skin therefore has:

> …a biological life, a social life, a fantasy life, a somatic life, a political life, an esthetic life, a life in the 'lived body' and a cultural life – all of which inform one another to shape what it means and how it feels to inhabit skin.
>
> (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2013: 3)

Through examining skin in literature, Claudia Benthien summarised that skin is on the cultural border between self and the world. She saw skin as the external-internal site of the person, of the spirit, body and life. It housed the body (Benthien, 2002: 13). It was a boundary and contact surface, which both separated and connected the self and the world. It was a place of encounter where the self was formed, a site of inscription and codes, a screen, and a fragile parchment where power may be played out. The skin is a place of cuts, wounds, burns and bruising and is unable to protect against the pain of violence (Benthien, 2002: 1-15).

The psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu explains that the skin and brain are formed from the same membrane, the ectoderm (Anzieu, 1989, 2016: 10). For Anzieu, the brain and the skin as body are interleaved.

The importance of touch

According to the anthropologist Ashley Montagu, touch is the first of the senses to develop and for the infant tactile perception is primary, followed by auditory perception and then later by visual perception (Montagu, 1971: 169). Montagu writes of the significance of skin and touch thus:

> [The skin] is the oldest and the most sensitive of our organs, our first medium of communication, and our most efficient protector…Even the transparent cornea of the eye is overlain by a layer of modified skin…Touch is the parent of our eyes, ears, nose, and mouth. It is the sense [,] which became differentiated into the others, a fact that seems to be recognised in the age-old evaluation of touch as 'the mother of the senses.'
>
> (Montagu, 1971: 3)

Benthien adds that there are close connections between skin and emotional states, that are reflected in the words 'to feel' and 'to touch', words whose etymology points to tactile origins (Benthien, 2002: 7). Thus, skin, touch, feeling and relationality are seen to be congruous.

The sociologist Pasi Falk maintains that in industrialised countries a hierarchy of the senses operates, which mirrors the persisting mind/body dualism. Vision and hearing are considered to be higher 'distant' senses most closely aligned with mind, thought and reflection (Falk, 1994). The term 'distant' removes these senses from the baser, more primitive forms of bodily awareness associated with touch, smell and taste, considered to be 'contact' senses linked to our animal heritage. They are thought to be less civilized and of lower importance in our evolutionary development (Blackman, 2008: 85). Vision and hearing are also more directly connected to communication through symbolic language as speech, reading and writing and figuration. This might in part explain why embroidering through cloth, so completely bound to the sense of touch (and the skin-body) might be ranked as a baser and more animal like form of expression, as 'natural' and 'female', and consequently culturally overlooked and continuously debased. It might also explain why, when considering the suffragette embroideries the emphasis has always been on their linguistic content and visual imagery rather than the material process of their making and the primacy of touch.[77]

In my work, *The Waning of the Light* (2017) I left the trailing ends of the embroidered threads behind the work and on turning back the cloths I realised that the underside resembled animal fur. The upper surfaces of the work were black, shiny and smooth and the back of the work was tangled like massed, wet, black hair, what textile academic, Catherine Harper might approximate to the sniff of 'the snuff', of a dead animal (Harper, 2008). There was a hint of primal, animal cruelty hidden beneath the glossy upper appearance of the textile. There was also an oblique reference to the corporeal and hairy body materialised as cloth and thread, culturally disavowed by the rational and enlightened mind.

[77] In her study of the Bayeux Tapestry, Janet Catherine Berlo emphasises the importance of tactility in making the case for a 'poetics of embroidery' (Berlo, 2020).

Fig. 88 *Denise Jones, detail of 'The Waning of the Light'* (2017)

The architect Juhani Pallasmaa writes of the dominant and hegemonic eye of vision in culture and 'the suppressed sense modality of touch' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 22, 10). He asserts that, 'All the senses, including vision, are extensions of the tactile sense' and 'all sensory experiences are modes of touching and thus related to tactility' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 10). For Pallasmaa, 'Our contact with the world takes place at the boundary line of the self through specialised parts of our enveloping membrane [the skin]' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 10-11). He calls for an approach to the body, which integrates all the senses and sees the body as the navel of the world as 'the locus of reference, memory, imagination and integration' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 11). Thus, 'Vision reveals what touch already knows. We could think of the sense of touch as the unconscious of vision' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 42).

At the beginning of the research I embroidered *Cloth of Dreams* (2015-2016) to particularly focus on the practice of embroidering. I logged every micro aspect of the process: the cutting of thread and the threading of the needle; that the embroidery had to be worked in a tight frame to maintain the tension; that the frame had to be continuously moved; that it was difficult to use the frame at the edges of the cloth and I had to resort to the weight of a stone to maintain the tension; that the embroidery could spread nomadically in any direction I chose; that the silk was unruly, springy

and lively; that it shredded easily because of the friction with, and resistance to, the fine cotton fabric; that there was a resultant pile of shredded and distressed silk fibre waste; and that the embroidery was a constant struggle to work because of the push and pull of the thread through the tight weave. The skin of my index finger became hardened and it flaked because of the constant contact with the needle.

It was only through the excessive 'doing' of embroidery that I realised that this work was overwhelmingly about friction, tension and the implicit presence of the body experiencing small instances of pain through its sensitive fingertips. Working this cloth confirmed how important touch and feeling were to the process. The cloth, needle and thread continuously passed through my hands and fingers. I spatially turned the cloth from front to back and around in order to work it. Cloth, thread and the needle were always spatially and temporally on the move.

Fig. 89 *Denise Jones, detail of the working of 'Cloth of Dreams'* (2015-2016)

Fig. 90 *Denise Jones, 'Cloth of Dreams'* (2015-2016)

The writer Constance Classen states that, 'Touch precedes, informs and overwhelms language' (Classen, 2005: 13). It is the sense that we cannot refuse. It is powerful and immediate (Finnegan, 2005: 18). It confirms social life and personal experiences. It helps to make allegiances between people (Finnegan, 2005: 21). Whereas 'the eye is the organ of distance and separation' and 'surveys, controls and investigates', touch 'approaches and caresses' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 46).

For Pallasmaa, 'The tactile sense connects us with time and tradition: through impressions of touch we shake the hands of countless generations' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 56). A shiny door handle for instance connects us to 'thousands of hands that have entered the room before us' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 56). The historian Arlette Farge believes that the feel of the archive (like the feel of material objects such as the suffragette embroideries) is about 'touching traces of the past' and that the archival manuscript is like a 'living document' (Farge, 2013: 15). Farge states that it is as if 'some material traces had returned from this departed world, traces of moments that were the most private and least often expressed' (Farge, 2013: 11). Touching the material object can let the intimate and proximate break through. Farge argues that

through touching and ‘combing’ we become aware of tactile memory (Farge, 2013: 55). For Pallasmaa the body knows and remembers (Pallasmaa, 2005: 60).

We can posit that in touching the suffragette embroideries we touch suffragette experiences and become materially aware of the embroiderers’ absent presence. In the seam of the bag embroidered by Nellie Taylor in Holloway in March 1912, I found a small hair, a material trace that had been lodged there for over a hundred years. The finding and touching of this hair together with her embroidery physically and seamlessly connected the material body of Taylor with myself. The hair as a relic from her body, together with her embroidery, affirmed her past material presence in the world and connected with my own body living in the present. The past and present thus became conjoined without a word spoken or written.

Fig. 91 *The inside of the ‘Brush and Comb’ bag embroidered by Nellie Taylor, showing her hair caught in the seam inside the bag* (1912)

Pallasmaa also acknowledges the connections between the naked skin and the sensation of home with its intimacy and warmth (Pallasmaa, 2005: 58). For Pallasmaa, architecture helps us to engage with fundamental existential questions allowing us to place and remember, to locate ourselves, deal with change and permanence and become aware of our integrity in socially reciprocal relationships (Pallasmaa, 2005: 72). We could impose similar architectural metaphors of skin onto

that of cloth-skin and embroidering, as tactile scaffolding, housing sense, sensibility and feelings of security.

As with Foucault writing about the Panopticon, Pallasmaa claims that the eye has an, 'implicit desire for control and power' and is historically linked to patriarchal domination. Western culture favours vision and links vision to the acquisition of knowledge, to ontology, power and ethics (Pallasmaa, 2005: 13,16). Pallasmaa writes of the 'aggressiveness of vision' and the 'specters of patriarchal rule' that 'haunt our ocular-centric culture' (Levin, 1993: 205 cited in Pallasmaa, 2005: 17). Ocularcentrism weakens our capacity for empathy, compassion and participation in the world and feeds nihilistic attitudes, whereas touch presents us with 'unavoidable nearness, intimacy, veracity and identification' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 22). The ocular realm also separates us from our world and the wisdom of our body as it can present life as a constant flow of images with ourselves as passive spectators (Pallasmaa, 2005: 25). It relies on flatness, surfaces, appearances and instant impacts and denies 'the veracity of matter' (Pallasmaa, 2005: 31).

According to Pallasmaa we therefore need to be aware of a new mode of 'open' looking which focuses on peripheral and unfocused vision and hapticity. He calls for the seeking of an 'aletheic gaze', to seek standpoints and perspectives that are 'multiple, pluralistic, democratic, contextual, inclusionary, horizontal and caring' as opposed to applying the 'assertoric gaze', which is rigid, fixed, narrow dogmatic and intolerant, 'exclusionary and unmoved' (Levin, 1988: 440 cited in Pallasmaa, 2005: 36). Thus, if we look with an aletheic gaze, we can reconsider the suffragette prison embroideries beyond their traditionally bound visual and linguistic parameters to find their material, sensed, felt and embodied meanings.

An expansive model of the skin-body

Blackman wrote of touch as an expansive sense. Bodies experience a visceral synchrony when they move together without actually touching (Blackman, 2008: 86). The anthropologist David Howes writes of 'skin knowledge'. The skin enables a tactile form of knowing that attunes us so that we are permeable and open to being affected by others, human and non-human (Howes, 2005: 27-37). Bodies become assembled with other bodies as assemblage (Blackman, 2008: 106). They are

multiple, complex, entangled in material and cultural processes and as open systems, they are receptive to potentialities and 'becomings' (Blackman, 2008: 97). The philosopher Erin Manning writes that the body is always in movement and always multiple (Manning, 2007: 136). There is a complex 'folding' of the inside of bodies with the outside of bodies to the extent that it is impossible to see bodies as individuals but always in relation (Blackman, 2008: 137-138). The psychoanalyst and clinician Nicola Diamond states that we possess a literal-littoral skin surface not unlike the Möbius strip, where our skin-bodies are 'in movement, liminal in being undecidedly inside-outside and precarious in identity in its openness to the possibility of change in the encounter with a shifting relational field' (Diamond, 2013: 186-187). She referred to Merleau-Ponty's skin envelope 'glove' turned inside-out and outside-in, 'the other and world installed therein' (Diamond, 2013: 187). For Diamond, there is a relational 'installation of otherness in the heart of own-ness, the inhabitation by another of our own skins, where the borders are constantly negotiated, sometimes incorporating and at other times attempting to exclude' (Diamond, 2013: 186). According to Diamond, there is no dividing line between the body and the outside world and we must consider 'the border of the body as *between skins* for the fundamental opening of my skin and of other skins to world – as a skin enveloping structure' (Diamond, 2013: 188).

In her autobiography, the suffragette Zoe Proctor referred to the small, embroidered bags she made in Holloway in March 1912. Nellie Taylor and Mary Aldham also made small, embroidered bags. Aldham's bag was formed like an envelope. The bags can be turned inside out and back again. Cloth folds over to create pocket spaces and an interior that can be turned into an exterior.

Fig. 92 *Mary Aldham, the small embroidered bag* (*c.*1908-1914)

Fig. 93 *Detail of the embroidered bag marked 'Grace'* (1912)

Embroidering through the cloth-skin boundary of these bags, in and out, out and in, materialises their openness to otherness installed therein. I argue that the embroidered bags and the other prison embroideries materialised the cloth-skin-body open to intensive, sensing and feeling. On her panel Terrero intensely and compulsively embroidered the names of the women who were with her on hunger strike and forcibly fed in April 1912.

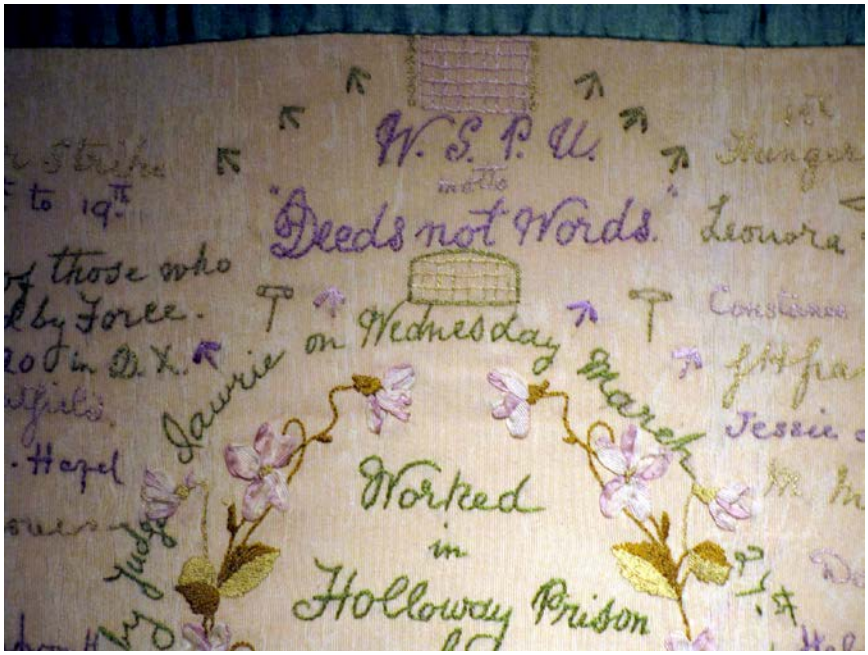

Fig. 94 *Detail of the Terrero Panel* (1912)

Allowing for difference and multiplicity

The need for a non-dualist model of the body that notes different bodies is of particular interest to feminist thinking and to the subject matter of this research. It has been contended that the body is at the centre of feminist theory (Conboy, Medina and Stanbury, 1997). Feminist philosophers and thinkers such as Rosi Braidotti and Elizabeth Grosz call for a 'corporeal feminism', an open approach to feminism and body theory that allows for the corporeal body and that discloses embodied experiences and felt orientations to the world that are not easily verbalised and understood (but might be articulated by a process such as embroidering) (Braidotti, 2002; Grosz, 1994). What Braidotti and Grosz seek are theoretical understandings that do not leave the body as a *tabula rasa* to be written upon or existing prior to social and cultural processes. Crucially, for Grosz and Braidotti, the body is not an immobile entity, a biological foundation with a fixed sexuality or gender (Blackman, 2008: 74). According to Blackman both theorists prefer to 'embrace a philosophical re-reading of the psyche in the context of the [corporeal] problems with cultural inscription' (Blackman, 2008: 76).

Grosz turns to the psyche or psychical in order to explore our more felt, lived relations to others. She writes of felt 'intensities' that are derived from lived, bodily sensations. Thus, for Grosz, bodies are 'a site for the circulation of 'energetic

intensities' that might be difficult to see or verbalise (Grosz, 1994: 138). Following this thinking, imprisoned suffragettes embroidering through cloth might be posited as embroidering a circulation of energetic intensity.

I made the work, *Intensity* (2018-2019), a messy network of threads and cloth, some fixed in wax, to materialise and capture the sharpened moments felt by the body. In this work, threads attach and re-attach to create thread tangles. They twist, twine, knot, ravel and unravel. The complex concentrations of thread concretise intensive moments in time and heightened moments of energy. Some of the threads were intensively bound as were the threads embroidered on the Women's Library panel.

Fig. 95 *Denise Jones, 'Intensity'* (2018-2019)

Grosz writes that in Western liberal democracies we view ourselves as coherent and unified, as an ego that is intact, whereas in fact this wholeness is fantastic and illusory (Grosz, 1994: 37). She sees the body as '…a discontinuous, nontotalizable [*sic*] series of processes, organs, flows, energies, corporeal substances and incorporeal events, speeds and durations' (Grosz, 1994: 164). Grosz rethinks the body as always

linking, connecting, making alliances and proliferating its capacities (Grosz, 1994:165). It moves, it does, it embroiders.

Like Grosz, Braidotti writes that bodies are inscribed in contested, contradictory and multi-layered ways (Braidotti, 2002). Braidotti's thinking introduces the idea of bodily affectivity as a realm of felt experience that is at the intersection of 'normativity' (what regulates and disciplines the body) and 'the body's capacity to fight back' (Blackman, 2008: 78). Crucially, what is being explored here, is the place of the body and its agency, in the corporeal concept of difference.

Using psychoanalysis, Judith Butler developed the concept of gender performativity as a way of theorizing subjectivity. Butler states that bodies struggle with the contradictions of cultural norms at a conscious and unconscious level. She asserts that transformations and resistance to cultural norms are not simply due to acts of will but will be 'governed by complex, unconscious factors' related to 'personal histories and how these intersect' to produce what Braidotti calls 'the bundle of contradictions that is the subject' (Braidotti, 2002: 39). Braidotti leans on the concept of 'becoming', which is not dissimilar to Butler's performativity but is strategically different (Blackman, 2008: 80). Rather than focus on the idea of loss and melancholy in the matching of normalized subject positions, Braidotti focuses on the plenitude of possibilities, of becoming subjects open to a multiplicity of possible differences (Braidotti, 2002: 71). If we follow Braidotti's model of 'becoming' and apply it to the suffragette embroideries we can extrapolate that the thread acts of their embroidering negotiated with cloth-skin-body differences and sought affirmative potentials and possibilities. Suffragettes embroidered and made sense of themselves in the face of intersecting, multiple, ambivalent, contradictions, inequalities and oppressions that were corporeal as well as discursive, cultural and ideological. When suffragettes autobiographically embroidered, they negotiated through the lived corporeal politics of being a 'woman' and how this intersected with their different lived experiences of class, race, sexuality, age and disability.

4.3. Skin in Psychoanalysis

A key theorist in contemporary psychoanalysis, Didier Anzieu writes of the connection between the skin and the ego in his seminal work *The Skin Ego* (Anzieu, [1989], 2016).[78] Anzieu's work is said to bring 'the body back to the centre of psychoanalytic enquiry' (Anzieu, 2016: xi). He draws on the writings of Sigmund Freud, where in *The Ego and the Id* (1923) Freud states that the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego; it is 'not merely a surface entity', but is 'itself a projection of a surface' (Freud, [1923], 1974: 16).

The skin ego acts 'between the psyche and body, making it the primary site or instrument of interaction between self and other', a site where there is continual exchange and interchange between (Blackman, 2008: 86). For Anzieu, the skin exists as an interface between the biological and social, organic and inorganic. It is external and internal. It is the 'intermediary screen' (Anzieu, 1989: 4). The psychical, corporeal and cognitive are considered to be thoroughly entangled processes (Blackman, 2008: 88). Diamond adds a relational dimension to the concept of the skin ego stating that the 'skin surface is a surface that is bound to others and to a social field' (Diamond, 2013: 124).

Anzieu elevated the significance of skin, claiming that it was the most vital organ. Thus, 'one can live without sight, hearing, taste or smell, but it is impossible to survive if the greater part of one's skin is not intact' (Anzieu, 1989: 4). For Anzieu, 'the centre is … to be found at the periphery [the skin]' rather than 'the old image of thought penetrating through to a truth core' (Anzieu, 1989: 31).

The psychoanalyst Marc Lafrance claims that Anzieu's theories of the skin ego provide a more concrete and body-centred approach to psychoanalysis unlike the language centred theories of his predecessor Jacques Lacan (Lafrance, 2013: 16). According to Lafrance, Anzieu condemned Lacan for having presented language as 'representative of the totality of the field of psychoanalysis, and of the totality of

[78] The author Robert Musil first introduced the term the 'skin ego' in *The Man without Qualities* ([1930-34], 1978). He referred to the visibility of emotions on the skin under the rubric *das Hautich*, the skin ego.

human praxis' (Anzieu, 2000b: 173 cited in Lafrance, 2013: 19). For Lafrance, Anzieu's theories provide a model that is non-dualist and non-determinist.

In *Thinking Through Skin*, (2001) Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey write that the turn to Anzieu – and also to the phenomenological writings of Merleau-Ponty ([1945], 2002) – is 'symptomatic of a more general move toward a model of embodiment that facilitates an understanding of the processes through which bodies are lived and imagined in more visceral and substantive ways' (Ahmed and Stacey, 2001: 9). Thus, Lafrance writes that Anzieu's work:

> …has potential to provide contemporary cultural theorists with new tools for thinking of human subjectivity as 'completely psychic, utterly somatic, essentially intersubjective and intercorporeal, constantly changing […] and fundamentally located in space and time.
>
> (Lafrance, 2013: 16-17)

Acquiring a skin ego

According to Anzieu, in the first six months of life the infant finds itself in a state of helplessness (Freud, [1895], 2001: 283-397 cited in Lafrance, 2013: 22). The child does not have a fully-fledged ego; instead it has a 'body ego' (Lafrance, 2013: 22). Anzieu sees the child as possessing a range of tools to move outwards beyond its nurturing environment and that it has a tendency to move towards objects and develop strategies towards them (Anzieu, 1989: 58). 'In this way, the body ego provides the infant with the building blocks of a fully-fledged ego' (Lafrance, 2013: 22). Anzieu argues that this body-ego is already a skin ego (Lafrance, 2013: 22).

For Anzieu many of the functions of the body in this primary pre-ego phase are already played out on and through the skin and the psyche, and these are propped on the actual body and its functions. Taking the functions of containment, protection and inscription as his three prime examples he shows that the skin operates as a surrogate ego for the infant, since it is the skin that performs the vital tasks the fully-fledged ego will perform (Lafrance, 2013: 23). He defines the skin ego as a 'mental representation of the experiences of the body's surface', which becomes 'a container capable of containing psychic contents' (Lafrance, 2013: 23). Anzieu's theory of the skin-body as a container fits here when considering the embroidered bags and cloths

of this study. We can consider them as cloth-skin-body containers holding psychic contents.

Lafrance writes that the skin is the site on and through which first impressions are laid down, brought into being and imagined, made phantasy.[79] The baby experiences what Anzieu describes as 'the phantasy of a shared skin' (Anzieu, 1989: 41-6; 62-5). The baby's skin is fused phantastically with the caregiver (Lafrance, 2013: 24). The baby then develops a sense of its own bodily space from tactile exchanges with the caregiver (Lafrance, 2013: 24). It begins to understand that it is a three-dimensional container with insides and outsides (Lafrance, 2013: 24). 'With this understanding comes a sense of containment and, by extension, individuality' (Lafrance, 2013: 24). When this process happens – when the infant begins to make sense of its body in individual and individuated terms – is when 'the phantasy of the shared skin gives way' (Lafrance, 2013: 24). Crucially Anzieu explained that this rendering 'does not come about without resistance and pain' (Anzieu, 1989: 63). Lafrance explains 'The infant's imagined acquisition of an individual skin is therefore accompanied by the imagined rending of a shared skin' (Lafrance, 2013: 24). Anzieu recognises this as 'phantasmatic flaying' since the infant has, up until this time experienced the security of the caregiver's skin as its own (Lafrance, 2013: 24). This rending is a key moment in the realisation that the infant has its own skin and is open to possible harms. It 'marks the infant's transition from the realm of the shared skin to the realm of the skin ego' when the child can transpose its somatic experiences of the skin onto the psychic plane and figure them psychically (Lafrance, 2013: 24-25).

Thus, 'to acquire a skin ego is to acquire both a physical and a mental skin of one's own – an acquisition that does not take place, however, without the traumatic loss of the shared skin' (Lafrance, 2013: 25). This phantasmatic rending of the shared skin opens up 'thinking about how primitive trauma might shape the human relationship to his or her skin across the lifespan…' (Lafrance, 2013: 25).[80]

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[79] The psychoanalytic term 'phantasy' and 'fantasy' are not used consistently throughout psychoanalytic theory and often fantasy is used without distinction (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2013: 13).

[80] He writes, '…it also allows for a developmental model that avoids the sexed and gendered essentialisms associated with the Freudian and by extension, Lacanian approaches', both concerned with 'phantasmatic genital castration' and the Oedipal complex (Lafrance, 2013: 25).

In making the skin as her or his own the infant is an active bodily being, with agency from the very beginning of life (Lafrance, 2013: 25). The caregiver is also important in this analysis as it stresses the radically relational nature of embodied experience (Lafrance, 2013: 26). The body's processes are thus 'at once concretely somatic and abstractly psychic' (Lafrance, 2013: 26). As humans we are constantly psychically making (or even embroidering) our own skin-bodies.

Mapping the foundations for security and safety

The skin ego has been referred to as having the functions of containment, protection and inscription, which are concepts of note with regard to the embroideries in this research.[81] Anzieu explains that these functions are 'propped' or 'grafted' as psychic functions onto somatic functions (Lafrance, 2013: 26). He claims that the structure of the skin ego was formed as psychic envelopes. In her translation of *The Skin Ego* (2016) Segal explains her substitution of the term 'envelope' with the term 'wrapping', which was closer to Anzieu's meaning of enclosure (Segal, 2016: xvii). For Anzieu, the senses and sensory experiences are transposed from the somatic plane onto the psychic plane and once transposed form envelopes, or wrappings or skins of the psyche.

Exploring further the idea of the psychical cloth-skin-body, I filled an old leather suitcase with folded envelopes made from printed, waxed and embroidered cloth. I called this work *Hide* (2017-2018). I wanted to draw attention to bodies, skins (as exemplified by the hide suitcase) and the unsealed psychic envelopes referred to by Anzieu (Anzieu, 1989). This work developed the idea of embroidering the cloth-skin-body as a way of opening out and revealing, as well as concealing and keeping safe. I added a needle, thread and feathers to the lining of the suitcase to recognise this expansion outwards, as if I was materialising a 'line of flight' from the suitcase. I was aware whilst making this work that the suffragettes had made small bags or containers and that there were also small bags amongst the Dutch resistance embroideries and from the concentration camp Ravensbrück (Bloem, 2018; Bergqvist Rydén, 2018).[82]

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[81] In 1985 Anzieu expanded his list of functions to include maintenance, individuation, inter-sensorality, sexualisation, recharging and self-destruction, but later questioned the inclusion of the latter (Lafrance, 2013: 26).

[82] See pages 31-32.

They were kept proximate to the body and they were used to keep small 'treasured' objects safe. They allowed their owners to keep secrets and they protected and held their possessions together. I also recognised that the words I was using to describe the bags and their functions had some psychoanalytical resonance: holding together, keeping safe, protecting, keeping secret, and keeping close.

Fig. 96 *Denise Jones, 'Hide'* (2017-2018)

Fig. 97 *Denise Jones, detail of 'Hide'* (2017-2018)

According to Anzieu, eventually the skin ego is superseded by the thinking ego, which allows for the development of symbolic thought, language and desire. Lafrance asserts that this does not make the skin ego any less important as the thinking ego is already informed and formed by the skin ego. He writes, '…the skin ego is the permanent support and ever-present backdrop of the thinking ego' (Lafrance, 2013: 30).

Whilst in accord with much of Anzieu's theories, in *Between Skins* (2013), Diamond pushes Anzieu's concept of the skin ego further into the relational psychoanalytic field and refers to a more open, plastic 'brain-body mapping' as being crucial to a 'skin matrix' set up. Then, from the very outset of life the baby's somatic-affective and psychic body is open to the relational other (the caregiver, (m)other, world).

Significantly for this research regarding cloth, skin, the body, embroidering and imprisoned suffragettes, the writings of Anzieu and Diamond place enormous emphasis on the secure early experiences of skins, which are needed to survive and thrive. In thinking about skin-bodies, Anzieu, Diamond and Lafrance provide a way of acknowledging the psychic, as well as the corporeal, somatic-affective and relational experiences of suffragettes under threat in Holloway and how these can begin to be connected to the embroideries under study. To move now from skin-bodies to cloth-skin-bodies can connect these experiences even more closely to the practice of their embroidering.

4.4. From Skin to Cloth: 'Cloth-Skin-Body'

In, *Skin: on the cultural border between self and the world* (2002) Claudia Benthien writes of sixteenth and seventeenth-century anatomical engravings of bodies, where the skin has been lifted. She states 'These figures clearly reveal the extent to which the skin was understood as a kind of enveloping leather or textile tent in which the true essence was concealed' (Benthien, 2002: 64). It is the idea of skin as being akin to cloth that is of interest here, rather than what has been held as the search for 'the true core'. Skin depicted as a corporeal cloth, a living *écorché*, is evident in other anatomical illustrations and works of art (Benthien, 2002: 65-80). In depictions of

the flaying of the satyr Marsyas skin is shown as a loose cloth stripped from the body.[83] The body is undressed of its skin: skin is draped, hung and worn, resembling a cloth apart from its original owner. Benthien writes of the 'textile, hairless garment of skin' (Benthien, 2002: 79). The flaying of Marsyas is described as a 'process of deanimalization; what Apollo removes, as though in a painful birth to humanness, is the noncivilized, the beastly in Marsyas' (Benthien, 2002: 79). It is an extraction from 'the animal shell, his 'furry hide' a splitting off of the animal. (Benthien, 2002: 79). Benthien also writes that he 'seems more undressed than flayed' (Benthien, 2002: 79).

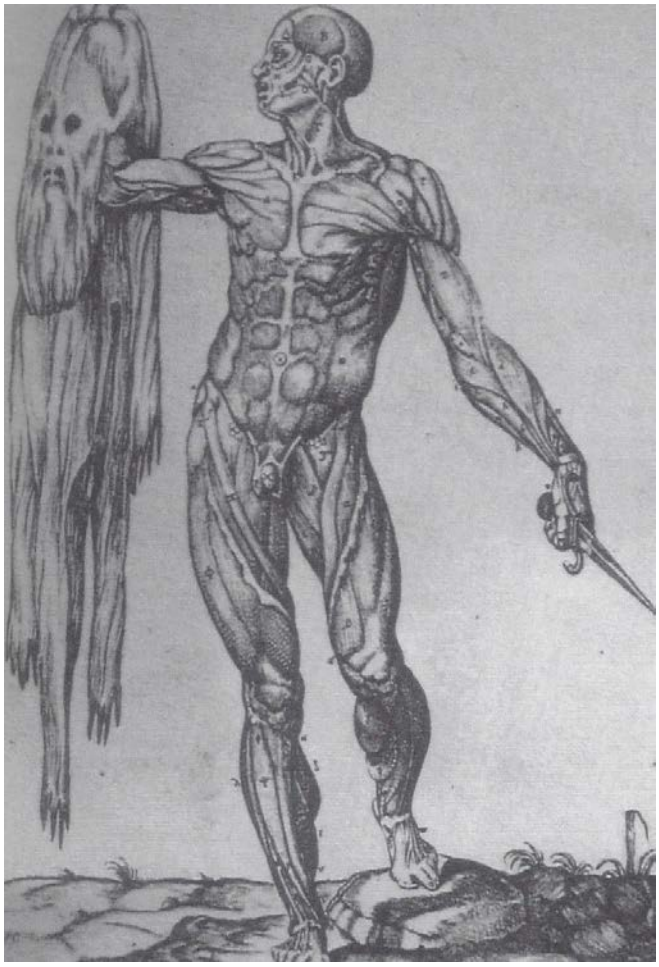

Fig. 98 *'Écorché', from Juan de Valverde de Hamusco, Historia de la composicion del cuerpo humano* (1556)

[83] Marsyas dared to compare himself to the god Apollo and challenged him to a musical contest, lost, and was punished by being flayed alive.

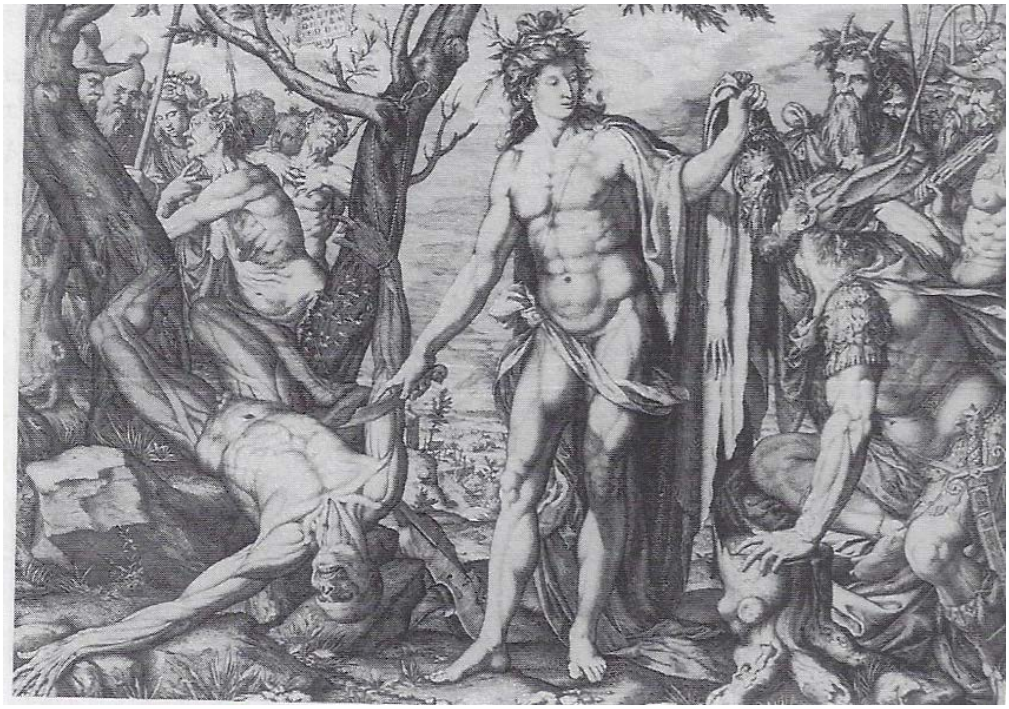

Fig. 99 *Melchior Meier, 'Apollo with the Flayed Marsyas'* (1581)

Fig. 100 *Damien Hirst, 'Saint Bartholomew, Exquisite Pain'* (2006)

Flaying is a ritual of the most extreme and excessive form of punishment, spectacle and pain (Benthien, 2002: 62, 74). In the myth of Marsyas and the martyrdom of St. Bartholomew the existing order is symbolically restored through these extreme means.[84] Lawbreakers, 'presumptive individuals' have taken from them the boundary of their bodies and are 'put back in their social place' (Benthien, 2002: 72). Benthien explicates, 'The act of flaying deprives the victims of their identity along with their lives; in extinguishing the skin, it obliterates the person' and removes it 'from the gaze of the public' to become an object (Benthien, 2002: 72, 81). Power is asserted over 'the human being's most elemental possession: his [or her] skin' (Benthien, 2002: 82).

The puncturing, piercing and removal of the skin is thus culturally loaded and enmeshed with power relations, punishments and the unmaking of the self. The skin as it separates and emerges from the body into a corporeal cloth, of the body yet apart from the body, can be regarded as a site where power and politics play and have played out. These ideas can link back to the experiences of Constance Lytton quoted at the opening of this chapter where she wrought a visceral political message through her skin. The very reference to skin-cloth (and embroidering through skin-cloth, reclaiming skin-cloth) can evoke corporeal power relations. Julian Walker's unpicking and re-embroidering of old samplers made by young girls is described as unsettling. His work helps us to speculate that power relations are at play when one embroiders through the cloth (skin-body). Walker's embroidering powerfully negates and replaces some of the original work. He inserts himself into and authoratively takes over the projected cloth-skin-body of the original female embroiderer.

[84] The apostle St. Bartholomew sacrilegiously converted King Polymius to the Christian faith and was consequently flayed alive and beheaded. Religious artworks have depicted him with his skin draped around his body.

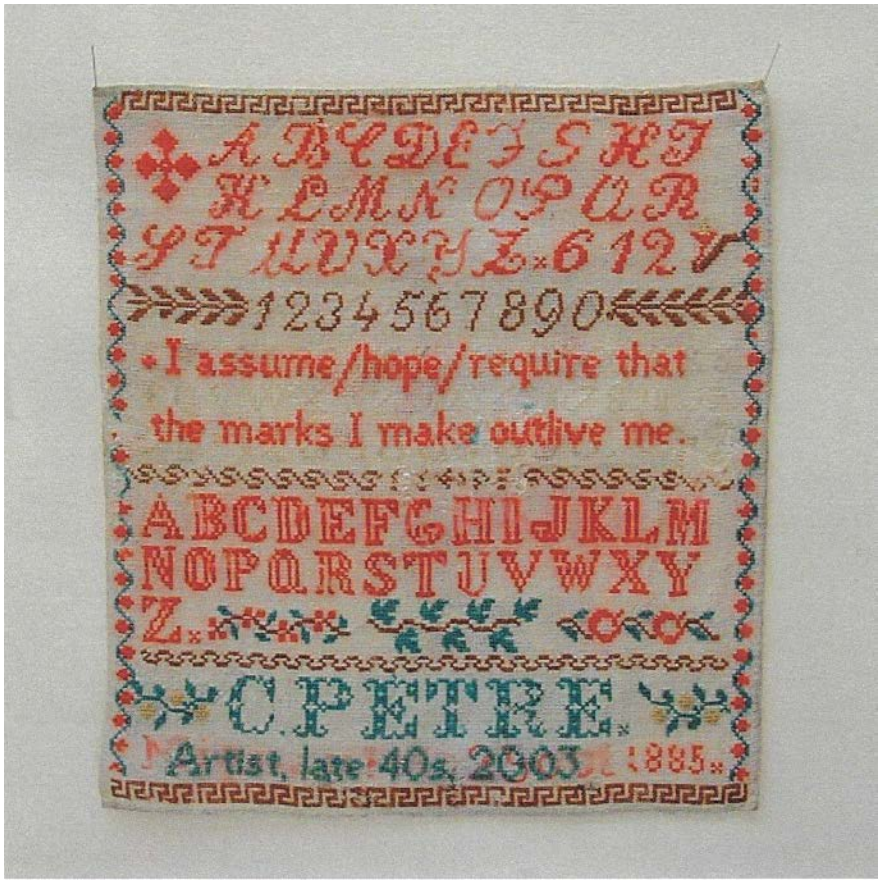

Fig. 101 *Julian Walker, 'Dialogue with C. Petre'* (2003)

Benthien adds that in medical texts the skinless woman was rarely portrayed as *écorché* (Benthien, 2002: 85). Woman was seen to exist on the skin surface where she was exposed to the male gaze (Benthien, 2002: 90-91). For Benthien, this narrative emphasised that there was a void beneath her skin and she lacked form. Her skin became a mask, a canvas, a veil, a painted deception and an object. She was not profound but 'a bag of rot inside the skin' (Logau, 1872: 103 cited in Benthien, 2002: 94). The smooth skin of woman became a fetishized signifier of masculine desire, her skinless-ness representing a threat to 'the inner and outer borders in which and through which the speaking subject is constituted' (Benthien, 2002: 94).

Following this thinking, I suggest that through claiming their skin by embroidering, suffragettes could culturally make a political claim for themselves, for their bodies and for their being. Skin as a tactile embroidered cloth could assume enormous cultural weight and become a site of negotiation with the powerful patriarchal gaze.

Psychical cloth-skin

In Segal's translation of Anzieu's *The Skin Ego* (2016) there are numerous references to skin and cloth, allowing for the intersection of textile and psychoanalysis. The text refers to 'psychical wrappings' that interweave (Anzieu, 2016: 216). Anzieu lists sound, thermal, olfactory and taste 'wrappings' and 'wrappings of suffering'. Cloth terms are used to describe the skin-ego, as a 'backcloth' (Anzieu, 2016: 238, 251, 253), bag (Anzieu, 2016: 235), tunic (Anzieu, 2016: 234), and the thread term, 'loops' is used (Anzieu, 2016: 182). Anzieu's references to the functions of the skin-ego such as containment, protection, shelter and screening, are all qualities and characteristics of cloth that are multiply referred to in textile culture (Gordon, 2011: 23-37; Jeffries, 2016; Hemmings, 2012; Kettle and McKeating, 2012).

The researcher Stella North makes specific reference to cloth, skin and the surfacing of the self, proposing the concept of 'the clothing-ego'. North contends that 'Clothing is as much as skin, a psychical surface' (North, 2013: 67). For North, 'The mutually interfaced skin and clothing' are like the 'hyphen-hybridized body and ego: each is in- and on-each' (North, 2013: 68). The skin forms 'the hinge between these two entities body and ego, and clothing the further hinge between body and world' (North, 2013: 68). She posits, 'The body thus becomes an interface of inter-implicating skins: clothing-ego facing skin ego, and skin ego facing body-ego' (North, 2013: 68). She states, 'On and in, too, are skin and clothing in relation to each other. They are implicated in each other not just materially but linguistically and rhetorically' (North, 2013: 69). They are 'inter-forming, inter-facing, each is in the other, each on each' (North, 2013: 69). To think clothing and skin is therefore 'to explicate and to implicate: to unfold, and to be folded within' (MacKendrick, 2004: 84 cited in North, 2013: 70). For North, clothing is entangled in bodily experience and helps to shape the self. 'Clothing and skin is forever *sur*-facing, forever inter-facing' (North, 2013: 72). She claims:

> Skin and clothing, staging a continually inter-changing encounter, become infused, interfused; intermingling, they stand as a recursively, structuring surface.
>
> (North, 2013: 72)[85]

[85] I refer to embroidering as engaging with the surfaces *and* structure of cloth on pages 192-193.

I argue that North's clothing-ego can be expanded into a *cloth-ego*. The cloth-ego is not limited to the close proximity of touching the body as with clothing, but may be psychically projected from the body. A cloth-ego, hyphenated in its proximity to skin and the body but abstracted and expanded into the world can be a handkerchief or a tablecloth, panel or a small bag as with the suffragette embroideries. These small cloths wrought by the physical body, express the psychical, embodied and relational body. Body, skin and cloth can be aligned in these small embroideries as of the *cloth-skin-body*. The projected cloth-skin-body cannot be taken off or put on as a 'second skin' but can gather the traces of lived lives as continuous (yet fragmentary and repeatedly shedded) first body-skins. The cloth-skin-body thus becomes a space where sensations and feelings can be materialised and where protean life can be recorded as well as being open to the future. Concurring with North, I would therefore substitute 'cloth' for 'clothing' in the following quote:

> Located on the threshold of body and world, clothing [cloth] simultaneously extends the skinned body into the space of the world, and marks the limit of interaction.
>
> (North, 2013: 72)

In a note at the end of her paper, North acknowledges that she had originally termed the clothing-ego as 'the cloth ego', placing an emphasis on 'the common materiality of cloth and skin' (North, 2013: 86). However, she states that she prefers to use 'clothing-ego' as it refers to the finished product rather than the unprocessed cloth. Embroidering a cloth-ego might be seen to be an on-going process as opposed to the fixity implied by the clothing-ego as a product.

Seen through contemporary psychoanalysis, cloth and embroidering through cloth can thus become radically reconfigured and implicated in the recording and formation of the self and its wellbeing. A gap opens whereby all the millions of disregarded cloths that have been embroidered (produced and continue to be produced) by lived skin-bodies and were not for wear, such as table cloths, *d'oyleys*, tray-cloths, handkerchiefs, bags, pouches, towels, work cloths, can become suffused with rich and overlooked meanings. Conceiving of a 'cloth ego' rather than a 'clothing-ego' would include and embrace these embroideries, and these would include those embroideries that were worked by suffragettes in Holloway Prison.

4.5. Processing Experiences

As a psychoanalyst and clinician, Nicola Diamond writes of her work with victims of torture and abuse with specific reference to Anzieu's theories of the skin ego. Diamond writes that the body enacts the narrative of trauma 'before words are found or deployed' (Diamond, 2013: 164). Thus, '…the body enacts fragmentary body states in motility and movement, the language of gesture and in sensation, but there may be no cognition, or conscious sense, awareness or understanding, of the situation' (Diamond, 2013: 132). She continues '…the body can tell stories about situations lived and set up by environmental relations that have not been subjectively and linguistically processed' (Diamond, 2013: 164). She refers to a case of sexual abuse where the patient 'would experience sensory states whereby she felt penetrated from all directions and would blush uncontrollably with shame, desire, inhibition, humiliation and the sense of violation' (Diamond, 2013: 165).

According to Diamond, abused patients exhibit fragile body ego states. We can speculate here that the abused bodies of imprisoned suffragettes who experienced forcible feeding, heard it, or felt threatened by the possibility of it, would also exhibit fragile body ego states. Abused bodies have experienced perturbations of the relational and supportive skin-matrix structure, by a 'toxic' other (Diamond, 2013: 165, 169, 170). The threatening toxic other has psychically 'got under the skin' and the protective and filtering skin boundary has been breached (Diamond, 2013: 155). For such victims, body *gestalt* may be fragmenting, collapsing, and body integrity and the corresponding fear of bodily disintegration may be occurring (Diamond, 2013: 164-5).

Connections can be made here to the embroidering of the suffragette cloths. All the embroidered threads were neatly tied in at the back of the work to prevent the embroidery from becoming undone and unravelling. In part, it might also explain why embroidering occurs at the edges and seams of some of the cloths, their most vulnerable areas of wear. The seams of the bag by 'Grace' were edged in herringbone stitch, the edges of the shield by 'ASC' were worked in blanket stitch and the embroidered signatures on the West Hoathly handkerchief patrol around the cloth edges.

Fig. 102 *Detail of the West Hoathly handkerchief showing the signatures embroidered around the edge of the cloth* (1912)

Diamond explains that torture and abuse work, 'to break down all body boundaries and destroy meaning, fundamentally affecting sensory skin-touch body states, sensitivity of touch and reception of tactile stimuli' (Diamond, 2013: 183). As referred to in chapter three, Elaine Scarry describes the all-consuming pain of torture as the unmaking of language and the world (Scarry, 1985). Discriminating and filtering tactile encounters can be destroyed, leaving the tortured body (where gross touch dominates) in a state of 'alive but dead and no value or meaning is possible anymore' (Diamond, 2013: 183). Diamond concurs with the philosopher Georgio Agamben, in describing this state of survival as 'bare life' (Agamben, 1998; Diamond, 2013: 183).

Chronic and unfathomable pain can also exist post trauma and this can give the sense of possessing an alien body that has been taken over (Diamond, 2013: 183). The psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche explains this feeling as 'the veritable spine in the protective wall of the ego', which Diamond interprets as 'spine in the flesh' (Laplanche, 1985: 24 cited in Diamond, 2013: 183). She describes a state where the

body's 'ownness' is lost and where in extreme cases the boundary between human and non-human breaks down, a state of *Unheimlich*, de-realisation and depersonalisation, an estrangement of flesh, of 'not me' ensues (Diamond, 2013: 184).[86]

The state of *Unheimlich* – of not being at home in one's own body – becomes part of the somatic living on, well after the act of violation, abuse or torture. For Diamond, *Unheimlich* readily involves the body and is frequently experienced in somatic symptoms (Diamond, 2013: 184-5). Diamond made clear that her focus was not only on the visual and ideational body image but also on 'the sensory and veritable heightened states of sensory and somatic alterity' where alterity is disowned flesh, excess flesh to be removed. This excess flesh can take on 'abject status' (Kristeva, 1982; Diamond, 2013: 186). It can exist 'on the border, un-decidable, between subject and object, me and not me' (Diamond, 2013: 186). Thus, affective, sensory, somatic, relational and traumatic body states need to be processed, to shore up the psychic cloth-skin-body boundary and enable understanding and repair. Diamond's theories could be speculatively applied to the experiences of the suffragette body in prison and under threat. Processing this potential and actual bodily threat through procedural acts such as embroidering might enable a psychic re-making, a repairing of the self through tapping into the secure laid down skin matrix that loops back to the primary caregiver or (m) other, in effect a 're-pairing.'

In my work *The Sheltering Cloth* (2018-2019), I decided to intensely embroider the entire cloth to further explore the relationship between embroidering the cloth-skin-body and protection. In 2014, I had described the embroidery called, *Quietly, With Every Stitch* as being like an autobiographical skin that I had shed. As I finished this work I described it as slipping from my hands away from me and onto the table. In making *Cloth of Dreams* (2015-2016) I also felt that I was inside the embroidery, wrapped within it as I made it.

[86] This term is derived from Freud's *The Uncanny* (1919) where the term *Heimlich*, the opposite of *Unheimlich* refers to homeliness and hearth, the familiar and comforting (Diamond, 2013: 184).

The Sheltering Cloth (2018-2019) emerged from the thinking behind *The Waning of the Light* (2017). I began to consider the abuse of suffragette bodies in prison and their need for protection from potential physical and psychical harms. Embroidering this cloth drew on the knowledge that prisoners keep, have kept, objects in prisons to hold and to ground themselves with the material world, to rebuff dehumanisation (Bergqvist Rydén, 2018). I attached shells and mother of pearl buttons with web-like embroidery to the embroidered cloth. I made the connection between shell and sheltering and harked back to collecting shells with my mother as a child. Shell, shelter, pearl-shell buttons, cloth, thread and embroidery were all assembled to materialise a relational re-pairing with the safety and protection of (in my case, maternal) human care. I also attached a tactile silk ribbon talisman containing thread and my own hair to the edge of the embroidered cloth. I was aware that Terrero had also used silk ribbon at the edges of her panel.

Fig. 103 *Denise Jones, 'The Sheltering Cloth'* (2018-2019)

Embroidering as 'language'

We think of language as synonymous with symbolic language and the discursive. Diamond posits that the term 'language' should be more broadly conceived in that she would include the 'open and enriched affective bodily field' (Diamond, 2013: 40).

For Diamond 'language' has a 'primary basis in affective somatic/sensory-based interaction' with the relational (m) other or caregiver from birth as discussed earlier.[87] She asserts that the body works with the brain and that language is made both materially and discursively.

I made a series of embroideries, *Remembering, Retracing, Reworking* (2018), and framed them in wooden frames behind glass. I wanted to reference the framing of received visual 'art' work and set up how anomalous this was to the sense of touch that is registered with textile. Inadvertently, I was exploring embroidery as an embodied 'language' that articulates thinking, feeling and touch. The framed works frustratingly denied the viewer the ability to touch yet recognised that there was some desire to do so. Diamond acknowledges that 'absence' becomes registered by the withdrawal of touch, being unable to touch (Diamond, 2013: 178).

In this work I played with the idea of the viewer wanting to touch, stroke, handle the textile and having these impulses denied. The tactile qualities of these framed embroideries were compounded at exhibition because the embroidery *Cloth of Dreams* (2015-2016) was hung alongside with a sign requesting 'Do Not Touch'.[88] Viewers could not help but touch *Cloth of Dreams* as the embroidery was hung like a domestic cloth. For the viewer there was an unsaid, unconscious compulsion to touch this embroidery.

In discussing absence, touch and emergent symbolic language Diamond amplified the importance of unconscious tactile (and material) experiences between the caregiver and child that lead to the acquisition of cognitive language. For Diamond it is the relational absence between the baby and caregiver, registered through the sensory and semiotic exchange that aids the capacity to symbolise. The ability to symbolise does

[87] Diamond contends that psychoanalytical theories such as those of Lacan's emphasise the realm of ideas and the mental sphere, leaving the body out. For Diamond, it is the (m) other's imperfect relational and bodily responses to the child that registers absence, a temporal delay, a deferral of satisfaction, marking forever the 'somatic striving' semiotic formation and crucially, access to the symbol (Diamond, 2013: 45, 84).

[88] The embroideries were exhibited at The Knitting and Stitching Shows, London, Harrogate and Dublin (2019).

not come about through linguistic exchange alone as advocated by Lacan (Diamond, 2013: 178).

Fig. 104 *Denise Jones, 'Cloth of Dreams' (2015-2016) and 'Remembering, Retracing, Reworking'* (2018)

In playing with embroidery, spacing, hanging, framing, touch, being unable to touch, absence and presence, my attention was drawn to the connection between embroidery, the body, touch and language. For me this work highlighted once more that embroidering is an embodied tactile process, and that embroidery can summon the (absent) presence of the body. For me, it confirmed that embroidering is a 'language' of the thinking-feeling, relational, corporeal and material body above and beyond the discursive limits of symbolic language.

Diamond's psychoanalytical writings address the 'relation of the symbolic field to bodily processes and expression' (Diamond, 2013: 43). She claims that the 'work of the symbol is not solely aligned to speech and the linguistic sphere but encompasses a sensory semiotic and is somatically accessed' (Diamond, 2013: 43). So, 'it is not the

case that in the beginning was the word' (Diamond, 2013: 43-44). But, in the beginning was the plastic (lived, bio) body open to a relational life with the (m)other/social field.
Diamond asserts that the somatic-affective, as a 'proto-conversation', has access to the symbolic and reflection, through procedural enactment. 'Thinking and action develop together' (Diamond, 1998: 207; 2013:40).

Following Diamond, a crucial pathway opens whereby embroidering through cloth can be posed as an embodied process, as a series of procedural thread acts through cloth, where thinking and feeling develop together. Embroidering can connect somatic-sensory-affective, relational and psychic expression with symbolic processing. The procedural enactment of embroidering through the cloth-skin-body can be coterminous with the development and surfacing of language and thinking. For Diamond:

> …the somatic-sensory level is profound and should not be viewed as existing outside language and as therefore incapable of symbolic access or of any symbolic processing potential. In my definition, symbolic processing requires both bodily procedural processing and…language based linguistic process.
>
> (Diamond, 2013: 195)

Importantly, Diamond writes of 'procedural embodied processing where non-verbal relational sense gets reworked' and that this can be pre-reflective and based on body action; in such a case re-enactment is not a repetition but brings about some change. Thus, deep-seated difficulties (such as actual and potential penetrations of the suffragette body) are not transformed only at the level of ideas, words and speech but somatically felt action based meanings also need attending to (Diamond, 2013: 195). Thus, Diamond explained how in her clinical work the alexithymic (no words for feelings), can be processed, brought to the surface and worked through. Affective-somatic change will not occur if this not addressed.

I suggest that this is where embroidering for suffragettes assumed cogency in that for Diamond, enactment, the act of doing (embroidering) is important in accessing that which cannot be verbalised, as well as that which can be verbalised. Access lies in the action itself; in driving a car, dancing a dance, doing physical acts, embroidering.

The body just does it. Diamond hypothesises that '…a story can be told by the body before words are found or before the person puts feelings into consciousness thought or speech' (Diamond, 2013: 196). Bodily know how is played out and is unrecognised on a reflective level. Talking may not be enough for the patient as it infers that the body has no symbolic significance. Ways of reworking experience, procedural re-enactments, such as embroidering, can bring about shifts in affective somatic-semantic states.

What we can draw from this is that embroidering can function as procedural enactment and enable the repair of the affective-somatic-relational body as well as give access to linguistic processing.

Embroidering through the projected cloth-skin-body of the suffragette embroideries (as procedural enactment) helped the perturbations of the sensory-somatic-affective and relational body to surface. It helped to make sense of suffragette bodily experiences. The invasive 'spine in the flesh' that potentially or actually penetrated the body (as with the torture of forcible feeding, or the breaching the skin-body boundary with threatening words, imagery and physical harms) could be processed and named.

Embroidering could bridge the gap in meaning between the body and mind offering the potential for understanding and repair. Embroidering through the cloth-skin-body for suffragettes can thus be considered as a particular and expansive mode of articulation connected to and beyond what we understand as, or is reduced by symbolic 'language.' It also follows that the doing of embroidering as an embodied material and discursive practice was instrumental in helping to configure and reconfigure the suffragette (political) self.

5. 'In-between': Embroidering as a Subversive, Political and Dangerous Practice

> Out of the little group of half a dozen women who used to meet in a room in Manchester has emerged the movement, which has shaken the whole fabric of politics.
>
> (Gardiner, 1917: 144)

> …harmed bodies draw near each other and seek to engage in new acts that will restore their power, protect against a future harm, or compensate for damage done – in *that* consists their political action…
>
> (Bennett, 2010: 101)

> All radical engagements are inventions in some sense: unthought, untried, extraordinary. Let us improvise.
>
> (Manning, 2007: 161)

5.1. Towards the Political

Roszika Parker argues that women can reposition themselves societally and politically through subversively appropriating embroidery. She ponders that embroidery might be considered to be a 'revolutionary art' (Parker, [1984], 2010: 189). Specifically, she writes of the symbolic use of embroidery by the suffragist movement in its function to change ideas about women and femininity, 'to evoke femininity – but femininity represented as a source of strength, not as evidence of women's weakness' (Parker, [1984], 2010: 197). In describing the Terrero panel and the Wilcox handkerchief she maintains that:

> The delicate embroidery declared that the supposed weaker sex was being subjugated to the torture of force-feeding – and resisting. They signed their names in the very medium, which was considered proof of their frailty, and justification for their subjugation.
>
> (Parker, [1984], 2010: 201)

What Parker emphasises is that the suffragettes used embroidery to play with cultural meanings. Embroidery was used as a subversive counter to what was ideologically

expected of it, as feminine, trivial, superfluous, of the amateur and of the domestic. Importantly, she states:

> Limited to practising art with a needle and thread, women have nevertheless sewn a subversive stitch – managed to make meanings of their own in the very medium intended to inculcate self-effacement.
>
> (Parker, [1984], 2010: 215)

Parker claims that it is the developing 'categorisation of embroidery as the art of personal life outside male-dominated institutions and the world of work, that has given it a special place in counter-cultures and radical movements' (Parker, [1984], 2010: 204). It is therefore being culturally 'outside' of that which is considered to be the traditional and received art forms, such as painting or sculpture that gives embroidery its politics. Parker also asserts that embroidery should be regarded as: an affective 'emotional gesture'; a departure from 'competitive individualism' where ownership can be ambiguous; and it can confirm that 'personal life [in part] is determined by the wider political structure' (Parker, [1984], 2010: 208, 209).

Parker is primarily concerned with embroidery and the ideological and cultural play of signs and meanings. She does not explore how embroidery, and more specifically how the material process of embroidering, can be implicated in the subversive and political. Parker's standpoint regarding embroidering and the political remains linguistically and visually orientated.

Likewise, Maureen Daly Goggin's examination of the Terrero panel describes this embroidery as an example of 'identity performance' and 'rhetorical praxis', which reveals Terrero's political allegiance, most notably in her embroidering of the initials of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) (Goggin, 2009a: 18-20). Goggin claims that, 'This handkerchief can be read as a political protest' and that Terrero 'made embroidery as a political statement ', thus rooting her argument in the textual, of what appears as words on the surface of the cloth (Goggin, 2009a: 34, 20).[89] Thus,

[89] Goggin acknowledges in a further publication the turn towards the material and that what can be counted as text needs to be opened up to include a more 'fluid, process orientated view of knowledge construction' (Goggin, 2009b: 5). She concurs with Jane Marcus that 'history is preserved not in the art object, but in the tradition of making the art object' and she also refers to the need 'to understand

Goggin focuses on the visual and linguistic interpretation of the panel and does not elucidate why Terrero chose to embroider or whether there was political significance in the materials used, in the process of embroidering or if the presence of the body was of note.[90]

The textile historian Eileen Wheeler also examines the politics of Terrero's embroidery and further explores its textual implications. She writes of the stitches as 'being imbued with political purpose' once more focusing on the embroidered text. Wheeler is in accordance with Parker, writing that the women consciously and subversively used embroidery because of its ideological and cultural connotations (Wheeler, 2012: 7). Thus, Wheeler relies on the 'symbolic content' of the embroidery and what it signifies, to align it with the political (Wheeler, 2012: 11).

This is not to deny that 'reading' the text and imagery on these embroideries gives immediate access to their subversive and political meanings. Terrero explicitly embroidered the names of resistant women who were forcibly fed in April 1912. Wilcox and Terrero expounded their support for the WSPU on their embroideries by embroidering the abbreviation. Being aware of what embroidery came to culturally signify also influenced their embroidering. They could use embroidery to circumvent prison rules. Thus, Wilcox may have used embroidery on the package to deflect the eye of the warders in order to defiantly conceal or receive a forbidden letter (see Figures 4, 5, 83 and 84).

However, beyond these discursive 'readings', concealed within the material process of their making, there are more nuanced and textured understandings to be had. This chapter explores the relationship between embroidering and the political from this perspective. It asks what is it about the material process of embroidering that links it to subversion and the political, and how can embroidering be considered to be

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choices of threads, materials, stitches, colours, motifs and so on.' And continues, 'in other words, to know how to read and write the fabric via the mind and body' (Goggin, 2009b: 5; Marcus, 1988: 222). Goggin gives hegemony to the conscious and linguistic, the 'text centric' field, in the making of the political (Goggin, 2009b: 5).

[90] The names were already signed in pencil on the cloth before Terrero embroidered them, thus raising the question as to why they needed to be embroidered?

dangerous? The politics of New Materialism thread through the discussion, drawing out the assertion that bodies, materials and material processes are in the words of the political theorist, Jane Bennett, 'vibrant'. She writes of 'vibrant matter' with its own 'trajectories, propensities or tendencies' (Bennett, 2010: viii). For Bennett matter can be harnessed and have its own emergent unforeseen outcomes. Scrutinising the material parameters of embroidering will therefore push further Parker's original contentions and will augment her argument.

Bennett states that following the ontology of 'vibrant matter' can 'stretch received concepts of agency, action, and freedom sometimes to breaking point' (Bennett, 2010: x). Leaning on 'vibrant matter' can thus offer a radical way of thinking about embroidering. And, although beyond the scope of this thesis it can also pose new thinking about the material process of embroidering and its recurring presence in contested spaces beyond the feminist.[91]

Thus, this chapter focuses on analysing why imprisoned suffragettes specifically used the material process of embroidering to express their politics and their incarceration. It explores how their embroidering and being subversive, political and dangerous were culturally and materially entangled.

5.2. Towards the Material-Political

The philosopher Arthur C. Danto explores the idea that for the ancient Greeks, weaving was both a 'model and a metaphor' for political thinking and that cloth is a metaphor for aggregate governance, the body politic. He claims that since our Western culture rests on Greek foundations, 'weaving is as much a part of our [Western] conceptual scheme today as it was in the time of Homer' (Danto, 2006: 23). Danto explains how Plato disparaged the fine arts as being fundamentally mimetic and wrought to give pleasure and illusion, whereas the art of weaving was an apt metaphor for 'the art of the life of the community', the praxis of life, the human condition (Danto, 2006: 29). Pushing further into the writings of Plato, Danto claims

[91] See chapter one, section two.

that an analogy between the weaving process and the fabric 'that results from its labours' and 'what one might call the art of justice' can be made, justice being a way of harmonising society in the interest of producing a unity (Danto, 2006: 30). Injustice can be therefore construed as the condition of being in disharmony and disunity, 'a failure in the weave of the state' and 'in the fabric of the human soul' (Danto, 2006: 30-31).

Leaning on Plato's writings Danto acknowledges that weaving is a powerful metaphor for integrative human relationships, an allegory for a social and public cloth that belongs to everyone. Thus, there is 'common ground' in the art of weaving and statesmanship. The 'creative judgement' of the weaving process enables the combination and interweaving of different and even opposed 'human materials' and (although concerned with building in small stages) has the 'whole fabric in view' (Danto, 2006: 34-35). Weaving is seen to be an incorporating process. Danto reiterates that many skills are needed to produce a harmonious state. Drawing on Plato's thinking he writes:

> We need philosophers, guardians, and producers, all of them necessary and none of them dominant. And weaving naturally suggests itself as a metaphor to him [Plato] because of the way in which these disparate but necessary elements can be held together in a whole that offers shelter, protection, and fulfilment.
>
> (Danto, 2006: 36)

Thus, with reference to the writings of Plato, Danto makes a very powerful connection between thread, cloth and politics. In woven cloth, he evokes a metaphor for the polity, and for social justice: its weave of warp and weft threads representing an imaginary harmonious social balance that offers the skin-like shelter of protection and fulfilment.

However, whilst opening the debate about thread, weave and the body politic, Danto's explanation calls to a stable and utopian configuration of binary cloth, politics and bodies. His model refers to an ideology of human subjects within a fixed structure rather than thinking of threads and cloth in formation and bodies in genesis.

Bennett offers thinking that draws away from the presumption of human hegemony in the world and gives attention to materiality and its implications for the political. She therefore recognises and includes non-human material as well as the materiality of bodies in her theories (Bennett, 2010). Following Bennett, any discussion of the politics of suffragette bodies, threads and cloth would recognise the energies and forces of matter that are, and were, felt. She writes of a vibrant materiality that flows dynamically alongside and inside humans, a 'confederation' of the human and non-human. For Bennett, materials and material processes become 'things', '*quasi* agents or 'actants', the latter a term borrowed from Bruno Latour (Bennett, 2010: viii; Latour, 2004: 237). She describes an, 'actant' as a source of action, with the efficacy to do things, produce effects, make a difference, and alter the course of events. Its 'competence is deduced from [its] performance rather than posited in advance of the action' (Bennett, 2010: viii). Bennett explains that some 'actants' are 'protoactants', as their 'performances and energies are too small or too fast to be 'things' (Bennett, 2010: viii). For Bennett 'thing-power' is about 'constituting the outside of our own experiences', venturing into that which we do not know (Bennett, 2010: xvi). Materials and material processes such as embroidering thus have a material vibrancy that exceeds their status as 'objects' (Bennett, 2010). 'Things', threads, cloth have a material resonance that cannot be pinned down and are independent of the words, images and feelings they provoke in us: a materiality that is difficult to theorize (Bennett, 2010: xvi).

In accordance with Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987, 2013) Bennett prefers to regard the world as composed of human and non-human 'assemblages'. She writes that we assemble with the non-material world: we conjoin, and as humans make 'intelligent improvisations' with it. Our actions therefore become not singular human acts but distributed amongst an array of actors including the non-human (Bennett, 2010: 20-38). We could see the suffragette embroideries as assemblages, of the human – as cognitive and material beings – and with the material of the non-human – as thread and cloth – all brought together *to act*, as well as enact, ratify, record and document what is already cognitively known. The politics of the suffragettes, cloth and thread were all in formation in the embroideries: the suffragette embroideries were a productive form of that assemblage.

Bolt writes:

> I argue that it is through process or practice [of embroidering] that the outside world enters the work and the work casts its effects back into the world. In the dynamic productivity of the performative act, the work of art produces ontological effects.
>
> (Bolt, 2004: 178)

Following Bolt, we might consider the process of embroidering as a 'co-emergent practice' and importantly for this research as not just a 'play of signs'. She continues:

> In a co-emergent practice, matter is not impressed upon but rather matter enters into process in the dynamic interplay through which meanings and effects emerge. A picture [an embroidery] emerges in and through the play of the matter of objects (the dynamic object), the matter of bodies, the materials of production and the matter of discourse. It is not just a play of signs.
>
> (Bolt, 2004: 178)

Suffragettes as bodies of matter themselves, selected linen, wool, cotton and silk materials and the steel needle as a tool and through and with embroidering they harnessed the properties of these materials. They worked the pliable fine weave structure of the cloth with twisted, and particularly in the case of silk, unruly threads, with a hard, firm, sharp, fine needle. The process involved the constant pushing and pulling of threads and cloth with the needle and by the suffragette body. I suggest that the material process was preoccupied with the tautness, tightness, stretch, tension, traction and pressure felt between the textile materials and the suffragette body.

My continuous embroidering of *Cloth of Dreams* (2015-2016) highlighted the tension between the fine cotton lawn cloth and the fine twisted silk thread. To work it, the embroidery had to be stretched within a taut frame and the thread constantly shredded as it was repeatedly pulled through the cloth. A pile of waste fibre was left over from the silk threads.

Fig. 105 *Denise Jones, 'Cloth of Dreams', showing the shredded waste thread and fibres* (2015-2016)

The emergence of a public and the *demos*

Bennett opens the wider the discourse regarding structure(s), agency (agencies) and politics to assert and include the material in our thinking. She draws on the philosopher John Dewey's concept of the public in *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), explaining it as a 'confederation of bodies, bodies pulled together not so much by choice… as by a shared experience of harm, that, over time, coalesces into a "problem"' (Bennett, 2010: 100; Dewey, 1927). This public (in Dewey's instance a human public) is inducted into action by their affective capacity, its human bodily responses to the problem. We could insert here 'a public of suffragettes' embroidering individually and together, in response to the problematic threats and corporeal realities they perceived in prison.

For Bennett, the actions of a public have unpredictable consequences beyond its original intentions. In fact, consequences become more significant than the original proposition. Bennett describes how a body is always surprised by what it can do. Quoting Latour, she writes that what 'acts through me is also surprised by what I do, by the chance to mutate, to change, and to bifurcate' (Latour, 1999: 281 cited in

Bennett, 2010: 103). For imprisoned suffragettes, the action of hunger striking for instance caused a chain of events that escalated into forcible feeding and into more dramatic acts of defiance such as arson. The women acted with and through embroidering to translate and document events. Embroidering enabled events to be named and their impact brought to consciousness. It allowed for mutation and transposition.

Bennett leans on the text, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy* (1998) by the political philosopher Jacques Rancière, to unpick the concept of the political act. She explains that within the public there exists the '*demos*', the idea that the arbitrariness of the dominant may be disrupted. Rancière calls this a 'partition of the sensible' where there is a disclosure of what can be sensed, made visible in space and time (Rancière, 1999; Rancière, 2004: 12,13). Bennett concurs with Rancière, in that politics is seen to reside 'not in acts that preserve a particular order or respond to already articulated problems, but is "the name of a singular disruption of this order of distribution of bodies"' (Rancière, 1999: 99; Bennett, 2010: 105). Referring to Rancière and Panagia she elaborates that such disruptions are located in 'the between-space of the staged event'. Here 'noise' begins to sound like 'argumentative utterances' and it is where relations of the visible and sayable expose that 'there is no natural principle of domination by one person over another' (Rancière and Panagia, 2000: 125; Rancière, 1999: 79; Bennett, 2010: 105). She continues:

> For Rancière, then, the political act consists in the exclamatory interjection of affective bodies as they enter a pre-existing public, or, rather, as they reveal that they have been there all along as an unaccounted-for part.
>
> (Bennett, 2010: 105)

Following this argument, the interjection of the *demos* modifies the regime of the perceptible, the visible (and tactile) and changes everything. The *demos* find that they have opened a political gate, 'partitioned the sensible' and, 'Through transgression they find that they too…are endowed with speech that does not simply express want, suffering, or rage, but intelligence' (Rancière, 1999: 24-25 cited in Bennett, 2010: 106).

Suffragettes, using Rancière's estimation, could be construed as 'an unaccounted-for part' of the body politic (Bennett, 2010: 105). For imprisoned suffragettes, with bodies under threat, embroidering could be regarded as a material *demos*. Their *demos*, as embroidery, included excessive expression, the articulation of material bodies beyond language (Bennett, 2010: 106). I suggest that through embroidering suffragettes could materially articulate disruption, the disruption of the cloth grid, the fixed order. They could use thread and cloth as a metaphor for their own bodies and for their public, their problem in the body politic.

Bennett importantly adds that in speaking of bodies, Rancière was stepping towards a political vital materialism. For Bennett, the political act is a current of energies and forces that flow through events and gather a momentum of their own. Between participation and human language, vibrant materials 'swarm', 'entering and leaving agentic assemblages' (Bennett, 2010: 107). Through embroidering, suffragettes were expressing the intensities of the events they were caught up in as well as harnessing the capacities of those energies with every event of the stitch. Each stitch caught bodily movement and gesture and engaged with the twist and unruliness of thread entering and leaving, passing through cloth. The messiness of thread became newly formed, even patterned on and through the fixed grid of cloth. When Gliddon wrote home asking for her embroidery to be sent to Holloway in March 1912, she wrote that she did not want existing embroidery tracings to be sent to her as she 'wanted to invent the pattern herself' (Gliddon, 1912: TWL.7KGG/ 2/1).[92]

According to Bennett, we adjust with and alongside available materials 'to the particular situation and its set of possibilities' (Bennett, 2010: 96). We pay attention. We correspond, are pragmatic, and are always reworking, reordering, calling and responding to circumstances and we use materials as part of this (Bennett, 2010: 97). I inadvertently called attention to this when I named a series of embroideries *Remembering, Retracing and Reworking* (2018). The work was autobiographical and looped back to a previous work called *Remembering* (2013). In this work, the very act of embroidering, of forming, (as well as sometimes unpicking, and reforming) the stitches was exposed as a continuous negotiation with time. I moved the needle and

[92] See the opening quote of the thesis.

thread backwards and forwards through the cloth to form stitches. With each event of the stitch, I travelled between the past and future, whilst situated in the shifting present.

Bennett continues, 'A vital materialist theory of democracy seeks to transform the divide between speaking subjects and mute objects into a set of differential tendencies and variable capacities' (Bennett, 2010: 108). Thus, we work with materials and their energies to work through the 'problem', to discover the myriad of the 'not yet'. Additionally, Bennett writes that 'The political goal of a vital materialism is not the perfect quality of actants, but a polity with more channels of communication between members' (Bennett, 2010: 104). Embroidering, for imprisoned suffragettes, might therefore be seen as fundamental in articulating, enabling and consolidating such relational channels of communication.[93] The embroideries acted as portals for more interaction. They brought the women together and made communication inevitable.

What Bennett helps us to understand is that the suffragettes and the materials they used were thoroughly implicated with each other. Through embroidering, suffragettes harnessed the materials of thread and cloth: linen, wool, cotton and silk, to articulate their experiences and to negotiate through and into uncharted territories. They used a process that passed in and out of fine cloth, through its tight gridded structure and over and across its surfaces. All the fabrics worked by the suffragettes in this study were evenweave cloth, where warp and weft cross in a uniform, ordered and structured system, and where the weight of weft balances with that of warp. Suffragettes were able to thread into these cloths, into their interstitial micro spaces, in-between warp and weft. They disrupted the formal structure of the cloth and added their own demonstrating voices to it. Embroidering for suffragettes was thus a thread act where suffragette bodies and thread became 'actants' tapping latent potentials and possibilities.

[93] Latour calls this 'a more vascularized collective' (Latour, 1999: 261).

5.3. ‘In-between’: Micro Spaces

In an interview with Monique Levi Strauss in 2004, the weaver Sheila Hicks declares that, ‘I found my voice and my footing in my small work. It enables me to build bridges between art, design, architecture, and decorative arts’ (Laitman, 2004: 5; Stritzler-Levine, 2006: 17). Hicks emphasises that much can be ‘bridged’, achieved, worked through, made to connect, through making in a concentrated way as in her small weavings. For the writer Joan Simon, this focus on the miniature, on the diminutive in Hick’s work, can reveal what is termed in Latin *multum in parvo*, the finding of much in a small space. Hick’s small works are seen to be condensations or ‘compressions’ of immediate experiences (Simon, 2006: 56).

All the embroidered cloths made by imprisoned suffragettes are small, intimately-scaled and could be kept proximate to the body. The Wilcox panel, the ‘ASC’ shield and the sampler by Mary Aldham can be held entirely in the palm of a hand.

Suffragettes embroidered in the cramped and confined prison environs and worked with the pocket sized: fragments of cut thread, small needles, and smuggled in or scraps of salvaged cloth as with the small ‘ASC’ shield made from a stained, prison blanket. The embroiderers unknowingly worked within, through, and over the cloth’s minute spaces that were between warp and weft. Their needles rarely penetrated the warp and weft threads but definitively sought out the micro spaces, the intervals between the cloth threads. These tiny gaps between the tightness of the weave were the almost invisible openings, pathways through the cloth boundary. Suffragettes used the needle and thread to feel their way through these gaps and they used touch to seek them out. These spaces are in-between the thread structure of cloth, of the cloth, yet not of it. They are ill-defined, abstract and ambiguous spaces, open to improvisation. Thought and language cannot describe, grasp nor categorize what could be contained within them. What is possible here is yet un-named, untamed. It is ‘unthought, untried and extraordinary’ (Manning, 2007: 161). For suffragettes, such openings might unknowingly be gravid with emergent proto-political potential.

Dialectically, in imaginative contradiction, suffragettes sought in working with the small, a macro-dynamic 'worlding'.

Gaston Bachelard writes:

> The cleverer I am in miniaturising the world, the better I possess it. But in doing this, it must be understood that values become condensed and enriched in miniature. Platonic dialectics of large and small do not suffice for us to be cognizant of the dynamic virtues of miniature thinking. One must go beyond logic in order to experience what is large in what is small.
>
> (Bachelard, 1969: 150)

Fig. 106 *Detail showing embroidering through the gaps between the warp and weft of the cloth of The Women's Library panel* (1912)

What begins as small can, in effect, unleash macro chains of events. Bennett writes of Charles Darwin's 'small agencies' whose 'accumulated effects turn out to be quite big.' She refers to his study of worms adjusting their 'technique to a particular situation and decisions based on available materials' (Bennett, 2010: 96). Agency thus, has 'no single locus, no mastermind but is distributed across a swarm of various and variegated, vibrant materialities' (Bennett, 2010: 96). It arises, emerges, from

situations and has unforeseen trajectories. Sociologist Nikolas Rose writes that force relations at the 'molecular' level interweave with multiple circuits of power, and complex assemblages (Rose, 2003: 5). Concurring with Latour, Rose explains that the 'macro-actor' is not different in kind from the 'micro-actor', but is merely one who has a longer and more reliable 'chain of command' and is 'assembled into longer and more dispersed networks of persons, things, techniques' (Rose, 2003: 5). Thus, small acts reverberate and have dispersed effects on the body politic and on governance. Rose states:

> Things happen through the lines of force that form when a multitude of small shifts, often contingent and independent from one another, get connected up: hence it is these configurations of the minor that seem to me to form the most appropriate object for the work of a historian of the present.
>
> (Rose, 2003: 11)

The minor thus becomes crucial in any discussion about politics and power (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987], 2013: 244-270). Rose asserts that the encounter, the event, produces from the repetition of elements. It is where 'small differences can be made' (Rose, 2003: 13). He confirms:

> It is a method of inventivity, the invention of concepts as objects of an encounter, a here-and-now encounter, which produces ever new, ever different 'heres' and 'nows'. It is an attention to all the occasions when a minute modification becomes possible, when difference can be made.
>
> (Rose, 2003: 12)

And, quoting Deleuze, he continues:

> …it is always a question of drawing a small difference, a weak generality from the repetition of elements or the organisation of cases.
>
> (Deleuze, 1994: 79 cited in Rose, 2003: 13)

Rose concludes that from the small encounter, the event, there is the capability of acting counter to what exists and counter to our time (Rose 2003: 13). With every small act of embroidering with cloth and thread suffragettes were open to such possibilities.

5.4. Resistant, Emergent and Contingent

Rose unpicks the notion of resistance to power, seeing more significance in minor and specific politics. Resistance was and is therefore not necessarily an assertion of the agency of the idealised individual or collective subject but about a situated minority politics of everyday life that emerges according to contingent events as with suffragettes engaged in the familiar act of embroidering. Rose reasons that the concept of 'resistance' to power by the 'subject' is too simplistic an analysis and that less obvious, more complex, affirmative and creative dynamics are at play. He writes:

> The notion of resistance, at least as it has conventionally functioned within the analyses of self-proclaimed radicals is too simple and flattening for such an analysis. It is merely the obverse of a one-dimensional notion of power as domination. And it seems to imply a subject who resists out of an act of bravery or heroism. But however noble the sentiment, in the politics of innovation and creation, courage is redundant.
>
> (Rose, 2003: 279)

Rose is notably interested in the creative thinking that arises out of small, particular situations and relations of force. He refers to the significance of 'cramped spaces' (such as those of Holloway Prison and experienced by the suffragettes) as important 'territories of the everyday' where change might emerge, writing:

> These minor engagements…are cautious, modest, pragmatic, experimental, stuttering, tentative. They are concerned with the here and now, not with some fantasized future, with small concerns, petty details, the everyday and not the transcendental. They frequently arise in 'cramped spaces'– within a set of relations that are intolerable, where movement is impossible, where change is blocked and voice is strangulated.
>
> (Rose, 2003: 279-280)

There are clear analogies between this quote from Rose and suffragettes embroidering in constrained, physically limited and disciplined spaces of prison, using everyday materials and an everyday process and being concerned very much with personal and immediate prison grievances that affected their daily lives yet also had a much

broader resonating political impact, for instance their demand to be treated as political prisoners rather than as common criminals. Rose offers the second-wave feminist slogan 'the personal is political' as the most obvious example in our recent past of 'a molecular and minor engagement with cramped space [that] can connect up with a whole series of other circuits and cause them to fluctuate, waver and reconfigure in wholly unexpected ways' (Rose, 2003: 280).

He emphasises that it is in the rough and ready, the spontaneous and vital that creativity and experimentation emerges. From the messy, from intensities of experience, from turbulent and tangled knots new forms and old forms must negotiate, unthread and rethread. He writes the following paragraph, which should include suffragettes:

> But perhaps the real powers of invention lie in those untimely mobilisations which can introduce new possibilities into our thought: marginal, eccentric, minority movements, millenarians, syndicalists, situationists, autonomists, rough and ready assemblages of forces.
>
> (Rose, 2003: 280)

Rose was thus in favour of political vitalism, a politics that is an active part of living (Rose, 2003: 283). For Rose, in living we do not know what the future holds and consequently we do not know how we will react. Following Deleuze, Rose suggests that we can only write (act, or embroider) 'at the frontiers of our knowledge, at the border which separates our knowledge from our ignorance and transforms the one into the other…' and 'To satisfy ignorance is to put off writing (acting, or embroidering) until tomorrow, or rather to make it impossible' (Deleuze, 1994: xxi cited in Rose, 2003: 13).

5.5. A Politics of Touch, Movement and Affect

The art theorist Erin Manning asserts the importance of seeing the body as always in movement and in relation to others. She inserts the relational and moving body into the political discussion and stresses the importance of touch between bodies. For Manning, touch initiates a shift in perception and creates improvisations, re-

articulations of the sensual and relational body and thus makes relational matrices possible (Manning, 2007: xiii). She explains that touch forces us to rethink bodies as always extending and reaching outwards. A politics of touch, of bodies in movement with and alongside the world, makes a pact to invent the world as it draws the other into relation (Manning, 2007: xv). Thus, Manning writes that the sensing body in movement is, 'to think alongside and against the nation-state', alongside what already exists (Manning, 2007: xv). She proposes that touch – every act of reaching toward – invents new bodies and 'enables the creation of worlds' and that this production is relational (Manning, 2007: xv-xvi). She explains that in reaching out to touch, a relation 'between' occurs, and that 'you' will invent 'me' (Manning, 2007: xv). Thus, a politics of touch can invent the political beyond ideological identity politics (Manning, 2007: xv, xviii). She maintains that we should stop trying to pin down knowledge, and 'invent' through relational touch and in this way, the relational movement of bodies can rethink many of the concepts we think of as 'foundational' (Manning, 2007: xvi). She writes that we recognise that the political can be invented 'if we understand politics to be lured by the body's tendency to relate' (Manning, 2007: xv).

Manning's theories thus help in our understanding of the suffragette embroideries and the political, as they are highly relational. The handkerchiefs and signature cloths can be seen as binding cloths that materialise the relational gestures of suffragettes towards each other. They are akin to thread matrices that link, inter-connect and galvanise suffragette relationships and friendships. An instance of this can be seen on the Women's Library panel. The Rock sisters, Madeleine and Dorothea, were friends of Zoe Proctor and Grace Chappelow and their names were signed and embroidered in close proximity on the cloth (see Figure 107).

Embroidering continuously adds more threads, more intersections of thread to the warp and weft of cloth. Threads pass between and around the crossovers of the warp and weft. They are 'third threads' added and entwined around the first and second threads of the weave and they carry across the cloth surface connecting spaces (see Figure 108).

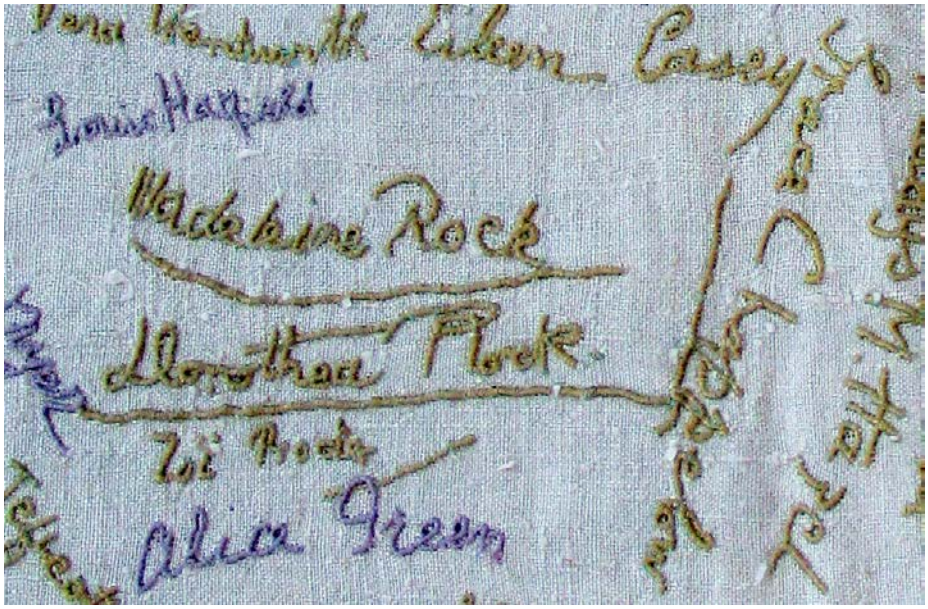

Fig. 107 *A detail of the Women's Library panel* (1912)

Fig. 108 *Entwined and 'carrying' threads at the back of the Women's Library panel* (1912)

In working, these third threads have been pulled and extended outwards from the cloth, as expansive gestures, lines of flight. Following Manning's writings, we can claim that embroidering for suffragettes can be understood as a movement of threads, a movement of bodies towards each other in a movement of political invention and improvisation.

Manning pushes further into the political implications of touch, movement and the relational, writing that the body is excessive to the already known national body politic and so to focus on the sensing and relational body will always be more expansive than it (Manning, 2007: xvi). Thus, embroidering, as an embodied process, might be seen to be excessive to the known body politic of cloth. In accordance with Rancière, Manning writes that 'Politics – like – bodies emerge out of frictions, accidents, disagreements, and interlockings that are firmly institutionalised within pre-constituted space-times and that create emergent space-times' (Manning, 2007: xvii; Rancière, 1999). The instability of bodies, disagreements (rather than the consensual), and information are in relation and this ever-moving body is always improvising and engendering new concepts. Bodies on the move create ideas on the move, renewal and transition in their excess of Being. They 'become' (Manning, 2007: xxi). Thus, touch reaches to what is uncommon and unframed, in excess, 'calling forth that which cannot be securely organised' (Manning, 2007: xxi). For Manning, a politics of touch is the exploration of a fleshy democracy where we make pacts and explore what a body can do. Touch de-territorialises and exceeds the state grids of knowledge (Manning, 2007: xxi-xxiii). Using the example of the Argentinian tango, she shows how the gestures of bodies can improvise with each other and are never exhausted in their relational correspondences. They interrupt language in their relational movement creating possibilities for change (Manning, 2007: 8). For Manning, gesture is an alternative vocabulary of the political. The tango is a dance of the 'in-between', of movement with and towards, of participation and negotiation, a dance that shows political potential (Manning, 2007: 17-31). And, touch breaks down the idea of a secure border between bodies (Manning, 2007: 31). The body becomes an extension beyond its physical limits, like a body without organs.[94]

Cloth, threads, suffragette bodies, the political and embroidering can all form a tactile assemblage that is on the move, if we give credence to Manning's writings. As suffragettes embroidered together or by themselves they formed relational networks and thread-works that politically sought more than their allotted criminal identity. For instance, when they embroidered the broad arrow and their prison number they were

[94] Deleuze and Guattari refer to an abstract 'body without organs' (Deleuze and Guattari, [1987], 2013: 180-98).

disrupting this imposed identity and reaching towards what it meant to be political women acting together. They negotiated through the tight spaces of cloth, transgressing the cloth boundary in search of new possibilities and potential. The imagery and words on the embroidery hide this energy of inquiry, whereas a material scrutiny of these embroidered cloths opens up the relational politics of touch and movement concealed within.

Manning uses the terms 'affect' and 'being affected' by the relational movements of the body (Manning, 2007: 152). Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth explain that affect is in many ways synonymous with 'force or forces of encounter' and a play between thought and feeling (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 2, 18, 21). Teresa Brennan likens the transmission of affect to the transmitting of 'atmosphere' and that affects are social in origin (Brennan, 2004: 1-3). Affects can be hormonal, pheromonal and imbibed. They can be picked up on, attuned into, and they can touch and move us more than words (Brennan, 2004: 6-10). Gregg and Seigworth claim that affect more 'often transpires within and across the subtlest of shuttling intensities: all the miniscule or molecular events of the unnoticed' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 2). It is 'born in in-between-ness and resides as accumulative beside-ness' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 2). They claim that it is part of what a body can do although no one can determine what this is (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 3). Thus, 'There is no single, generalizable theory of affect: not yet, and (thankfully) there never will be' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 3).

The embroideries left by suffragettes still affectively communicate. Through the materials used and through the process of their making, the embroideries subtly evince discreet textures of understanding. They emit anxiety, tension, fear and enclosure as well as a subversive defiance in their challenging of the cloth grid, in their un-acceptance of what is.[95] The cloth and threads of the Wilcox and Terrero panels convey an atmosphere of constricted bodies in austere and cramped conditions.

[95] In, *Fray: art+textile politics* Professor of Art, Julia Bryan-Wilson states that textiles 'give texture to politics' (Bryan-Wilson, 2018: 7). They are flexible, pliant, can be pulled, stressed and withstand tension, sometimes to breaking point. They can rip. She equates these textile properties with the human condition, writing that textiles are often 'in the fray of heated disputes, controversies and disagreements', where human 'Nerves and tempers also fray' (Bryan-Wilson, 2018: 7).

The names of the women are squashed in to the top section of the Terrero panel and the threads are too bulky for the silk cloth of the Wilcox panel. The shield worked by 'ASC', the bag named 'Grace', and the bag by Nellie Taylor are all clumsily worked with thick threads and through poor cloth to convey something imperative. The signature cloths affectively convey the defiant gathering together of the women. Their names are also squeezed together and on the West Hoathly panel and they travel around the edges of the cloth. Through their embroidering, suffragettes unconsciously tapped into what was intensely felt. Affect was laid down and still emerges from the in-between micro and interrelated (social) spaces of these embroidered cloths.

Gregg and Seigworth continue, 'Affect emerges out of muddy, unmediated relatedness' and rather than fit any categorisation gives way 'to thresholds and tensions, blends and blurs' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 4). It is always 'underway' rather than being pinned down. (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 4). Using terms that could be applied to embroidering, Gregg and Seigworth call the 'line' of affects as akin to 'swerves and knottings', a 'line' that that can mark or remark intersections as well as those 'unforeseen crosshatchings of articulations yet to be made, refastened, or unmade' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 5). Affects occur in what Gregg and Seigworth call promising 'bloom spaces' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 9). Here, affects can be promises, hopes, 'shimmers', that exceed, 'stretch', the context of their emergence (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 5, 10). They offer a vital 'more' to life, being 'simultaneously right now and not yet' (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010: 15). The philosopher, Brian Massumi adds that what makes affect political is the inbuilt idea that it takes 'change as primary' (Massumi, 2015: viii). Emphasising the processual 'politicality of affect', he continues:

> The concept of affect is politically orientated from the get-go. But moving it onto a 'properly' political register – the arena of social order and reorderings, of settlement and resistance, of clampdowns and uprisings – is not automatic. Affect is proto-political. It concerns the first stirrings of the political, flush with the felt intensities of life. Its politics must be brought out.
>
> (Massumi, 2015: viii-ix)

For Massumi, to 'affect and be affected' through relational encounters is 'to be open to the world, to be active in it and to be patient for its return activity. This 'openness' is therefore taken as 'primary' and 'the cutting edge of change' (Massumi, 2015:ix). He writes that, 'It is through it that things-in-the-making cut their transformational teeth' (Massumi, 2015: ix). We could conjecture that in their openness to emergence and the stirrings of the felt intensities of life, the suffragette embroideries captured Massumi's concept of transformational 'things-in-the-making', the proto-political. They materialised political boundaries.

5.6. Boundary Crossing, Powers and Dangers

> Better than harbour a secret grudge, anyone with a just grievance should speak up and demand redress, lest the saliva of his [her] ill-will [*sic*] do harm secretly.
>
> (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 131)

To claim that embroidering is dangerous as well as subversive and political involves investigating the process as the continuous crossing of the cloth boundary, and connecting embroidering once more with the body.

During embroidering, the needle and thread pass through the permeable structure of cloth from one surface to the other and back again. They loop in and out and repeatedly cross the cloth boundary. Referring back to chapter four, we can add that embroidering crosses the projected 'cloth-skin-body' boundary.

Additionally, embroidering has another 'hidden' engagement with the body regarding its excreta: blood, spittle, sweat and skin shavings, all leaked or falling away from its margins. Embroidering is therefore quietly tied up with that which the anthropologist Mary Douglas calls 'dirt', that which is deemed to be culturally disgusting and 'dangerous' (Douglas, [1966], 2002).

When the tightness of weave (and hence minuteness of the spaces between warp and weft) requires the use of a sharp, fine needle, the embroidering process will nearly always result in some bleeding from the embroiderer. Many embroiderers use spittle

to help thread different weights of thread through the eye of the needle, especially if it is a fine needle. Lips and spittle are used to flatten the thread for threading.[96] The constant pushing of the needle through cloth also wears down the skin of the index finger and hands mark the cloth and thread with sweat. In short, embroidering implicates and embeds the waste products of the body into the cloth. Despite its associations with 'clean' domestic linen, embroidering as a material process can thus be seen to be 'unclean' and 'dirty', and this has symbolic implications. Douglas writes that saliva is seen to be particularly defiling and impure (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 42). For Douglas:

> …all margins are dangerous…Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins. We should expect the orifices of the body to symbolise its specially vulnerable points. Matter issuing from them is marginal stuff of the most obvious kind. Spittle, blood, milk, urine, faeces or tears by simply issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body. So also have bodily parings, skin, nail, hair clippings and sweat.
>
> (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 150)

According to Douglas, the body can stand in for wider, bounded social and cultural symbolic systems and these are manifested in rituals and through taboos. The boundary of the body can represent 'any boundaries, which are threatened or precarious' and the matter of the body thus, 'offers complex symbols for rituals about boundaries' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 142). And, taboos associated with the body 'protect an abstract constitution from being subverted' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: xix).

Douglas writes that rituals regarding the dirt of the body are used to shore up social conformity, order and its attendant powers. The marginal, as that which cannot be easily classified and is ambiguous, is shunted into that which is considered to be threatening and harmful. It is brought under control and denounced as taboo (Douglas, [1966], 2002: xi). Marginal, dirty stuff thus evokes pollution fears and contact with such excreta 'may be held to transmit danger' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: xi, 13). She explains that contagion is kept at bay by rituals of separation and demarcation and by beliefs in the dangers of crossing forbidden boundaries (Douglas,

[96] It is also said that the most effective way to remove spots of blood from the cloth is to apply spittle to the stain.

2002: 27, 79). Thus, pollution dangers strike when form has been attacked (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 130). Douglas amplifies:

> Taboo is a spontaneous coding practice, which sets up a vocabulary of spatial limits and physical and verbal signals to hedge around vulnerable relations. It threatens specific dangers if the code is not respected.
>
> (Douglas, [1966], 2002: xiii)

Thus, the ideal order of society is guarded by dangers, which threaten transgressors (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 3). Disorderly suffragettes, as transgressors of the law and presiding social and cultural boundaries, would therefore be exposed to dangers. They were at risk and faced being brought to order via the 'bounded' system of their bodies. Points of entry into, or exits out of the suffragette body, bodily orifices such as the mouth, nose, ear, rectum, or vagina were particularly vulnerable.[97] The imprisonment of suffragettes, threats to their corporeal bodies and forcible feeding thus take on deeper anthropological and cultural meanings, and the fact that suffragettes engaged in the act of embroidering that continuously crossed the cloth boundary can therefore assume potency.

Following Douglas, ideas about separating, purity, demarcating and punishing transgressions such as the prison policy towards suffragettes, have as their main function an imposition of that prison system on 'an inherently untidy experience' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 5). Suffragettes could be deemed to be culturally untidy, unruly and dangerous rule breakers and when they crossed the boundary of cloth with needle and thread, adding the spittle, blood and the dirt-matter of their bodies, their embroidering took on potent anthropological implications.

Douglas writes that 'there is no such thing as dirt; no single item is dirty apart from a particular system of classification in which it does not fit' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: xvii). Dirt is 'matter out of place' and where there is dirt there is a system (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 44, 50). Suffragettes were matter out of place in a cultural system that was particularly concerned with dirt and cleanliness and pollution fears.[98] It is of note

[97] As referred to in chapter three Frances Parker was forcibly fed through the rectum and vagina in Perth Prison in 1914 (Leneman, 1993).
[98] See Kelley (2010).

that the Taylor ‘Brush and Comb’ bag and the small tablecloth worked by Alice Ker were of white embroidery on white cloth, known as ‘whitework’. On suffragette regalia white also represented purity.

The excreta within the suffragette embroideries would be classified as dirt and this involves some engagement with notions of order and disorder and has attendant dangers. Douglas writes that reflection on dirt involves ‘reflection on the relation of order to disorder, being to non-being, form to formlessness, life to death’ and that wherever ‘ideas of dirt are highly structured, their analysis discloses a play upon such profound themes’ (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 7).

The dirt of prison, the emphasis on cleaning cells, the dirt of the suffragette body, the inadequate sanitary arrangements, the dirt associated with forcible feeding: vomit, spittle, and blood and embroidering in prison thus subtly become very powerful cultural symbols.

According to Douglas, in dealing with the ‘dirty’, which is aberrant, ambiguous, unclassifiable and anomalous, we display certain attributes: we express outrage; we seek to physically control; we ignore, negate, label dangerous; or we incorporate (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 49-50). Thus, unclean suffragettes needed to be brought into line because they disfigured the existing cultural pattern. She states:

> If uncleanness is matter out of place, we must approach it through order. Uncleanness or dirt is that which must not be included if a pattern is to be maintained. To recognise this is the first step towards insight into pollution.
>
> (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 50)

A pollutant such as a suffragette would always be ‘in the wrong’ according to Douglas and this crossing of the line, this displacement, would consequently ‘unleashes danger for someone’ (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 140). As a result of their transgressive behaviour, escalating dangers were unleashed upon suffragettes. For Mary Aldham and Janie Terrero, two of the embroiderers, it resulted in the coercive crossing of their body boundary by the prison authorities as forcible feeding. They were treated as pollutants.

As pollutants, suffragettes put the system in danger. Douglas iterates that wherever 'lines are precarious', wherever the boundary may be ill defined or shifting, then pollution ideas come to the fore to shore up the existing system. What is more, 'The polluter becomes a doubly wicked object of reprobation, first because he [she] crossed the line and second because he [she] endangered others' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 172). Danger therefore resides in states of transition, shifts away from existing modes of thinking where 'transition is neither one state nor the next, it is undefinable'. What is more, the pollutant who must 'pass from one [state] to another is himself [herself] in danger and emanates danger to others' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 119-120). Thus, 'not only is transition itself dangerous, but also the rituals of segregation are the most dangerous phase of the rites' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 119-120). We might interject here that it is during the separation and segregation of suffragettes in prison (and being dispersed to other prisons in March 1912) where they might face the most danger.[99] This may in part explain why it was so important for the women to draw themselves together to maintain their community by embroidering the signature cloths at this time.

Heeding Douglas, segregation (as in the prison) becomes part of the ritual of transition and such transitions may mark death and rebirth. Douglas particularly refers to the 'in-between marginal state' that is a symbolically dangerous, lawless and unruly place to be in (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 140). Thus, she writes 'To have been in the margins, is to have been in contact with danger, to have been at a source of power' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 120). Importantly, she states that power resides in these 'inarticulate areas', in the 'margins' and 'confused lines' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 122). These 'inarticulate, unstructured areas emanate unconscious powers which provoke others to demand that ambiguity be reduced' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 127). Thus, 'interstitial positions' are dangerous and those living in the interstices of the power structure (such as militant suffragettes) are 'felt to be a threat to those with better defined status'. Consequently, 'since they are credited with dangerous uncontrollable powers, an excuse is given for suppressing them' (Douglas, [1966], 2002: 127, 129). We can insert here how embroidering materialised this dangerous and interstitial, 'in-between-ness of the suffragette position, if we think of the ill-

[99] See pages 133-134.

defined, ‘in-between’, micro spaces of cloth that have been interrupted and disrupted with dirty embroidering threads.

Douglas notes that dirt could be hurled at the weak points of structure, which is why it is both a symbol of danger and power (Douglas, 2002: 149). Bodily margins, holes, orifices, exits and entry points all become invested with dangers and powers (Douglas, 2002: 149, 154). She asserts that there is energy at the ‘margins and unstructured areas’ of the permeable form and these may be manifested as boundary lines, thresholds, or frameworks such as arches, doorways and windows. Passage through these frames can symbolise ritual entering and crossing and access to new beginnings, ‘new statuses’ and new configurations (Douglas, 2002: 141). There is therefore potency in disorder (Douglas, 2002: 117). The ritual play between order and disorder articulates and this articulation is formative (Douglas, 2002: 118). Dirt can become creative and productive. For Douglas, purity as a concept is thus, the ‘enemy of change’ as the abomination can be a source of tremendous power, which is why ‘pollutions are often used in renewal rites’ and power is fed back into the system to strengthen it (Douglas, 2002: 200, 202). It follows that impure, dirty suffragettes could be seen to be dangerous and powerful architects of change and this was materialised in their transgressing, dirty embroideries.

To conclude, suffragettes may have realised that they were licking threads and bleeding into the fabric when they embroidered these cloths, but it unlikely that they reflected upon what this implied. They did not document what they thought about the process of embroidering. They were more interested in doing it. It is therefore only with speculation and with hindsight that the present interpretations of their embroidering can be made. However, practice as research and research into material and textile culture do raise more hypothetical, creative and latent questions about the embroideries. Adamson writes that in the study of material culture facts may not be ‘decoded conclusively’ but may ‘exert a salutary influence on the process of writing of history’ (Adamson, 2009: 205). He amplifies, ‘what a culture takes for granted, or will not allow itself to speak aloud, might be found precisely in those areas that are less self-conscious’ (Adamson, 2009: 202). Material culture research is ‘a means of getting at cultural content that could be recovered in no other way’ (Adamson, 2009: 202).

Imprisoned suffragettes might not have recognised that by embroidering through cloth they articulated the symbolic powers and dangers of boundary crossing: the crossing of the boundary of accepted norms of feminine behaviour, the crossing of their body boundary, the crossing of the prison boundary and the crossing into the political. They might not have recognised that through working with cloth and thread they materialised entering and exiting boundaries and playing in hybrid in-between spaces to politically, dangerously and powerfully forge new modes of thinking. However, with this hypothesis laid before them they might acknowledge that embroidering for them was a potent subversive, political and dangerous practice.

Conclusion

In the Foreword to *The Subversive Stitch: Embroidery and the Making of the Feminine* ([1984], 2010), Roszika Parker quotes from the novel, *From Man to Man* (1926) by the writer Olive Schreiner (1855-1920). Schreiner asks 'Has the pen or pencil dipped so deep in the blood of the human race as the needle?' (Schreiner, [1926], 1982: 323; Parker, [1984], 2010: ix). Parker replies that, 'The answer is, quite simply, no. The art of embroidery has been the means of educating women into the feminine ideal, and of proving that they have attained it, but it has also provided a weapon of resistance to the constraints of femininity' (Parker, [1984], 2010: ix).

The suffragette-embroiderers of this study were well versed in the material practice of embroidering. They tacitly and implicitly knew about the feel of the materials they used, the tightness of the weave and the qualities of the thread. Embroidery was, as Gliddon unwittingly transcribed from her correspondence, 'embrodiary'. It autobiographically expressed what the women thought and how they felt. They embroidered script and imagery knowing that embroidery could historically and textually document their experiences and that they were defiantly creating tangible and discursive records that might endure for posterity.

More than that, however, their embroidering transcended their intentional messages. As a material 'language' of the cloth-skin-body, embroidering allowed the women to unconsciously articulate their feelings, their fears and tensions, their emerging proto-political thinking and their resistance to the discipline of the prison in small but important ways.

Embroidering was a refuge. It helped to keep the women anchored, grounded and resolute. They literally held onto threads and the ground-cloth and physically and mentally 'held on'. Embroidering materialised and reinforced the importance of relational touch and of networks of togetherness, giving and sharing. It helped them to reclaim and re-pair themselves and it offered psychical protection. Embroidering enabled suffragettes to surface the excessive intensities of experience of the somatic-affective body in prison: the potential and actual threats of the hunger strike and forcible feeding and the brutish and controlling prison conditions. Passing back and

forth through the boundary of cloth, the women could filter their situated and lived experiences and tacitly negotiate with the visual 'gaze'. Embroidering helped the women procedurally work through deep seated anxieties, fears of invasion, transgression, and boundary crossing with its attendant dangers, as well as consolidate their hopes and their comradeship.

Embroidering, so often downplayed, dismissed and denigrated, has thus become radically reconfigured in this study. Reconsidered through practice as research and from the perspective of the material and discursive, the suffragette embroideries worked *in extremis*, reveal rich, nuanced and overlooked information. For suffragettes, their embroidering was embodied, relational, subversive, political, potent and dangerous and it engendered thinking.

In the suffragette embroideries, cloth and thread conjure the absent presence of the skin-body that was so crucial to the women's suffrage campaign. As concrete and material relics, the affective skin-body of their makers also continues to be sensed, felt and evoked. Quietly, unobtrusively and hidden within their surfaces and structure, the embroideries still contain the embedded matter of suffragette DNA in spittle, hair, dead skin, sweat and blood. Although not materially followed through by Parker's argument in *The Subversive Stitch* ([1984], 2010), Olive Schreiner's words regarding the needle and 'the blood of the human race' were and are profoundly applicable.

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Fig. 52 *Detail of the Wilcox handkerchief* (January, 1912) [Textile] In possession of: MoL.

Fig. 53 *Detail of the Wilcox handkerchief* (January, 1912) [Textile] In possession of: MoL.

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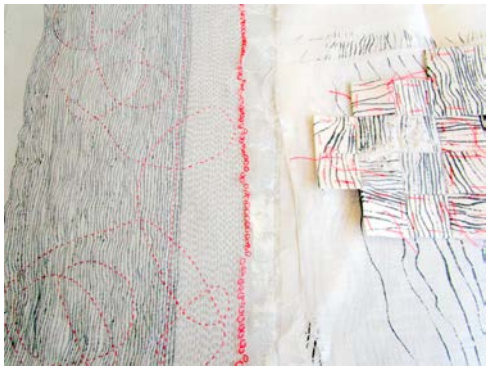
Appendix I Record of Practice (2015-2020)

(In chronological order from the date the work began)

Drawings and watercolour paintings of the suffragette embroideries (2015-2019)

Samples (2015)



Samples (2015)

'Entangled' (2015-2020)

Exhibited at: *The Archive Project* (2017), London.

'Cloth of Dreams' (2015-2016)

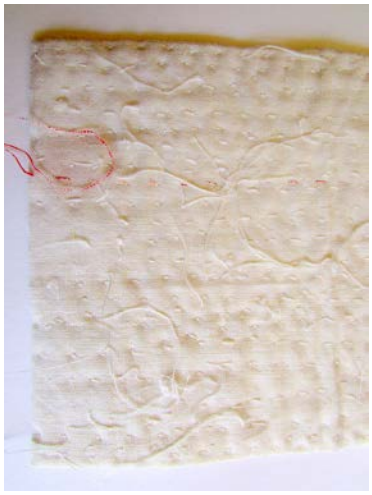
Exhibited at: *Somatic Shifts* (2017), Rochester, Kent; *The Archive Project* (2017), London; and *The Knitting and Stitching Show* (2018), London, Harrogate and Dublin.

'A Dark Bloom' (2015-2020)

'The Spirit Level' (2015)

Exhibited at: *The Archive Project* (2017), London; and *Women Empowered* (2018) London.

'Where Are You Cissie Wilcox? (2016-2019)



'With What I Had' (2017)

Exhibited at: *The Archive Project* (2017), London.

'The List' (2017)

'The Waning of the Light' (2017)

Exhibited at: *Temporal Connections* (2018), Farnham, Surrey; and *Women Empowered* (2018), London.

'Remembering, Retracing, Reworking' (2018)

Exhibited at: *The Knitting and Stitching Show* (2018), London, Harrogate and Dublin.

‘*Tablecloth’* (2018)

‘Hide’ (2017-2018)

‘*The Shelter of my Cloth’* (2018-2019)

Internal City’ (2018-2019)

‘*Grace’* (2018-2019)

‘The Here, Hear Project’ (2018-2019)

Exhibited at: *The Archive Project* (2017), London; *MAP event* (2018), LSE; *Suffrage in Bloomsbury* (2018), London; *The Watts Gallery* (2018), Compton, Surrey; Haslemere Educational Museum (2018), Surrey; Godalming Museum (2018), Surrey; *The Festival of Crafts* (2018), Farnham; and *Threads* (2019), Farnham, Surrey.

Appendix II Suffragette Names (as they appear on the embroideries)

Additional information in brackets has been cross-referenced with the file TNA. HO.220.196/16 and *Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 178-179.

The Wilcox panel (December, 1911)

Wilcox, Cissie

The Wilcox handkerchief (January, 1912)

Mrs (Helen) Archdale
Mrs (Kathleen Roy) Rothwell
Mrs (Evelyn) Huddleston
Mrs (Mary Violet) Jones
Mrs (Frances) Rowe
Miss (Olive) Wharry
Miss (Vera) Wentworth
Miss (Isabella) Potbury
Miss (Ethel) Slade
Miss (Violet) Harvey
Miss (Grace) Stuart
Miss (Sarah) Benett
Miss (Georgina Helen) Grant
Wilcox, Cissie

The Terrero panel (spring, 1912)

Terrero Janie
Louise Hatfield,
Gladys M. Hazel
May, R. Jones
Vera Wentworth
Olivia Jeffcott,
Edith Hudson,
Hilda Burkitt
Fanny Pease
Mary A. (Ann) Aldham
Leonora Tyson
Constance Craig
G. H. (Georgina Helen) Grant
Jessie Laing
M. (Maggie, Margaret) Macfarlane
Doreen Allan
Helena de Reya
Alice Green
Lettice Floyd
Isabella Potbury

The West Hoathly handkerchief (March 1912)

There are sixty-six signatures and two initials on the handkerchief
The star indicates that sixty-four of these signatures match with those on the Women's Library Panel

*Fanny D. (Davison) Palethorpe
*Emma Fowler
*Frances McPhun
*Janie Terrero
*Georgina F. (Fanny) Cheffins
*Jessie Laing
*Helen MacRae
*Louise Hatfield
*Margaret McPhun
*Olivia Jeffcott
*Isabella Potbury
*Doreen Allan
*Vera Wentworth
*May R. Jones
*Fanny Pease
*Katherine Gatty
*Margaret Rowlatt
*Kate E. Tordon-Cardo?
*Lilias Mitchell
*Enid M. Renny
*Frances Parker
*Lizzie McKenzie
*Edith Hudson
*Eva Wilson
*Annie Myer
C.L. (Clara Lambert?)
*Constance L. (Louise) Collier
*Alice Maud Shipley
*Mary Graily Hewitt
*Mary A. (Ann) Aldham
*Dorothea Howlett Rock
*Zoe (Zoë) Proctor
*Grace Chappelow
*Janie Allan
*Madeleine Rock
*J.L. (Lavender) Guthrie
* Lillie Lindesay
*Kathleen Bardsley
*Louise Lilley
*Mary Hilliard

*Helena de Reya
*Netty (Nelly) Crocker
*Gladys Roberts
*Eileen Casey
*Alice Morgan Wright
*Margaret Macfarlane
*Victoria Simmons
*Isabella Casey
*Gertrude Lowy (Löwy)
*Ethel M. Crawley
*Hilda Burkitt
*Frances Williams
*E.K. (Emily Katherine) Marshall
Barbara S. Jocke
Alice J. Stewart Ker
*Edith Downing
*Alice Davies
*Lettice Floyd
*Kate Lilley
*Alice Green
*Grace Tollemache
*M. (Maria) de Santay Newby
*Cassie (Mary) Nesbit
*Janet Boyd
*Constance Craig
*G. H. (Georgina Helen) Grant
*Leonora Tyson
C.E.L. (Caroline Lehmann?)

The Women's Library Panel (undated)

There are seventy-nine signatures on the panel

R. M. (Rosa May) Billinghurst
*M.A. (Mary Ann) Aldham
*Helen MacRae
*E.K. (Emily Katherine) Marsham
*Victoria Simmons
Jeanette S. Ellenbogen
*Janet A. Boyd
*Grace Tollemache
*May R. Jones
*M. (Maria) du Santay Newby
*Margaret Macfarlane
*Lillie Lindesay
*Alice Maud Shipley
Norah Yorke
*Emma Fowler
*Frances Williams
*Vera Wentworth
*Louise Hatfield
*Madeleine Rock
*Dorothea Rock
*Zoë Proctor
*Annie Myer
*Olivia Jeffcott
*Alice Green
*Kate Lilley
*Louise Lilley
*Isabella Potbury
*Lavender Guthrie
*G.H. (Georgina Helen) Grant
*Leonora Tyson
*Janie Terrero
*Fanny (Frances) Pease
*Jessie Laing
*Helena de Reya
*Constance Craig
*F.D. (Fanny Davison) Palethorpe
*Eva Wilson
*Georgina F. (Fanny) Cheffins
*Lizzie McKenzie
*Kate E. Tordon-Cardo?

*Mary Hilliard
*Isabella Casey
*Eileen Casey
*M. (Mary) Graily Hewitt
Gladys M. Hazel
*Grace Chappelow
Blanche Bennett
*Doreen Allan
*Katherine Gatty
*Edith Hudson
Elizabeth Herrick
Lilian Ida Lenton
Gertrude Jessie Heward Wilkinson (Jessie Heward)
Genie Sheppard
*Ethel M. Crawley
*Nellie Crocker
?C. (Caroline) E. Lehmann (C.E.L.?)
*Gladys Roberts
*Margaret Rowlatt
*Enid M. Renny
*Alice Morgan Wright
*C. L. (Constance Louise) Collier
*Lettice Floyd
*Kathleen Bardsley
*Lilias Mitchell
*Hilda Burkitt
*Frances McPhun
*Margaret McPhun
*Frances Parker
Ethel C. Haslam
*Edith E. Downing
*Cassie (Mary) Nesbit
*Alice Davies
*Janie Allan
*Gertrude Löwy
Beatrice Follit
Eveleen B.A. Arton
Florence E. Haig
Emily Wilding Davison

Appendix III Biographical Details

The following biographical details of suffragettes referred to in this study have been collated from primary and secondary sources.

Aldham, Mary Ann Mitchell (née Wood) (1858-1940)

Mary Aldham was born in Deptford in 1858. She married Arthur Robert Aldham (1854-1905), a commercial clerk in 1883 at Thornton Heath, Surrey and they lived in Greenwich. She had two daughters Mary Ann (1885-1955) and Gertrude (1887-1909). She lived with her daughter Mary Ann (Gertrude had died aged 23) and her son-in-law, Cyril Arthur Collins and their child Gertrude Aldham Collins at 'Fairacre', Wiltshire Lane, Pinner in the 1930s until her death in 1940 (Ancestry, Accessed 10/01/2020).

Aldham was arrested with fifty other women in 1908 for disturbing the peace but was bound over and not imprisoned (*Votes for Women*, 05/03/1908: 83). In December 1910 she was charged with throwing stones at the premises of John Burns. She was sent to prison for one month after not paying the fine (*Votes for Women*, 02/12/1910: 142-143). She was released on the 23rd December 1910 with Cissie Wilcox (*Votes for Women*, 16/12/1910: 181).

On 22nd November 1911 she was sentenced to 14 days imprisonment in the Second Division for breaking windows at Charing Cross Post Office with a hammer (*Votes for Women*, 24/11/1911: 125; *The Manchester Guardian*, 23/11/1911: 3). She was tried at Bow Street Police Court and sent to Holloway Prison. She was released on 5th December 1911. On 1st March, 1912 she was sentenced to six months' hard labour (*Votes for Women*, 29/03/1912: 414). Terrero's panel indicates that she went on hunger strike and was forcibly fed.

In November 1913 she smashed windows at the Central Criminal Court at the trial of the suffragette Rachel Peace and was sentenced to one month in Holloway (*Coventry Herald*, 21/11/1913: 4). She went on hunger strike again and was released under the 'Cat and Mouse Act' on 21st November and returned to Holloway on 29th November 1913. Lockdales auctioneers state that she was in Holloway in April 1914 and released under the 'Cat and Mouse Act' on 1st May 1914 (Lockdales, 2015).

She is most remembered for slashing the painting of the author Henry James by John Singer Sargent at the Royal Academy on the 4th May 1914. She was returned to Holloway where she was again forcibly fed (Mary Richardson had slashed the 'Rokeby Venus' in the National Gallery, London in March 1914).

Two of Mary Aldham's embroideries, worked in Holloway Prison appeared at auction in 2015 at Lockdales Auctioneers alongside other memorabilia including her hunger strike medal, letters to Aldham from her daughter Mary Ann, a copy of *The Suffragette* recording her attack on the Sargent painting and two photographs of Mary Aldham. One of these photographs is a surveillance photograph issued by the Criminal Record Office, New Scotland Yard on the 16th May 1914, taken inside Holloway Prison. The memorandum with the photograph stated that Mary was aged 55 and 5ft 4

inches tall, had a pale complexion and hair turning grey and that she wilfully damaged a portrait of Mr Henry James with a chopper at the Royal Academy. It stated that she had had broken plate glass windows on four occasions. Special attention was drawn to Mary, who had committed damage to public art treasures or public offices, and who 'may at any time again endeavour to perpetrate similar outrages' (TWL.10/54/099).

Bulwer-Lytton, Lady Constance (1869-1923), also known as Jane Warton

Constance Bulwer-Lytton was the second daughter and third child of Edith Villiers and Robert Bulwer-Lytton, first Earl of Lytton. He was the Viceroy of India and Constance spent the first eleven years of her life there. She was unmarried. She was imprisoned four times including once in Walton Prison, Liverpool, under the pseudonym Jane Warton, where she went on hunger strike and was forcibly fed despite her ill health. She was an active member of the WSPU and was a paid organiser from June 1910.

She was imprisoned in Holloway in 1909, spending most of her time in the infirmary. She was arrested again in October 1909 in Newcastle for throwing a stone and sent to Newcastle prison, where she took part in the hunger strike but was released after prison doctors realised she had a heart condition and could not be forcibly fed. In January 1910, disguised as a working-class seamstress named Jane Warton, she sought arrest to expose the treatment of working-class suffragettes in prison. She was sentenced to two weeks imprisonment in the Third Division. She was not medically examined and was forcibly fed. Despite having suffered a slight stroke in 1910 she was imprisoned again for breaking windows in November 1911. She was quickly released, her fine having been paid anonymously.

She suffered another stroke in May 1912. She was a staunch supporter of the WSPU and wrote a book of her experiences *Prisons and Prisoners*: *Some Personal Experiences by Constance Lytton and Jane Warton, Spinster* (1914). She died in 1923 aged 54 (Jenkins, 2015).

Chappelow, Grace (1884-1971)

Grace Chappelow was born in Islington to Mary Elizabeth and John Stephen Chappelow. A musician and vocalist, she attended North London Collegiate School (*Islington Gazette*, 2/11/1903: 5). She lived at Hatfield Peveril, Essex (*Votes For Women*, 09/12/1910: 161). She was an active member of Chelmsford WSPU.

In 1910 she was sentenced to fourteen days imprisonment for breaking windows at the house of the Right Hon. Lewis Harcourt at Berkeley Square, London. At her trail she stated that she had acted as a protest against the Government's treatment of women on Friday 18th November 1910 (later known as Black Friday) (*Votes for Women*, 25/11/1910: 128; 2/12/1910: 143). She was arrested in November 1911 for breaking windows (*Votes for Women*, 01/12/1911: 144). She was sentenced to two months' hard labour for breaking windows in March 1912 (*Votes for Women*, 08/03/1912: 363). She spent 14 days in Ipswich prison in November 1912 (*Essex Newsman*, 23/11/1912: 3).

Essex suffragette Dorothea Rock (with whom she was arrested in 1911), left a bequest in her will for Grace (Crawford, 1999: 604).

Gliddon, Katie Edith (1883-1967)

Katie Gliddon was born in Twickenham, Middlesex and was one of five children. Her parents Aurelius and Mary were from Guernsey. She had one sister, Gladys, and three brothers, Cuthbert Paul, Maurice and Donald Guilbert (Ancestry, Accessed 10/02/2020). Her brother Paul was active in the Men's Political Union under the pseudonym 'Charles Gray'.

She was an artist and teacher and had studied at the Slade School of Art between 1900-1904. Some of her paintings are held in Guernsey Museum and Art Gallery. She was a close friend of the painter Helen Saunders (1885-1963) who was associated with the Vorticist movement (Crawford, 2018: 103-104). Two portraits of Gliddon by Edna Clarke Hall are in the collection of the National Museum of Wales, Cardiff. There is also an ink and brush portrait called *Gliddon* (worked between 1922-1924), by Walter Sickert (Schwan, 2012: 165-167).

In 1912 she was living with her family in Croydon and was an active member of the Croydon branch of the WSPU. She adopted the pseudonym 'Katherine (or Catherine) Susan Gray (or Grey)' when she was arrested in 1912. She was sentenced to two months' hard labour for breaking windows in March 1912. She was unmarried and died in Worthing in 1967 (Crawford, 1999; Gliddon papers, TWL).

Hilliard, Mary Ann (Minnie) (1860-1950)

Mary Hilliard was born in Cork in 1860 to Margaret and Dominick Hilliard. She trained in England as a nurse at the age of sixteen and served as a military nurse between 1914-1918 (Beare, Accessed 10/02/2020; Atkinson, 2018: 291, 609). In March 1912, she was sentenced to two months' hard labour for window breaking (*Votes for Women*, 15/03/1912: 382). In March 1942, an issue of the *British Journal of Nursing* recorded that Hilliard gave the West Hoathly handkerchief to the British College of Nurses (Crawford, s.d.). She lived in Hackney and died in Wembley in 1950 (Ancestry, Accessed 10/02/2020).

Ker, Alice Jane Shannan Stewart (née Ker) (1853-1943)

Alice Ker was born in Edinburgh and married Edward Stewart (c. 1840-1907), a merchant, in 1901. They had two children, Margaret Louise (1893-) and May Dunlop (1897-) (Ancestry, Accessed 10/02/2020). She qualified in Dublin as a doctor and was the thirteenth woman to be included on the British Medical Register. She became a general medical practitioner in Birkenhead.

By 1909, she was involved in WSPU with her daughter Margaret. In March 1912 she broke the windows at Harrods, London, valued at £42 (*Votes for Women*, 05/05/1912: 432). She was given a

three-month prison sentence in Holloway Prison, but was released early on 10th May 1912 because of ill health resulting from being forcibly fed. Whilst in prison she wrote a poem for *Holloway Jingles*. Ker moved to London in 1916 and died in Finchley in 1943 (Crawford, 1999: 322-323). (Also, see Murphy, 2020).

Macbeth, Ann (1875-1948)

Ann Macbeth was born in Bolton, Lancashire and was the eldest daughter of nine children of Annie and Norman Macbeth. Norman Macbeth was a civil engineer and portrait painter. She attended Bolton High School and from 1897 studied at the Glasgow School of Art. In 1908 she became Head of Embroidery at the School. She published the educational manual *Educational Needlecraft: Instructresses at the Glasgow School of Art* with Margaret Swanson and Margaret McMillan in 1911.

She was a supporter of the WSPU and the 'Hunger Strikers' Banner' was designed by her and sold to Emmeline Pethick-Lawrence in May 1910. It was carried in the 'From Prison to Citizenship' procession in London on 18th June1910. Macbeth wrote to the School in 1912 indicating that she had been forcibly fed that year, but her name does not appear on the lists of arrests. From 1921 she lived in Patterdale, Cumbria (Rae, 2016: 79)

Proctor, Zoe (1867-1962)

Zoe Proctor was born in India. She was educated at Clapham High School and found work afterwards as a private secretary. She joined the WSPU in 1911 and became involved with the shop run by the Chelsea Branch. She continued working there after 1914. She wrote in her autobiography, *Life and Yesterday* (1960) that she helped to make banners for the 1911 Coronation Procession.

She took part in the window breaking campaign on 1st March 1912 and was remanded in Holloway and sentenced to six weeks. In prison she met Dorothea Rock, who became a life long friend. They were both members of the independent WSPU during the First World War (Crawford, 1999: 574-575, 604).

Smith, Aileen Connor (*c.*1883-)

In 1912, *Votes for Women* stated that Aileen Connor Smith was a gardener *(Votes for Women*, 29/03/1912: 413). She was of independent means (*Common Cause*, 11/07/1912: 230).

She broke three plate glass windows at Turner's (a hatters) at 5, Grand Hotel Buildings, Strand, London in the early hours of the 22nd November 1911. She was convicted at the same time as Cissie Wilcox in December 1911 (*Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 170). In March 1912 she was again convicted for breaking windows at the jewellers, William Carrington Smith's, Regent Street and was sentenced to six months imprisonment (*Votes for Women*, 08/03/1912: 362; 29/03/1912: 413). There was some controversy over the even-handedness of her early release. It was alleged that pressure had been exerted from Irish Nationalists. Her father subscribed to Irish Nationalist Party Funds (*Irish*

Citizen, 10/09/1912: 94). Her brother Harold D. Smith (of Montree, Althlone, Ireland) wrote an open letter to the newspapers stating that this was not the case (*Daily Herald*, 2/07/1912: 9).

Connor Smith campaigned for the vote for Irish women and for an amendment to be inserted into the Home Rule Bill to that end. In 1912 she could be contacted with Miss (Laura, Geraldine) Lennox at 43, Kempsford Gardens, Earls Court, London (*Votes for Women*, 04/10/1912: 845).

Taylor, Mary Ellen (Nellie) (née Bennett), also known as Mary Wyan (1863-1937)

Mary was born in Leicester in 1863 to Sarah Swain (1833-71) and John Bennett (1830-1906). They were married in 1854 and the family were comfortable well-respected middle class non-conformists. Her father John was a philanthropist and was elected Mayor in 1879 and 1880. He established a successful corn merchants business in Leicester. There were six children from this marriage, Henry Swain, Frederick William, Annie, Elizabeth (Lily) Mary Ellen (Nellie), Martha Louise (Pattie)
In 1872 after the death of his wife John married Elizabeth Widdowson and Arthur Edward Bennett was born in 1873 (Jenkins, 2010).

She married Thomas Smithies Taylor in 1891 and had three children, Dorothea (1892-), Garth Smithies (1896-) and Mark Herschel (1903-). Thomas Taylor was an engineer and founded a scientific instrument makers company. In 1897 they moved to Smeeton Westerby, Leicestershire and in 1912 moved to Nottingham. Dorothea and Garth were educated at the progressive co-educational boarding school Bedales in Hampshire.

There was a strong family involvement with the suffrage campaign. Taylor's brother in law Mark Wilks was a member of the Men's Political Union for Women's Enfranchisement. Both Taylor and her daughter avoided being enumerated in the 1911 census.

Taylor was arrested for smashing the windows of the Kings Road Post Office, Chelsea with Nellie Crocker and Gladys Roberts of Nottingham on 4th March 1912. In court she stated that she was '…there to fight for the freedom of her daughter, to gain for her equal rights' (*Votes for Women*, 05/05/1912: 433). She allegedly caused £12 worth of damage. The women were all sentenced to three months in Holloway Prison in the Third Division (*Votes for Women*, 05/04/1912: 433). Mary participated in the hunger strike in April but was not forcibly fed. She was released on the 27thApril. She had been admitted to the hospital in Holloway.

On the 14th July 1913 she was arrested and sentenced to 14 days under the name Mary Wyan and went on a hunger and thirst strike in Holloway. She was released on the 18th July and on 25th July she returned to Holloway of her own accord and resumed the hunger and thirst strike. Four days later she was discharged and was dangerously ill. She was admitted to a local Infirmary until the 20th August and sent back to Holloway. On the 22nd Aug she was released.

In 1914 she was living at 'Stonerdale', Church Lane, Steep, Hampshire. She died in 1937 (Jenkins, 2010). (Also, see Murphy, 2020).

Terrero, Janie (née Beddall) (1858-1944)
Terrero, Manuel Maximo (1856-1926)

Janie Terrero was originally from Finchingfield in Essex. She was the youngest daughter of Thomas and Eliza Beddall. The 1881 census shows that the family were living in Hampstead and that her mother was widowed. She married Manuel Maximo Terrero in Hampstead, London in 1885 (*Bury and Norwich Evening Post*, 22/12/1885: 5). He was the elder son of Manuela and Maximo Terrero and his family lived in Belsize Park, Hampstead.

In 1901 both were living at Fir Tree Lodge, Bannisters Rd., Southampton with Maximo Terrero (83), Manuel's father. Manuel was registered to vote in Pinner from 1907 and is recorded in the 1911 census as being of independent means (Janie avoided the census). The couple were childless.
Manuel was a member of the Men's Political Union for Women's Enfranchisement and was a committed socialist, campaigner and advocate of temperance.

In 1911, Manuel wrote to the syndicalist paper *Justice*, indicating that the couple knew Cissie Wilcox. He stated that Wilcox and three other women had stayed at the Terrero home in 1910 after Black Friday and Janie and Dr Jessie Murray had examined the women (*Justice*, 18/03/1911: 6). In 1910 Manuel had written a letter to *Votes for Women* indicating that the Terrero's gave shelter to suffragettes who had 'come from a distance' (*Votes for Women*, 9/12/1910: 162).

In 1911, *Votes for Women* made an appeal for money and food items for hampers to be sent to Holloway, for prisoners sentenced in November and December of that year. The appeal asked that items should be sent to 4, Clements Inn, Strand and it was organised by Mrs Marshall (*Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 172). The issue of the 29th December 1911 printed a thank you notice in appreciation of the response. Hampers costing 1s 6d, money and items such as plum pudding, Christmas cake, jam and turkey had been sent. The names of contributors were listed including Mrs Terrero, (*Votes for Women*, 29/12/1911: 215). Janie Terrero had also donated cakes the year before (*Votes for Women*, 30/12/1910: 216).

Janie Terrero was arrested for smashing windows at Messrs. Alfred Stedhall Ltd., Oxford Street causing damage estimated at £150 (*Votes for Women*, 15/03/1912: 381). She was sentenced to four months in Holloway Prison. She had refused bail and had not been convicted before. During this term of imprisonment she went on hunger strike twice and was forcibly fed. In May 1912 after the first hunger strike, *Votes for Women* recorded that she was fed with a nasal tube after four days on hunger strike and that she was forcibly fed twice. She said, 'It was not pain, it was agony' and that after the

second time she was left in a state of spasms, but no one went back to look after her (*Votes for Women*, 17/05/1912: 522).

In 1912 Janie Terrero was the secretary of the Pinner branch of the WSPU. She used their home, Rockstone House, Paines Lane, Pinner, as the local WSPU headquarters and gave 'At Homes' and garden parties there. Lady Constance Lytton was a speaker there on 4th July 1911 and Manuel presided.

After Manuel's death in 1926 Janie returned to Belsize Park and lived there until her death in 1944. They are both buried in Southampton Old Cemetery (Manuel was born in Southampton) (Ancestry, Accessed, 21/02/2020).

Wilcox, Mary Ellen (Cissie) (1884-)

Mary Ellen Wilcox was born in Penketh, Warrington, Lancs. Census returns (1881-1901) show that she was one of five sisters in a working-class family. Some of the women in the family were concerned with textiles: Lily Taylor (sister) was a millener, Eva (sister) was an upholsterer and in 1891, her mother Margaret was recorded as being a 'mantlemaker'. Her father George was a wiredrawer. In 1901 Cissie was recorded as being a domestic servant to the Booth family in Warrington. Her mother died in 1905 and between 1905 and 1910 the family moved to Gateshead, County Durham. George, Minnie and Nora were living in four rooms at 9, Mafeking Street, Gateshead in the 1911 census (Ancestry, Accessed 11/11/2015-18/02/2019). Cissie is not registered on the 1911 census. Jill Liddington states that she slept in the WSPU shop at 77 Blackett Street, Newcastle on census night (Liddington, 2014: 362).

In the 1939 England and Wales Register, she is recorded as single and a retired hospital nurse, living with her sister Eva Wilcox, a retired matron, in Horsham, East Sussex.

As a member of Newcastle WSPU, Wilcox was a speaker, seller of newspapers and active WSPU militant (*Votes for Women*, 18/02/1910: 326, 16/09/1912: 755).

In January 1910 she was sentenced to three days in prison in Newcastle for throwing copies of *Votes for Women* into the car of Sir Herbert Samuel, the Postmaster General, at Wallsend. She was charged with missile throwing and assault and went to prison for three days. This incident is embroidered on her handkerchief as, 'Newcastle Hunger Strike 3 days Jan. 1910' (*Votes for Women*, 14/01/1910: 242; *Shields Daily News*, 11/01/1910: 3).

In Oct. 1910 Wilcox was speaking in public outside a Liberal party meeting in South Shields. She remarked that if the third reading of the Conciliation Bill were to be refused by Asquith 'There will be trouble'. She claimed that the women would assemble in Parliament Square and march upon the House

of Commons. She said, 'Nothing but force will stop us' and '500 women have already volunteered for the fray' (*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 25/10/1910: 7).

On Black Friday in November 1910, she pleaded guilty to breaking three glass windows valued at £3, in the Post Office at Wimpole Street, London. She was ordered to pay £3 damages and a £5 fine or in default, spend a month in prison. She was charged at Bow Street police court with seventeen other defendants (*Western Daily Press*, 25/11/1910: 10). Wilcox's sentence is recorded on the handkerchief as, 'Holloway one month Nov 1910' She was released with Mary Aldham and others on the 23rd of December 1910 (*Votes for Women*, 16/12/1910: 181).

In *Justice* March 1911, Manuel Terrero stated that Wilcox was badly injured on Black Friday. He claimed it 'was the worst case'. He described Wilcox as a 'small, refined, inoffensive little girl… quite incapable of lying.' He indicated that she was 'an earnest adherent of the Socialist cause' and that she was the daughter of a 'good comrade' (of Newcastle) (*Justice*, 18/03/1911: 6).

The handkerchief is embroidered with 'Holloway 2 months Nov 1911', and the panel is dated Dec. 1911. These dates refer to Wilcox's sentence for the window breaking on the 21st November 1911. She was one of nineteen women sentenced to two months in the Second Division in Holloway for malicious damage to property. The cases were held at Newington Sessions (rather than Bow Street) and before a jury, because the alleged cost of the damages exceeded £5.00. The cases were heard on 12th December 1911. *Votes for Women* gave a detailed account of the trial and of the women's voices. It stated that two hundred and twenty women and three men had been arrested and a hundred charged. Wilcox was charged together with Vera Wentworth for breaking plate glass windows at approximately eight pm at Messrs. J. Lyons and Co. Ltd. (450, Strand) and London and South Western Bank (448, Strand). Vera Wentworth had broken windows at 453, 454 and 455 Strand, which included the ABC Company and Lyons and Co. Ltd. Wentworth had in her possession a hammer, a catapult and two stones. They offered no defense as to the facts but Wilcox gave a long speech defending her motives. The other women tried at Newington were; Atheling Lelegarde; Helen Archdale; Sarah Bennett; Edith Huddleston; Mary Violet Jones; Peggy Julian; Margaret Robinson; Mrs Kathleen Roy Rothwell; Frances Rowe; Ethel Slade; Isabella Potbury; Aileen Connor Smith; Miss Evelyn Taylor; Margaret Wallis; Vera Wentworth; Olive Wharry; Miss Frances Wise; and Georgina Helen Grant (*Votes for Women*, 15/12/1911: 178-9).

She was released from Holloway, after two months imprisonment, on Saturday 10th Feb. 1912 with eleven other suffragettes. The released prisoners included Aileen Connor Smith. Friends and officials of the WSPU met them at the prison entrance. There were 'gaily, decorated omnibuses' and they were 'accorded a rousing response'. The party then 'drove to a restaurant where they were received by Christabel Pankhurst and entertained to breakfast' (*Yorkshire Evening Post*, 10/02/1912: 5; *Globe*, 10/02/1912: 9; *Votes for Women*, 09/02/1912: 286).

Wilcox was welcomed back in Newcastle and was scheduled to speak at Gateshead Town Hall on 28th February 1912 (*Votes for Women*, 23/02/1912: 330).

She was evicted from a meeting in the Town Hall, Stanhope, Durham, on 3rd July 1912. The speaker was Sir Herbert Samuel. She spoke outside the meeting with Miss Mildred Atkinson and Mr Gow (*Votes for Women*, 12/07/1912: 572).

In *Freedom's Cause: Lives of the Suffragettes* (2003) Fran Abrams noted that Emily Wilding Davison stayed with Wilcox in Newcastle on her way south before the Epsom Derby in June 1913. Wilcox said that she had 'discovered Emily tying a flag around her dress with a reel of cotton and trying out the effect in front of the mirror'. She said Emily was 'secretive about what she was planning' (Abrams, 2003: 172).

Wilcox was arrested again on October 20th 1913 at Hillheads, Whitley Bay, Northumberland. She justified trying to set fire to a new school saying, 'This is being done to rouse the people of Whitley Bay to a knowledge of their duty respecting the women's suffrage cause' (*Sunderland Echo and Shipping Gazette*, 30/10/1913: 4). When the policeman asked her about two boxes of matches she dropped on the steps of the railway bridge she replied, 'Perhaps they are yours?' She was asked to remove her coat and the pocket contained one shilling and sixpence and a broken matchstick. A hatbox was discovered the next day with every mark scraped off it. It contained firelighters and 'composition'. She was fined 20s and costs. (*Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 30/10/1913: 9; *Morpeth Herald*, 31/10/1913: 5; *The Manchester Guardian*, 30/10/1913: 12)). The police had been notified beforehand (*Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 22/10/1913: 3). *The Suffragette* recorded that Wilcox was sentenced to 14 days in Newcastle Prison (*The Suffragette*, 31/10/1913: 63).

On May 24th 1914, five women including Wilcox were carried out of The Cathedral Church of St Nicholas, Newcastle, during the church service. The women chanted 'God save Emmeline Pankhurst'. They 'screamed and kicked, 'resisting violently' when ejected. Wilcox was taken into custody but was subsequently released when the church authorities declined to prosecute (*Newcastle Journal*, 25/05/1914: 7; *The Scotsman*, 25/05/1914: 10).

In July 1914, Wilcox was a member of a private deputation organized to speak with the Bishop of Durham about forcible feeding and the provisions of the Cat and Mouse Act. The deputation comprised of: Elizabeth Grew (Newcastle); Mrs Boyd (Leamside); Miss Armstrong, Miss Williams B.A., and Miss Dickinson (Jarrow); Miss Bentley, Miss Wilcox (Gateshead); Miss Falconer (Chester Le Street); Miss Ellis (Esh Winning); Mrs Jeffries (Birtley); and Mrs Forster (South Shields).
It was pointed out that the women being forcibly fed were un-convicted prisoners who were being subject to 'torture'. Miss Bentley described her experiences of forcible feeding, and having need of an operation for a kidney complaint twelve months later. The Bishop intimated that he would consult with other bishops on the issue. Miss Grew said that she hoped the Bishop would use his influence against

‘the horrible torturing of women’. The paper stated that, ‘As some of the women were being shown round the castle paper ‘bombs’ were exploded, which created much amusement’ (*Newcastle Journal*, 06/07/1914: 5).