

The Art of the Bodge:

Understanding bodging as a methodology when working  
with themes of sexual violence in the mediums of sculpture  
and writing.

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## ABSTRACT

This practice-based research focuses on experiences of sexual violence expressed through autobiographical writing and sculptures. These experiences are explored in *Headstone*, a collection of writing that draws on memories that seem only half-real. Extending from this reflective writing practice, sculptural works respond to insitutional hierarchies and engage with the aftermath of sexual violence.

The definitions of nonviolence in Judith Butler's *The Force of Nonviolence* (2021) underpin the methodological approaches in this research. The thesis reflects on intuitive responses to being within the 'forcefield of power', and this is understood as 'bodging'. The methodology of 'bodging' has developed in a hodgepodge way through intense periods of research practised in different states of being 'outside' – away from my birth country, away from the institution, in the loft of my home, escaping paid work into a relationship with creative writing. This methodology of 'bodging' has led to reaching an understanding of the place of protest in this art practice. Working both as a way to access a state of 'not knowing' and also concurrently undermining power and revealing vulnerability, I have developed the methodology of the bodge in my approach to sculptural works as well as writing and academic research.

This experimental way of conducting research has shown the importance of revealing a combination of aggression and vulnerability, both in myself and in the sculptural works, to express a subjectivity that reflects my lived experiences. This research has come to position experiences of sexual violence as central to the intuitive responses and solutions that are relied upon in this kind of rushed sculptural practice. Embodied yet doubted memories become central to the sense of loneliness invoked by the position of exile that the research is practised from. Through placing myself in a position of unfamiliarity, as a researcher, writer and sculptor I am able to work on the edges of each medium, within an area I have defined as the bodge. The words in my thesis are presented as an ongoing reflection which moves with you as you travel through the text. Welcome.



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## VISUAL LIST OF WORKS MADE DURING THE RESEARCH



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## INTRODUCTION

‘We demand that sex speak the truth [...] the deeply buried truth of that truth about ourselves which we think we possess in our immediate consciousness.’

Michel Foucault

This practice-based research is centred around experiences of sexual violence. The work that constitutes this research foregrounds my subjectivities, experiences and perspectives of that violence. This perspective is expressed in *Headstone*, a piece of semi-autobiographical creative writing, and in this thesis’s sculptural works.

*Headstone* is partly an autoethnographic account of life in rural Sweden in the 1990s and early 2000s, and moments of a life later on in the UK and in the present day: working, doing this research, going on vacation, looking after my baby and remembering the past. It also contains material I borrowed from other biographies.

Rather than shy away from this way of producing knowledge, through my own experiences and reflections I have wholeheartedly embraced it, albeit through a sometimes painful and often fractured process of remembering and revealing.

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This thesis is both a process of discovery and reflection, as I have been working out what my practice can tell me about violence being a catalyst in creative work. Reading this thesis might be difficult and awkward, as my thoughts are developing with the writing, as I write, but I do not know how else to achieve a research process, text and reading that embodies the complexities of what I am discussing, have experienced, and am making work from now.

I am doing this research within the context of a world where women are frequently experiencing violence. Violence against women here refers to both blows of ‘fast’ violence as well as slower kinds of institutional violence. In 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) published data that revealed that one in three of all women globally have experienced violence. And 27% women worldwide report that they have experienced violence, physical or sexual, by someone that they are in a relationship with. And the violence starts young. One in four girls have experienced violence by someone they are in a relationship with by the time they reach



their early 20s. According to the WHO's report, these numbers have remained 'largely unchanged in the past decade' (WHO, 2021, para.1). This violence is often situated within the home. An accurate map of rape would highlight more suburban neighbourhoods than back alleys (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). These examples of violence, the blows of rape and beatings, are made possible within a structure of slower forms of violence – institutional violence – where women are repeatedly valued less than their male counterparts. Their lives are, in Judith Butler's terms, less grievable (Butler, 2021). Therefore, this violence is incredibly important to examine and comprehend. Understanding the effects on men's sexual violence of women and its effects on creativity and academic research is hugely relevant to our times. Compared to the fast blows of bruising physical violence, institutional violence is harder to observe, but this thesis reveals how refusal, or being told 'no' in an academic context, can point to it and indicate a point of fracture, a place where it hurts. This research draws on subjective experiences of violence. It makes no claims to represent women's experience as a whole, recognising that feminism needs to be approached intersectionally (Crenshaw, 1991). However, it aims to build a subjective manifestation of what some of that violence has been like, in 19 keeping with the feminist claim that 'the personal is political' (Hanisch, 2006). Though I am making work from my autobiography, I am also making work about what are, sadly, shared experiences for women around the world.

Extending from my writing practice and the reflections around it, I created sculptural works in which I seek to manifest my subjective experiences and responses to power and to violence. The project develops a response to the following central research questions. Firstly, how do violent experiences that feature in female sexuality shape responses to power? And, secondly, what is the creative potential in looking for an escape from violence? This leads to a feminist engagement with the methodology of 'bodging' as a reflexive approach to writing and making. In other words, I have questions to which 'bodging' seems to offer a solution, and a creative way forward.

The methodology of this research has developed in a hodgepodge way; that is to say, the methodology has been bodged. Firstly, it has happened through meeting

refusals (being told no and denied funding, for instance) and during intense periods of research practised in different states of being 'outside': away from the institution, transcending the domestic (in the loft of my home), escaping paid work into a relationship with creative writing, being away from the place I was born and grew up. Judith Butler (2021, p.15) claims that whether we like it or not we exist within a 'forcefield of violence'. We cannot un-choose the ways in which violence appears around us. The actions of others are out of our control. But what we can influence are our own choices, how we respond to that violence. I have noticed how institutional boundaries have appeared through and criss-crossed the process of this research. Initially, this was through the denial of approval, through the word 'no': for instance, in applications to fund this research and when registering my research proposal with the internal university committee. These instances reveal opportunities to reflect on my intuitive responses to power, or in other words how I, in my creative practice, respond to being told 'no'.

In response to those noes I have sought to protest under the guise of fieldwork.

20 At first, my protests were instinctual – as I faced the hierarchies of the institution, I felt an inescapable need to flee its field of power (my mind shouting 'get out, get out, get out'). Through this research journey, I have come to shape the form this protest has taken into a learned and intentional awkwardness when facing harsh structures and boundaries. But instead of running away, I carried out several smaller protests, which were probably too small to be noticed, but I knew. Through Butler's nonviolence, this can be understood as making our bodies heavy, to put an end to violence. Likewise, Carol Rambo (1995) describes her own response to sexual molestation, as she reflects on subtly protesting without her perpetrator knowing what she was doing. Through this research I have found this gentler form of protest, like lying or dragging one's feet to reclaim a sense of autonomy, though the action is not necessarily obvious to the molester, the perpetrator, the institution or an audience. But my response to the power of my academic institution has become a central methodology of this research and my practice; it is activated in the push and pull, my resistance to the boundaries of the institution, making this relationship and struggle for power both rich and creative, despite

stemming from violence and memories of pain. More broadly, while we exist with violence, we are free to respond to it with more violence, or to respond differently. So, while this research starts with violence, it is not destined to stay violent. This practice-based research is underpinned by a desire to create and aim for a future that is less violent.

The sculptural works that have been produced through the research have guided the understanding described here of my subjective relationship to sexuality and violence. Importantly, I have come to understand that my previous experience of sexual violence has influenced my methodology. This has become clear through thinking about the way that I bodge: improvise and bung bits together to make sculptural works. The bodging has several registers. While it can be understood as a continuation of the protest, following the idea of dragging one's feet and sabotaging to reclaim autonomy, it has become clear to me through this research journey that it has more depth. It is to do with previously lacking a voice. Lacking a defined subjectivity. This sense of not being able to speak up relates to freezing during rape, the way that I have frozen. It also relates to subsequently 'not know- 21 ing' (as in for years totally forgetting) about those sexual assaults. It has been established that memories of sexual violence can hide and be left out of what memory pictures all together, only to resurface later in life (Joslyn et al., 1997). Thus, the methodology of cack-handedly assembling sculptural works is in a way a manifestation of trying to remember, piecing stuff together to give 'it' a physical presence, make it real, relatable, tellable, rather than hidden and shameful in its frailness and ugliness. As a process, this research has come to position experiences of sexual violence as central to intuitive responses and solutions that are relied upon in this kind of rushed and time-poor sculptural practice. Embodied yet doubted memories become central to the sense of bodging as a version of events is made up, and the exile that the research is practised from evokes the loneliness of a deserted island. I have been so alone, with my wordless and forgotten memories.

Furthermore, bodging has become my method of making the sculptures 'stand up'. This is a very direct approach, as once they do stand up, they are complete.

Sometimes this means wrapping gaffa tape around the legs to stabilise it or using a bag of flour to weigh the base down. Bodging as a methodology for making art is driven by a need to find a solution (make it stand), and so necessitates grabbing whatever is within reach to achieve that goal. To bodge a sculpture is urgent, instantaneous, unintelligent and blunt. 'Standing up' has also become a way of thinking about my ability to work in this field of research, about my ability to carry out research. While being rooted in protest, the bodge also seems to reveal a vulnerability. This becomes apparent when I leave the works in a gallery during an exhibition, and I carry a dull worry that my sculptures will fall over. While initially the bodging came about as a protest to boundaries and hierarchies, the research has revealed to me that it is also to do with allowing others to see your fragility and vulnerability.

22 Whether we like it or not, violence becomes a component of many women's sexualities, as shown by the research published by WHO in 2021 for instance. With those experiences come uncomfortable contexts of violence and victimhood. Despite the violence, this research is not carried out from the position of victim. Positioning women who have experienced sexual violence as victims turns the trauma into something that is only about what has been inflicted (Ahmed, 2014). Throughout the research process, I have been looking for ways of transcending violence, stepping away from it and breaking the cycle, choosing not to use violence as a tool against violence, but instead being led by a desire to 'stand up' and use available materials to create a nonviolent response to violence. Through my research I have arrived at way of responding by creating with the materials available to me within the domestic, which is tinged with violence. Following Butler's (2021) insistence on vulnerability as a marker for co-dependence (which in *The Force of Nonviolence* necessitates building a nonviolent future), I have chosen to think of vulnerability not as a marker of victimhood but as a marker of strength that takes me away from self-reliance. The aim is for this response to not victimise, but to take an active role to create from the violence and trauma.

During this research an important political event took place. The MeToo movement had a resurgence, with the eventual sentencing of Harvey Weinstein. This



was an important, but largely symbolic, moment, as sexual violence against women is of course still happening. While it is my undeniable desire to not have to spend more time devoting myself to the pains inflicted upon women by those they are, for instance, intimate with or relying on, violence continues to occur and to drive my practice methodology. When I began this research, I aimed to make work that was less autobiographical and less about rape. My initial proposal focused on other ways to speak about sexuality and fractures in the domestic environment through other, non-biographical, narratives. But I have discovered that violent and biographical narratives are present in my work even as I tried to turn away from it. I have been able to see this as the research unfolded, for instance through how aggression has appeared in my writing, in fiction, prose and poetry. And it has subtly been present in the disruption and reassembling of the domestic environment, and my response to academia. Similarly to how subtle protests indicate an aversion to and need to escape hierarchical environments, I have understood that expressions of aggression figure in my work in response to violence.

## Origin

My subjectivities are written into the research through a collection of poetry and prose: *Headstone*. *Headstone* exists as a parallel narrative to the contextual and theoretical thesis that you are reading right now. Parts of *Headstone* also appear within this thesis; when it does you will notice the colour of the writing changes to blue.

I grew up nowhere, or that is how it seemed. I lived in a house with a garden in a neighbourhood with other houses with gardens. In the summers, the front lawns were freckled with dandelions. Raspberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants hung heavy on branches in the patches out the back.

My parents settled in the countryside following what in Sweden is referred to as the 'green wave' of the 1970s, people from the city moving to the countryside, looking for a simpler life, building their own home, setting up large gardens for



fruit and vegetable growing. Mum chuckled, 'They all moved back to the city after the first winter.' My parents doggedly stuck with the graft and the cold for another 20 years or so. What in the end caused them to move back to the city was not the weather, but a feud following the revelation that our neighbour across the street was a paedophile.

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Several times every year we took day trips to IKEA. I spent hours browsing the enormous location, a sprawling array of bendy one-way isles, brim-full baskets and dreamy displays, dedicated to homemaking. At Christmases and birthdays my wish-lists included items I had spotted.

As I visited other people's houses, I noticed how whole homes were assembled and decorated purely with IKEA furniture. Their back-garden summerhouses were my teenage dreams – inflatable sofas, minty coloured polyester cushions and Nintendos. For the final assignment in home economics, the pupils at my school 25 were given a budget and tasked to select all the furniture, ornaments, utensils and soft furnishings to put together their first home, cutting and pasting the items they had chosen alongside their calculations. Needless to say, apart from scissors and glue, the IKEA catalogue was the only tool provided to us.

Away from school, there was a group of us that spent much of the summer out in the woods. There were places we knew of by lakes that were particularly serene. Sometimes we brought canoes. We cycled for hours along hot and dusty gravel tracks through deeply fragrant, green, mossy forests. We lit fires and swam. Thinking back, I see these days and nights in a heady coming-of-age blur. There was an electric, sexual tension in the air, and I remember the panic that cut through it when one of the boys slashed into his foot with an axe. Hours from the nearest house.

Beautiful sunsets and water pure enough to drink straight from the lake. Fear and lust. Steam rising. Peeing in the pitch-black night. Water that drips on tarpaulin

forms a puddle. The woven plastic catches the condensation of breath overnight. It could just as easily suffocate.

Years before that we slept out in tents in the field behind my home. A group of girls. We would collectively imagine the fabric being slashed by a rapist's knife. The chaos, the ripped tent, the floral cotton knickers. We whispered and wondered what that would look like, feel like.

A year or so into my 20s I escaped Sweden. I found painful, lonely narratives in my own biography, and spent many years working through some of those memories from my teenage years in Sweden; stuff that I had, for a time at least, forgotten all about, the imagined trauma of rape and chaos that had become real, came to the surface. After moving to the UK, I enrolled on a BA in and then an MA in photography. I learned about the language of the image, studio lighting, editing, psychoanalysis. I was interested in the concept of the nuclear family, and appropriated amateur photographs. And, using the tropes of this kind of photograph, I  
26 visited professional studios with strangers – men and their children – and had an unknowing photographer capture us as a family.

After completing the MA, I started experiencing photography as a set of boundaries. I hated the restrictions – four sides, flat surface, binary format – and its language seemed just as limiting and predictable to me as the patriarchy I fought by destroying myself through some kind of substance co-dependence. I wanted to break away from the societal expectations that I felt hung heavy over me, and spent a decade trying to find another escape. Those years were angry, promiscuous and self-loathing. I acted violently at the world and at myself. Some of this time, rife with clichés, is chronicled in *Headstone* and in the autoethnographic sections of this thesis.



## How This Thesis May be Read

This thesis is written in the style of autotheory, Lauren Fournier (2022) offers a good definition of the term. But for me and in this thesis, I have made the choice to foreground my 'I', as there is no use in trying to hide it within false objectivity and because through the thesis I am looking for, and locating, my subjectivity in relation to the material I am encountering. I am, to quote Arianne Zwartjes (2019), conducting research by 'walking around in the world with my eyes open'. What I write here is what I see. Within the thesis, two narratives run parallel. Sections from *Headstone* cut through more academic writing. These parallel texts are part of the same discussion (what I see and on sex, violence, aggression, escaping and expressions of sexuality) but operate in different ways. The contrasting styles hint at the multilayeredness of the violence, sex and traumas that this thesis covers. Moreover, the presence of the parallel texts can be understood as using complementing approaches to understand the impact of sexual violence on creativity, which is a complex thing to untangle. As a side note, at some points *Headstone* is quoted within the academic writing, this is intended to reinforce my understanding of specific concepts that are at play in this research. In other words, *Headstone* feeds into and supports the ideas that I am exploring academically. Importantly then, in this sense, *Headstone* is primary data, a description of experiences that drives the research forward. Here I am drawing on the autoethnographic approach of Carol Rambo (1995) and using the self as the subject within research, drawing on personal narratives to build the research. 27

In 2000, just after I had first been sexually assaulted, I went to what in Sweden was known as Urix. Urix is the short name for Ungdomsriksdagen, or the Youth Parliament. Between 1994 and 2009 annual festivals were arranged, and teenagers from across Sweden gathered to make their voices heard. When I went, I chose to join the sex and sexuality subgroup. In a series of lectures, workshops and discussions we learned about equality, sexuality and gender. I remember wondering if I would be able to connect with anyone to share with them my secret, what was making me so angry inside. I tried catching the eye of the sex and sexuality subgroup lead-

er; she must have been in her mid-20s. I remember her chestnut-brown hair, her thick fringe, and bright-blue t-shirt and denim skirt still. She lectured on hermaphroditism. I lingered at the end of the class, helping her stack chairs.

Are you, my reader, her? Following Emmanuel Levinas (1984), do you take an ethical responsibility for me as your Other, to care for me? Can you be the workshop leader now? Can you listen? Do you hear me? I did not find the words to tell her this then. After the lecture on hermaphroditism I met a guy who I gave a handjob to. I remember his sister told me off for it; she said he was too naive and would fall in love and get hurt. On the Monday, after the weekend at Urix I went back to school and gave a presentation on the linguistic root of the Swedish word for cock, kuk. I think I found in this situation of sex, politics and language a way to try to make sense of the assault without directly expressing what it was. I think that this thesis is a continuation of that process.

28 Following the process of making sense and communicating what it is like to experience sexual assault, I have organised this thesis to reflect the research journey I have been on, which (as I will explain) seems connected to trauma. This text is a journey and you, my reader, may also be on a journey with the text. You might read it from start to finish or stop before reaching the end. You might use the search function to look for key words that are relevant to you, or you might jump from my text into others and then come back to mine again. Wherever you end up, remember that the thesis reflects the research's iterative process. This means that the thesis is in itself choppy; reading it may be uncomfortable and jerky. So it might be helpful to remember that this writing, here, is an outpouring of stuff, of memory and reflections, which once on the page is 'out there' as opposed to 'in here'. Or another way to think about this is as a text punctuated by trauma, a trauma which continuously, sometimes suddenly and unexpectedly, ruptures the flow of this thesis. Similarly the trauma has continually ruptured my research, well, my every day, my life.

Christopher Hanley (2019) suggests using text and writing as a way to 'think',

to which I add to 'process' events. So this thesis has become a place where I can speak about sexual violence. It is also a semblance of what language and expression of sexual violence look like, sounds like, reads like. The text is repetitive and cyclical as I work through memories and reflections. But importantly, all of this feeds into the understanding of bodging and the feminist methodology that I am building. The logic behind this approach is that I am, myself, the expert in my situation. This way of working follows on from feminist research methods. For instance, Feminist Participatory Action Research (FPAR) combines research, gender justice and activism (Chakma, 2016). It can be used by feminist social movements as a strategy to challenge and transform patriarchal power. At its core, FPAR is an iterative, democratised methodology. This is seen in research projects with participants becoming 'co-researchers' who collectively generate knowledge through sharing their experiences, as they are the experts in their own circumstances (Godden, 2017; Kirby, 2011). The power of knowledge is shifted from the 'expert researcher' to something held by communities. In this project I do not work with participants, nor with communities, but draw on my own life experiences to create knowledge. In addition, in feminist research reflexivity has come to be considered 29 a key component in what is a vast and sprawling area of research employing an equally vast range of methods and methodologies (Wilson, 2023). In this project I rely on personal reflection to situate myself in relation to the research. I use a reflexive impulse to position my personal experiences, emotions and biography in relation to the theory worked through and my experiences in the research. This approach underpins the logic to present the research in this sprawling and non-didactic way. It is my view that the iterative and reflexive shape of the thesis performs the methodology of bodging. It is an expression of a feminist approach to conducting research, placing emphasis on a previously hidden subject of sexual violence which ruptures the flow of the research and the text. In turn, the research embodies my situation, as someone who carries trauma. I am present in this research, here within the pages, performing for you what it is I have to say. I am in agreement with Arianne Zwartjes' (2019) claim that there is rebellion in autotheory, of putting oneself so fully within a thesis and rejecting the dichotomies of truth and imagination, personal writing and theory.

The thesis is written to be accessible as a text, to toe the line of what is an acceptable and useful format for a thesis to take. I have kept some key ideas in mind when making decisions on this text's structure. Firstly, Katherine Behar's (2016) assertion in *Object-Orientated Feminism* that to be wrong can sometimes be right. What Behar points to seems like what in the social sciences is sometimes referred to as 'mess' (e.g. Rabbidge, 2017). 'Mess' is in that context interpreted as the material which results when research behaves in unexpected ways. In this research the unexpected, the mess and the debris are exactly what is foregrounded. I understand the sexual assaults as messy and unexpected, and therefore equate these experiences and, moreover, their understanding to how they are situated in relation to art-making (and research) and keeping the mess – the bodes – in the project.

The thesis draws together ideas in three distinct chapters. In the first chapter, *Leaving*, I reflect on what it is to leave after sexual violence. But also, on being rejected due to promiscuity. I do this through a series of deliberations on Julia Augusti and the island of Ventotene, where she was banished by her father Emperor Augustus.

30 This opens up a discussion on productive anger (anger at being told to leave) and embodying the frustration of lovers turning rapists. In the second chapter, *In the Fold with Violence*, I continue to work through anger, and how violence has folded around and into me and how I through my art practice am folding it outward again. I also look at expressing subjectivity and foregrounding the experiences of violence within research and art practice, wondering if liberation or freedom can be found within the sense of gaining a voice. As an aside, through my art practice I have achieved a deeper understanding of how I communicate trauma in processes of revelation, in fits and spurts – and this process is reflected within each chapter of this thesis. I see this as analogous to the ongoing process of re-remembering associated with forgetting and re-remembering sexual violence (Joslyn et al., 1997). Chapter three, *Vacation*, turns to the idea of vacation, in the sense of emptying out and 'putting the words out there rather than in here' but also as the artist's residency – which has been a place of productivity in this research. Having said that, the artist's residency is nonetheless not a place where I feel completely safe, as I am haunted by the memories and reality of the ongoing (threat of) sexual violence.

To conclude, I am presenting my research journey in this thesis, as a key part of my findings is the importance of iterative practice when working with trauma. The implication of this is that only through the process of research have I discovered what the thesis is truly about, and this will become evident as you read on. A marker of that process, *Headstone*, is presented within the research in its five separate sections.

## Contextual Situation

This research has been carried out in the extremely exciting and rich field of female sculptors. What I present here is preceded by the work of a group of women whose practices opened the space that this thesis builds on. What these sculptors have in common is the unconventional use of material and works that occupy spaces with a bold presence. The works are also intimate, domestic and humorous. Initially, however, I looked at the artists of the Arte Povera movement. It seemed like their rejection of political and economic systems might be relevant to my research; moreover, their use of unconventional art materials seemed contextually relevant to my work. However, as my writing practice developed, I began to place my research more firmly within feminism, and particularly as a practice dealing with sexual violence. For that reason, seeking a connection to the male-dominated Arte Povera movement seemed illogical. Furthermore, I am not looking to locate myself as an outsider as a way to critique the status quo, instead I am coming to terms with being on the outside (of not having subjectivity and feeling the need to define it) and finding a way in. In 2017, a year or so into my research journey, writing became the focus of my practice and my main creative outlet, as I was spending more and more time earning money and less time in the studio, which at this time had moved into a spare bedroom. But writing was something I was able to do wherever I was, whilst working or commuting. At this time I also read Maggie Nelson (2009, 2015). Nelson's personal and intimate writing spans autobiography, theory, feminism and art critique. Her often-aphoristic style, in both the *Argonauts* and *Bluets*, effortlessly and poetically dips in and out of scenes, musings and

nuggets of facts. Similarly choppy and philosophical, Kathy Acker (1993, 1994a,b, 2015) has an even more raw and direct tone. Some of Acker's angrier works that deal more directly with sex influenced my own writing practice and inspired a sense of experimentation in what became *Headstone*. Trauma runs through each of these writer's practice, and in *Headstone* I too experienced that. In this research I am looking to define the jolty, sprawling, messy methodology that seems to be employed by these writers, especially by Acker. I have coined the term 'bodging', which works to describe protest, urgency and messiness. Furthermore, Acker's writing has the volume turned to the max, it is full on. The collaging style of her text and, above all, the multiple layers and complexities of her work can be understood as bodging, in that it joins material together. In my research, a reflexive autoethnographic instinct to bodge extends from the writing into the sculptural works (and vice versa). The relationships between the two mediums and their conversation uniquely positions the research through both 'speaking' and 'showing', with each at different times leading the direction of the research. This embodiment of violence and a record of pain illustrates the complex nature of sexual violence.

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Moving on. In 2018 I travelled to Berlin to see *The Empty House* at the Schinkel Pavillon, with work by Louise Bourgeois. A looming threat seemed to hang over her work, particularly evident in her oozing and dripping watercolours of pregnant bodies and breasts shown in the clinic-like white tiled space in the basement. The watercolours brought to my mind women being held in an asylum, as the paper remind me of bodily smudges on the tiles (all the more eerie when considering the Schinkel Pavillon's history as a mausoleum for Queen Louise of Prussia). Though Bourgeois's materials are often traditional, I am particularly interested in her use of domestic and everyday items, such as muslin cloth, fur and stone in *Peaux des Lapins* (2006), and her smaller figurative sculptures using hessian. There is a suggestion of improvisation in the use of that kind of domestic material. It seems the artist is appropriating what is at hand. Furthermore, trauma runs throughout Bourgeois's work, evident in these sculptures, particularly the sack shapes shown at the Schinkel Pavillon, which suggest failing, emptying bodies. Trauma is also evident in her writing. 'You can stand anything if you write it down', she famous-



ly said (Coxon, 2010, p.89). Importantly, then, beyond standing things, like the trauma of sexual violence, this research aims to understand the practice of moving beyond mere acceptance of trauma, towards a point where pain turns productive, even positive, whilst contributing knowledge of that pain and trauma that can inform further research on sexuality, violence and trauma.

Following Bourgeoise, I looked at the work of Eva Hesse. She was pioneering in her unconventional material choices – latex, fibreglass and plastic – and often concerned with intimacy and experimentation. Similarly, Alice Adams uses domestic and everyday materials in her sculpture and objects that have an element of unfinishedness about them. Both Hesse and Adams seem unafraid of messiness. In my research I am looking closer at this, trying to understand through my own autobiography and performance of bodging in my sculptural practice what that messiness, the unfinishedness, wobbliness and rushedness is about. The autobiographical element here is essential, as it allows me to understand the relation between experience and practice in a way that analysing someone else's work does not. What Bourgeoise, Hesse and Adams have in common, beyond their use 33 of everyday materials, is that there is a certain uncanniness about their work, perhaps owing to their use of domestic materials. It is familiar. Their work allows us to understand women's situations better, particularly trauma. I want to take this understanding further, specifically into sexual violence – an area of sculpture and experimental writing where there is still work to be done.

Having said that, Tracey Emin has of course also worked within this realm. Both her short story *Explorations of the Soul* and her quilt *Hotel International* reference the sexual abuse she experienced during childhood. *Explorations of the Soul* chronicles the first 13 years of Emin's life, from birth to when she lost her virginity against her will. Fascinatingly, the book contains spelling mistakes and errors which, I would argue, add to its strength as a document working through and coming to terms with life and sexual violence. There is a definite potency in the rushed, bodged way of working and presenting work. When I started writing *Headstone*, on my honeymoon in Thailand in 2018, I had an urge to just get my

thoughts out. I needed to get the words onto paper, to keep them out there, rather than in here. Yet, it is with real sadness that I write this. I am so sad Tracy Emin experienced these horrific things. Raped on New Years Eve, in an alley. When I read *Explorations of the Soul*, I am reminded of the horrible things that happened to me just after the turn of the millennium. Memories of that day, spring 2000, still freeze me up, slow me down, stop me in my tracks. When I feel like this it is hard to see beyond the sadness. I have found that after a night's sleep I can reset and think other thoughts again. It is as if sleep restores me, packs all the memories back into their compartments after they have been brought out momentarily for air. It is good to have the option of sleep to reset, but a hard task to research and make progress when I so often need a night's sleep to clear my mind. Throughout much of this research I have guarded myself against looking too much at other artists' work.

34 Like the artists and writers mentioned above, Sarah Lucas's work is also contextually relevant. The work of Phylida Barlow and Isa Genzken is germane at the level of methodology. I admire the scale of their works, but they remain peripheral figures in my research, the shadows of their expansive work cast over mine, with their woody assembled aesthetic, stacked, figure-like, simultaneously frail and strong. Laia Abril concludes – an artist who currently works with thematic of rape whose work I have been fascinated with recently.

My research is situated in relation to all of these artists and writers, and my aim is to contribute to the field of both sculpture and autoethnography to shape the understanding of both what it is to be raped but also what it is to be on the other side of trauma with an urge to make from the subjectivity that emerges from the pain.

Although I have provided this context, I hope it is clear that my research is on understanding and coming to terms with trauma after sexual violence through engagement with the methodology of bodging. It is unhelpful for me to focus on other people's trauma – not only does it introduce the idea of comparing awful events, but it slows me down and saddens me. I am not interested in comparing



my experiences of violence to other people's experiences. I do not know what good can come from that. However, because of the loneliness I have experienced at points in my research, I have found close allies in artists like Eva Hesse and Tracy Emin, whom I often imagine speaking with. It has become a conversation about this research, focused on them understanding me, not the other way around.

## **Contribution to Knowledge and Research Questions**

Firstly, my research aims to show what it is to make with a body that carries the trauma of sexual violence. The research primarily focuses on something interesting that happens in the relationship between me (the artist) and power. During this research, repeated meetings with power provoked an intuitive protest. This took place within the university setting, when I was confronted by the hierarchical power of the institution. I responded through my practice by finding ways to escape the institutional forcefield, leaving traces of vulnerability and aggression – which I consider a rich and productive exit. Moreover, this is where the approach 35 'to bodge' as a feminist methodology when working within the field of sculpture and writing appeared. Defining this is a key contribution to knowledge.

Secondly, and also a response to confrontation and trauma, protest runs through the work that is presented here. Protest is present in the concept of bodging and within the literary work in *Headstone*. The thesis contributes to an understanding of how an art practice can be an outlet for protest – moreover, a delayed protest against violence that has already taken place. Foucault has discussed the exchange of power in sex. He says that 'the notion of sex brought about a fundamental reversal; it made it possible to invert the representation of the relationships of power to sexuality, causing the latter to appear, not in its essential and positive relation to power, but as being rooted in a specific and irreducible urgency which power tries as best it can to dominate' (Foucault, 1986, p.155). In other words, power tries its best to dominate the urgency of sexuality, meaning that there is a power in restraint and abstinence from sex. I am committed here to investigating what those

urgent exchanges between power and sexuality look like, from a feminist perspective. The thesis contributes an embodied manifestation thereof which clearly signals pain, fragility, trauma, anger and vulnerability attached to the very complex relationship between power and sex.

Thirdly, locale in my research has been key concern, as primarily the domestic has been the stage on which the violence I experienced took place, and the space where this research has been carried out and where the artworks themselves were made. A key contribution of my research is therefore to problematise the domestic, primarily as a place where sexual violence frequently occurs (Blunt and Dowling, 2006). The research contributes a reshaping of the domestic environment in sculptural works that reflects the violence that it silently hosts.

36 Speaking of the power relations of the family, Foucault (1986, pp.120–21) says that: 'It was in the [...] family that the sexuality of children and adolescents was first problematised, and feminine sexuality medicalised; it was the first to be alerted to the potential pathology of sex, the urgent need to keep it under close watch and to devise a rational technology of correction. It was this family that first became a locus for the psychiatrization of sex. Surrendering to fears, creating remedies, appealing for rescue by learned techniques, generating countless discourses, it was the first to commit itself to sexual erethism. The bourgeoisie began by considering that its own sex was something important, a fragile treasure, a secret that had to be discovered at all costs. It is worth remembering that the first figure to be invested by the deployment of sexuality, one of the first to be "sexualized," was the "idle" woman. She inhabited the outer edge of the "world," in which she always had to appear as a value, and of the family, where she was assigned a new destiny charged with conjugal and parental obligations. Thus, there emerged the "nervous" woman, the woman afflicted with "vapors"; in this figure, the hysterization of woman found its anchorage point.' Therefore, and fourthly, in this research I aim to turn the sexualised and idle woman into an active woman – simultaneously problematising the role of the artist and researcher mother. Furthermore, in *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1986, vol. 1, p.3) highlights how 'sexuality was care-

fully confined; it moved into the home. The conjugal family took custody of it and absorbed it into the serious function of reproduction. On the subject of sex, silence became the rule.' A key contribution of this thesis is therefore as a record (including my semi-autobiography *Headstone* and sculptural works) of the powerful shift from objectified and raped into a producer of knowledge.

Implicit in that shift from inactive to active is a questioning of victimhood. Specifically in *Headstone*. This work presents a sexuality that is concurrently engaging with fragility, aggression and at the same time violence and pleasure. But, importantly, this research aims to move past victimhood. The practice that is developed within the parameters of this research through the methodology of bodging works with vulnerability and aggression approached through a practice and research process that has fallen into shape through a series of exiles, making sculptures, reading, reflection, discussion and writing. The exile and the uneven folds of this research are the focus of the chapters in this thesis, as they are where hope lies. Another contribution to knowledge is therefore to share what can come after violence – in this research that hope is connected to geographically moving. The research 37 arrives at a place of exile, away from violence and away from domestic ideals, and proposes this as a creatively rich space to practice from, through a protest against the many subtle notions of violence emanating from the forcefields of the sexual, the domestic and the institutional.

To summarise, therefore, the practice in this research aims to reveal a feminist understanding and approach to power, resistance and victimhood, active through the engagement with bodging in sculpture-making and writing. I am careful not to talk from the perspective of the aggressor, yet understand that the role is ambivalent and subjective. I am working from an autobiographical perspective, and bodging manifests the vulnerability and instability that experiencing power awakens in me as someone who has experienced being totally powerless and abused. The language of the bodge is both a methodology based on moving away from victimhood and one which signals an urgency to the act of moving on. The approach draws on uncertainty, a sort of 'making from memory', as embodied images of

sexual violence and their environments are half-forgotten but the need for remembering is greater than the urge to let go.

Furthermore, the research aims at acknowledging vulnerability, fragility, instability and interdependency as situations full of creative opportunity. Therefore, I am rejecting a didactic, grand, solution-orientated methodology in favour of one that embraces uncertainty, boundlessness, inconclusiveness, contradiction and open-endedness.

To reiterate, bodging has emerged as a term describing a multifaceted approach to both the process of making sculptures and of writing. In both mediums the term is underpinned by a sense of urgency, to respond to a very pressing, violent and threatening situation. But also to manifest the fragility of the body and the precarity of the situation that it finds itself in, as well as to reflect the choppy process of re-remembering forgotten sexual violence. In conclusion, I am producing a key perspective, through building the language of the bodge, on experiences of sexual violence.

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At an early stage of the research I posed the following questions: How do the violent experiences that are included in much of female sexuality shape responses to power? In what way does exile feature in this understanding of sexual subjectivities? Does escaping the field of power offer any creative potential? Is there an opportunity in Judith Butler's theory of nonviolence to depart from the focus on violence in women's sexualities and find room for creative aggression? Having written the thesis, these questions remind me of the journey of self-discovery this research represents, as they are now indicative of where this thesis was in the past. Therefore, I have further questions: How can the idea of bodging be useful as a feminist methodology when making sculptures around the theme of sexual violence? How can bodging to produce sculptures and writing help us better understand experiences of sexual violence? What are the active registers within this idea of bodging (protest, humour, fragility, etc.) which contribute to building an understanding of experiences of sexual violence? How does bodging sculptural

works help us to understand the effect of sexual violence on the body and on the memories thereof?

## Methodology

In *The Force of Nonviolence*, Judith Butler (2021) discusses approaching equality through nonviolent forms of resistance. Nonviolence is, according to Butler, not a state of passivity. Nor is it an action built on a position of radiating love towards a general other. We are capable of aggression, and Butler sees this as a fundamental ability of all humans, but aggression does not have to be violent or lead to violence. With aggression and rage present in our psychology, Butler's nonviolence is about channelling those states in a way that refuses to reproduce violence. Making the case against violence, Butler (2021, p.18) explains that 'one of the strongest arguments for the use of violence [...] is that it is tactically necessary in order to defeat structural or systemic violence'. But, she explains, because violence relies on subjective understanding, if used, violence always has the capability of behaving 39 in unpredictable ways – it can easily get out of hand. Boiling it down to a simple binary choice, if faced with the options of living in a world with violence or a world without it, would we not all want a world without? For me, violence represents oppressive behaviours that I do not wish to recycle. But working within the terms of the present, Butler (2021) states that dealing with violence is not a choice per se, as we are already within its force field. What we face instead is the choice of whether to pick up the tool of violence up, and in doing so contribute to building a more violent world.

Still, aggression and nonviolence are bound together in Butler's concept, and this is also the case in my research, as my work is staging a protest while maintaining a level of aggression. For Butler (2021, p.21) 'nonviolent forms of resistance can and must be violently pursued'. I understand this similarly to how Foucault (1998, p.95) understands that power produces resistance: 'where there is power, there is resistance'. I see violence as a continuously present threat and reality, something





image 3: New York/London patchwork, HUTT Collective, Nottingham 2017





image 4: New York/London patchwork, HUTT Collective, Nottingham 2017





Image 5: New York/London patchwork, HUTT Collective, Nottingham 2017

I cannot feasibly, as a woman, get away from. Moreover, I recognise it as an agent shaping my subjective understanding of the institution, domesticity and sexual violence. This understanding, underpinning my creation of knowledge, as it were, has become a core tool in my practice, as I relate to what it is like to under threat of (sexual) violence and what the continually present resistance that provokes it can look like.

Butler reads violence both as the act of the 'blow' but also as systemic and part of unseen structures. One can be part of the other, and they are often intertwined – systemic, or 'slow', violence aimed at women, for instance, enables the 'fast' blows, such as rape. In this research, I have worked with the physical 'blows' of sexual assaults. As this research has progressed, I have seen that my exchanges with this kind of violence have been re-enacted within my engagement with the institution. One key concern in the definition of my methodology is understanding how the research has been shaped by working within a hierarchical institution such as the university. Foucault (1998) points to the family being a distribution point of power where sexuality is compartmentalised and surveilled, just as it would be within 43 the hierarchy of the institution. My methodology has been shaped by how I respond to each of these locations. Through reflection, I have come to identify some key points where this push and pull of boundaries and response to hierarchies has been played out. I am following Foucault's understanding of how knowledge is produced, sifting back through the archaeology of my meetings with power to understand what structures guide my research and my queries. Foucault would propose an excavation of sub-structures to understand the hidden system of knowledge and the implicit role of, for instance, sexuality, in the production of knowledge. I have come to enter this understanding through reflection on some of the practical systems set up to aid the production of knowledge for practice-based research students at the University of the Arts London. I will now recount and describe some of the scenarios that played out in this research and immediately preceding it, as these informed my work here.

With methodological roots in photography (my area of study in my BA and MA degrees) my practice had, just before I started this research, begun to break out of the photographic image's binary front and back. I was looking for a way to express myself beyond the image's flat surfaces and clearly defined edges. In my photographic work I am not technically perfect, and I am uninterested in fulfilling any rules of composition; I am not precise, and I rush, and I never think that I am good enough. I have a sense that I want to get to the layers and folds of life, and that is something that photography does not allow me. Kafka (Janoush, 1968, p.206) claims: 'photography concentrates one's eye on the superficial [...] it obscures the hidden life'. The language of photography, its insistence on morality, the rigidity of its physical boundaries, presented me with frustrating limitations, boundaries that I saw as red rags to run against and try to undermine. It also left me feeling worthless, and reinforced a sense of not having a voice, as the work I was making (i.e. during my undergraduate and immediate postgraduate studies) was continually pitted against the established canon and its ideals, and from which it diverged. I read photographs as 'surface', but the core concern in my work is to burrow, into

44 complexities. Trying to delve into the internal life of photographs, looking for honest narratives of the sexualities in domestic environments, I found just a flat, glossy surface rather than the rich, fleshy, painful experience I sought and wanted to speak about. I go further into this in Appendix 1: The Frame and the Fold.

For Linda Alcoff (2000), sexual violence and language are misaligned. We lack the vocabulary to speak about rape, as the invasion is indescribable. This missing language has become something for me to push against and address. In this research I have thought of existing outside of established language, in a reality where a language develops in response to a situation without control or structure. Thinking about how this space can be creative in *Not Knowing How Artists Think* (2013), Emma Cocker (cited in Fisher and Fortnum, 2013, p.129) says that, when faced with the loss of control, artists can transform their own 'impotency or powerlessness into a productive force'.

At University of the Arts London, registration is the first official process of the



research degree programme. In a brief Microsoft Word form, the intention of the research is to be made clear. This brief proposal must pass an internal panel, which typically returns the form to the student several times, asking for clarifications, suggesting improvements and so on. In my research project, registration coincided with completing numerous funding applications. After some initial uncertainty and further form filling, it became clear that this research would be self-funded. Subsequently, my proposal was reshaped to pass registration and I took two part-time jobs to fund the degree and changed my study mode to part-time. I experienced this as a loss of control and, in an intuitive response to this faceless power dominating my project, I made myself – to use Butler’s term to describe nonviolent protests – ‘heavy’ and carried out several small actions to reclaim my integrity. I used the tools available to me to protest the faceless power that had steered the direction of my project. It is not how I had imagined the research starting, but I can see now that it revealed the core of my methodology.

Fiction writing emerged as a reaction to the process of registration, both as a protest undermining academic writing and as a response to the writing involved in 45 registration itself, which forced me away from my studio. Self-funding also meant that I stopped being able to spend a lot of time making work in my studio. Writing addressed that, and *Headstone* was written hurriedly, responding to a sense of urgency to record memories of a time that I sensed the research process was transporting me away from. Hence the title *Headstone*, a monument to a disappearing subjectivity and now one part of a thesis speaking about a subject of sexuality and violence that language on its own is unable to grasp. Kathy Acker’s work has had an influence on my writing practice, as she approaches these issues in her own fiction, and her simple, brash and lewd descriptions chime with my experiences of sexuality. In prose that thrills and hurts at the same time, Acker (1994a, p.21) writes: ‘the plants in her room cast strange, beautiful shadows over the other shadows. It was a clean, dreamlike room. He fucked her in her asshole cause the infection made her cunt hurt too much to fuck there, though she didn’t tell him it hurt badly there, too, cause she wanted to fuck love more than she felt pain’. Capturing this style, Acker’s novel *Don Quixote* (1994b) is a symptom of trauma



Image 6: Unwriting, Collonade House, 2016



Image 7: Unwriting, Colonnade House 2016





Image 8: Unwriting, Colonnade House 2016



resulting from her mother's suicide, delivered in Acker's characteristically messy, hodgepodge, bodged language. Critics at the time found her language juvenile, unworthy of the sophistication of her layered narrative. According to Tom LeClair (1986), for instance, reviewing *Don Quixote* for the New York Times when it was first published in 1986, Acker's passion was too banal and self-imploding.

When away from the studio I turned to writing as a practice to drive my research. Christopher Hanley (2019) uses Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's assemblage theory to 'think' with writing. Rather than using language and text as representation, Hanley suggests using writing to work through ideas, as a way of thinking. He suggests that this is a way of thinking and approaching a changing and uncertain situation. Approaching the text as an assemblage that shifts and changes, *Headstone* is only momentarily certain and forms a non-dogmatic body of writing that at different times takes different shapes. The text of *Headstone*, while descriptive, at distinct points carries a sense of urgency, flatness and naivety – qualities that reflect the idea of a moment in time that is both the process and the result. I am not writing to convince you that my perspective is right. I am writing to live, 49 to be content with a refusal of victimhood, and to tell you that life becomes less fleeting through the text, as subjectivity emerges from these places.

As a further intuitive protest, in the year following my enrolment at University of the Arts London, I began using a project fund available to each PhD researcher for travel. In spring 2017 I went to New York on fieldwork, bringing my partner, now husband, along. I set myself the task of capturing photographs of the city's iconic yellow taxis crossing Times Square that I planned to print on canvas, replicating artwork sold at B&Q. I was then going to cut these up and make a series of large patchworks, combining New York with London, Venice, Berlin and so on. The trip to New York was in equal parts fieldwork and a reclaiming of integrity, protesting the harsh borders of the rigorous institution, fuelled for me by its unpreparedness to fund research looking at a woman's subjective experience of sexuality and the domestic environment (beyond the yearly travel grant available indiscriminately to all students). This action and subsequent ones that always included travel

– trips to Venice, Brittany, Spain, Sweden and Norway – were discrete enough to fit within the permitted uses of the grant, and always included productive activity, fieldwork or writing, but gave me the freedom to find an alternative space of ‘vacation’ within this institutional rigidity, departing from its field of power and looking for an independent methodology that for me creates integrity. To understand this reaction to power, I have drawn on the reflections of the social scientist Carol Rambo (1995), who recounts how, during her experience of childhood abuse, she used to urinate in her father’s mouth every time she was orally molested. She learnt to do it without him noticing, and the act meant that she could reclaim a sense of power, while avoiding his wrath. Psychologist James Scott (1985, 1990) understands this kind of act as a form of resistance to domination. Scott explains how individuals in subordinate positions adopt strategies for lying and sabotaging to subtly rebel against power and to create a space for defiance. According to Rambo, this is an affirmation that the molester does not have complete control. However, sexual abuse for me was never repeated. It was a short flash of violence, and it gave me no opportunity for protest within that moment. My rebellion developed

50 beyond that instant. Rambo describes her rebellion within the moment of abuse, whereas I see my need for rebellion within my artwork and writing. In relation to this, in *Headstone*, I use autoethnography as a methodology to create a document of the experiences that feed into the research (and the claim for subjectivity) (Adams et al., 2022). I am also employing an action research methodology (plan, act, observe, reflect). Bodging has appeared in the planning and action stages of the research (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988).

In Butler’s concept of nonviolence, resistance to systemic violence is coupled with a commitment to build future equality through shared vulnerabilities. This research has unexpectedly revealed mine. Following the registration process, University of the Arts London requires its research students to give a paper during what is called Research Network of University of the Arts London Three (RNU-AL 3), a mandatory event which students must complete to progress through the research programme. One is reminded of the risk of failure by several emails explaining that any absence from this weeklong series of panels might result in

the termination of studies. For me, RNUAL 3 coincided with recovering from two consecutive throat infections, as my father-in-law quickly and suddenly deteriorated in a hospice. Giving the paper, drenched in a cold sweat, as I spoke about the retailer B&Q, New York, autobiographical writing and sexuality, hinting at violence I had experienced, I suddenly swayed, overcome by an inability to stand at the podium. I stumbled to a seat where I continued to give my paper, watched by my peers. Someone gave me a glass of water. Determined to carry on, I stood back up but was unable to speak without swaying. After trying to stand up for a third time, I finished my paper from a seat.

Speaking about the embodied experience of 'slow' violence, Butler (2021, p.138) points out that 'structural forms of violence take their toll on the body, wearing the body down, de-constituting its corporeal existence'. I should not have been at RNUAL 3, but somewhere during my first year of research, going through the process of registration, I had lost faith in my ability to listen to my gut feeling; it seems I had again become unable to speak. Perhaps an inability rooted in experiences of sexual violence. And still that self-doubt lies awfully close to the surface. 51 Experiencing attack, either physically or intellectually, my body self-inflicts strangulation. My throat gradually stiffens. The muscles in my neck tighten, and it feels like my windpipe swells up, pushing my jaw shut as if an invisible hand squeezes me up against a wall. The threat I perceive from hierarchical structures is acted out by my own body on my own body, telling me to stop using my voice. This invisible strangulation can last for days, weeks or months.

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I have resisted continuing the cycle of violence, influenced by an aversion to conflict or an inclination to show whoever or whatever I am up against my vulnerability in the hope of being met with humanity. But moreover I am mindful not to respond to violence and feed into the structures that I believe must melt away to achieve equality. For Butler, who subscribes to shared vulnerabilities and interdependencies, this means that if we act violently against another, we act violent-

ly against ourselves. Still, Butler's nonviolence allows for ambivalence, and of course, as she says, self-defence is sometimes necessary. Nonviolence, therefore, is not an absolute moral principle, it is a practice.

As my practice-based research progressed through its first years, two fundamentals became clear. Firstly, though my work led towards a discussion of ongoing and systemic violence and threat towards women within the domestic, this work is not to be understood as a practice working through the moments that created the trauma. It is important to highlight this because it has been suggested at points in this research that trauma might be foregrounded, highlighted and centralised in the work, or that I should be creating a methodology to provide myself with a safe space within the gallery to be able to speak about my subjective experiences of sexual violence within domestic settings. By providing a shelter, like a confession tent, in the exhibition space I would be able to speak in depth, graphically, about what has happened to me. It is not that simple. Following on from the idea of woman as victim within patriarchally structured domesticity and morality, the very idea of oppression has been commodified. The wound as identity is shaped around violent and real injustices, but it is problematic because it fetishises the hurt and turns it into something that just 'is', rather than something that has been inflicted (Ahmed, 2014). According to Sarah Ahmed, the trauma becomes sensationalised, isolated, and feeds into a culture of confession that functions within our identity-based ideology. There is also a power in the distribution of confessions: whose story is heard and whose is ignored? According to Alison Phipps (2021), white women are entitled to the sympathy that is attributed to taking the position of traumatised victim. Phipps partially attributes this notion of embodied victimhood to the ideas that Wendy Brown (1995) presents in *States of Injury*. Brown argues that the identity of woman has become based on injury. There is thus further violence exercised through the culture of confession, as not everyone is allowed to be seen or heard.

Secondly, it is crucial for me that this work is a way to reach a place beyond violence. I am looking for a place outside of the limitations of patriarchy, the predicta-

ble forms of sexual violence exerted on the woman's body, the unsafety of the domestic, the domination within the rigid institution. I am resistant to making work around desire and sexuality from the position of victim. It is a role I absolutely want to get away from, but the violence is there in this thesis still; it is part of the process of how this PhD has progressed as I have continued to push against the boundaries in order to expand the territory I move within and beyond. This mindset is not about refusing vulnerability. There is a strength in being vulnerable, as Butler (2021) suggests. But we are not speaking about vulnerability as an identity. This is not a suggestion about accepting violence. Rather, it is a position defined by the positive recognition of dependency and reliance on others. We can track women's protests against intellectual, sexual and economic violence in politics, art and culture through Christine de Pizan (1364–1430), Ching Shih (1775–1844), Sylvia Benton (1887–1985), Judy Chicago (1939–) and Kathleen Hanna (1968–) (to mention a few), but to really highlight the spread and depth of these issues, and importantly the struggles against them, we must identify the issues that remain and continue to fuel the push for equality. According to Butler (2021), if we focus on each individual act of violence, we run the risk of overlooking the violence which 53 is not physical, but verbal or institutional. Likewise, by excluding the physical we miss the embodied nature of the threat. Butler (2021, p.36) states, 'no one actually stands on one's own'; we are all reliant on each other, codependent as the child is on the mother throughout childhood. This realisation challenges the myth of the self-sufficient, miraculously independent male, outlined by Hobbes (1998) who seems to never have needed anyone in his life. Drawing on ideas of reliance, fragility and interconnectedness, and readdressing the domestic as a vulnerable, fractured space, this research began in 2016 with a series of sculptural works that were spindly, human size, vertically erect – structures that had to be propped up with wood, concrete and wedges to remain upright, and even then some of them still slumped, in their domestic precarity. These works have enabled me to understand how vulnerability can work alongside aggression. They were made as I moved into a new home, after a period of sofa surfing, and as such also made me reflect on the richness of working in an unstable domestic environment.

In the two years leading up to this PhD, I changed the way I did work. In the autumn of 2014 I moved house, so I kept most of my belongings and furniture in my studio in Brighton. Working late one evening, I took some of these bits, a photograph, an old lamp, a bottle of shampoo, a CD, and stuck them together with duct tape. I felt liberated, as if I had broken a boundary and expanded into an unfamiliar territory. When I enrolled to start this research, I had once again moved house and lived in a flat that was being renovated with me in situ. Right at the start of the research I made the works for the exhibition *Unwriting*, from that flat. These works were shown together with the New York patchworks, connecting the fragility and precarity of the domestic space with the protest and exile of my New York work, two themes that have existed side by side throughout this research.

54 Butler (2021) claims that we are all supported: the road carries us to where we need to go each day, our food is brought to us by a supply chain of producers, we share an emotional life with those around us. In 2017, the New York/London patchworks were shown at The HUTT Collective in Nottingham alongside two experimental works, *Trap I* and *Trap II* (see page 40 and 41), made from builders' plaster and domestic signs with phrases normally hung on doors and in kitchens – 'tea', 'bathroom', 'nan', supported on branches that I found in the yard outside the gallery. A few days after installing the works, I left HUTT, anxious that they would collapse. I have found that I am holding on to that precarity, fearing collapse. Emma Cocker (Fisher and Fortnum, 2013, p.127) asserts that artists look for an unknown, like that fear of collapse, adopting 'tactical approaches or methods that [...] produce the condition of uncertainty, disorientation, or indeterminacy'. In this research, this condition (which is summed up for me by 'precarity') has been achieved by moving homes, in being without a fixed domestic environment. It is also experienced by leaving the works to wobble and be precariously supported. After a few days of the London College of Communication exhibition in 2020, the clothing rail and figures exhibited had slumped, and someone had leant the work against the wall to keep it upright. Often, as the works reach a setting outside of the domestic where they were made and first tested in their ability to stand (where inevitably the conditions are different from those in the studio), they face new, un-



known risks. Importantly, however, in the exhibition context the works maintain a sense of aggression in the threat of collapse. The woman's body is never completely safe either. She might at best be able to keep herself protected in her domestic environment, but as the setting and context changes so does her concern for safety. There is also an awkwardness about this impending fall in the sculptural works. Cocker (Fisher and Fortnum, 2013, p.127) states that working with the methodology of the unknown 'involves an attempt to smuggle a trace of something infinitely unknowable within the parameters of finite form'. My works and I behave similarly: we sway, at times unable to stand, unable to resist provoking, cobbled together from an array of past experiences (or materials). Within this aggressive, vulnerable state we are companions. In relation to this approach of seeing the sculptural body as analogous to my body, I return to Butler's discussion of becoming an obstacle: 'using the solidity of the body and its proprioceptive object field to block or derail further exercise of violence' (Butler, 2021, p.22). I leave the sculptural bodies to perform this protest in the gallery in my absence.

Is there a point when the fragility of the sculpture becomes violent? At times in this research I have worked at the borders of sculpture, with structures that are barely held together. Like when exhibiting three sails on the portico of the British School at Rome. These masts were so fragile that they barely stood up in the light evening breeze, despite being weighted down with bricks hidden inside and tied with loads and loads of rope and tape (see visual list). Also, when exhibiting the clothes rail at London College of Communication, it was so nearly tipping over that the curators decided to put a marker on the floor, beyond which no one could go, to ensure the public kept a safe distance from my work (see visual list). When practising nonviolence, Butler (2021, p.22) locates a 'tipping point' at the site where the impeding body, the one doing the nonviolent protest, commits new injustices. Beyond protest, aggression and violence, I have come to understand that the fragility of sculptural bodies reveals vulnerability and awkwardness. The sails were so vulnerable that a gentle gust of wind blew them over when exhibited. And, likewise, the clothes rail wobbled in the breeze from an open door. This fragility is reflected in my role as an artist and PhD researcher, as I have experienced

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my body wobble during the research and struggled to stand up. I am protesting, but I am also exposed.

Throughout this research I have come to use 'bodging' to describe the slippage between the fragile and the aggressive, the standing and the collapsed, the pronounced and the unspeakable, the messy and the ordered (which is still breaking). The sense of the sculptures being cobbled together has in this research become synonymous with a lack of balance and propping up. Somewhere within this vulnerability and aggression my claim for a (subjective) language meets objectification. Along this trajectory, Object-Orientated Feminism (coined by Katherine Behar, 2016) frames the study of objects by objects within the exclusion of women from Object-Orientated Ontologies). To illustrate Object-Orientated Ontologies, Behar describes how Ian Bogost designed a website feature advertising a symposium, programmed to display as a slideshow every image on Flickr tagged 'object', 'thing' or 'stuff'. Behar explains how Bogost called this feature his 'tiny ontology', as it showed the diversity of objects in the world. Obviously, the resulting reel

56 included images of nude women, owing to the internet being awash with those types of images. Bogost's solution to this perceived problem was to remove any images tagged 'sexy', 'woman' or 'girl' from his slideshow. Behar rightly concludes that while the objectification of women is fundamentally a problem of inequality to be resolved in feminism, an ontology in which all objects are equal must surely include naked women. Removing the images sweeps the objectification of women under the carpet. While this is a comfortable place to be, it denies objectification. This type of censorship perpetuates the biased anthropocentric decision-making that object-orientated ontologies could address. While my research is more concerned with the creation of subjectivities than the realignment of equality amongst objects, Object-Orientated Feminism contributes a valuable approach to the methodology of bodging.

The approach in this research has been to embrace messiness through acknowledging that something can be right even if it is wrong. I have come to understand the wilful imbalance and expert cack-handedness as a feminist, sexually charged

bodging, engaging with the creation of subjectivity through a sexuality that is unclear, blending violence and pleasure. The process of bodging is immediate, direct and unfussy and relying on intuition. The result is unsteady and unfinished, a response to structures of power and a manifestation thereof.

The bodge is instant, bound to fall over and break. The bodged is spontaneous. Bodged sculptures exist for the duration of the exhibition, and after that the materials go back into the cycle of 'stuff' to be reused in other works, chucked or used in baking (four bags of self-raising flour used as weights to prop up). Because of the urgency of the situation that requires a bodged solution, the methodology is guided by what is within grasp. Bodging has grown from DIY. Put simply, this is because the source of much of my work is the bits of timber, screws, lamps, rails, sheets, curtains and canvases I have lying around in my studio, which are from home-improvement shops. But also, somewhere in its genealogy, DIY can be understood as a gendered practice, used to fulfil a set of expectations of heterosexuality (Van Gelder, 2021). The tropes of 'bad' or 'unsuccessful' DIY are a way for me to think about what that performative male heterosexuality looks like for women 57 in domestic spaces. I am working in a space that can be violent while propping up binary gender ideals. In fact, DIY in the home is an activity, unsurprisingly, carried out by both women and men. Any division based on gender is falsely perceived (Van Gelder, 2021). My work and bodged solutions are not meant to suggest that women in general lack capabilities to do DIY. What I am suggesting is an unwillingness to cooperate with or exist within the creation of domestic power and ideals that do not fully serve to create, support or acknowledge the subjectivities that I am seeking to define.

There is no mistaking a bodge; it is honest, expertly cack-handed, clumsy, short-sighted, humorous, a little bit tragic and trashy. Bodging in this research also has a sense of fragility, aggression and protest, as mentioned above. Bodging is also about welcoming 'wrongness'. The bodged is less concerned about being right as it is linked to the processes of experimentation and finding something out. Editor of *Object-Orientated Feminism*, Katherine Behar (2016, p.18) claims that 'being

wrong *in this way is radical, political work*'. In Object-Orientated Feminism that translates into embracing being an object, a sexual object, while studying objects, and through that work reclaiming objecthood with humour and eroticism. For Behar, this momentarily requires setting truth and truth-claiming aside for the sake of investigation, or process. Behar places the bodged, or in her words 'botched', which features briefly as an idea within Object-Orientated Feminism, in opposition to truth or a need for correctness.

Moreover, bodging can also represent mischievousness. This mischievousness is sometimes obvious and sometimes not. The hooks for the headphones were taped up on the projector plinth in *Unfolding Narratives* (see visual list), for instance. I used several metres of tape going around and around the plinth, over and over. It was unnecessary, but fun. It is also the use of wooden spoons to seemingly wedge the worktops up straight in *Untitled (Made for Life)* (see visual list). I did not need to tape the hooks up as they were not broken, and I did not need to straighten the worktops with wooden spoons, but these items performed a subtle and humorous protest, being disobedient. But in this research I have come to look beyond the process for what I think the acts are repetitions of. I want to draw a parallel between experiences of trauma and the experiences of this practice, as the making of the work performs a delayed protest of sexual violence.

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For me, trauma is an uneven, unsteady experience. It is not something that ever finishes or completes, it is sometimes ear deafening and sometimes a whisper, it is half a sentence and then a whole novel. It distracts, it enhances and gives unbelievable depth. Daily, it goes perhaps like: memories of trauma, something else (preparing a bath for my child), memories, fear, reading the news, memories of trauma, daydream, memories. So, to purposely be cack-handed with tape or screws is an expression and a way of embodying that reality, as it is not complete, but ongoing, never ending, never finishing. Ongoing, on and on and on; I am constantly interrupted by the trauma.

In this thesis I am coming to terms with what it is to have a body and be raped, and crucially to be glad for those experiences, as they are what have shaped me.

As the reverberation of trauma (the on and on and on) feeds into the iterative process of the research as it goes over and works through the same point over and over. In this way, I am giving a voice to a previously unexpressed reality.

The autoethnographic self in *Headstone* exits itself and slips into multiple and changing locations, situations and identities. Becoming its teenage self, becoming its ideal self, becoming Courtney Love, Julia Augusti, becoming enraged, becoming a father's fantasy, becoming a mother. Outside of writing, the self (as in the raped body) is a series of indescribable experiences, a subjectivity that exists outside of language. In *The Sex Which is Not One*, Luce Irigaray (1985, p.102) says: 'if we keep on speaking the same language together, we're going to keep reproducing the same history. Begin the same old stories over again. Don't you think so? Listen: all round us, men and women sound just the same. The same discussion, the same arguments, the same scenes. The same attractions, and separations. The same difficulties, the same impossibility of making connections. The same ... Same ... Always the same.'

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In this research, I am bringing a previously wordless subjectivity into language in fiction and sculpture. In autoethnography, one encounters oneself as an object of study. In the process of this encounter, truths merge with lies as these identities shift and change – the subjective is slippery. In *Headstone* I want to tell the truth. If the writing is shocking, it is because the acts that have been carried out on my body are shocking. But, written down, truth becomes different from the lived reality, it becomes edited and rewritten. Carol Rambo (1995, p.399) explains that 'I write myself, I edit myself, interacting with the self I wrote by objectifying it, judging it, and rewriting it in response.' Nonetheless, her autoethnographic account of incestuous sexual abuse makes me recoil in hurt and disbelief, holding the page out, away from my chest, as if to protect myself. Her words hit ever so hard: 'He would part my legs, forcefully, if necessary, while holding me down. Placing his head between them, his whiskered face scratched raw places on my inner thighs. His entire mouth covered my small vulva as he rhythmically licked and sucked. His brown eyes peered from beneath wavy brown-black hair, intent on my every

reaction. These are my earliest memories of my father.' The autoethnographic methodology decentres authority and offers a sort of sketch of life, with gaps and uncertainties. In *Headstone*, I ask the reader to step into the memories with me. I need their companionship, their understanding and attention. Maybe if they come with me, this time they can protect me. And besides, it is too lonely here, in this place, on this island on my own. Though I appreciate the space, I did not come here to isolate myself, I came here to create.

Thinking about the self as layered and merged with stories borrowed from others, Butler claims there is a purpose in moving away from the focus on the individualistic self, and that social connections, dependencies and shared vulnerabilities are the starting point for approaching equality. Kathy Acker shaped her literal persona and biography through a mesh of half-truths and fabrications (Kraus, 2018). In addition, I lie and invent to protect myself. That way, the truth, even when told, might seem like lies. As mentioned above, American political scientist James Scott (1985, 1990) has spoken about resistance to domination. Avoiding any outright  
60 action, the subordinate uses strategies such as lying, sabotaging, or pretending to be ignorant. Taking control of the narrative and holding the keys to the 'truth' is an affirmation that I am not fully submissive. Simon O'Sullivan (2015, p.4) speaks about practices that offer something different from what already exists in the world, a radical reimagining of the status quo: 'when the political scene offers no new models, art steps up. Here, in fact, it might be less a case of already worked out models than experimental probes, affective scenes, proto subjectivities, and such like. Art can generate the feeling of something different in this sense.' Acker connected with a choir of people whose biographies were altered, imagined, and woven into her literary narratives. This boundlessness, adaptability and wilful vulnerability undermines individualism and binary patriarchal processes while emphasising the fluidity and malleability central to adopting a layered approach to autoethnography. But perhaps we can think of the idea of truth telling through another perspective. The act of the abused person brushing rape and sexual abuse away as a misunderstanding is something that researchers have come to call 'unacknowledged rape' (Peterson and Muehlenhard, 2011). This can include ex-

periences that feel strange at the time but might take years or even decades to be understood as sexual abuse at all, if ever. Within this kind of experience, rape can seem ambiguous. This could be attributed to the fact that as many as 90% of women know their rapist (Brooks-Hay et al., 2018). This familiarity with the perpetrator jars with the idea of rape as something carried out by a stranger in a sudden attack where the woman is able to scream and loudly protest. Brooks-Hay et al. (2018) found that only a small number, 9%, of rapes were carried out by someone who was a stranger to the victim. Notions such as truth and memory become slippery, changeable and fragile when thinking about autobiography through the perspective of rape-ambiguity. For me, the experience of a decade of 'unacknowledged rape' still makes it seem as if I am lying or making things up when I speak about the sexual abuse. Expressing a subjectivity that is partially created though the ambiguous and unacknowledged creates a unique relationship with the concept of truth (what is experienced as true) as it slips from one state to another.

This research is inspired by something that happened during my BA in photography. When I first made work about my experiences of rape in 2009, I sensed from 61 my peers and tutors that this work was too personal to share. Also, questions were raised around whether the pose in these nude self-portraits was too proud to speak of something so catastrophic and damaging. The work I made then could be described as a pastiche of a Lynda Benglis advert in Artforum for her show at the Paula Cooper Gallery (1974) and Sarah Lucas's *Chicken Knickers* (1997): I was posing naked, not ashamed, but proudly holding a chicken carcass, covering my vulva, flexing my toned body. On a purely technical level, the opinion amongst the technicians and tutors was that the flash was too harsh, not comparable to Benglis's professional studio set up. In this thesis I argue that the success of this kind of personal, messy, painful narrative is in the inability to achieve perfection. It is within bodging that I can access my subjectivity, which seems just as cack-handed, unstable, fragile and awkward as my sculptures. Anthropomorphisin these institutions, thinking about my relationship to University of the Arts London (and also others) like that of a being in couple, the structure of the PhD process has some interesting parallels to the relationships I have had with men, though most of the



men I have called lovers seemed ignorant of the pains they inflicted. But to return to the institutional response to my BA work, during a culminating tutorial with a visiting lecturer (someone specialising in highly polished documentary photography), it was concluded that no one would be interested in my story, especially since the highlights were blown. Although my aversion to perfection was initially a gut feeling, through this research I have come to understand that 'the messy' speaks about my subjective understanding of sexuality, of the domestic and my relationship to power. By not reproducing perfection in my pose and in the use of flash, I was refusing to relinquish the power of my body. Ignoring technical correctness, taking a DIY approach like in that early but indicative work, I rejected the documentary photographer's didactic ideal in favour of my own visual language, with urgency and confidence. To summarise the approach: the work was rushed, and I bodged it.









# HEADSTONE

## Part One

The grass is bone dry; it crunches a little underfoot, covering the dusty pebble track. Either side of the path there are huge cacti growing, slashed and scarred by passers-by. Some have even been severed by a kind soul realising that uninhibited the plant would take over the land. Knobbly shoots still try. There's rubbish everywhere, shreds of fading newspaper, crisp packets, and it smells of piss. People are in a hurry and don't attempt to veer away from the path to relieve themselves. The further I get towards the island's northern tip, the fewer people I find until I am by a ruin, totally exposed to the elements for thousands of years. The ruin is guarded by a thin metal fence that lazily attempts to stop the handful of tourists seeking to visit this promiscuous place each year.

66 A gentle wind brings a welcome breeze, just strong enough to tickle any loose strands of hair across my face. Between the gusts the air is close, melting like lard over the land, and everywhere the smell of the sea mixes with the sharp urine. Something moves through the dry grass and a lizard scurries across the path. It freezes as if stilled by the presence of a woman. It seems to blend into its crumbly gravel path context but as it gently flicks its tail the sun sends a current of rays across the minute scales on its skin. Let me tell you what I found.

For the past seven years Julia's life has been confined to these walls. It is 2 AD, and she has been sent to the island by her father, who thought isolation away from the temptations of the city was what 'the disease of his flesh' needed, no, deserved, for slandering his name across the Forum. Julia's life had come to include knowing too many men for her father's liking. The villa where she is now imprisoned has a central courtyard, partially covered by a canopy of vines. She often seeks shade under the vines at the height of noon. She's without her poetry, without her wine, bored and lonely. It's autumn, and as she sits there in the courtyard a swallow lands for a break amongst the yellowing leaves, chirpily flicking its spatchcocked

tail, before flying off again, heading south.

Let me tell you this from another perspective.

Julia had grown up nowhere, or that's how it seemed. She lived in a house with a garden in a neighbourhood with other houses with gardens. In the summers the front lawns were freckled with dandelions. Raspberries, gooseberries and blackcurrants hung heavy on branches in the patches out the back. It was under the blackcurrant bushes that Julia would make her friends go down on her.

The neighbour's dog had been let out to the back garden and was barking. Debbie was licking Julia's pussy with the tip of her tongue. Small, round motions. Hanna, who had been sitting quietly watching the others, squatting, with her pale cotton dress falling over her fuzzy pale legs, started taking her pants off and laid back on the ground next to Julia. Debbie had salty, sweet tasting lips. Smooth chicken liver pâté.

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The scent of your love, or a bed of ferns. Deep, well we can hear a bird sing, can't we? We can hear rays of sunshine warming the tarmac up, right?

I don't know how else to tell you this.

Tall pine trees letting in rays of sun, spotlighting cushions of moss down below. Overgrown boulders make dens for us to hide in. The day is dawning, and her hair is flowing over the forest floor. The lady of the forest, she is here now, silently waiting, kindly, then she turns her back to you and changes shape.



## Cast of Characters

Father: A man in his early 40s (looks younger). His skin is olive. Hair cut like James Dean. Calm brown eyes. He works more than he should, really. He expresses love by being entrusting. He likes fixing things around the house that he built himself.

Julia: Child, daughter. Julia adores her father. Julia's father is everything to Julia.

### Scene

Inside a garage clad in yellow-painted wood, beside a bungalow in the same colour, somewhere in suburban Sweden. Two large double doors open onto a white pebble drive.

### Time

In the past.

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### Act 1

#### Scene 1

SETTING: We are in the garage. On the side wall rows of tools are hung up on two perforated boards. Along another wall a metal shelf has boxes stacked with more tools. A few lengths of timber are leant up against the opposite wall. The concrete floor is smudged with oil and splodged with paint. There is a moped covered with a green tarpaulin at the back, behind a pile of tyres and several half-empty pots of white emulsion.

The garage is typical of the area. There is a blue boom-box plugged in over on the wooden workbench under the perforated tool board. It's playing *Modern Girl* by Sleater-Kinney.

My baby loves me, I'm so happy  
Happy makes me a modern girl  
Took my money and bought a TV  
TV brings me closer to the world

At rise: Julia is watching her dad pump the scissor jack to raise the car up. It is warm and the seams of his jeans have left reddish dents on the skin over his strong hips.

My whole life  
Was like a picture of a sunny day  
My whole life  
Was like a picture of a sunny day

My baby loves me, I'm so hungry  
Hunger makes me a modern girl

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JULIA

(Walks over and embraces her father's waist from behind. She presses her neck into the skin on his bare back, cold from sweat, warm from within; she can feel his muscles contract and release as he carries on the jacking. He smells oily and deeply, deeply sweaty. They are changing the rear left tyre.) Music continues:

Took my money and bought a doughnut  
The hole's the size of this entire world

My whole life  
Was like a picture of a sunny day  
My whole life  
Looked like a picture of a sunny day

My baby loves me, I'm so angry

Anger makes me a modern girl

Took my money I couldn't...

FATHER

(Julia's dad stops pumping the jack and removes the hub cap. He looks at the rusty nuts.)

JULIA

(Julia releases the hold on her father's waist. She walks over to the workbench under the perforated board and fetches some WD40. She walks back over to the tyre and sprays it on to the rusty nuts. It foams, then runs in a slow stream down the wheel, absorbing. It smells of bubblegum.)

70 That was at the beginning. You have got to understand me. When I am quiet, I think. When I speak, I have finished thinking. I can't always be productive, but you have got to let me finish my trail of thought. It strikes me that your questions and my answer are of different conversations. For instance, I only ever felt safe in the forest. But that was before I knew about the general unsafety of this place. Speaking of questions and answers. It is your question that is flawed, not my response. But now I have started speaking up and I worry it will change our relationship.

Let's start again.

## **Julia's Neighbour**

One day the whole family is at the dinner table and the doorbell rings. Julia looks up, puzzled. She glances diagonally across the table at her mother, who does not like being disturbed during mealtimes. Putting her cutlery either side of the dinner plate, Julia obediently gets up to answer the door.

To her surprise it is the neighbour from across the street, Stu. His tufty blonde greying hair has wild sideburns growing down the sides of his cheeks, tucked into gold-plated aviator bifocal cut glasses. Wrinkly thin lips cover his rickety, old teeth. It is all anus-shaped. His clothes are drenched in a deep, earthy smell of lawn and leafy smoke, Marlborough red.

Without a verbal exchange and just a nod for a greeting, Julia and Stu walk into the kitchen and stand together on the paisley-patterned lino floor, next to the dinner table. Julia's socks have slid halfway down, and she is gathering the excess fabric with her toes, massaging it into a ball under her big toe as Stu begins to cry. Julia is hungry, looking at her untouched plate of pan-fried mackerel and potatoes.

Stu: I had to tell you in person. (Pursing his wrinkly lips, his voice filled with sadness.)

Julia: (Looking at Stu with compassion. Then back down at her socks. Nodding her head.)

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It is silent in the kitchen. Everyone has stopped eating. Julia's mum is clasping her knife with her right hand. Hunger. Anger.

Stu: I just want you to know it was an accident. (Pleading for sympathy.) It remains silent.

Stu: (Eyes glancing down, still looking for sympathy.) I touched Mel, Fred and Ann. (Removes his glasses off and wipes the saggy skin under his eyes with his shirt sleeve.) There will be a trial. I wanted to tell you in person.

Stu is really crying now.

Stu: I had a stroke, and I did it all when I was out of it. I can't remember a thing. It all happened because of the stroke.

Julia: Poor you! (Genuinely feels horrible that Stu is so upset and crying in the kitchen. Mel, Fred and Ann are the kids from across the street. She played with them just before dinner time and saw Stu watching them from his bedroom window.)

Julia moves closer to Stu and wraps her arms around him. Stu strokes her head across the crown. Julia's dad gets up.

Stu: (Looks Julia in the eye.) At least I never laid hands on you.

Stu leaves the kitchen, closes the front door behind him and walks across the road, back to his house. He walks in through his hallway, through the front room and straight out onto the back porch which is adjacent to Mel, Fred and Anne's back garden. He sits down on his sun lounger and lights a fag. His wife comes out after him with a clean ashtray as the lenses in his glasses adjust to the early evening sun and darken.

We are moving forward now, you'll see where this is going.

## High Pressure

The early evening is beautiful and hot. The air is the colour of peaches in pale blue milk and swallows are flying high in the sky to catch their prey. In the summers, you can tell so much by looking at the swallows. They fly high because swarms of insects are carried up with the warm air. The swallows must be up there too to catch them. On summer evenings you can get a good idea of the following day's weather by looking at how they fly. When the swallows soar high the weather will be sunny.

Barn swallows are common where Julia lives. They make their nests under roofs and in other parts of buildings in the fields around the neighbourhood. In the autumn the swallows fly south. By October they are all gone. The thing with swallows is that they always return to the same place for winter year after year, somewhere on the other side of the planet.

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The sky goes from pale blue to dark, and the swallows are landing to rest their wings on the phone lines.



## Medication

It was clear she needed to sort out some birth control. She was about 12 and was fucking her mates at school regularly. She went up to the drop-in clinic to sort herself out. Walked through the huge sliding doors and sat down on a puffy chair, metal framed with a wipeable fake leather upholstery. Her name was called, and a nurse took her details. She explained that she needed to be put on the pill because she didn't want to get pregnant, etc., etc., etc. Just couldn't happen, wanted the sex, just not a baby. She was told to come back if this kind of pill didn't work out as 'desired', whatever 'desired' was, no fucking idea what was 'normal'. Julia jumped up, out of the chair, peeling her sweaty skin loose from the seat, left the clinic with pills in a paper bag and started chomping them. All the other girls around her were on the pill, it was free, it was on the government. They were dealt with like that, their desire to fuck was dealt with like that. Institutionalised hormonalisation that would turn some of them into psycho pussies, raging out of control, poisoned by birth control, of which they were all oblivious because they had never  
74 been given the chance to find out what they were like WITHOUT the pill. Julia got fucked up on the pill. In a fit of rage driven by jealousy she went around the house of this guy with who she was sleeping with. He was ugly as fuck and had a stutter but gave the most amazing rim jobs and would fuck her up the ass – instant gratification.

On her way over there she picked up a scissor jack which she used to trash his front door. She bashed it and splinters of wood flew all over the place. Looking back, it was lucky the door didn't break. She would have killed him if it had. She was fucked off, well, that's an understatement...

I am fucked off cos you've fucked your ex.

When really, you're fucking supposed to only fuck me.

It's so fucking unfair – that it should be me dealing with this shit.

Yes, it is my body. Yes, it is me not wanting to become pregnant.

But fuck me, this monster inside of me is EATING me.

And for what?

I am out of control, all over the fucking place. What's worse is I know how fucked up this situation is...

But right now, this fucking door is in my way, and it needs knocking through.

How about you deal with these side effects inside of YOUR body?

No, no, you're too frail. Too, I dunno, too unable to cope.

To deal with what ACTUALLY happens when you dump your load inside of someone.

Trials of birth control for men have been stopped.

Some men got depressed.

One man took his life (Fucking hell! Why are we doing this to other humans??!!)

What did we do? Did we hide behind bushes? Did we hide behind stones?

Did we just get on with it? Of course, we did.

The worst guys were the guys who she fucked missionary. The ones that jump straight in, not bothering lubing ANYTHING up. She might as well have not been there. (The irony is that some humped the bit between my ass and the mattress. 75  
Could she even be bothered to tell them? No.)

This happened.

Was what happened under the blackcurrant bushes not my idea?

Did it have anything to do with the violence I experienced when I was twelve – was I not curious, with previous experience?

## Millennium

The legal age in Sweden is 15, give or take.

1999 summer houses, walls clad in lacquered pine wood.

Full and dark forest surrounding us, smell of  
condoms and Nintendo 64s on pause.

Unframed Metallica posters,

Lars Ulrich posing in shades.

Corners worn with pin pricks,  
where mapping pins had pierced.

VHSs and bulging TV screens.

Late evening playing. Tapes passed around in  
piss yellow, pale pink, minty coloured,  
worn-out school corridors.

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We emancipated, owning our bodies and insults whilst  
illustrating biology projects with cut out boobs and cunts from pornos,  
giving blowjobs in bunkbeds. Someone presses play –  
Bloodhound Gang – The Bad Touch.

Park the moped by the stone steps to  
the smoking-bench veranda.

Terracotta pots turned upside down filled with  
an ashy paste of cigarette butts and rainwater.

In autumn the garden leaves brown, dry and crumpled.

Mum's sweeping, moaning,  
storing newspaper-wrapped apples away for winter  
in cucumber boxes all the way from Spain.

Spider plants hung on hooks in bungalow ceilings.

White, pink and coral seashells on fishing lines

as dad brings in a new microwave from the car.

Billy's pan pizza spinning round on a very fragile and expensive glass plate, pling.

Let us carry on. I will show you how to touch me.

Julia had learnt what people wanted from her. She could read people's minds and had learned to behave as they expected. At school she knew which answers most pleased the teacher. And what made her seem interested. What's more, she knew how to do things so that it seemed as if they had been done properly, as if she cared.

Julia took a job as a cleaner. She got keys for people's houses and let herself in to sweep. Julia swept up around people's furniture. She lifted the edges of rugs up and swept underneath. She scrubbed the tiles and cleaned where the powder and softener go in the washing machine, the parts that always seem caked in sticky 77 crud. She opened cupboards, rummaged through drawers, read letters and ate their food. Julia worked slowly. Taking their food and their hours. Every time she went to work, she stole time. She decided that having many voices was better than being blunt and silent, so she grew more heads and sang in harmony with herself. She could sing in harmony, and she could sing different songs at once. She was a hyena changing fur from spring to summer to autumn and winter, moving her spots each time. She was still hungry. And around this time she learned for what.

Julia left work early and walked home, walked through the park. The early afternoon sun hung low on the horizon and shone in her eyes. She took her hoodie off and tied it around her waist; her strong arms were touched by the warm air. She walked through the park and up onto a bridge, crossing the river from the suburbs over, towards the city. She looked down and saw canoes and boats criss-crossing the water, afloat on the flowing mass. She saw other pedestrians, dog walkers and cyclists. She was high up in the air and she saw graffiti scratched into the metal

railing, she ran her fingers over the marks. At the foot of the bridge she jumped onto a bus. She sat down on the plush fabric seat as the bus jolted to a start. Her skirt slid up and the scratchy gum-covered fabric rubbed her naked thighs.

She got off the bus by a huge, blue, corrugated-metal building. Up high, in yellow accents, letters spelled out IKEA. The car park surrounding the building was even bigger than the building itself, arrows had been squirted and flattened onto the tarmac, pointing and directing people in. Julia followed the arrows into the store and stepped into a dark room, lit only by a curved chrome floor lamp with a big black fabric shade dangling off the end. A leather sofa sat across the room, on top of a cow hide rug. As she stood in the space, a guy approached her. He asked if she wanted to fuck. Julia said no. He said 'I'll go down on you. You're beautiful.' Julia lifted her skirt up and pulled her pants to one side. He kneeled behind the sofa, in front of Julia. Behind Julia's back a bookcase was adorned with family photos and dog-eared paperback books. There was a spotlight on each shelf, one highlighted a bowl of plastic fruit, a large price tag hung down from it. Julia put her foot on the  
78 guy's shoulder, and he stuck his fingers inside her, he licked and sucked her flesh, licked his fingers. She opened herself up. Julia came and then lay down on the floor, next to the bookcase. She looked up and there was a painted-on window on the wall. A pair of grey cotton curtains hung around it. Julia lay on the floor and made herself come again inside the massive, corrugated shed, surrounded by the huge car park. She followed the path back out and walked into the city shade and day-dreamed about two men fucking her at once.

### **Diary Entry 2003**

Sitting on the floor, you know, where we last cuddled and kissed, after making love, on the sofa, where you were sleeping, with your top of, and I just had to come close to you because you were looking so. Just like that.

And that is when you are so simple to understand, and I want to be in you. Part of



you. Will you follow me anywhere?

This memory, of you, I want it to remain, along with happiness. And warmth. So just be. And I'll see you soon. Yeah, I am looking forward to receiving all that love you keep sending me in the end of your emails.

You are back with me. You made it back somehow.

And nothing really needs to make sense.

I don't mind.

You brought it back with you, the light I seem to need.

And, yeah, I am all right.

What do I do now? I'm out here on my own! I won't be in love with you when you're not here. Why the fuck are you not here? I can't love you if I can't see you. I don't even want you to want me. You mean nothing to me when you're not here after I've fucked you. I've stopped eating. I've quit being in love with you. Because unless you're here, present, to be in love, I can't love you back. I make myself cum. Blood and shit on my fingers. I drift off to sleep on the floor.

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Julia was in the room, 1.5 x 3 metres, downtrodden smudged rug, marking a path where many, many feet had walked before she had laid down to make her bed. She had around her paperback books, cold cups of tea with browning skin top surfaces. Her lover had bitten off and spat out his fingernails, now balancing on a crunched-up ball of tissue. Dust in her hair. She was on her back looking at the warty ceiling. It was all magnolia and she wanted to leave the room. She would have gone back out on the street and found a gang. She would have made friends with Jasmine. She would have held her arm out to Jasmine's friends, just as Jasmine had done. She would have let them all stand around her while she injected. Her existence wrung the last drops of water out of a four-month-old washing up sponge left soaking in dirty water for days.

No reasons for me to tell you 'take care' because you won't – troublemaker.

No reason for me to say lots of love because you don't know what love is – heart-

breaker.

He did come back eventually, and Julia had dark circles under her eyes and looked awful. She hadn't drunk any water. She hadn't brushed her teeth. He promised never to leave again but the next time he did he was gone for even longer. She curled up in a ball on the floor and stopped eating again. Unless he was there, she had no energy to love herself. She found a deep hatred for herself. She hummed:

### **Bank Note, Love Note**

You came into my life,  
showing me the bright lights.  
Spoil me, if it makes you happy.  
Sneak me away, find a place for us to be.

Piss on me if you want.

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Piss if you want.  
Let's do it in the bath,  
let's let our love flow into the world.

Show me you're angry,  
so I don't have to worry.  
Hit my face, so, I can kiss your fist.

I was blown away,  
now hand me your note.  
Hand me your bank note,  
love note.

Tell me you're leaving,  
so I don't have to find out you've gone.  
Show me you're crying,

so I don't have to be the only one.  
You were the first to show me love,  
but you took it away the next day when I had lost myself.  
I hope you cannot sleep,  
I hope you lose all your dreams.

Julia's working hard, she's been out twice, picking up more bottles for the three of them. Heading back. She presses a silvery plastic buzzer, flat 3. And, with a languageless grunt, is let in. Returning up to the bedsit on floor 2 to carry on drinking. Kicks her trainers off by the front door. The walls are fraying and coats of magnolia have been slapped on, one on top of the other. There are distinctive thumbed grease marks on the corner between the hallway and the room which contains a kitchenette, a sofa-cum-bed. Some clothes had been thrown over a metal drying rack, which was itself knocked over a couple of hours ago, crusty grey socks marked by the metal bars scatter across the shit-brown short shag carpet, darkening in patches where a meal was spilt some days ago. A layer of smoke hovers near the stained ceiling. As she comes into the room, both guys are on the sofa 81 and she slumps down and puts her head on a lap, letting the bottles in her carrier bag fall in the little gap between their legs and the sticky table. His dick under black denim against her cheek. She's rubbing her temple into it.

She sits up to light a fag, and the contour of cock is showing through the thick fabric. That wet chest. His shirt is loose and open. On what seems like pure instinct he runs his fingers through her hair. Whereby her head falls back on the same lap, her fag goes into an almost empty glass of warm whiskey and his zip opens. In that very motion the guy's knees touch. The next moment both of them have their dicks out. They fuck her. The tampon inside Julia is shoved up deeper with each thrust. After forever, they stop. She squats down over by the crusty socks, pushing her fingers inside to get the tampon out. She gets hold of the packed-up string and reaches up onto the kitchen countertop to grab another. With lightly blooded, tacky fingers she twists the cellophane wrapper. She carries on like that for days, days, days and nights, fucking, getting tampons out, fucking getting tampons out,

and the whole time only Julia comes. They spend the summer together, and saying it out loud sounds so fucking cheesy, but she deeply loves them both.

### **The Only Hotel in Town**

Poetic and pissed.

He was in the reflection she saw turning away from the mirror,  
tattooed to the insides of her eyelids.

He was in songs and in movies.

Pressing her eyeball to the binocular,  
so close that the device itself disappears.

Looking for islands that have never been seen before.

Looking for home.

82 That was when she saw that the asshole was just an asshole.

He was not an icon.

The burden of being the responsible one fell on her.

And he was not tall, dark or handsome.

This time she was dead.

Lying naked on the floor in the only hotel in town.

The dream was less a dream and  
more a pastiche of rape and rejection.

Needing to meet the gaze of another that would see her.

If you run fast enough, if you go deep enough you can get to oblivion.

The high is heavy enough to suppress the dreams.

But every now and then those memories creep up, into desire.

In my dreams I am writing porn for you to cum over.

On the streets bodies melt together in sweat.  
Still, these places are better than reality.  
I am falling into it, down through the layers, at the bottom, smashing into a cold floor.

My skin is green, and the inside is dead.  
You're pounding me.  
Shoving a dick-shaped ice-olly into my cold, dry anus.  
But not reviving me.

You pierce the skin on my chest with pins then,  
slap my cheeks and,  
shove the lolly deeper, deeper and deeper until...  
My eyes open.

You twist my head and  
loosen the grip around my neck.  
I start to see now, it's all familiar.  
It's home.

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Viewed in the binocular the shape seems flat.  
Its sides shooting out of the water in 2D.  
The closer we get to it, the more enigmatic it becomes.  
We arrive then we see,  
it's flawed, bruised and broken.

Meanwhile, somewhere else  
Tall pine trees letting in rays of sunshine  
spotlighting cushions of moss down below.  
Overgrown boulders make dens for them to hide in.

Once again, the day is dawning, and her hair is flowing over the forest floor.



The lady of the forest, she is here now  
Waiting for you, kindly, to meet her kiss,  
then turns her back to you to change shape.

## **The Conclusion**

So here we are, I am going to wash the stain of you away.  
I am going to change myself in every way possible to remove you from me.  
*Damnatio memoriae.*

## **Your Worst Fear and I Am the Prisoner**

And your worst fear is I will fall in love with a woman. You could not bring your-  
self to castration, and the complete lack of control seems frightening, I agree, but  
84 how can I resist falling in love?

They fucked and slept and each time he came he stayed inside of her. He forbade  
her to leave the bed and she stayed. The sixth or seventh time she pissed herself.  
They drifted back to sleep on a damp bed, going cold. She is free, and that is why  
she is lost.

## CHAPTER ONE – LEAVING

‘There is a Greek in me, or a Christian’

Deleuze

A forest so thick and ancient, with a density that suppresses echoes.

The scent of your love, or a bed of ferns. Deep, well we can hear a bird sing, can't we? We can hear rays of sunshine warming the tarmac up, right? I don't know how else to tell you this.

Tall pine trees letting in rays of sun, spotlighting cushions of moss down below. Overgrown boulders make dens for us to hide in. The day is dawning, and her hair is flowing over the forest floor. The lady of the forest, she is here now, silently waiting, kindly, then she turns her back to you and changes shape.

I am moving. I have spent most of my adult life running, and, in this chapter, I 85  
will speak about that. I have physically moved myself between places. And, I have made myself so busy. I have not waited, nor paused. I have carried on, despite not knowing. Or maybe it is because I have been moving in relation to the ‘unknown’ – the unknown that is forgotten, that I have continued. In this chapter I am reflecting on what this movement looks like. In this chapter I am also thinking about exile. It might seem like a formal word to describe what is essentially ‘leaving’ or ‘getting away’ from a difficult situation. But the formality of my language says something about the seriousness of feeling that there is no other choice than to leave after there has been violence. Through this research, exile has also become synonymous with a desire to have a practice positioned outside or away from something or someone. Following from this thought I have come to understand exile as an act of displacement that offers the opportunity to imagine new possibilities. I am thinking about Deleuze’s ‘island’ (2004), which he describes as being away from the continent of structures. The island offers an opportunity to find creativity away from the conventions of continental society.

In this first chapter I will outline some of the exiles I have encountered and practised from during my research. I will speak about the ways in which I understand their place in my work.

To begin with, I am going to be talking about the historic exile of Emperor Augustus' daughter Julia, whose story I encountered whilst working in Italy in 2019 and who has also lent her name to the heroine in *Headstone*. But I am also thinking about my own 'exiles', as in needing to move away from Sweden, moving my art practice into the loft, and moving from photography into sculpture and fiction writing. But let me start by thinking about Julia, Foucault's understanding of sexuality (which connects to Julia), and my interpretation and use of the geology and infrastructure of Ventotene, the place that Julia was exiled to. These sections take a more diaristic style as I use notes from my time working in and around Rome in 2019, and this approach, mixing more academic writing and autobiographical accounts and impressions, is one that will continue throughout the chapters of this thesis.

## **Julia Augusti**

In 2 BC Emperor Augustus's (63 BC – AD 14) only daughter, Julia (39 BC – AD 14) was exiled to the windy and remote island of Ventotene in the Tyrrhenian Sea, just off Italy's west coast, about halfway between Rome and Naples. Julia was accused of adultery. To give a brief background to the banishment: in 18 BC Augustus legislated, in the Lex Julia, to make adultery a crime punishable with being exiled to an island. Contemporary reports claimed that Julia had scoured the city at night and chosen the Forum itself as a platform for the said liaison. This was the same place that her father had announced the Lex Julia some years before (Fantman, 2006). Julia was accused of cheating and leading a debauched life. This is an account of her character that is accepted by scholars (Fantman, 2006). She indulged herself in wine, debate and poetry and, it seems, casual sex. Following the accusations, she was exiled to Ventotene, without a trial, for crimes 'injurious to religion

and the violation of his majesty' (Fantman, 2006, p.86). Today, Casa Julia, where she was taken, is an inconspicuous and little visited site locked behind a rusty and bent fence on Ventotene's northern tip. A forgotten ruin, it is completely exposed to the elements. I am on Ventotene during a month-long residency at the British School at Rome. I am interested in Julia's history, which I encountered through a conversation with a Roman friend. In some ways I feel it might tell me something about my own life. I feel there is something of Julia in me. I read her history as somehow aligned with mine. I feel we have come up against similar patriarchal structures, where it has seemed as if my sexuality was also other people's business and where sexuality has meant that I have felt no other choice but to move. I moved to Britain, an island, having left Sweden. But of course the circumstances of our lives are vastly different. I am not an emperor's daughter, and my banishment has thankfully not been fatal.

Augustus's Lex Julia aimed to raise moral standards, to protect marriage and favour the nuclear family. While these political efforts were meant to recreate the moral rigor of 'previous times', the reality was different according to Foucault (1986), who discussed Augustus's conservatism in *The History of Sexuality, volume 3, Care of the Self*. The legislative interventions were too sporadic to have a broader societal impact, but interestingly Foucault takes a broader perspective. He argues that the time of Augustus marks the start of a movement that sees increased focus placed on the individual, urging citizens to be more austere unless they wanted to live like 'the throngs'. Foucault sees any change in sexual behaviour, decreased public promiscuity and so on around this time as a result of the anxiety of the individual to 'do right' and exercise self-respect. For Foucault, this is the beginning of a development taking place over the centuries where sexuality changes through the individual's relationship with laws and institutions on the one hand, but also importantly through their relationship with themselves. This individualism or 'care of the self' through self-reflection and discipline sees the individual emerge as an ethical subject. Focus is placed on a withdrawal into the domestic, where marriage and sexuality become central to acts of self-care. It is a move from the provocative sexuality of ancient Greece towards the austere morals of Christianity,

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prioritising the nuclear domestic family over a sexuality that takes place outside of the home. Foucault looks specifically at the creation of the patriarchal moral subject through the control of one's own urges, which come to reflect one's standing.

One of the reoccurring questions I pose through the writing of this thesis is: what subjectivity do I produce through the sex I have experienced? That is, a sex pock-marked with violence. And one which has led to a sort of exile where I have tried to get away from violence and memories of humiliation. What knowledge might that sexuality produce?

88 The reoccurring violence seems to have produced a form of resistance. I resist power that I feel is connected to the patriarchal structures that I see are partially responsible for the creation of opportunities where violence could take place against my body. Past violence also becomes present as vulnerability. As well as these traces of violence in my work through resistance and vulnerability, I think violence has and is impacting the way that I view domestic space (a space that seems so vital to the sexuality and power that Foucault describes). Though presently it is a place of safety for me, this has not always been the case, given that most of my experiences of sexual violence have taken place in domestic environments. I am now going to look at what Foucault says about rape and furthermore how he has been criticised for his position.

Women are passively present in Foucault's analysis of sexuality and power, as they are participants (not always freely) in the acts discussed. Foucault does not speak in depth about women's experience of sex in any of his volumes on sexuality. Linda Alcoff (2000) has picked up on this, directing critique towards specific passages in *The History of Sexuality, volume 1* (Foucault, 1998). In this volume, Foucault tells a story about a simple farm hand in the French village of Lapcourt. The man had taken a young girl to a secluded spot on the outskirts of the village and forcefully made her play a game the villagers casually called 'curdled milk'. The girl subsequently told her parents about the man and the game, they then reported the man to the police. The man was accused of rape. For Foucault, this example shows how,



at this point, ordinary sexual acts became the object of social intolerance and juridical action. But it is notable how casually Foucault retells this story, which must have been horrific for the young girl. Foucault completely overlooks the young girl's experience. He goes on to analyse the incident as inconsequential, assuming the girl was willing, explaining it as an event that is simply an ordinary part of village life. The error, from a feminist perspective, is firstly that Foucault assumes the girl's willingness, an example of arrogance, and secondly that he dismisses the act as inconsequential. Alcoff's response to this passage focuses wholly on the girl and her experience in a harrowing account of invasion, confusion and fear, as she is forced into a foreign and humiliating situation. Alcoff places women's experience and personal stories at the centre of her attempt to understand how sexuality functions. She argues that women's sexualities are simply outside of the narrative in Foucault. The reason for this, Alcoff argues, is that for sexual violence to be appropriately understood we must understand that language and experience are misaligned, and that experience sometimes exceeds language; sexual violence is indescribable. With the focus so often placed on structures, power and legislation, harrowing personal experiences that are all too real and frequent, like the experience of the young girl in Lapcourt, are absent from the way Foucault analyses sexuality. 89

In *The History of Sexuality*, volume 3, *The Care of the Self*, Foucault (1986) locates a change in the economy of pleasure starting at the time of Augustus, which rippled into the centuries that followed. Speaking of the importance placed on the relationship with the self, the centring of the individual, Foucault points out that behaviours here were slightly altered to draw sexuality into the domestic and into the relationship between spouses. These ethics, which prioritise virginity and abstinence in order to consummate the union of marriage, which according to Foucault begin to appear at the time of Augustus, align with the Christian idea of one version of sexuality (that which neglects self-restraint) as an evil, something to be feared. This is a position that grew stronger from Augustus's time over the centuries (Foucault, 1986). In *Foucault*, Deleuze (2006) speaks about subjectivities that continue to be produced based on modes that no longer reflect our contempo-

rary lives. Deleuze uses the term 'absolute memory' to describe the kind of forgotten memories that fold into us (I will talk more about his concept of the 'fold' in Chapter 2). With 'absolute memory' the situations that produce memories are irrelevant (when we think of something remembered as opposed to something forgotten). Instead, what matters is memory as the condition that produces us as subjects. Deleuze argues that the past, as memories truly remembered or not, folds into these subjectivities. In this research, through reflection and discussion, I have been able to see how sex and violence together produced my subjectivity, in turn producing the work that I present here as my thesis. This includes not just the situations that I remember, but also those that are forgotten, or existed outside of my language, and even those outside of my own experiences but passed through to me from someone else's past.

I want to carry on thinking about Foucault, Julia, Augustus and sex for a little longer. This time I approach it from the perspective of the dichotomy of good and evil. Though the austere approach to sexuality appeared even before Augustus, 90 Foucault (1986) notes that an increased preoccupation with the body and an understanding of sexuality as ambivalent, concurrently 'good' and 'evil', a balance of pleasure and restraint that the self has to master. The ambivalence of sex is a problematic at the core of my understanding of sexuality, the bad and the good, the unpleasurable and the pleasurable and the unsafe and the safe.

For Foucault (1986), the ethics of pleasure that have developed over the last 2,000 years involve the mastery of one's body and one's pleasure. It emerges through the control and power that one has over oneself and one's desires to achieve enjoyment with the body. It entails restraint. He argues that an increased awareness of sexuality brings about a heightened fear of it; we have an increased need to fear it as a problem to overcome in our efforts to lead a moral life.

From a feminist viewpoint, it is not just a fear of one's own rampant sexuality and a need to control one's own sexuality that leads to withdrawal into the private – such a withdrawal is also the result of a fear of the patriarchal system where wom-

en are valued less, and the raping of their bodies is considered 'inconsequential'. For me, the involuntary in sex is not primarily in connection to spasm, but to rape. Sex describes pain and invasion on the one hand, but also pleasure. It hurts yet it is intimate. It turns from safe, with a promise of care, to unsafe, in acts where friends turn into perpetrators. It is voluntary, quickly turning involuntary.

I want to pick up on the idea in Alcoff (2000) that sexual acts of violence can exist outside of language. For over a decade I lacked the language to talk about the sexual abuse I experienced on the cusp of adolescence. I think I am right in saying that afterwards, almost instantly, I forgot all about it. Yet, I kept a hazy, wordless, but pin-sharp recollection of it someplace. This memory made itself present in my life as anger. I was angry. Eventually, I found ways of understanding, rationalising and combating the invasion, and importantly channelling the anger, while keeping it outside of a language that spoke directly about my experience. Some of that included more flirtations with abuse. And starting almost immediately after that happened, the anger became formalised in an academic and politicised understanding of sexuality. This is something that arguably has continued in this research and runs like a thread through my life, together with the idea of escape and moving myself away from the violence and carrying out a delayed protest. 91

A decade or so after the first experience of rape, the anger that I had carried with me made it into my work through photographs and texts. And with that expression and the experience of sharing, my spirits slumped. Through that sharing my work became bound to trauma. But I failed to recognise my own sensation and experiences as just traumatic.

The productive and political anger I had kept to myself for so long had, through the interpretations of those around me, become victimisation. At that time, I was using photography to talk about my experiences. What I had experienced as a complex assault was required to fit within the boundaries of the medium. The discussions around the work never included thinking through the potential in surviving rape, the power and creative subjectivity that could emerge from the

92 experience of sexual violence. While the conversations around shame and ‘speaking up’ are legitimate and probably appropriate in some instances, I felt they reinforced the power imbalances I saw at the root of the structures enabling rape in the first place (I am thinking of Judith Butler’s (2009) grievability concept here). After all, there is a power dynamic at play in being positioned as a victim. Alison Phipps (2021) challenges the position women as victims, pointing out that not all people (regardless of experience) are entitled to being a victim. Phipps also draws on Wendy Brown (1995), who speaks of feminism where ‘confession’ and speaking out are central to the creation of an argument, and thus become central to a feminist identity. But, as Brown has rightly argued, speaking out is not akin to liberation. I am finding this slippery to navigate, as on the one hand I recognise that the subjectivity I am basing my practice on is at least partly created through experiences of violence and an ongoing exchange with hierarchies and power. Yet I am not looking for a practice solely defined by trauma. None of the equality that I was and am looking for is found in the role of victim, and I am not looking for pity. All I find in pity is sadness over what had happened, sadness for all the people who shared a similar experience, and sadness that it must keep defining me in my life. In my early work around sexual violence that sadness continued to grow through the language I used to speak about my experiences. This might be a good time to turn to Appendix 1 and read my essay ‘The Frame and the Fold’. When you come back from that we will look again at Ventotene, which will follow on from the journey I set off on within the narrative of the ‘Frame and the Fold’.

The cliffs of Ventotene seem to hold the remains of banished sexuality, as Julia's house has crumbled into rocky ground. As I near the northern tip of the island where her house once stood, I imagine the dust of the dry path being a mix of the old villa's walls and the island's native rock. I also see traces of broken glass bottles, glistening like green and brown jewels in the slutty dust. I imagine the dust is holding on to the remnants of her past, her exile at the hands of patriarchy and her life on this island, that no one knows much about. Back in the studio in Rome, I mix a handful of the crumbly glassy path with salt dough, twigs and bay leaves that grow nearby, making sharp and jagged lumps. After living with the lumps for a few weeks I turn the lumps into caves that I end up using to cover the work – for lights that I use to illuminate three sails I have installed on the portico of the British School at Rome. When I visit Ventotene I am told by the locals that the island was nicknamed the Utopian Island. Allegedly, 400 criminals and prostitutes were sent there from mainland Italy in 1768 to repent and improve their sinful behaviour. It was believed that spending time in unspoilt nature would realign one's moral compass and that bad people would revert to their inherent goodness. Nature here, however, was not pure; its dust contains the slutty history of Julia and 93 her interactions with the patriarchal politics of her father's legislative power. The story goes that the prostitutes set up brothels in the sandstone caves, just below where Julia had once been imprisoned. A new frontier. Today, the caves house sail repairers and boat merchants, working out of the cool, dark hollows.

In this research and my artwork, the precarity in, for instance, *Memorial* (2021) highlights the instability suggested by these changing conditions. Thought about like this, sex is an unsure, unstable situation. I have found my own ways of dealing with this in life, but also in my research and artwork, where the rushed method of bodging feeds off unsureness, unfinishedness and fragility. These qualities also characterise *Memorial*, *Sail* and *Weave* (see the illustrations or visual list at the beginning of the thesis).

In *Headstone*, this ambivalence is present in my use of symbolism, or what Simon O'Sullivan (2015) might have called fictioning. In his essay 'Fictioning the Land-





Image 11: Ruins of Casa Julia, Ventotene 2019



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Image 12: Cave with sails, Ventotene, 2019

scape', O'Sullivan speaks about a landscape that encapsulates both a past and a future through artistic interpretation. He describes a sort of layering of temporalities that importantly provides new myths that have the potential to help us orientate our realities. The location of Julia's prison seems ambiguous and uncertain, its opening times unclear. A lazy, partially fallen fence attempts to protect the ruin, but is failing. The remains of the villa are just metres away from a helicopter pad, as if the present day is mocking her past imprisonment. The uncertainty of this location resonates with an ambiguity that I have in relation to all sexual encounters, which I think, is also reflected in the work I have made for this research. Through my writing and this research, I have come to understand that there is an ambiguity in relation to the unsureness of the encounters with violence I have experienced – is it safe or dangerous, is it painful or pleasurable, am I staying or leaving?

96 Following the only road south on the island, at quite a distance from Casa Julia, lies the museum of ornithology, dedicated to the migration of birds. Ventotene is on the path of the birds migrating from northern Europe. Each autumn they invade Ventotene. Most are heading towards the Mediterranean shores of North Africa. The island must provide a welcome place to rest on their way to where they are heading. Swifts, peregrine falcons and gulls. European turtle doves, nightingales and honey buzzards. Blackbirds, black caps and white-throats. Short-eared owls and barn swallows. When I was a child, in the summer evenings, we would try to tell the next day's weather by gazing at the barn swallows, interpreting how they flew in the sky. If they flew high, it would mean that the weather would be fine, if they flew low it was sign of rain. And then, before we knew it, as the summer ended, we used to look at the swallows again as they flew south, heading for warmth, while we were left behind to face the rain and cold. The forest and fields around us were calm, as we drew into our homes looking for comfort. Packing the lawn games and sun loungers away, locking down life after a summer that had seemed as if it had no end, we raked leaves and harvested apples from the two large trees while watching the swallows and geese leave. They were headed for Ventotene where Julia once stood, maybe watching them approach land to rest. The centre for migrating birds at the former prison island of Ventotene. The heli-

copter pad by the ruins of Casa Julia, dreams of leaving, all resonate with the sense I have of a woman's sexuality. It is the 'do' and the 'do not' that seem bound up in a sexuality that is absent from Foucault's philosophy yet nonetheless present as the silent partner of the sex that he describes. She is there but she is also gone. Escaping into silence. Lying flat. Sent away. In the act of love making, which for Foucault is the moment when the subject is at its most present, I am just about escaping memories of rape. I am between presently feeling pleasure and being overcome by wordless memories of the past. I am splitting myself to engage both pleasure and pain in both staying and leaving to eventually erupt. It is a moment of letting go which must be the start of approaching my subjectivity that, nonetheless, has its roots in a violent past.

## **Us Girls in the Forest**

Shortly before first experiencing sexual violence, I illustrated a project in biology with a collage of smooth and pink vulvas cut from porn magazines. I remember 97 arguing that these vulvas were relevant in our biology project (although the purpose of the magazine or the photographs was not to educate on anatomy). The project was displayed in the school corridor for a few weeks, but our teacher had insisted on covering the collage with paper flaps that anyone wanting to see the photograph had to lift to peep inside. The foldable paper flaps were torn off quite quickly, but the project stayed up for a little while longer.

Angela McRobbie (2010) defines the phallic girl as sexually expressive and promiscuous. The phallic girl gets drunk and has casual sex, yet she does so only in agreement with an extended form of patriarchy, functioning within a realm of symbolic authority, which is understood as an adaptation of phallocentric domination that substitutes a male authority for consumer culture. For McRobbie, the epitome of the phallic girl is a woman able to make her money by being commercially savvy while bearing it all on the Sun's Page 3, or maybe more recently on social media. For us, girls in the Swedish countryside, the reality looked very





Image 13: My Studio at the British School at Rome, 2019



Image 14: Boat with tree on the Tiber, Rome, 2019



different. We rode mopeds, drank moonshine, notched bedposts, gave hand jobs in compost loos, passed out and showed off by taking our knickers down in public. We rode to a nearby lake where there was a dance floor in the open air. We stayed out in the midnight sun and mixed our moonshine with Fanta. I felt high and powerful like Courtney Love, though I barely knew who she was. Once the party was over, someone threw our mopeds on the back of a tractor and drove us home. We snuck into bed while the sun was still warming the sky in hues of purple and orange.

It seems McRobbie was never one of us girls in the forest. Instead, she is addressing us from the outside, as objects and, as Linda Stupart (2016) notes, carrying out a sort of academic slut shaming. There has been a focus in research on women's sexual behaviours following rape (Deliramich and Gray, 2008). A connection between increased sexual activity post-rape has been reported by survivors. Furthermore, links have been made between increased alcohol consumption, as a sort of post-traumatic coping strategy, and increased sexual activity with multiple and  
100 new partners, a behaviour which in itself increases the risk of further crimes happening (Deliramich and Gray, 2008).

I still perceive that I am somehow on the outside – Augustus would have sent me away; Foucault would have omitted my accounts, added insult to injury and called my raped body inconsequential; and McRobbie highlights that although I thought I was free in adopting perceived masculine behaviour, I was in fact still stuck in perpetually renewing power relations in which I remained in a position of submission.

Lewdness and smuttiness were noticeably more central to this research, in both the written and sculptural works, in its earlier stages. Still, these concepts run through and have propelled this work forward. Smuttiness is present in the work *Tongue* (2017) (see the illustration page 102). *Tongue* was made as a response to 'The Jam in Belleville' – a section of *Headstone* – and shown at the Regency Townhouse in Brighton in 2018. The tongue was made from photographic canvas prints of red

fruits and berries, and was backlit from within a wine cellar. Creative writing from throughout the research appears chronologically in *Headstone*. It is evident from reading *Headstone* from start to finish that the focus has shifted slightly away from lewdness and potentially shocking sexual behaviours to a more complex picture of sex, desire and subjectivity. As I came to understand the function of those occurrences through my writing, the need to record those memories caught up with the present and my present sexual circumstances that are more concerned with child-birth and rearing.

The phallic girl is, despite her wilful lewdness and play of sexual power, not safe from sexual violence. Though she is subversive, challenging, loud and pushing boundaries, she is never safe from rape or abuse. Brazenness is not a shield. And, as I have learned through this research, nor is escaping, exiling yourself somewhere away from the violence. What happens 'here' happens 'everywhere', and there is no place, nowhere in the world where one is absolutely safe (WHO, 2021). Uprooted. A declaration. No longer wanting to take part in the transaction of violence. Exile is, in this research, not thought of as about setting up a community 101 that is physically distant. Rather, it is about understanding already being separate.

## Drifting

Being on residency has been some of this research's most productive times. The idea of practising from another kind of domesticity, such as a temporary studio dwelling has given me access to a set of new spaces and materials to relate to and be outside of what is a typical home environment. My proposal for the residency for the British School at Rome (BSR) was based on being purposely adrift, as it connected to the water in and around Rome in different ways. In her essay 'Tactics for Not Knowing – Preparing for the Unexpected in On Not Knowing how Artists Think', Emma Cocker (cited in Fisher and Fortnum, 2013, p.130) explains that 'the unknown or unexpected must be stumbled upon [...] thus it remains somewhat aleatory, improvisatory, a little blind'. Serendipitously, Julia was, in the part of



Image 15: *Tongue*, 2018

*Headstone* I was writing in 2019 just as I applied to go to the BSR travelling through the French waterways, heading (like the birds in autumn) towards the Mediterranean.

I went on to travel to Rome via boat and train. I wanted to give myself time to arrive in Rome and adjust to the residency slowly. After making a steady start, leaving the UK on a ferry then heading through France by rail, the Paris to Milan sleeper train became my first meeting with improvisation. I boarded the train at the Gare de Lyon, and found I was sharing a couchette with an Italian architecture student and an older French man now living in Birmingham. As the train pulled out of Paris, we sat ourselves down to talk in front of the window. A series of tunnels made the light in the carriage flicker between complete darkness and bright summer light, making me unable to fully follow the conversation which seemed to flit between British pies and the French education system, following the beat of the alternating daylight and darkness. I excused myself to visit the bar. When I arrived back an hour or so later the couchette was empty, so I climbed up to the top bunk to rest. It had not been long before the train unexpectedly came to a halt. After a short time of stillness, the older man came back. Immediately he told me that I must get up as we must all leave the train, which, we had now been informed, had broken down. To everyone's relief we still had access to the station at Lyon. 'I think,' I said, 'I would prefer to stay on board until a solution to take us on to Milan has been found.' At this point the man seemed angry and raised his voice, then went running down the corridor to look for the young Italian student. I said after him, 'I think he went to work in the restaurant car.' Though the train guard made an announcement to all passengers not to evacuate the train just yet, all I could think of was leaving the environment that the aggressive man would return to. So, I took my luggage and left the train. For ten hours I sat immobile on top of my suitcase on the platform in Lyon, before coaches finally came to collect us and bring us across the Alps to Milan. I never saw the man again. I assumed after a while that he must have gone back to the couchette to sleep. Though I contemplated going back to the car many times during the hold-up, I did not want to risk angering him again.

So, I finally arrived in Rome a day later than intended, with a loose plan to follow the flow of the water in the Tiber River, which connects Mount Fumaiolo to the Tyrrhenian Sea. My research has been led by the unknown, both through encounters with situations that recall past violence, enabling reflection on my response to hierarchies, and through intuitively being led by barn swallows and sailing boats. The fact is that none of my experiences of sexual violence have been planned, at least not by me. The ability to work with the unknown is very much linked to my experiences with sex. When we speak about the methodology of the 'unknown', as when we speak about rape and the inability to move, act and so on, a set of apparently negative concepts dominate the language, like for instance uncertainty and invisibility. I am consciously trying to shape these sets of nouns that are for me tied to trauma and conflict into creative opportunities.

104 Serendipitously, Rome and Ventotene intersected with the narrative in *Headstone*, as the journey follows the French waterways, flowing through its cities and countryside before leaving the canals on the Côte d'Azur, heading southeast into the Mediterranean. Some of it flows through the same countryside as the Paris–Milan train route. In *Headstone* I wrote about Julia travelling on a boat with her father towards Ventotene:

After three days on the canals, they reached Pont-l'Évêque where the waterways split and they took the route southwest on the Oise, reaching Conflans in two days, joining the Seine, passing under the bridges of Paris: Pont au Double, Pont des Arts, Pont au Change.

They followed the Bourbonnaise route south, passed Rogny and Briare, carried on northeast through thickly wooded countryside, briefly, before heading south again towards Villefranche, following the Rhône and eventually ending up in Port Saint Louis du Rhône on the Côte d'Azur.

Some have been known to make male muses out of thin plastic and blow them up with bicycle tyre pumps, pump pump pump, a motion that fills it up with air.



They hump the muses and objectify them. They use their own objectification as a mirror, they undress, body slide in mud on polished concrete floors, reflecting the problem back onto the observer. They use megaphones. They amplify motorway noise to prove the point that motorways are too loud and ruin the peace and quiet of the countryside. Then they portray themselves as shy and romantic despite New York being such a 'fast paced city' and the fact that 'our society sexualises every encounter'.

Julia ties a man to the top of their mast and sees beauty in his still limbs. She adores how the sun reflects on his olive skin and the contours of his contorted muscles paint in the shading. They cross the Mediterranean.

Then there's the island in the Tyrrhenian Sea where they send sluts like you. There's a sort of rugged charm about that place. My evil internal critic throws up a little every time I allow myself to like somewhere like that. There are rats, of course there are rats, it's nature, but it is also where they send sluts like me, who also like to read a little too much. All around there are sounds of doors opening. 105  
A distant murmur followed by what sounds like a door closing and a car arriving. Fucking becomes our only tool for communication. Being important was never allowed. My father was adopted, and adopted many sons, just as his father had done. You needn't look any further.

I spent the first period of the residency walking along the Tiber's shores in the north part of Rome where it runs deep in its ravine, far below street level, and I wrote:

The moment patriarchy falls might look like this. We could kill the seventh king and throw the body into the river. We could let his corpse sink and let silt mount around his stinking, swelling flesh. We could build an island around the body and give it the shape of a ship. Over thousands of years, we could let the seven arches of the bridge crossing from north to east crumble one by one. We could sit back and watch them problem solve and repair and patiently wait until the arches have

all crumbled, all but one still standing midstream with the men all caught. And me, at the bank, I would only be able to stand back and watch it unfold because I couldn't possibly construct something so marvellous as a bridge to get out there to save them. The men are caught, forced to eat one another, until, they all disappear. The lost sunken city. Marble statues that crumble. A nose here, an ear there.

There are steps leading down the sides of the steep ravine to the river. By the river a cobbled path takes you along the water. Twelve metres below the familiarity and safety of the city, life seemed fractured and frayed. Knickers, sheets and trainers mixed with mud on the shore and, over time, silt had formed a mound near the ravine wall. There were tents, broken bottles and syringes, gone out fires, shopping trolleys, all half-buried in a mixture of mud and excrement. I took these impressions back to the studio and worked with the mud and broken glass bottles to try and capture the baseness of that place. I wanted to figure out what draws me to it but also how it repels. In *Headstone* I wrote:

106 Another day, much later on, the pleasures that know no season. A meeting at a cinema. The dark is the only place they hold hands. Plaiting their fingers in a grip that changes with strokes and caresses. A bottle of gin shared without any real conviction as the film cut from home to streets and cars. She leans her head on his slender shoulder that is draped by a white, breaking veil of cotton. With his free thumb he grips her chin by the cheekbone and in a sweeping movement flings his tongue around hers with tobacco and booze. Shifting his hand to creep up the inside of her bare thigh.

As the credits begin their slow parade, the lights come back on. They fall out onto the damp, sticky streets. With his usual pull-of-the-wrist technique he drags her along. They end up on a dirty road adjacent to the train tracks. They always end up in places where shit gathers after bad weather. Surrounded by plastic bottles and emptying footballs she kneels to suck him off. But before finishing, he drags her back to the bedsit that he shares with his girlfriend. She spreads her ass open bending over the back of the sofa and he meets her invite. She comes and falls onto

a thin mattress on the floor. He wakes her up with sharp nudges of desire through the night but at 5am she gets up to walk home though the salty, early air. It is unusual, but as she gets home he is there sleeping, so she tucks herself into the bed next to him and drifts off. She wakes up by him rubbing his boner between her thighs. Her tongue sticks to the roof of her mouth while cum from the two men mix inside of her and they drift back to sleep through the day.

When I arrived back in Rome, after having visited Ventotene, I started constructing a mast. It was wobbly and as tall as the studio at the BSR would allow. I bodged it together with bits of timber I found in the wood-working store, next door to my studio. I also found some large pieces of white cotton fabric. I cut these into triangular shapes and painted them with a mix of green and brown pigment and urine. I let the fabric soak in the muted muddy shade of the Tiber's ravine. The work of constructing masts continued for two weeks until I ended up with three sails, all on equally wobbly, fragile masts. At a point during the final week, the idea occurred to show these on the spectacular front portico, which had just been renovated and looked at its most beautiful, radiant and glistening in the evening twilight. I had noticed swallows dipping in to catch their evening prey and I hoped that they would be flying near my masts.

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Whilst focusing on the sails I also carried on my work with salt dough, twigs, leaves and glass as mentioned above. Salt dough has featured in my working process throughout the PhD. It seems so obviously domestic, a mix of salt, flour and water. I think of it as a material without frills. At the BSR I made it from flour and salt I found in the school's kitchen. Before it dried, I rolled the salt dough in broken glass from the bin, twigs and bay leaves from out the back of the studio. Once dried I broke it off into lumps and soaked it in the brown and green pissy pigments. Out of this glassy, salty material I made an island with a cave. Inside of it I placed a lamp which shone light on the sails on the portico. The other two sails were also lit. But for these I made two cobbled-together cabins that I placed at the base of each sail. Both cabins also had a weight within them. This was to stop the sails from falling over in the light evening breeze on the portico. As the sun began

Overleaf  
Image 16: Sails on the Portico of the Brisith School at Rome, 2019



ACCADEMIA  
BRITANNICA  
VIA  
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to set, I switched on the lights, and the wind stilled just enough to not tip over the masts, but there were no swallows. That night their clipping calls were absent; they steered clear of my shining sails.

As the residency was ending, I broke the masts down and put the scrap wood back in the wood store, but I brought the sails back with me. The sails were shown again at Triangle Space in Chelsea for an exhibition titled *Picturing the Invisible* (2019), which was held by a research group on how artists work with the unknown. So much of the work with the sails is invisible. The viewer would not know about the urine in the sails (the smell is very faint), they would not know about the Tiber's ravine, Julia's story, my experience of rape, the sense of being exiled. I am not sure how to counter that, or indeed if I should. These elements are all woven into an experience that the works create around vulnerability and fragility, yet also steadfastness and erection – standing up. Despite, or maybe because of, being held together with duct tape and bits of string.

## **Communities That Place Themselves on the Outside**

In this research I have thought about both people who, and methodologies that, can be thought about as separate to what Deleuze (2004) would have called the continent. I have thought about islands and finding oneself separate. In my case, this means being separate from my own past and history, as a result of leaving a place where there was violence. Finding myself on this island. In this research, writing *Headstone* has become a way of thinking through writing, as explored by Christopher Hanley (2019). The writing happens before fully knowing its relevance or place within the research. That was the case with the section of writing borrowed from incel Elliot Rodger, who in 2014 became the community's most infamous member. Thinking about incels seemed to resonate with the core of the narrative, in *Headstone* and in the research overall, around being exiled (as in living separately from a place that you feel unwelcome in), around violence and around complex relationships with sexuality. Rather than craving life away from sexual

Previous page:

Image 17: The Cave-Island on the Portico of the British School at Rome, 2019

violence, incels tend to crave inclusion in sexual and sometimes sexually violent transactions (Sugiura, 2021). Incels or involuntary celibates are mostly men who experience isolation in their sexlessness. What unites these men, whose communities are mostly found on online forums, is being convinced that women owe them the sex which they are denied.

In 2014, 22-year-old college drop-out Elliot Rodger killed and injured more than 20 people in Isla Vista, California, before taking his own life. In the midst of this fury, Rodger had uploaded a YouTube video and distributed a 107,000 word text detailing his privileged upbringing in England and Los Angeles. It is from this text that I borrowed in *Headstone*. 'In My Twisted World: The Story of Elliot Rodger' (Rodger, 2014), he writes that 'all I ever wanted was to fit in and live a happy life', but he had become increasingly fixated on not being able to have sex with the beautiful blonde girls he saw around campus at UC Santa Barbara. He felt these girls owed him sex: a pattern of thinking that unites incels. They are, in their minds, being denied what is their right: to have sex. After Rodger's killing spree, the incel community commented that had one of those girls only slept with Rodger, he would not have had to kill anyone (Srinivasan, 2021). This kind of commentary quite clearly explains the problem with patriarchy and making sex something that men seemingly have a right to. Rodger seems to think he himself need to make no effort to be attractive to the women he wants to sleep with. Instead, they should just be available to him.. Not only does it remove the onus from the men to act in ways that are attractive to women, according to Rodger he need to do no such thing. Furthermore, , it places blame on women for men's suffering and actions. It is the womens fault that Rodger feels so rejected he kills people. 113

In relation to this issue of women being accountable for men's suffering, feminists have campaigned for notions of accountability in rape cases to change. Often, women who are victims of sexual abuse and rape are themselves questioned and blamed for the violence (Bongiorno et al., 2020). Incels have advocated for lesser punishment for rape as well as actually advocating for rape. In *The Right*

to *Sex*, Amia Srinivasan (2021) correctly points out that Rodger's issue in the case described above was not women refusing him sex, but the sense of entitlement to it that patriarchy sets up. It is the denial of this perceived right that Rodger is enraged by. Srinivasan makes the point that feminism should be his friend, as it is resisting those same systems. Rodger does not see it like that, however, as he puts the blame on women. In Srinivasan's words, Rodger was a creep, he thought of himself as superior to others while clearly being capable of shooting and stabbing people to death. Yet, he felt he was owed sex with the most attractive women around him. But the idea that women's bodies exist for male desire is entirely familiar. For Srinivasan, sex within patriarchy can never be free (Srinivasan, 2021).

114 In this research, exile is coupled with a desire to leave violence behind. Escaping rape, life in exile and bodging are intertwined and held together within the methodology of my research. I can describe this as an idealistic situation – I make work with whatever I have within reach while away from men who have desired to rape. This is practised from a place on the outside, through banishment, a poetic (geological) migration. This place carries a sense of uprooting, allowing for a disparate set of ideas, connected with the theme of exile, to meet within the work. It is about sex and art practised in exile, using caves, blinds, lamps and scrap wood. It seems more of a repurposing, looking for new frontiers, than freedom. No matter how far away I get from that which I am escaping, I cannot get away from the fact that I am still running even though the speed at which I move has come to a near stop.

• • •

I have been raped three times, twice by men named Christian and once by someone whose name I never knew. The Christians did so in a cabin and in a bathroom, respectively, the stranger in a tent. The first Christian, a boyfriend, left me within days of the assault for another girl called Elin. I saw them walk hand in hand, and that is how I knew it was over. They drove off together on his moped and I wanted to run after them and shout his name, but I was confused, so I stayed silent.



I thought her body might be less resistant to his penetration. He would not have to be so forceful. She would participate, unlike me, lying flat, crying, bleeding into the bed sheets.

After the assault, it seemed as if everyone knew we had been intimate. Near the old mill, on the white panelled front door of the old red cottage, someone had written 'Elin is a slut', followed by my phone number. On seeing this my mother took matters into her own hands. She grabbed a pot of white emulsion from our garage, then went down to whitewash over it, before the owner of the disused house noticed. It seems as if my opportunity to speak was removed by the whitewashing. Through what I understand as a very intuitive act of DIY, perhaps even bodging, as she took the first paint pot and brush she could find, I remained silent. This is the moment when everything changed. Thinking about my subjectivity, I have a sense of it being non-existent at this point. Moreover, my trajectory in life was strongly influenced by other people's desire which was being played out at this moment. But I find myself needing to come to terms with these gestures, as I feel that somehow they hold the key to me understanding myself. And now I have 115 claimed my subjectivity, needing to understand how these actions (the violence and the whitewash) influence my perspective but also my practice, my preference for bodging. Pivotal moments in this research seem to reflect the whitewashing. The use of what is at hand, improvisation, a nod to DIY. It is the meeting of an event, a domestic structure and the word.

Where I grew up everyone knew each other's business. My parents purposely moved there to raise a family, and I was brought up knowing it was not a place I should stay. I was raised to leave.

Subsequently, I dealt the rape alone. Knowing that one day soon I would be able to leave that place and those people behind.

I dealt with those experiences alone.

I dealt with it alone.

I am alone.

What is this text doing now? How do you feel when you read this? I expect you might feel sad. Maybe empathetic, reading this might invoke a sense of care for me in you. Or maybe feel guilt or even remorse. Perhaps gratitude or fear. You might wonder what this information is meant to convey. You might feel flat or embarrassed. Uncomfortable. In other words, your reaction will considerably vary depending on who you are and what your life is or has been. Do you, my reader, take an ethical responsibility for me, following Levinas (1984). Might it be you, your responsibility for me that enables this thesis to stand up? The point that I am trying to make is that these experiences clearly so deeply affecting me, my sense of self, that I feel it necessary to bring them into this work. I struggle with how much or how little to share about this. Reading Foucault (1998), we can understand this as an obsession with sexuality and the idea that honesty can be reached through baring all and sharing the most intimate details about ourselves, like we might in confession. So, perhaps the point here is that bringing these revelations to the fore in the form of confession comes from a belief that there is truth in sexuality.

116 Further to this, and as a feminist addendum to Foucault, I understand the sculptures that propel this PhD as the remnants of painful sexual encounters. An out-pouring, an off aftertaste, a collection of memories that I would rather forget. It is exhaustion, the exhaustion of revisiting and living within a reworking of pain. The banal sculptures reflect the disinterest in my will. The dull gestures, the inadequate relationships, the vacant exchanges. Unequal lovers, uncoordinated, one prostrate and the other erect. I have displayed stillness and lifelessness when being attacked, removing tension from my body to avoid getting hurt. Freezing, as if the world around has been momentarily paused and stilled, is a natural response to rape (Galliano et al., 1993; Mezey and Taylor, 1998; Suarez and Gallup, 1977). Essentially, I am exhausted by this and carry the flatness, my response to rape, with me every day. I have a basket in my chest, just below my throat; it is overflowing with fed-upness. My point is that through the sharing and revelations in this thesis I seek to make a connection with you. It is my hope and intention that this connection can build a sense of understanding and trust which both Butler (2021) and I consider a crucial tool in reaching equality.

In *Desert Islands and Other Texts* Deleuze (2004) approaches the idea of the island as a place to find liberty for a new beginning. Deleuze (2004, p.10) explains: 'Dreaming of islands [...] is dreaming of pulling away, or being already separate, far from any continent, of being lost and alone – or it is dreaming of starting from scratch, recreating, beginning anew'. The continent, for Deleuze, is a place of ideals, so being away from that offers the opportunity for creativity. So, to conclude this chapter I contend that the residency can be understood as a separate, creatively rich location (more on this in Chapter Three).

In addition, the desert island analogy shares attributes with Deleuze and Guattari's (2005) nomadology. Fundamental to the transitory ideal in this thesis is the separation of the nomadic state of being and the nomads themselves. In this thesis, the nomadic is not to be dependent on the movement of the body. I will speak about the folding of the external and the internal in Chapter Two, but escape can in this sense also be an inward escape. Even in consenting sex, the memories of rape that fill the interiority are something to be escaped within the moments of pleasure.

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Deleuze and Guattari specify that nomadic cultures are time unspecific, making the specificities of time in relation to nomadology unimportant. In this thesis, there is no idea of 'after the violence of patriarchy'. It is something we are within, creating from. I might imagine it away, and I might undermine it, but I am going forward without making a grand call for upheaval and violent restructuring. What I am proposing and concluding from this chapter on movement, exile and escape is the need for a gradual shifting towards a greater inclusion of perspectives and making space, through practice-based research, for the perspective of having experienced violence and wanting to talk about it, within the context of a hierarchical institution and without pity.

# HEADSTONE

## Part Two

### The Jam in Belleville

Everyone in Belleville loved jam. Some people would eat jam for breakfast but mostly people had it in the evening. That was tradition, how things had always been. They ate it with spoons, whole jarfuls at a time. Some people ate it with wooden spoons as large as a fist, which they crammed into their mouths, licking the jam from the handle as it ran down and spilled. Other people ate it gently with silver spoons the size of ring fingers, poking their spoon into the jam and delicately scooping it up, giving out a sigh of pleasure as they swallowed the jam and it settled into their bellies. The people of Belleville were deeply connected to their jam, and the jam was deeply connected to the people. They had a relationship which was whole and filled with desire, with passion.

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After some time, the newspaper in Belleville, the *Bellville Post*, started featuring daily photos and interviews with cute-looking jam jars. These short articles would always include which berries or fruit had been used in making the jam, from raspberry, strawberry or plum. Mostly the jams were made using only one fruit or berry. But sometimes the Belleville Post would feature unique blends, such as gooseberries and kumquats or partially ripened grapes with guavas, catering for those with a more exotic taste in jams. In the photos, jars were wrapped in beautiful ribbons, adorned with labels and gingham-cloth-covered lids. Sometimes the lid would be removed and sort of leaning up against the jar, tantalisingly revealing the jar's content to the, at this point, salivating Bellville Post reader.

Interview from 6 April 2014:

Sweet Currant, 23, Belleville

So, Miss Currant. You're looking remarkably tasty today. How do you keep so

sweet?

Oh, haha, thank you xxxx ;)x The thought of being eaten is what keeps me sweet.

So, how are you best eaten?

In small doses, baby. Because I'm addictive!

Oh okay, I see. What are you made of Sweetie?

Well, it's a family tradition to keep the recipe a secret. But let's just say I am made of sugar, spice and all things nice!

Finally, how would you describe yourself in six words?

Concentrated... Intelligent. Motivated. Oh, and cute.

Sweet Currant was right. It was a tradition in Belleville to keep jam recipes secret. They were passed from generation to generation by mouth, and both recipes and jams belonged to their owners. But recently things had changed and most people bought their jam ready-made. The population of Belleville had the most extraordinary knack of figuring out a jam jar's contents by just simply looking at a jar. Therefore, staring at somebody else's jam was considered offensive to the owner in most cases. Jams had over the years learned that it was often best to keep quiet and keep the gaze down when this happened. But in private, what happened between you and your jam was your business and your business only.

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Subsequently, descriptive stories about history's most delicious jam were kept hidden in the most private places of people's homes. Images of concentrated and arousing jams were passed around and spread in closed networks. And at dusk, inside of Belleville's many thatched-roofed homes, doors would lock, old jam lids would come out of cupboards and be scattered on bedspreads. People would caress, rub and lick photographs and lid rims until mouths had gone from salivating to dry and images were fully drenched in spit and light was no more. The night would take over and cast its dense shroud over the village until all was quiet and cottony.



## George Gaston

Despite jam being such an essential and important component of culture and life in Belleville, some people had no idea how to make it. Like George Gaston. Late one night, George was desperately lusting for jam, but with all shops shut and most people sleeping soundly in their beds, he had to figure out another way of getting his hands on a jar. He had heard of a dealer working near the canal, around the back of the fishmarket, and went out into the night. When he found the dealer it was already very late, but he was satisfied that he would be eating jam within the hour.

Back in his kitchen he got a large discoloured plastic bowl out of his cupboard, which he poured the currants into, all six kilos of them. George proceeded to squeeze the currants with his fingers. He squeezed them and juice ran down his fingers and soaked up in the material of his starched, white shirt sleeves. If you listened carefully you could hear the currants scream as they were squashed together; some of them tried rolling up the inside of bowl to escape. A band of sweat  
120 formed in a crease on George's forehead. He kneaded and punched the currants with his knuckles until his mouth began to fill up with saliva and he started to dribble into the bowl. The berries huddled together for protection, but George's onslaught was more than they could manage to protect themselves against. At this point they were all in shock, stiff with fear and immobile.

George reached for the spices in his cupboard and got out an assortment of ingredients: sugar, turmeric and allspice, which he sprinkled on to the by now completely mashed, dead currants. George began to bash the mixture hard with his fists; he had squished currants all the way up to his elbows. Despite knowing so much about life (George was very charming and liked by all) he really had no idea how to make jam. In fact, most of the stuff he thought he knew about jam was what he had learned by watching a tape a friend of a friend had given to him. It

was a tape that all men in his acquaintance had probably watched at one point or another. George wanted to try his homemade jam and licked a bit of the mixture from his finger, but he was terribly disappointed. It did not taste anything like what he had imagined. He put his mucky hand back in the ingredients cupboard and brought out the salt. In his experience, jams with a hint of salt were the most delicious. Also, the most well behaved and kind.

Over on the other side of town, Sweet Currant came home. And that evening she wept. And I think I know now that her secret ingredients were her sorrow and her tears.

## **The Journey**

We're still going, okay, hold on, this is what I must tell you.

I could die in my rage.

121

Julia set off on a trip. She visited a museum and came across a blue whale which had died more than 100 years ago, so she went inside the whale's belly, through a door on its side. Inside, there were tables and chairs, so Julia sat down to rest her legs. Around her were shelves full of ceramic whales, floor to ceiling. There were mugs printed with pictures of whales, whale rubbers, whale aprons, soft toys in the shape of whales, notebooks in the shape of whales and whale Rubik's cubes for sale.

She looked up at the inside of the whale's rib cage. It had toughened and gone leathery, but it was all disguised in layers of red velvety fabric, draped from the spine down and around the whale's insides. She felt uneasy and stood up. It was time to go. Julia's dad came to pick her up and they sailed away together on a boat. Julia's dad had a huge sailing boat. It was glorious and white, shining on the waves. Her name was *Belone*.

They entered the French waterways on the Liaison Dunkerque-Escaut and sailed southeast through the Mardyck lock, passing Saint-Omer after a day or so. They embraced in the rear of the boat; Julia's dad brushed the hair away from her neck and rubbed his stubbly cheek into her skin. His arms folding round her. Breathing, they sat together. Music shouting from the speakers. Julia's dad cracked open a beer and they watched the sun set over the viaduct in Bethune. He held her with his deep calm. Julia rolled over onto her back and her dad laid beside her. He rubbed his chin into her neck. She began giggling and pushed him away, but he came closer, he leant in. She was roaring with laughter and pushed him off, but he came closer. She begged him to carry on.

Keep me close,  
float with me,  
being in the sea is more free.

And the moon is covered in honey.

122 Is it okay? If we just stay  
And float away?

As the melody of the waves,  
slumps with the tide, and slows to a pulse,  
let it move through you.

Some wanted to see beauty, but they couldn't. They had long since abandoned looking at what was around them. The silent and timidly gorgeous lilacs, the stoic and proud public sculptures, the invaluable and unique medieval illustrated scripts. The purpose of which had become a mere backdrop; a mirror reflecting your individual importance to show others you had 'been there'. They did desire beauty but had, through technology and capitalism, made themselves unable to respond to it in any other way than with photography. They had substituted feeling and experiencing by commodification and communicating emotions in pictures.

After three days on the canals, they reached Pont-l'Eveque, where the waterways split, and they took the route southwest on the Oise, reaching Conflans in two days, joining the Seine, passing under the bridges of Paris: Pont au Double, Pont des Arts, Pont au Change.

They followed the Bourbonnais route south, passed Rogny and Briare, carried on northeast through thickly wooded countryside, briefly, before heading south again towards Villefranche, following the Rhône and eventually ending up in Port Saint Louis du Rhone on the Côte d'Azur.

Some have been known to make male muses out of thin plastic and blow them up with bicycle tyre pumps, pump pump pump, a motion that fills it up with air. They hump the muses and objectify them. They use their own objectification as a mirror, they undress, body slide in mud on polished concrete floors, reflecting the problem back onto the observer. They use megaphones. They amplify motorway noise to prove the point that motorways are too loud and ruin the peace and quiet of the countryside. Then they portray themselves as shy and romantic despite New York being such a 'fast paced city' and the fact that 'our society sexualises every encounter'.

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Julia tied a man to the top of their mast and saw beauty in his still limbs. She adored how the sun reflected on his olive skin and the contours of contorted muscles painted in the shading. They crossed the Mediterranean towards Rome. Are you coming along?

### **The Windy Island, the Rodent and the Brothel in the Sandstone Cave**

The fat cat Augustus  
caught a mouse this morning.  
Dragged it into the house where he  
left it for me to trip over on my way over,  
to give him his morning milk.

'God damn you Augustus'.

He blankly stared in my direction,  
then walked away with a wave of his ombre tail.

The milk spilt yet again  
when I couldn't quite reach up to the kitchen worktop,  
Augustus knew this all too well.

'Damn you.'

Then there's the island in the Tyrrhenian Sea where they send sluts like you.  
There's a sort of rugged charm about that place. My evil internal critic throws up  
a little every time I allow myself to like somewhere like that. There are rats, of  
course there's rats, it's nature, but it is also where they send sluts like me, who like  
to read a little too much.

124 All around there are sounds of doors opening. A distant murmur followed by  
what sounds like a door closing and a car arriving. Fucking becomes our only tool  
for communication. Being important was never allowed. My father was adopted,  
and adopted many sons, just as his father had done. You needn't look any further.

The moment patriarchy falls might look like this. We could kill the seventh king  
and throw the body into the river. We could let his corpse sink and let silt mount  
around his stinking, swelling flesh. We could build an island around the body and  
give it the shape of a ship. Over thousands of years, we could let the seven arches  
of the bridge crossing

from north to east crumble one by one. We could sit back and watch them problem  
solve and repair and patiently wait until the arches have all crumbled, all but one  
still standing midstream with the men all caught. And me, at the bank, I would  
only be able to stand back at watch it unfold because I couldn't possibly construct  
something so marvellous as a bridge to get out there to save them. The men are  
caught and then forced to eat one another, until, they all disappear. The lost sunk-  
en city. Marble statues that crumble. A nose here, an ear there.



Back on Julia's island an octagonal helipad offers promises of connectivity and of escape. These days what used to be Julia's front garden is the island's access point for those in a hurry. Yellow lights expectantly point from each of its sides, with its middle crowned by a white light pointing up into the sky, as if in conversation with someone, somewhere distant. It seems fitting somehow that this small tarmac platform provides access to the world, from a place where Julia might have stood many times, herself unable to leave. There is no irony in that.

The caves on Julia's island, just below where she would have stood, are now occupied by sailing merchants. Before sunset the men pack their tools into the hollow rock that is overflowing with metal masts and fabric. In front of each cave a door-frame attempts to provide security, but the door's square shape only covers some of the rounded hole.

In another time, I read, these caves had another purpose. As the island became a place for rehabilitation, prostitutes from the surrounding nations were sent here 125 to be close to nature, and through the experience find an inner morality and become good. But away from their normal clientele, the women found a use for these damp rooms and ran brothels, fuelled by the trade of the petty criminals, also sent here to reform.

Julia would have stood right on top of those caves and seen the barn swallows land on their way south. Ventotene, the resting place for tired wings.

## Poseidon

Julia and her dad had reached the black beaches of Poseidon. Julia put on her backpack, and a few hundred metres from land she left the ship. She closed her eyes and jumped into the water; she sank for a while. When each fibre she was wearing had saturated with seawater she swam up to the surface. From the water she watched her father turn the ship around and leave; he sailed away, towards the horizon. Julia swam towards the shore and reached it eventually. She was heavy, so so heavy. She walked out of the sea, then laid down on the black sand to sleep.

126 A driver took her along a deadly silent but luxurious road, lined with large trees, leaves shivering in the light wind. The cast-iron-gated homes were painted in pale hues: apricot, cream and powder blue. The vehicle stopped in front of one of the gates and she went inside, where she was greeted by a group of radicalised female punks. They held a short ceremony and welcomed her to their community. They were looking for a change to the capitalist economic system that had shackled them. They had been trapped in an exchange of time for money, which they needed to find a way out of. They had wanted their time for themselves. They were anti-government, anti-corporations, and they didn't want to conform. This move was her direct action.

I just wanted to be like the drummer in  
the White Stripes  
and in the plot of *Big Sur*.  
Making sculptures out of bone pipes.

Maybe I was a little too wild in the 00s.  
Burning flags, customising blazers and modifying  
bodies that are signs.  
And they show you how.

We're going to a day spa. Having our nails done.  
Taking turns to tell our truths.  
Back into the steam room,  
then we go out to protest.

Scented candles lit in the evening.  
The background filled with video calls.  
Come and stay with us.  
It's easy to get here.

All the answers add up to nothing.  
Life in constant transmission broadcasting to the One.  
The mass, out there, beyond, far away.  
Check the most recent edits, it's the way to start the day.

Some vehicles pass by,  
I am by the window, frying.  
But I can't remember crying.  
When I used to be rolled up on the floor more regularly.

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Trust that you'll be interrupted when you are just about to whistle a song.  
When you are just about to be kind to someone.  
Trust, someone will stop you when you're just about to rest for a minute.  
When you relax in a hairdresser's chair, about to cut your hair.

I remember the moment I decided I'd have so many lovers.  
I had never thought I had needed so many lovers.  
You took me out for a cheap date,  
daydreaming about the fates we'd create.

Women all around me in underwear.

Swimming with the times, we share.

The End, visualised and clear.

Saving it in a photograph, speaking of the last place as a garden.

The heels of my feet have hardened.

So, we go back to the day-spa, I have been here before.

But can't remember what for.

Seeing memories on a 4-inch display.

Gazing at the stars on a cloudy night.

Eventually the constellations show through.

Soul Sense Spa and Wellness.

The conversations you catch.

I am sure you've heard it too.

Kardashians have scared me off drugs,

128 it's coming back now.

Two men with kids, saying, 'stay off that crap', it echoes.

I've been spammed about a virtual lifestyle package. Must be my search history.

Just to be clear, the future of yesterday is here.

We're on the newsfeed express.

Mirrors and photographs.

## **Return to Route, Return to Route**

Are you still with me? I want to tell you about the time that the GPS shouted at me. Return to route, return to route, in a robotic voice more times than necessary to record here. This machine didn't know about the roadblock just ahead. My route had been barricaded with a pile of wood and god knows what the road looked like beyond that. Instead I turn right then left, through a deadly quiet village where the windows of the houses are mostly shuttered. These holiday homes are empty today. But I carry on beyond that, heading away from the blockade on a road outside of the GPS's awareness. Down a lane, between rows of poplar, left on an avenue-turned-dirt-track. There are some cattle grazing the fields, and if it wasn't for the fact that I was lost I could appreciate the beauty of the land around me. I take another left then a right and follow the road round the bend. Then I am back at the barricade, and am I right in thinking you are in the back seat?



## George Gaston Online

Virgins are spreading across the continents and resentment is growing, none of them want him.

He is thinking to himself, while typing:

If I was a millionaire, I could have any girl I want.

But if I can't have it, I will destroy it.

This is my struggle in a society that looks down upon me.

I am against the female gender for denying me sex and love.

I will never have sex. I will never have love.

Girls deem me unworthy of it.

130 The female gender is flawed. The more I explored the beach town, the more I witnessed their ridiculousness. All the hot girls were walking around with dumb jocks like Chance, while they should be going with a sensitive, intelligent gentleman like me. This is the major flaw in the world and at the very foundation of humankind. The truth that we are utterly doomed by the stupidity of women began to dawn on me.

He continues to write with tears rolling down his cheeks:

I cried every day when I imagined how much fun and pleasure other teenagers were having as I languished in despair, but to be angry about the injustices is a sign of strength. It is a sign that one has the will to fight back against those injustices, rather than bowing down and accepting it as fate. My friends seem to be the weak, accepting type, whereas I am the fighter. I will never stand to be insulted, and I will eventually have my revenge against all those who insult me, no matter how long it takes.

After two weeks of playing World of Warcraft I decided to quit. The new extension had been a major disappointment. The creators of the game had made changes to

the next extension that completely ruined my gaming experience. I won't get into details, as most people reading this won't understand the complicated gaming terms anyway. As I bought the Mega Millions lottery ticket I visualised myself being the winner. I meditated and saw myself walking along a beach in Malibu next to my supermodel girlfriend. I believed in the power of attraction. But as they called out the numbers and failing to win the jackpot that someone else won, I began plotting the ultimate revenge. I desperately wondered if there was another way I could make millions at my age. But I failed to come up with a solution. I realised that my lonely, desperate virgin life would continue.

I began taking karate classes, thinking I could become a karate Olympian. But it only made me annoyed that I wasn't progressing as quickly as the others in my class. The little kids in my class treated me with disrespect because I was still a white belt. I was angry at my comrades who were unfairly physically stronger than me despite being the same age. I took some of my anger out in the sparring sessions and it made me feel euphoric, but when my teacher saw this, I was criticised.

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As we went for sushi on the boulevard that night, I saw lots of teenage couples around me, and some of them talked to my comrade which made me despise him. I couldn't help but tell him all the acts of revenge and torture I would take upon them once I had all the power. I was going to use my anger to my advantage to punish those who lived a better life than me. I thought my comrade would agree with me as he was also a virgin but some of the things I said began to disturb him. One night he told me he didn't want to hear it anymore, and that was the night I decided to quit the karate class.

I didn't see my comrade again until months later when we attended Rob Lemelson's birthday party on the Drive. They had booked out a very upper-class restaurant. The wine was absolutely exquisite. Each bottle was from 1995 and worth over 2,000 dollars. There were hot blonde girls walking around everywhere and they ended up having a food fight with Rob Lemelson's birthday cake, and their white,

tight dresses were stained with what looked like raspberry jam. Of course I didn't get to try it.

I was giving the world one last chance to give me the lift I deserved, that I know I am entitled to. This is the endgame, for me to finally have the things I want in life: sex, love, friends, fun, acceptance, a sense of belonging. I made my move towards the coast, and on my first night at my new living quarters I had the most traumatic experience of my life to date. I could hear people partying in the streets outside. They were young like me, but I couldn't imagine how I would ever be able to join in. And then the worst happened. I heard two young people have sex in the apartment above. I was aware that other young people had sexually active lives, that was something that had always filled me with rage and envy, but to hear it took my rage to a whole new level. After all, I had moved to this place because I knew it was sexually active. Hell, I had moved here because I wanted to take part in the sexual activity. But when I heard the couple above me having sex, I couldn't help feeling vile. The feeling reminded me of my first ever interaction with pornography. I tried to calm myself, trying to convince myself that soon I would be doing exactly the same thing. Oh how wrong I was.

The day after, my new housemates invited Chance over. It was another vile experience. Chance began bragging about all the women he had had sex with, and as I didn't believe him I asked him and my two housemates if they were virgins. They looked at me weirdly and said that of course they weren't. They had all lost their virginity years before. I have never felt so inferior in my life, and it reminded me of how much I had missed out on in life. And then this guy, Chance, said that he had lost his virginity when he was thirteen with a hot blonde girl. I nearly lost it and threw my juice over his stupid head. I was so enraged at this and I didn't believe him, so I went to my room to cry. I called my mum and cried for hours. How was an inferior guy able to get it on with a hot girl, but not me? I am beautiful. I am a descendant of British aristocracy. I deserve it much more than him. I had to suffer my whole life, living as a virgin despite being so perfect, while he can go ahead and have his ways with hot blonde girls. This only proves to me how stupid

girls are. That they can give themselves to this filthy scum but reject me.

As I went out for my morning coffee, like I always did every morning at the local coffee shop, I saw a gorgeous young couple passionately kissing in the queue in front of me. The sight of them doing what I had always wanted to do made me feel a deep rage. I was absolutely livid with envious hatred. They were rubbing their bodies together, and I was sure they knew that they did so to anger me. After they got their coffee, I followed them out of the store, and as they were getting into their car, I splashed them with my coffee. The boy (who was an obnoxious punk) yelled at me and I quickly ran away to hide. I felt scared and a surge of excitement. I had never struck at my enemies before. I spent five hours driving up and down the Drive, trying to contain my tumultuous emotions. Even though I had splashed them with coffee he was still the winner. He was going home with his sexy blonde girlfriend to have heavenly passionate sex and I was condemned to my lonely bedroom to sleep alone in my lonely bed. I have never felt so mistreated in my whole life. I curse them and I curse the world for condemning me to suffering.

I began thinking about all the horrible suffering I wanted to submit them and all 133 young couples to. I began realising what I was capable of doing. I would happily kill them. I would kill them slowly, first stripping their skin off their flesh, they deserved it. The males deserved it for taking all the females away from me, and the females deserved it for choosing the other men over me.

Ever since I was 14 I had fantasised about inflicting pain on young couples, and after going through so much suffering and injustices because of them all my innocence was stripped away. The cruelty the world had inflicted upon me had made me capable of doing those things that I now was preparing to do. I saw obnoxious drunk boys outside my window, and knew they were having sex with girls back in their bedrooms. I often fantasised about barging in and slashing them with a knife whilst they had sex.

The day after I attended the premier of the Hunger Games. As I walked up the red carpet, I looked at the dumb fans who remained on the sides of the ropes. I wanted

to rub it in, so I smiled cockily at them. There were some celebrities on the carpet with me, and a few times some paparazzis yelled at me to get out of their way. I gave them my middle finger; George Gaston will not move to the side for a stupid, stuck-up dumb actress no matter who she is.

The day of ultimate retribution came near. I will destroy everything that I can't have, and I will take them and me away from this earth to make sure no one can have me. After all, no one deserves me.

## **The Doge**

Venice was a powerhouse in the history of Europe. The Doge's palace hosts its elected king in a city where each aristocrat was a merchant. The story of my life you might say. Remember when Giacomo Casanova was held prisoner under the Leads? He freed himself with a bible and a metal rod with the help of a renegade  
134 priest. On the night of the festival, they climbed out of the prison on a bed rope, and Casanova took off to Paris. He said: 'the sweetest pleasures are those which are hardest to be won'.

## **New Arrival**

The days rolled into one another, days, months, years. The women oversaw everything. The men would come back at night to a home-cooked meal and a calm happy baby. Julia's man would lie down with his head on her lap and tell her about his day, Julia stroked his wavy brown hair calmly from the hairline to his crown. He readjusted his head into the fabric draping her lap and closed his eyes. He had seen beheadings. He had seen AK47s held up in the air, hungry babies and ripping vaginas. They were protecting the people from their humanity in the name of the godly. They went to sleep.

'How are my darlings doing today?' Julia's husband looked at her with kind eyes



through locks of hair semi-obscuring his vision. Julia nodded into the pillow with a tiny smile spread across her face 'umm', while he folded his arms around to pull her in. For a moment she buried her entire face in his strong chest and inhaled him.

Julia rolled over onto her back and stretched out. The downy pillow crunched under her head and her belly tightened as she reached her arms up and pointed her toes. She walked over to a chair in the corner of the room and slipped on her gown, then tip-toed to the kitchen to put the kettle on. They started this day with coffee in bed like they always did. After a few minutes she returned with two steaming cups and curled her legs under her body at the foot end of the bed. He looked at her with his gorgeous gaze and she felt a little uneasy. She felt so greasy in the morning, and for a second wondered why on earth he had chosen a life with her of all people on the planet. She swivelled a lock of her hair around a finger and ran it between her lips.

She had realised she was pregnant very early on, she felt it intuitively. Too excited 135 to keep it to herself, Julia called him straight away, and he was just as joyous as her. That evening Julia cooked their favourite meal, and afterwards they sat on the sofa embracing. They were dreaming of their future and meeting the little creature who was their joint creation. Not only was this the start of the family they had always dreamed of. They were going to bring this new person up to be a part of a society they were building. They would love the child beyond belief, that was for certain! Their plan was to have another two after this one and embrace family life in the home that he had been building in a suburb just north of the city. They had found the perfect site. It was a little further outside of the city than they had initially planned. But they were convinced by the fact that the local school had a great reputation. Their plot of land was at the bottom of a cul-de-sac with a view over olive groves. To begin with, they had stayed in a caravan on site, but Julia's husband had help from four old school friends, and after a summer living in a temporary state, their new home was weatherproof, and they moved the furniture in from the storage unit they had been renting. Living a little away from the

city didn't hurt; she was saving money on takeaway coffees and had recently spent her time putting some of their photographs into frames. Her favourite one of them was of their visit to the black beach at Poseidon some months before, just after they realised they were expecting. They were standing with their backs to the horizon and the sun was setting behind, sending a glorious pink glow across the gentle shimmering waves. They were both glistening with pure joy in the late sunlight. It had been a wonderful day, and it always made Julia laugh a little at the memory of her husband chasing a group of teenage boys barefoot across the sand to ask them to take the picture.

Julia had put a lot of time into the back garden. She had been busy from February onwards, raising plants from seeds to seedlings in incubators. She had orderly rows of radishes, carrots and cauliflowers, she felt proactive pulling out the weeds. On the front step she had pots of tomatoes. The baby's room was her only other pastime, and she had just the other day assembled a crib; it was pretty straightforward if you followed the instructions, though at one point she had realised that  
136 she had put the side on upside down so had to take it apart and start again. In the evening she sat in her favourite chair by the window, stroking her growing belly. She had a feeling it was a little boy, and couldn't wait for him to arrive.

## Swedish Gooey Chocolate Cake

The origins of this recipe are a little bit unclear, but one thing is certain, there was no kladdkaka before the 1970s. To me, this cake is absolute comfort, and it's no exaggeration that for a period of my life, as a teenager, I would bake it several times every week.

Preparation and cooking time: 30 minutes

Makes: 8 pieces

Butter to grease

breadcrumbs to coat

200g sugar

A generous pinch of salt

40g cocoa powder

1 tablespoon vanilla sugar

150g melted and cooled butter

2 eggs

125g flour

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Preheat the oven to 175°C. Butter a 24cm cake tin and cover it in breadcrumbs.

Add the sugar, salt, cocoa and vanilla sugar to the cooled melted butter. Mix it together in a bowl, add the eggs, one at a time, until incorporated. Sift the flour into the butter mixture, stir it together but be careful not to over mix it.

Scrape the batter into the cake tin and smooth the surface down. Bake it for around 10–13 minutes. This cake should be barely baked in the centre but have chewy edges. Serve it warm on its own, with whipped cream and raspberries picked fresh from the garden or ice-cream. Also delicious cold from the fridge.

We're still moving, so come with me to this next part.

Since the allied troops bombed the area a few months before the birth of her second child, life had started falling apart. When things got bad, it unravelled very quickly. The birth of their second hadn't quite happened as anticipated, and Julia faced a severe post-natal depression, living in a country without proper infrastructure and healthcare. After a month or so mostly in bed after the birth, she knew she was failing in her role as a woman, as a mother here, well, anywhere in the world. She had no one to take her hand. No one to pray for her. No milk. There wasn't much she could do but leave. After she'd made the decision, she felt a sense of determination that had long been absent from her life. It was the only conceivable option, as the thought of a life in the suburbs seemed to force her deeper into her trouble. With a pack strapped to her back, she took the motocross bike from the garage. With one swift kick the engine started. She revved it up, then with a smooth bend of the wrist she accelerated down the dusty road, confidently shifting the gears until she was cruising east in fifth. Julia got to the hotel in Bangkok around 2pm. The breezeblock front desk had been thickly painted purple and white. She checked into a room on the sticky and hot second floor. It had a small  
138 desk with a fan on top, and a single bed tucked in the corner to the left. She laid down on the bulging mattress to let her body be pulsated with air from the fan. Its propeller mechanics had swivelled the air around enough times to capture on its edges a mesh of sticky, grey dust. She tipped the contents of her bag out onto the floor, found her bikini and a sarong to wrap up in, then went out onto the rat-infested streets lined with palm trees in pots to find some chicken skewers for dinner. Soon it had gotten late, and she was walking home though the narrow lanes with her room key as a knuckle duster tucked between her fingers.

On the other side of the planet, he had boarded the coach to the airport. He had, contrary to expectations, packed his bag the previous night and got it ready for an early departure. He might have listened to some music. He might have had a cup of tea, and he might have sat there for a while. He might have remembered all the good times, with all the sunshine and just a little bit of rain. He might have feared missing the coach, so turned the volume of the alarm up and checked it five times before tucking the phone back under the pillow.

He might have feared missing the flight, so caught the earlier coach. He might have feared not being there with her, but he would have never imagined the fatal five-car crash on the road ahead. He might not have imagined being left behind when the plane took off.

She looked at him and saw where he had come from. She gathered his papers, and he wrote down his words. Those became her gospels. He had gotten the shielded Madonna for free. But made a stain on her name.

He stood there with sand in his hair, and his breath came out like a white air and, strictly speaking, they both could have died then and there. Julia went missing inside of this man. His eyes were the colour of the sand, and the more he talked to me, the more she changed.

The dry skin on her feet had ripped and snagged on the silky sheets. The nails were bent and buckling with fungus and the skin dry and cracking. She rolled on to her back and threw the cover to the side. Only the men who loved her noticed 139 her feet. Those who she was just fucking for the sake of fucking never looked all the way down there. That was never about attraction in that way but about who's up for it and 'come on, let's have this moment'. Julia craved those moments almost as much as she craved love. But more than anything she needed to feel lusted after. Her hands knew how to make fucking very special. She wanted to kiss and hold someone in ways way beyond anything else. She wanted to feel free.

Julia got to work on the streets, working with her sisters. They were the crop-top army in hot pants, heels and ponytails. One day a woman came for Julia. She needed intimacy. Julia took her hand and led her up to the room. She went into the bathroom to turn on the tap and led the woman into the water. Julia then went over to the bed and sat down to wait. The woman eventually came out, wrapped in a white towel. They both fell onto the bed. The whole world around them went silent and there was only them. Julia held the other woman's head close to her chest, then they looked for each other's eyes. Julia looked down on the woman



and felt them both being there. They were together and held. The fan on the desk pulsated air onto them. Mixing the hot with the cool. Waves of salty and sweet; a long night of intermittent sleep. The lovers held, let go and then held again. Came and went, but stayed like that all night.

You are my new water.

Overleaf:

Image 18: Sunrise when sailing, Spain, 2019











## CHAPTER TWO – IN THE FOLD WITH VIOLENCE

‘You have to stand up as a cripple!’

Lucy Lippard

The sexual violence I have experienced has folded around me – into the way I reason, interact, and develop relationships. It has folded into the thematics of my art and my writing. While at times in my life I have hardly noticed its traces, at other times I found myself suicidal, in depression, self-loathing and destructive. At those times the echoes of violence and humiliation seemed louder. *Headstone* speaks about some of those times, which were also highly charged and indulgent periods, but not creative.

144 Through the concept of the fold, Deleuze (2006) displaces the idea of inside as an opposite to the outside. They are, rather than separate concepts, part of an expanding and changing process. We, Deleuze claims, carry with us our subjective experiences through which the inside is nothing other than a fold of the outside, perpetually doubled or folded into new iterations of existence. In fact, subjectivity emerges as an understanding of the folds of memory over time of being with our bodies. Putting across her idea of the fold as a concept involved in creating subjectivity, Johanna Oksala (2011, p.6) elaborates: ‘Instead of a clearly defined prism, we might think of it as a series of foldings: the subject must fold back on itself to create a private interiority while being in constant contact with its constitutive outside. The external determinants or historical background structures of experience and the internal, private sensations fold into and continuously keep modifying each other.’

The binary concepts of inside and outside have also displaced in the sexual violence that I have experienced. That is, our orifices seem particularly pertinent when thinking about the folds of the body and how these have the potential of undermining the inside/outside dichotomy. I mean by this that these are in a very direct sense a point of transference of activity as the folds slide and transform



between the inside and outside spaces (if for a moment inside and outside are thought about as separate again). The experience of penetration might heighten our sensitivity to the oscillation from outside to inside, and we are touched or approached through what might be thought of as our insides. The inside is in a continual bond with the sometimes-violent outside, which folds into us. In this way, my insides are violently touched. Here, I am drawing on my experiences of sexual violence. He forcefully put himself inside of me. He made my insides available to himself. In trying to make sense of this, it seems less of a folding of the outside into my interiority and more my interiority being available as an exterior of me. My interiority seems public and accessible to approach, to touch, to have, to take. Some violence is involved in this process, but once my body and resistance dissipate and through fear I freeze, what boundary between interiority and exteriority is left? I am prolapsed (or in pornographic language ‘rose budded’, describing a rectal prolapse [Lhooq, 2014]).

Working with autoethnography, social scientist Lena Gunnarsson (2017) argues that, compared to men, women in heterosexual relationships have an increased need to receive love from their partner. Women’s social worthiness is hampered, effecting their ability to be appropriately loved, and this in turn increases their need to be loved. Comparatively, she argues that men’s need for love is lower as a result of their comparatively higher social standing. So, women depend on their partners to fulfil their needs for love, a need that is not appropriately responded to. For example, through her personal experience, Gunnarsson suggests that women have it within themselves to dissolve their painful dependencies by focusing inwards on self-care and reflection. She suggests folding inwardly to reach a depth of care outside of the imbalanced nuclear domesticity while remaining within it. Though no ties are severed, she suggests a slight realignment of the conditions can give a greater sense of freedom. She argues that, in her experience, this internalised exile from structures removes the violence from the relation, as the frustration of not being loved as well as one deserves is removed by a lesser focus on the missing love and a greater focus on the care of the self through patience and softness. Opening to the vulnerability of letting go of a sense of injustice might

offer an opportunity to grieve old wounds. In her account of doing just that, Gunnarsson suggests looking inwards to grieve old pains results in a softening that meant others, her partner foremost, meet her with care in turn.

So, by folding inward and looking for a renewed fragile subjectivity, Gunnarsson was able to reach a greater sense of equality in her relations. She suggests that we are only ever able to transform our own actions, and as feminists, looking to change others, the ways in which he inflicts violence only results in more pain and frustration as we realise that we cannot change another. Focusing more energy and time on displacing the power of men only confirms that women are dependent. The letting go has the potential to find an internal exile where new subjectivities can emerge, not through the body's relation to patriarchal power – in which the woman is subjected to violence – but through the exercise of art practice, where the aggression is taken into the artwork rather than folded towards the perpetrator. Folding away from power might reframe the domestic context.

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From another perspective, according to Deleuze (2006, p.104) the relation to the self is continually reborn, 'elsewhere and otherwise'. Essentially, even on deserted islands and in a caring relationship with oneself, one would come up against renewing powers that are carried within us and exercised in a fold with one's own body as a measure of control over the sexual body. In other words, one needs not only freedom from the powers of the law, the institution, the patriarchy, but also of the subjectivation of the self. To clarify, the fold for Deleuze seems primarily focused on how we find others in us. He says, it is not the 'I' which is doubled and projected, but the 'other' that is folded into us (Deleuze, 2006). Importantly, then, underpinning the discourse around becoming a subject (where sexual violence has featured) is a push and pull of folding violence while, in the same motion, escaping it. To summarise, developing subjectivity features both the idea of escaping violence or taking a vacation from it and accepting the force of violence as a catalyst of the whole process.

About this renewing relation between discourse and power, Foucault (1998, p.101) claims:

‘Discourses are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby discourses can be both an instrument and effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy.’ What Foucault is saying is that there is no place within this discourse where power is overcome, but – importantly – it continues to make evident its structures. Foucault (1998, p.101) continues: ‘discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it’. So, to continue to develop our subjectivity we continue protesting power. Furthermore, the conditions of this protest are not general and fixed, but personal and flexible. Crucially, then, power is created through the definitions of sexual violence sketched out in this thesis.

## Delayed Protest

Within this thesis the idea of delayed protest runs as a sub-theme. What was not 147  
uttered during the moments of offence is, in a sense, voiced here. In *Headstone* I am protesting Julia’s exile, but what resistance can I offer at this late time? This is perhaps the point of needing to consider the helicopter platform being placed so near her ruin. And understanding what of me I am finding in her. I am reading and recognising being banished, rejected, presently on an island, being carried there on the father’s boat. I am reconfiguring and healing my relationship with my own father (on Julia’s behalf?) and using this (now) double place of exile (her father has used his boat to escape his ‘everyday’), the boat, as a platform for creativity and continually sharing experiences with my father. My father comes with me on residencies, lending me his mode of transportation to film sequences that feed into my (re)understanding and (re)shaping of what exile is and means and can become.

My father and I look for the sunrise in the Mediterranean in October 2019. We are out before sunrise to make a film. In wordless communication with me and the wind, he steers the boat by sail while I line up the shot to film the moment when

the sun appears in a shimmer of peach and pale blue for the very first time, at least that day. We do this two mornings in a row, the Rolling Stones echoing across the Balearic Sea. As the tunes fade in rhythm with the light appearing, I am, I realise, at the earliest possible stage of pregnancy, carrying my daughter. I am growing the ultimate displacement of the interior / exterior dichotomy. The baby undermines the idea of separation between me and another, undermines the idea of independence and clarifies that of reliance, of care, vulnerability, the opening and redistributions of folds. In pregnancy and birth, I embody and redefine my understanding of fissures and tears. I have never felt more complete than when I was two for a short nine months, when the two of us were one. But on that October morning I dove into the mild autumn sea, feeling as salient as the water. As I floated, I peered through my lens at the newly risen sun and I felt my heart skip several beats then flutter. That is when I first felt with every fibre of me that she had become. Through pregnancy I experienced a symbolic reversal of the forced entries of my body during those years of hedonism. Finally, once the nine months had passed, as I was taken over by surges that emptied my body, the seeds were sown to dare  
148 imagine a new future for her. The woman's body is receptive to external power as she functions in patriarchal society, but she is also deliverer of the internalised external that once again becomes external through birth. Deleuze (2006, p.98) says: 'I do not encounter myself on the outside, I find the other in me'. In this sense, the elsewhere of my exile is not an elsewhere in some other place, it has to be a peaceful, creative place within me. For Hélène Cixous (1997, p.170), art puts one in touch with that which is unknown to me and 'the unknown in me', suggesting that the outside and the inside are interchangeable, connected and equally close to our subjectivities within us. This seems to link with the idea that through pregnancy and birthing, but also rape, I am in the fold with a process that takes my body through a series of exchanges or foldings where concepts of external and internal indeed blend. In other words, this process is the subjectivation that enables my artwork to become from the folds.

As I argue above, at the end of Chapter One, as co-dependent and non-self-reliant, we encounter ourselves in others. 'I' becomes ambiguous, not just signifying an

internal, subjective 'me', but a shared 'another'. Searching for that which stops us from killing others and leads us to preserve life, Judith Butler (2021) understands that we find ourselves in others. Above all, my struggle is reduplicated in yours; I see them through my encounter with you. Your shadow leads me to search for a reality different from yours. In the shadows of violence I look for a future that is nonviolent. The 'I' does not just become dissolved in the folds of the self and the body, but also in our encounters with others if the melting away of the ideal of self-sufficiency and independence through childbirth (where me and another are momentarily intertwined). The experiences awaken memories of other instances where my insides have been occupied by another.

The point I am making here on the idea of folds is that in my practice I am simultaneously reaching inside to discover our interior worlds (where history is condensed and concentrated) and reaching out to find the knowledge to explain the way the two are connected. In this research I am reaching inside to find memories, past understandings, current motivations, methodologies and approaches that feel natural to me. I find sanctions in theory to act according to my instinct. I reach out 149 into the worlds of Foucault, Deleuze and Butler because something I find in their work seems to be able to tell me about me and my work, my patterns of practice, and my understanding of my contexts and realities. Coming back to the engagement I have with the external world, their thoughts comfort me, keep me company in the discovery of that which has folded into me over the years. And in Butler particularly I find the inspiration to fantasise about another future and reality.

## **Autobiographical Violence**

Through autoethnography the self is encountered in the research and included as a way to find knowledge. My autobiography is wholly in this research, through work that transforms the violence I have known into new creative possibilities. It is a process of looking within to position violence as creative, as a path towards discovery, freedom and exchange. I have in doing so moved through layers of



cathartic practice, years in fact, getting to this point not by means of short-cuts to some 'happy ending', but through hard, intense, upsetting, personal work with the goal of creating research that can lead to a greater understanding of violence and creative practice. As well as feeding into research on sculpture and sculpture practice, I am zig-zagging into autoethnography. In *Headstone* I am writing about many years of hedonism, about the childhood that led up to it and an ambivalent approach to life, being within a situation where self-respect and care were unobtainable and unavailable. Writing this chapter and this thesis, I am viewing myself as an object to analyse, understand and use to propel my research. As mentioned above, Carol Rambo (1995) speaks about the exchange between the subject and the object in autoethnographic research. She explains how she creates an ad hoc self for the page. Through her writing she is interacting with the self and 'flying by the seat of her pants'. Each time she writes and edits she is an active subject while also being an object; the writing subject interacts with the written and emerging object. In the understanding and contribution to knowledge that I am creating here, I think we can speak about this as a bodged-together self, a drawing together of memories that, edited, reflected on and rewritten, emerge somewhere between fact and fiction. Details come from lived experiences, but as I put them on paper and through reflection, they become slightly different from reality, as life exceeds language and as the self is also the audience that responds to the autobiographical accounts. In this research, the self becomes fictionalised as it is positioned as a primary research resource. I want to suggest that there is a relationship between the bodged and the fictional autobiographical self which is in the improvisation used to bring the self together for the page using subjectivities, understandings and methodologies specific to the self. As with the bodged sculptures, the autobiographical self is made up of the materials available to me, and is thus a reflection of the environment that they come from.

I have a distinct sense that this autobiographical writing and work is not about one person. Though in some sense it is a narrative from my life, it is also telling other stories. Thinking about this through the language of embodiment, there are several bodies meeting in this work: the textual body, the body of the artist, the body of

water, the sculptural body, the imagined female body. This meeting of bodies (with the rapist and the baby as discussed above) is central to the creation of subjectivities. Through Julia and other women, these are folds of the same larger body, with a shared understanding that runs through this whole work. Seeing myself through the lens of different figures I am able to experiment with my subjectivity. Who am I and what do I think? We could summarise this experimentation as the body of the research, the body of knowledge, simultaneously an outside and an inside, but that would be to simplify what is a complex web of contexts. I am projecting my subjectivity onto all these bodies in a practice that aims to be empathetic. And then there is the viewer's body, the guest, the reader of the folded, creased and crumpled body of this research. And in occupying the position of the viewer for a moment, what is a load of bodged together domestic rubble to other academics? As mentioned earlier, my hope is that this thesis reads as a process of discovery as I explore how my trauma is feeding into the research and the methodology. And at the same time I desire to impart some knowledge around what it is to be raped.

On the desire to make a positive contribution through this research, Deleuze and Guattari (1983) define desire not by what is missing, but rather as an affirmative force, a human drive. In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* Deleuze and Guattari (1983, p.25) claim that desire has been thought about mistakenly. They say that 'to a certain degree, the traditional logic of desire is all wrong from the very outset: from the very first step that the Platonic logic of desire forces us to take, making us choose between production and acquisition. From the moment that we place desire on the side of acquisition, we make desire an idealistic (dialectical, nihilistic) conception, which causes us to look upon it as primarily a lack: a lack of an object, a lack of the real object.' When thinking about desire and sexual violence, I am missing and yearn for my unraped body. But not wanting life to be defined by the trauma of sexual violence, I want for my drive towards making to be positive (for lack of a better word, 'inspired' by sexual violence). I desire not to miss my unraped body, but rather to use the sexual violence as a positive force (I am finding myself in this situation; I am matter of fact about that and it is something I am unable to change). I desire to work towards something (like drawing

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a conclusion from this research, and making my art work in general), rather than away from the fading pain of invasion. Though defined by a lack, desire for Lacan (2007, p.343) is about recognition 'the desire to have his desire recognised'. To put this another way, in this thesis there is something about wanting those experiences of violence to be recognised and about my subsequent work on this topic to be noted, thus again my desire for this research and its messy method to be validated. So, building on the positivity of desire (from Deleuze), for me this work translates into working with aggression to reassemble the domestic space through an art practice that is productive, not reductive. Thinking about *Headstone* and the desire to record the events there (for instance the young girls in the blackcurrant bushes, the father in the garage, the paedophile, the absent partner and the multiple lovers) is driven by a desire to recognise those experiences, and moreover my impression of those events as valid. I can see through my research, and express in this thesis, how these events have shaped me and say something about what it is to be a woman with experiences of sexual violence. To add to this, subjectivity for Deleuze seems to be always becoming, it is evolving (Deleuze, 2006; Deleuze and Guattari, 1983). I understand this as reconfiguring, reapproaching or refolding.

152 The folds of my body – and I am thinking about the violated body, the birthing body, the artist's body that is looking for freedom to practice – create subjectivities from experiences of sex, in the domestic environment. This understanding does not foreground the patriarch's care of self and subjectivities (as I am not a patriarch). But they always come of sex. Foucault (2006) says to make love as much as you can as it reminds you that you have a body. It seems that it is in my experiences of having a body, through the body, that subjectivation happens. For Foucault (2006, p.233) 'it is [...] in love, that the body is here'. Deleuze and Guattari (1983) discuss the body too, not in terms of its past position in the structure of power, but its future capabilities and potential. So, I am using this potential that comes from my folding body to make. *Headstone* is my rhizomatic desire, flopping and folding from paragraph to paragraph, memory to memory, moment to moment. A desire to recognise my desire as creative and positive with a future hope of transformation and evolution.

Thinking in these terms, I can let go. I am not defined by the past, but my future subjectivities are endless foldings and unfoldings of past experiences, expanding in webbed connections. Foucault (2006. p.229) says, 'I cannot move without my body', his subjectivity is in his body, in his sexuality. I cannot move beyond the subjective experiences of mine. The memories are in my flesh, in the parts of it I cannot see, only touch, or let others touch, in my internal, in my folds, in my hollow, penetrated body. My body is productively exiled from this creation of the patriarch's subjectivities, where the woman's body is an auxiliary, an object, leaving the restrictive arena yet continually meeting new sets of ideals at each turning so is challenged to a continuous reaching out reaching in. Becoming this woman, existing on the outside, is for Deleuze and Guattari (see Parr, 2013) non-anthropocentric work, disregarding the man's subjectivities, rejecting phallocentrism. Connected and co-dependent. Acquiring my perspective, I am fully indebted to my physique. And to my folds and the foldings of violence, the internalisation of the violence that becomes part of me, and shapes my understanding of the world, and here, of my practice and in my research. To summarise, my research embodies the methodology of bodging: through the iterative nature of writing this thesis, 153 bodging is performed in the text. I folded into the work, and the methodology of bodging is folded into the thesis.

## **Freedom**

Offering another way to look at this and a deepening of the argument, Nancy Holt speaks about female artists, identity and confidence in relation to Eva Hess's work. Holt (cited in Lippard, 2008) says: 'In women artists' fantasies, I think there is a little bit of acquiring a penis when you start to do your work; when you finally get to a point where you are actually doing your own thing, there is a fantasy factor. It's like having a mystical penis.' I wonder if what Holt speaks of is the space to express subjectivities that seems to come with Foucault's (1986) care of self. Even if we were unbound in this expression, we are, according to Foucault, always in a sense still tethered to our subjectivities. Holt's idea of the penis being present dur-

ing the creative process can be read as a desire for the mystical penis in an Oedipal sense, as a desire for the missing object. One way to understand this is as a displaced freedom. A freedom to create, it can also be taken as an ambition to make space for the art to happen. In other words, to create and be creative I have a sense that I need to create the space for that to happen. I am through this thesis staking a claim to the area. As Linda Nochlin (2021, p.1) asserts, in *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists*, the 'male viewpoint, unconsciously accepted as the viewpoint'; within that, the male perspective is neutral. Projects like this PhD work to multiply the viewpoints of what is the neutral.

For instance, perspectives or parameters that I am proposing as paths that can lead creativity are the oscillating folds of the body. Sometime this space is internal, filling the empty pelvis after childbirth, saturating and letting flower the shrivelled-up sense of pride and self-importance after rape. Or it can be external, reaching into and rearranging the domestic space, responding to contemporary aesthetics, stepping into academia and erecting a position within the institution. To  
154 conclude, the aim is to create a platform to speak from. If the body is central to the creation of subjectivity, then it is only through the regret and horror of rape that any form of truth around such occurrences can be approached.

Through this research I have come to search for subjectivities through experiences I had as an object: as an object experiencing sexual violence within domestic environments. Applying a feminist understanding to this creation of subjectivities, I have found a key consideration to be how I position my body in relation to male subjectivities and the creation of power. Expressing the experience of being in these situations has become integral to understanding but also to showing how my subjectivities emerge. They are forming through those interactions, between me and the page, me and the imagined viewer and the male subjectivities I have mentioned. It has become particularly clear to me through this research that my subjectivity has emerged through the sexual violence I have experienced with men. Realising in some sense the value in these experiences, the approach I have come to through this research is not one of doing away with an outside threat of



violence by not adopting the violence or assuming a violent position, but one of existing within the folds. As Deleuze (2006. p.99) suggests, 'we follow the folds'. Coming back to Butler (2021, p.15), I am within the force field of violence whether I like it or not, but folding the negativity (the uncertainty, the unsureness, the inability) both into and away from the process is what moulds this research into a readable shape. Negativity is folded into the process as uncertainty, uncertainty and inability are used to shape the sculptural practice. These states become tools in my methodology. My practice is about removing shame from the position of receiving violence and taking it to a position that can be practised from. I am therefore also attempting to fold the negative connotations of experiencing sexual violence away from my practice. It is, in a sense, a case of becoming who one is but refusing to continue to be defined by it, whilst at the same time acknowledging it as a position. A double.

Another double. Like the violence before, my PhD happened within my domestic environment. Typing from the bed, the sofa, the desk and dinner table. Lying down taking notes, taking breaks, going for walks and working through the evening. My stance is propped up, wedged into a position. I have slowly accumulated a thesis, through sculptural work, through written prose and poetry, through reflection and discussion. Importantly, in this work I have relied on trusting my intuition; it is what has been constant and ongoing and present. Later, through assembling this thesis, my intuition reveals its purpose, like the barn swallows connecting the geographies of my childhood and Julia's exile, providing a layered web of connections (after the sailing voyage) in *Headstone*. The subject of the fictional writing in this thesis is unfixed and could fall to pieces. In *Headstone*, Julia has many different identities; none are specific to a time or age but flit between different temporal registers. Nor is there a fixed location. I think I am trying out different ways of being, through projecting my subjectivity onto another character. Julia appears mid-action and is described from an external perspective as often as she describes an internal monologue, a time-specific memory that through the written language becomes her subjectivity, my subjectivity. My subjectivity is created through writing, as it gains a linguistic form that it never had before. For

Hélène Cixous (1997) the subject is always at risk in its unfixedness. By the time the self is recognised it has changed. In this research this fragility highlights the need to follow the intuitive process of not knowing. Through reflection the purpose of the process becomes clear, but as that clarity comes into view the self and its subjectivity have moved on. In other words, in learning from the trauma (by giving it a physical shape, i.e. a text or a sculpture) I am able to move in relation to it. At points the pain seems acute and at other times dull. Trauma is not something that goes away, but something that is lived with and constantly negotiated.

So, trauma is a repository for creativity for female sculptors – of which I am one. Important to the understanding of this is that accessing the trauma (through reaching in and out) creates a sort of erratic oscillating. In other words, it is unstable, like water dripping. Bodging makes sense of this unsteadiness, the unclarity, the haziness, the mess. It creates an understanding both for the person gaining subjectivity through the process but also for the audience who hears or reads. You are now reading the product of the erratic, the unsteady, the wobbly.

# HEADSTONE

## Part Three

### Diary Entry 2016 – Headstones and Veils

There's dust on my laptop screen and on the keys.

Life in bursts, continuation is scares.

Flitting in and out and I wonder why I feel haggard, dull, tired.

I work two part-time jobs, micro dose MDMA and go outside. Feel elated.

I run down a road, with

beautiful houses,

beautiful flowering gardens.

Old people, dogs, cats.

Buses a bit further up and people in shops.

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Got some lotion for the dull skin.

Let's see.

Drinking cold coffee, listening to  
songs on repeat.

*'Man of the World', 'All the Tired Horses'.*

*'Both great funeral tunes',*

the way you said that stays with me as I erect this headstone to the past you are  
now a part of.

The memories of that time of my life, memories that have become mine though  
maybe they were yours?

Sitting on the bed laughing, rocking.

I am keeping the cringe in the edit, because it is the truth, how it happened.

Once my

desire, but there's no power in these words anymore.

Except a slight numbness in places where the skin has healed over.

A scar, skin without nerve endings.

Headstones, smoke and veils.

## Notes from 5 January 2017

We're taking a client to a doctor's appointment and I'm in the passenger seat. My manager is driving. He's in his late twenties, younger than me. He doesn't say much. Cocky, self-assured. Wears his blond hair in a top knot. Skinny and small-town trendy, inoffensively dressed in All Saints and Nike.

More than once one of the seniors has described how she'd fuck him. 'Bash his brains out.' 'I'd grind his face with my clit. Suffocate him with my tits' (they're huge). She smiles and nibbles her bottom lip piercing; over time it's chiselled out a small gap between her front teeth. She lets out a burp as if to emphasise her point,  
158 sucks the piercing then take a swig from her instant coffee. She reaches for her pouch of baccy to roll a fag. Her foaming tongue darts out to lick the glue rim of the Rizla then gestures the rolly my way – 'Fancy one babe?'

She must find him exotic, coming in at office hours while we're in at the crack of dawn. Maybe it's how he nonchalantly puts his polyester PC bag down on the red chewing-gum-stained carpet each morning. Or the three-week safari break to Zimbabwe he's just come back from (but not spoken about). Or his dismissive-yet-passive group-chat messages to say when someone's not done their client's monthly report on time. Always delivered with contempt. He's managed to shroud himself in a mist of dismissal.

The tiny office we're all crammed in has just one chair. A stainless-steel conference chair with a ratty old upholstered seat. It's worn through and its foam filling is spilling out where people have sat on the desk, resting their feet on it. A couple of MDF shelves sag on the wall under the weight of care plans and pro-formas. To

the left a locked grey meds cabinet containing anti-psychotics, mood stabilisers, tranquillisers and laxatives. Too many meds would bung anyone up.

The automatic engine moves from second to third as we gently accelerate out of a roundabout. It's winter and the sun hangs low on the horizon. Warm dry air from the AC is streaming memories over my face. I flick the visor down to stop the glare hitting my eyes. They are sore and dry, and water as I blink. Knackered now and my head is fuzzy. Tail end of a 14-hour shift.

## **Methodology**

Art comes from the energy that would otherwise be put into masturbation.  
Making that work was like teetering on the edge,  
but more exciting than holding on for an orgasm.  
Even more exhilarating than resisting.  
And I am completely alone.

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This time is for me and the paper, the space we move into and in.  
Flicking the radio on and off. Imagining. Leaving.  
Coming to the paper, the ambition:  
500 words before  
eating.

The longer we can stay here, the more exciting it gets.  
The only thing I must resist is  
food. Everything I consume becomes the work.  
I leave and come back, because the paper is patient.  
It is excited to see me and wants me to carry on.



## CHAPTER THREE – VACATION

This research has been carried out in different domestic environments. Places I have lived in during the course of the research, my homes. But I have also worked in temporary homes, places that I have stayed in while on residencies or while doing fieldwork. Through this research I have observed that it is at the point of arrival and departure of these places when materials I work with are the most approachable. As when I move from one home to another and have all my belongings packed in boxes, or go up into the loft and work through the stuff up there (the wood, the screws, the lamps, the fabric), or arriving at a residency and work in a new space with the stuff that is there (the broken and discarded tables, the leftover pieces of wood, the gaffer tape, the twigs and broken glass.)

I have observed that the mobility inherent in switching between places, changing from one space to another, injects a sense of uncertainty into me and my process which ends up in the work. It is in the process of meeting that uncertainty that  
160 works come into being. Practically, that could be finding out what materials (of the ones available within a given environment for instance) can prop each other up and work together to build a standing structure. Emma Cocker (cited in Fisher and Fortnum, 2013) speaks about finding out what direction a work or a practice might take in *On Not Knowing: How Artists Think*. Cocker (in Fisher and Fortnum, 2013, p.126) speaks of the place of uncertainty as a 'state from which we strive to make sense'. When arriving at an environment and encountering these 'strange' materials, I work towards making sense of these surrounding. I work to find out what materials in this place I can use for the structures that are going to be made, but also, and importantly, how to make the materials make sense of me.

This research has been shaped around expressing violent experiences that for me existed for a long time outside of language. Like the sexual violence that for Linda Alcoff (2000) is misaligned with language, as those acts are horrifically unspeakable. Along the same lines, Emma Cocker (cited in Fisher and Fortnum, 2013, p.126) speaks of the unknown in terms of 'indeterminacy that thinking attempts to move

from and ultimately leave behind'. In this way, the exile that I speak about in Chapter One, understood as 'leaving' for another place, becomes productive rather than punishing. Though it is a journey of leaving something behind, it is also a journey of familiarisation and of finding a language for the unspoken; a journey looking for a language to speak of things that have been unsaid. Put another way, this journey intersects with the idea of vacating the field of power through the expanding or going outside of the boundaries of the cycles of institutions this research moves between, namely the university, the research institution and the family. Entering this field of not knowing is something to value in itself. It is not pain free, and necessitates a scared and reluctant welcoming of the half-forgotten wordless memories of violence. But it is productive.

### **The Somewhere Else and the Stranger**

The violence women experience has showed us is that the idea of 'elsewhere' as an escape from violence does not exist. What happens here, happens everywhere, 161 as is evident from research published by the WHO (2021). Women share experiences of violence across boundaries, nationalities, sexualities and race even when we, or our governments, are imagining that we are very distant from one another and that violence against women is something that happens in 'other places'. But I know, I have learned, that I am not safe, not here, not anywhere in the world. In other words, as a woman I am always potentially threatened by the partner I love who I might depend on. I am in fact most at risk in those trusting relationships, as statistically women are most frequently violated by those they are in relationships with (Blunt and Dowling, 2006); in the act of violence his body met with mine, in the wordless place of sexual assault. Silent communication between bodies, as outlined by Sara Ahmed (2021) occurs in a place exceeding language, a non-transparent form of language where bodies communicate abuse. The strangest things happen in this wordless place, the most trusted becomes the perpetrator. The lover and the rapist are the same. That is the most painful conclusion.

Along the lines of this shifting of delineations, for Deleuze and Guattari (2005), territories expand and engulf materials immediately outside of the organised space. Territories are only momentarily defined before they come to alter and include that immediately outside of their borders. Deleuze and Guattari (2005, p.199) claim: 'My territories are out of grasp, not because they are imaginary, but the opposite: because I am in the process of drawing them.' Within this mobility of boundaries and through this research I have understood the lover to move from trust and care into violence and violation. Essentially, the person becoming a rapist is the one we most know and trust. Experientially this means unfamiliarity and instability, what we thought we knew has to change, so from certainty and knowing comes an unknowing violence. Similarly, materials that seemed familiar, homely and safe are in this research broken apart and reworked to shape an idea of this oscillation between familiarity, trust and threat.

162 All the while I know I am also at risk from strangers, wherever I move. Through my every day and my vacation runs a red thread of violence. Still, vacation within this research has included travelling as an attempt to escape from hierarchies. Foucault (1986) points out that the care of self (as in the creation of power through self-control of sexual urges) starts with the idea of vacation. In *The History of Sexuality, Volume 3, The Care of the Self*, he says that 'a man must devote himself, to the exclusion of other occupations. He will thus be able to make himself vacant for himself (*sibi vacare*)' (Foucault, 1986, p.46). During the vacation, the self can be cared for and maybe even transformed. Foucault looks at Seneca, who states that vacation takes the form of a varied activity which demands that one lose no time and spare no effort in order to 'develop oneself, transform one self, return to oneself' (Foucault, 1986, p.46). Foucault explains that this time for self-care is dedicated to exercise, reading and sharing thoughts with one's writing through which we can approach truth. In spite of the ongoing threat of violence, this serene place of vacation seems privileged. It is according to Foucault (2006, p.229) 'in the land of the fairies, in the land of the gnomes, of genies, magicians [...] where wounds are healed with marvellous beauty, in the blink of an eye'. This land is also the land where you can fall from a mountain and stand up unsaved. As if the

body is less a physical body, and more the fantasy of a body, a utopian body that has no wounds, no traumas. This body has never been hard done by, hurt, raped, cut or hit. There, in that place of vacation, the elsewhere, the dream of being unraped precedes the action, it is not a healing, but a reliving, only this time without a body – but also then sacrificing the pleasure, the lust, the satisfaction, the making, sculpting, walking and birthing. It is in the failures, in the wobbliness, in the ugliness that I acquire a subjectivity. It is in acknowledging these are part of myself that I can create and make sense of the world, see my place within it and understand how the knowledge I have of the world is created. I have travelled through fieldwork and residencies, sometimes pushing against the boundaries of the institution and attempting an escape through the cracks. Artist Hélène Cixous (1997, p.170) says that ‘art leads abroad’. I think what Cixous is talking about is the methodology that ties creative practice to the unknown. In this research, the unknown is multiple, it is the residency and fieldwork, but it is also in approaching the violence and vulnerability present in my life and bringing it to the centre of my creative practice.

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The work in this research can be thought about as a series of uncertainties. I have largely not known exactly what my methodology or rationale is for doing this research. What can at this point in time be rationalised and understood as a ‘red thread’ or a path (like the themes of exile, the DIY methodologies and the constant undertone of violence and sexuality) has throughout the majority of this research been a boundless body that has flopped in many directions at once. The vacation (as in ‘going away’) that has taken place during a series of residencies is also connected to the vacating and emptying out as ideas have been tested and discarded. Some of this meaningful rubbish includes experiments in rolled-up photographic collages and experiments with plaster-covered lamps. As the research has developed into its current shape, some parts of the territories it covered have been left behind and released from the rationale of the research. I speak of territories in Deleuze and Guattari’s (2005) terms as assemblages that are concurrently the actions and result of the ordering of disparate objects in constant shifting combinations. Deleuze and Guattari (2005, p.4) say this about their book *A Thousand*

*Plateaus*: 'A book has neither object nor subject; it is made of variously formed matters, and very different dates and speeds. To attribute the book to a subject is to overlook this working of matters, and the exteriority of their relations. It is to fabricate a beneficent God to explain geological movements. In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or, on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage.'

164 Through making, thinking, reading and evaluating in disorderly cycles this thesis has jerked into its shape. One consequence of this jerky and unknowing way of working is a lack of certainty. I have instead of being sure favoured momentary descriptions, as words form within this document, one letter at the time, pushing the bouncing cursor on the page forward to include more matter, more materials and ideas that stack up to a structure that culminates in this thesis and is the sum of this graft, which in fact is just one point in time. I think of it less as a resolution and more like a moment in time. If the research went on for any longer, I have a sense that the ideas here would also change, and the certainty would flicker.

The Museum of Loss and Renewal hosts a residency in the isolated Molise region of Italy. The residency is set over three buildings in the small village of Collemacchia, located inland about three hours as the crow flies from Ventotene. The Museum of Loss and Renewal's curators Tracy Mackenna and Edwin Janssen say, 'rather than being a museum in the traditional sense that accumulates "stuff", it stimulates people to take time in which to generate thoughts, feelings and ideas.'

I spent time working at the Museum of Loss and Renewal almost immediately after becoming a mother in 2020. I needed to find out whether the responsibility of caring for my daughter would impact my ability to care about my work. I thought about milestones; parenthood was, in those early days, saturated in a language of milestones (is the baby lifting its head up, is it rolling, sitting, smiling?). A mile-  
Overleaf

Image 19: My Father's boat, Spain, 2019



stone is a marker, as in pointing in a direction, finding a path through a forest, preventing one from getting lost. In its most basic form, a milestone could be sticks stacked up against a tree.

Collemacchia is in the Abruzzo National Park, so it is surrounded by wonderful, wild nature. During the first few days walking in the environment around the studio I began to collect sticks. Walking up and down the mountain stacking sticks and reflecting on my work and on life became a daily activity, a meditative practice. Eventually I decided to take the sticks back to my studio, and I began moving them down from the mountain piece by piece, stick by stick. In *Headstone* I wrote:

The skies at dusk set in floating shades of violet.  
Swirled, flicked, intuitively named.  
Road circles round mountains.  
On their staggered way up  
into secrecy.

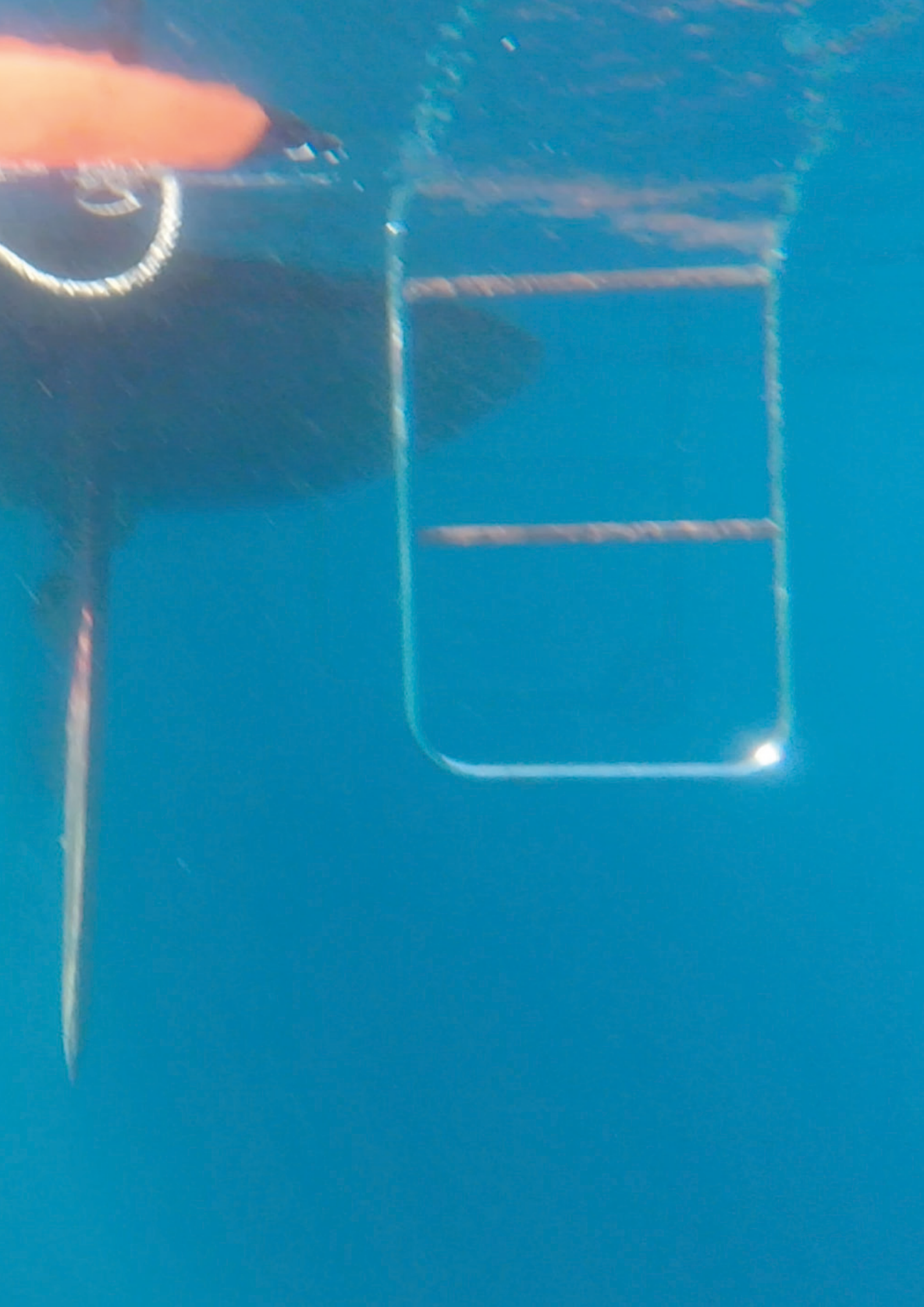
165

That is why I cannot believe you have found me.  
You navigate surer on water, by lantern, at night.  
Like, asleep across the Bay of Biscay.  
Now we are on land I have marked the trail out with some sticks and a fire.  
You can find your way to us so safely.

You have come to see  
my breast at night dripping, sacrificial, leaking.  
These woken hours by the pump are  
not real life, they are too happy, too at ease.  
Giving to the little person needing me. But 'I' do not exist yet.

In the studio the sticks became a triangular, pointy pile. The stack reminded me of a tipi, a structure that could be wrapped in fabric and become a place to shelter or be violated. Once wrapped in fabric (which I found in a local supermarket), the







pile looked more like a wedding dress than a tent. Thinking about ways to push the boundaries of the dress and its pristine facade, I brought the structure outside, into a courtyard behind the studio at the edge of the village. I thought, if lit from inside, the tent/dress/pile would attract insects, becoming a marker for them to navigate towards at night, after dark, bringing back the idea of the milestone. We brought all the candles and lights we could find in the residency's buildings and headed out to the abandoned courtyard about 1.5 hours before sunset. Myself, my daughter, Andy (my husband), Tracey Mackenna, and Laura McSorely (curator at Generator projects, also at the residency). I lit candles and walked around the space, we opened a bottle of wine (it was the last day of the residency) and soon the experience started to feel like a ritual. The sun set and the moon appeared in its stead. We discussed what the works would look like on fire.

168 The vacating that I had experienced, of emptying my pelvis of the baby, created a tracing of an external space that had folded into me. I had wondered if this space and this new developing relationship between myself and the baby would somehow threaten my ability to write and work. Learning from what Deleuze speaks about as the folding of the interiority of a ship also being the exteriority of it, I understood that the fear was just that of the unknown when in actuality the eye of the storm is also the storm – just as the hollow pelvis is part of the growing body of this research. In fact, being on maternity leave for a year – my statutory right – created a vacation from paid work when most of this thesis was written. This work came from within that vacated space. In *Headstone* I continued:

Treading these tonally mute paths  
undomesticated cats scurry away from under our feet  
in discretion, to find a ruin of a home.  
No one would know any of this existed  
without the Collemacchia Beacon.  
Melting, burning lace.  
A milestone in flames.  
The only distance between us now is imaginary.

But I might have thought of you wrong, the close safety I dreamed  
was the fist, clenching the rudder as you pulled away.

## Weaving

As the research has progressed, the idea of ‘standing up’ has become more defined. In spring 2021 I was awarded a scholarship to carry out research this time at the British School at Athens. The residency was supposed to last for three months towards the end of my maternity leave and came with a stipend. Though there were restrictions on travel relating to the global pandemic, it was clear that I was permitted to travel for work as I was unable to carry out the work from home. As I was preparing for departure, I discovered there were no guidelines that acknowledged me as a mother in those constrained times. The government, it seemed, had not imagined in their writing of the rules that a breastfeeding mother might also need to go abroad for research. That scenario was not in the guidelines, and I needed to travel with my baby and husband who would take care of her while I 169 worked. If we decided to travel, there was a possibility that we would arrive at the airport with a very small baby, only to be told that our reason for travel was not permitted. This was a probable scenario, as the Department of Transport had made its categories of what travel was permissible vague, putting the onus on individuals to make their own judgements and potentially argue their case if questioned. Supporting a spouse to carry out work was not on the list of valid reasons to travel. In numerous lengthy emails and phone calls I looked for reassurance from my MP, the Home Office, the Greek Embassy in London, the British Embassy in Greece and the Department of Transport, explaining my situation and the need to go abroad to do my research. Finally, in a phone conversation with the Department of Transport on the 10 March 2021, it was suggested that I might employ my husband to look after the baby, this would give him a legitimate purpose (i.e. employment) to travel with me. But as sufficient reassurance that we would be cleared to travel could not be provided (in a letter or email of approval), I decided to stay at home. Suddenly the fact that I was lactating, as well as researching and looking



after a small child, completely restricted my abilities to do this research. Foucault (1998) contends that periods of breast-feeding are illicit. Lactating removes the person from sexuality, and in this desexualised state the individual is entirely powerless to, in this instance, produce knowledge through research. Foucault states that this stems from a now historic approach to the bodied and sexuality that gradually changes, approaching equality and acceptance. But at that heightened time of pandemic and societal crisis the structures revealed themselves through the refusal, through 'no'. The lack of permission presented me with a choice between remaining a domesticated breastfeeding mother or to step outside of that as a researcher and separate from my family for several months. A combination of the two seemed inconceivable. Looking at Butler (2021) again in *The Force of Nonviolence*, I find that my experience of attempting to take up this residency also revealed a lack of space for co-dependence. The exercising of this physical and mutually life-affirming bond (between myself and the baby) seems to, by the circumstances surrounding this opportunity, be separated from the creation of new knowledge that can take place within the institution (like the British School at Athens)

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The research in Athens was postponed, and instead I decided to build a rudimentary loom in my attic. To deal with, I think, the frustration of not being able to go and make the work I had wanted to at this time I began constructing the weft over a clothes rail I had stashed in the loft some months before. It was a substantial size, but I knew that it would fit through the loft hatch if I ever wanted to bring it out into the world. The weave in the loft became a productive removal from normal life happening in the rooms below. It was a way to practise co-existence – of the artwork and the other parts of my domestic life. I worked in bursts at the boundary of my domestic space, while my daughter was playing or sleeping downstairs. Deleuze (2006) speaks about weaving as the interlacing of two beings. It seems that we could think about the weaving as a co-existence of the weft and the warp that in balance creates the fabric. I thought of the way life becomes woven and bonded in layers. Deleuze (2006, p.112) is not so sure; in fact, he says 'interlacing is a strangle hold'. The two are according to Deleuze more in battle than in union, the weft and the warp continuously fighting to be on top and dominate the other.

Thinking of attics as a space for women, Berta Mason's exiled existence in the attic of *Jane Eyre* (Brontë, 2019) epitomises subordination rather than creative freedom –she has famously no words and is approaching madness in her marriage, and is then locked in the loft against her will. She tears the wedding veil of her husband's new bride as an act of refusal to accept their union. For Virginia Woolf (1945, p.40), in *A Room of One's Own*, the loft offers the creative space she argues necessitates a woman's practice, and she says, 'perhaps she scribbled some pages up in an apple loft on the sly but was careful to hide them'. Louise Bourgeois's etching *He Disappeared into Complete Silence* (1947) seem to hint at going into a non-existent loft space: ladders extend and push against a solid ceiling. This work connects to Bourgeois's work where the home is the stage for a psychological drama; it is a man's habitat but a woman's trap. Interiors are in this work dead ends. Since my non-residency at the British School at Athens, the attic has come to figure in my research as a space for my exile, as an escape into a domestic studio while also being a reminder of limitations that I face as I insist on lactating. Reflecting on this time, I took part in a research project run by University of Brighton researcher Vanessa Marr, focusing on combating the reduced research output of women following the 171 pandemic in 2020–21. Through this project, the weave, the loft, the milk, and Athens became an embroidered patchwork. I am thinking now of the loft as a space in an expanded domestic territory (like the flat being renovated, or the home just moved into and the residency) where the domestic itself can be approached from an outside perspective. It is a case of working from a slightly altered position, just slightly on the outside of an environment in order to see how materials can be assembled to speak of my embodied experience of these spaces as violent, unsteady and fragile.

Around this time, I was approached to contribute a work to the British School at Athens's 20th anniversary exhibition opening in July 2021, and I proposed showing the weave. The exhibition was held at the 12 Star Gallery at 32 Smith Square in London (formerly the Conservative Party headquarters). After installing my work, I left instructions and a roll of gaffer tape with the curators, in case the work collapsed. The curator was told that if the works fell over she could prop it up in Overleaf:

Image 20: Collemacchia Beacon, 2020

















whatever way she saw fit. It was during this exhibition that I realised that I had developed a method of leaving my sculptures to perform a protest in my absence. At the exhibition preview, my daughter, who was then around 13 months, was testing how far down her throat she could stick her fingers before making herself gag. As the director of the British School at Athens was giving a speech, expressing his gratitude for the Greeks' hospitality to the attending Greek ambassador, Evie made herself gag over my plate of spanakopita.

## The Textile Sail

The sail is a gagging quilt. The quilt is like a blanket that you wrap up in when you need comfort. But the sail suggests action. Movement. It tests the boundaries, pushes the fingers a little too deep into the throat and gags. The sail has found its way into this research in some obvious and some less obvious ways. I made three sails on my residency at the British School at Rome. The three sails, the full rig,  
176 was soaked with piss and bruised in appearance, wobbly and frail yet erect, accompanied by caves, islands and huts that spread a gentle light as the works were exhibited on the newly refurbished portico.

In *Headstone* I wrote: 'Julia ties a man to the top of their mast and sees beauty in his still limbs. She adores how the sun reflects on his olive skin and contours of contorted muscles paint in the shading. They cross the Mediterranean.' These sails are objectifying, violent and painful. I imagine the man's body spatchcocked and tightly tied with ropes, naked, catching the wind and giving the vessel speed and arching his back in the pull. The body is probably in pain from the ropes while the mild sea air tickles and warms the skin. The view from the mast must be amazing.

The sail is in the weave I made in my loft, its colour, its shape and how it is hung over the loom. It invokes a less direct sense of the sail, with the rope built in, like an umbilical cord coming out from the piece in the centre, just below it a breast-like knob, like a handle.

Previous page:

Image 21: Collemacchia Beacon, 2020



Image 22: Weave with Cord, 2021



Louise Bourgeois's sculptural work from *The Sail* (1988) is cut in marble (152.4 x 76.2 x 177.8 cm). Here the sail is curled up into a rolling wave. It is layered and spiralled around a series of openings and orifices where the outside and the inside fold into one another. For many years it stood in Denver, in the garden of the late art collector and patron Ginny Williams. In the rain and the snow while water poured through its openings like tears, like urine, milk, and blood.

On one exile, in 2018, I went to Berlin to see a retrospective of Louise Bourgeois's work at the Schinkel Pavillon. I wrote in my notebook: 'The Schinkel Pavilion is full of Louise Bourgeois.' Hung in the basement, her pink bodily watercolours, pregnant bodies, dripping breasts and birthing vaginas felt perfectly claustrophobic. The installation of the works on cracking white-tiled walls reminded me of pregnant bodies trapped within a dilapidated institution – alive and bleeding but medicated and mad, yet somehow tender and caring for their babies. I suffocated. Her textile *Couple* (2003) intimately embraced in a scalloped marble dish under a fine pink mesh. On the hexagonal top floor, windows floor to ceiling, I made  
178 more notes: *Peaux de Lapins* (2006) 'is inviting yet threatening, the inside seems protective, and perhaps domestic, yet the thought of existing within strangles me'. Metal panels formed a cage with a door slightly ajar. The collection of objects inside – muslin sacks, fur and metal chains – seemed pristine, so tidy compared to the gushing works downstairs. Stacks of stones, blobby muslin and chains were so neatly hung from the mesh ceiling – presentable collections that seemed precious, but kept in, like good girls, tending to their lot in life. Her works filled the building with an eerie echo. For me, Louise Bourgeois perfectly encapsulates the ambivalent domestic, the care and the threat, the wholesome and the fractured, the comfort and anxiety.

## **Vacation, Islands, Disaster**

What might seem like a paradise for vacation, or place of new opportunities, might turn into a place of isolation where power is acted out in familiar ways

(what Deleuze (2004) might call continental behaviours). Without an infrastructure of support, care (the interdependencies and connection that Butler speaks of) the island becomes more of a Defoean reality where the castaway, entirely self-sufficient, acquires power to colonise their island, recreating structures of power known from home. In this thesis, particularly with regard to time spent on residencies, the island (as a metaphor and reality) is different from the continent. Through this work and building from the importance of the residency for developing this research, I have come to think of the island as a symbol for new possibilities; in Deleuzian terms, expanding territories or deserted islands, benefiting from the separation from the continent's structures. However, this idea of the island has a double meaning. For me, the island is, as well as being a creative opportunity, the silence surrounding much of the violence that exists in women's lives, in my life. My first experience of rape was followed by a decade long silence as I did not speak a word about what had happened. Living in silence created an uncaring environment as it completely removed any possibility for care or support to deal with the trauma.

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This research is not about creating isolation; however, the idea of a deserted island certainly suggests that degree of separation. I have built my methodology around an inability to stand without being propped up, and the introduction of DIY suggests a sense of self-sufficiency that works against the idea of shared vulnerabilities. To come back to the idea in Butler of working within present terms, in some sense the island is less of a choice and more of a place one finds oneself if one is unable to exist within another place. Isolation is therefore not a preference born from free will, but a consequence of violence. According to Deleuze (2006), Foucault seems haunted by this folding of imprisonment into freedom. Deleuze mentions how Foucault speaks about the Renaissance madman on his ship, in the freest of environments on the sea as a prisoner of the passage. As I am within the field of violence wherever I turn, a choice becomes reality, as in this research, I am choosing not to pick the role of victim, and to channel the aggression into creative practice.



As mentioned above, for Foucault power always produces resistance. In this thesis resistance is imagined in several places, in the wobbly structures, in the research trips and in the exile. Resistance is in the places I have escaped to, that have the potential to be places of freedom. These are imagined as places away from violence and domination. Furthermore, resistance (and therefore freedom) could be a place within us where 'a not knowing' and acceptance for uncertainty can be found, as explored by Lena Gunnarsson (2015). Gunnarsson talks about how freedom from patriarchy can be found within us, by letting go of expectations. Within exile, freedom is the poetic island that connects childhood memories of swallows emigrating to an island where a smutty emperor's daughter resides – an escape in imagination and a comfort in companionship, albeit companionship with a person from the past. In other words, there is a comfort in connection. The exile and the freedom is also a place immediately outside of the known – like the attic or the artist's residency. As I move into and around these places outside of the familiar in a response to the power, that I am trying to escape, and I am continually escaping it is the closest to freedom I have come.

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Foucault (2020, p.327) reflected on his study of power, claiming that rather than analysing the phenomenon of power, his objective with the study of sexuality was, for instance, to 'create a history of the different modes by which in our culture, human beings are made subjects'. This research has been concerned with understanding the becoming of a (autobiographical) subject. The escape that I have been practising is the transition and pull between different modes and situations. Autoethnography and the writing in *Headstone* have been a crucial tool in creating a library of experiences that the research refers back to and sifts through. It captures experiences, making them something more than wordless ghosts of memories. As material, printed pages, they finally take up space, they can be excavated. It materialises and acknowledges these experiences as real, lived. Creating a history that can be read and interpreted. I can feed from it, learn from it. I have started to feel hopeful about the future.



# HEADSTONE

## Part Four

### New Lonely

No more flutters and swirls, caressing kicks.  
You and I used to be so entwined.  
The heart of everything.

With a deathlike truth  
in this outside world you scare me.  
For others can hold you too now.

I want to snatch you and growl but perch.  
The ripping slivers of my flesh are  
182 looping around my neck, pushing me into these huge hollows.

As you bring your curious hand to touch  
their moist lips.  
Stunned I feed you from

a crippled husk.  
You wail and slap, I join thereafter.  
Our bald faces, greying. But your smile.

For the pulped heart I find a language, just for us  
wordless warmth; a sweet, breezing breath that  
I can barely feel, as I lower my cheek to see you have survived also this hour.



## CONCLUSION

This research journey has coincided with several events calling out the continual occurrence of sexual violence (such as MeToo, the trial of Harvey Weinstein and the murder of Sarah Everard). Though my intention at the start of this research was to avoid autobiography and avoid speaking about sexual violence and rape, these topics have continued to emerge in the research. This has revealed the place that speaks about what has previously been unspeakable when working with intuition and the 'not knowing' in a practice. It leaks out in fits and spurts; utterances that are unsteady, sporadic, intense, limp.

184 I demand subject-hood (because as an object I am raped). No matter how much ownership I can claim of the raped body I do not want it. I am, to paraphrase Wendy Brown (1995), not wanting to live through the identity of a victim. I am, however, understanding the ways in which those experiences shape my practice. Not simply through reflections of trauma, but as steering a set of responses to academic hierarchies and institutional structures. I have in this thesis reflected on the 'exile' that has criss-crossed this research, on leaving one place for another in order to create. I am pleased to be able to work on the outside of the continent, away from the ideal city. By and through my subjectivity I am fed (not starving as Julia). I use the complexities, the messiness, 'the outside' to make work.

Anger travels in bendy lines – mostly towards my throat – and I have come to keep it in a basket, in my chest. I pick it out at times and put it in my sad sculptures. My work enacts aggression and fragility expressed in works that are hurriedly bodged. It is a result of the self-funded, isolated, lonely but real situation I am in. As a subject, I am working to eat, working to fund the research.

### On Validation

Not that long ago I told a someone the detail of the experiences I had of the after-



math of rape as a child. No wonder you wanted to leave Sweden, she said.

I read the domestic is fractured, and maybe also so am I. I have been shredded then pulped but find joy in continuation.

Being alone becomes a strategy for survival.

I am the island.

## **On Using Art**

I need art to fix me. I have been born into this relationship that keeps mocking me. I carry on protesting it, looking for it to save me and give me autonomy, but I think it will always be prickly.

The last time I went on a University of the Arts London funded (faux research) 185 protest trip was in 2018. That is because since being awarded a scholarship to do my research at the British School at Rome in 2019 my work has changed. The need to carry out protests has waned because I am more able to understand the work, so other people understand it too.

The need to protest diminishes once you feel some sort of equality has been achieved. Now it seems there is room for my work within the institution; there is less of a need to declare it.

## **On Equality**

Just like nonviolence, equality is not an ideal state; it is a choppy, wobbly, fragile state that requires continuous dedication to remain 'upright'.

I try my hardest for things not to fall. I do my best for it to stand.

Though falling over we can invite the help of others. It is a declaration of co-dependence and exchange.

## **On Moving with the Changes**

The shores of islands are also limits.

It is maybe because I have become a mother, maybe because of the xenophobia surrounding Brexit or maybe because I have been unable to visit Sweden at all since having my daughter, but I am beginning to think it is possible to end the exile.

## 186 **On Sustainability**

It is not sustainable to work to eat and use annual leave to carry out research and practice. But I cannot deny that it is productive.

• •

In the introduction I suggested that the academic institution provoked in me intuitive responses to power and hierarchies. Through this research I have understood that the responses are coloured by exchanges of power, by being within its 'force field'. Hence, the violent experiences I have had influence how I make work, how I research, how I communicate, how I produce knowledge. I have based this on Foucault's understanding of the production of knowledge and power through sexuality, using this system of conducting an archaeological excavation to extract systems of power, of sexuality, that influence how we understand how knowledge is created. The material I have used in my study is eclectic, following Katherine

Behar's (2016) assertion that we sometimes must be wrong to be right. The material is autobiographical as well as borrowed and imagined, foregrounding my subjective reading and way of engaging with it.

In some of the experimentations in this research I have been barking up the wrong tree. Things that no longer serve the narrative of this research have been omitted from the body of the written thesis. But ultimately, using reflections to lift out the key works that thread the beads of this work together, I feel this thesis outlines a contribution to knowledge by and for people who want to understand this way of working, in taking experiences that have so often for me been that of a voiceless victim turning into a speaking subject.

The violence of the domestic space is remembered, echoed and reflected in my sculptural work. It is the chair once used to attempt suicide, it is the bed sheets in-between which I was raped, it is the curtain behind which I hid, the wall I got pushed into, the table that broke under my weight, but it is also the hope. Hoping for care, hoping for warmth, comfort. Hoping for a continuation of a practice that 187 includes the fragile and the aggressive.

I have argued that I do not wish to take up the role of victim, yet this thesis might provoke empathy or sadness about what I have described, and there is guilt bound up in sexuality too. Foucault (1979) says in *What is an Author?*: 'do not ask who I am and do not ask me to remain the same. More than one person, doubtless like me, writes in order to have no face'. While this writing is to give face or subjectivity to a silent, wordless experience, I do not wish to just be that experience. What I wish is to momentarily be it, in order to move past it, move out of it, the sort of wilful exile provoked by violence that I have continually spoken about here. The experiences that shape us need to exist in words to be able to be put to one side. I have not thought about the trauma as a loss or pain, but as one layer in the excavation.

## A Concluding Note on Bodging

I am unsure about using the term ‘bodging’. Besides the messy improvised solution that bodging describes for me, it also describes a traditional wood-turning craft. A bodger makes chair legs and other parts for chairs from green wood. In spite of that craft connotation, which I am unhappy with, I have stuck with the term through the thesis, thinking that ‘it will do for now’. Looking for synonyms has become an interesting and ongoing practice: to botch, make a mess, make a dog’s dinner, bungle, miscarry, muddle up and spoil. These are all useful terms that connect to what I have been thinking about through this research. But, as I have described in the text above, bodging goes beyond messing something up. For me, bodging has a creative potential (perhaps a nod to the wood-turning craft after all). So, staying with bodging as a term is in a sense true to my methodology – the term is ‘good enough’ for now.

188 In this research the idea of bodging is very tightly knit to the research outcome, as the sculptural works are themselves bodged. The sculpture manifests the methodology. It has become clear to me through the research that bodging is more than simply bodging the research. Through the autoethnographic work in *Headstone* I have been able to trace its connection to my own biography in my mother’s action of whitewashing the cottage door where someone had written ‘Elin is a slut’ in the days after I was first sexually assaulted. Furthermore, in this research I have been able to observe that bodging is a protest against institutional and patriarchal structures. Thinking through these connections between creativity and protest, I have noticed that bodging communicates both aggression and vulnerability that point towards a nonviolent future that I dream of. Bodging has, beyond being a methodology, become a core contribution to knowledge as a proposal for what reflections on sexual violence might look like in sculptural form.

I am remembering first making work about sexual violence in 2009 during my BA in photography. The usefulness of this methodology becomes clear when thought about within a teacher–student relationship. Allow me to sketch a scenario out. Overleaf:

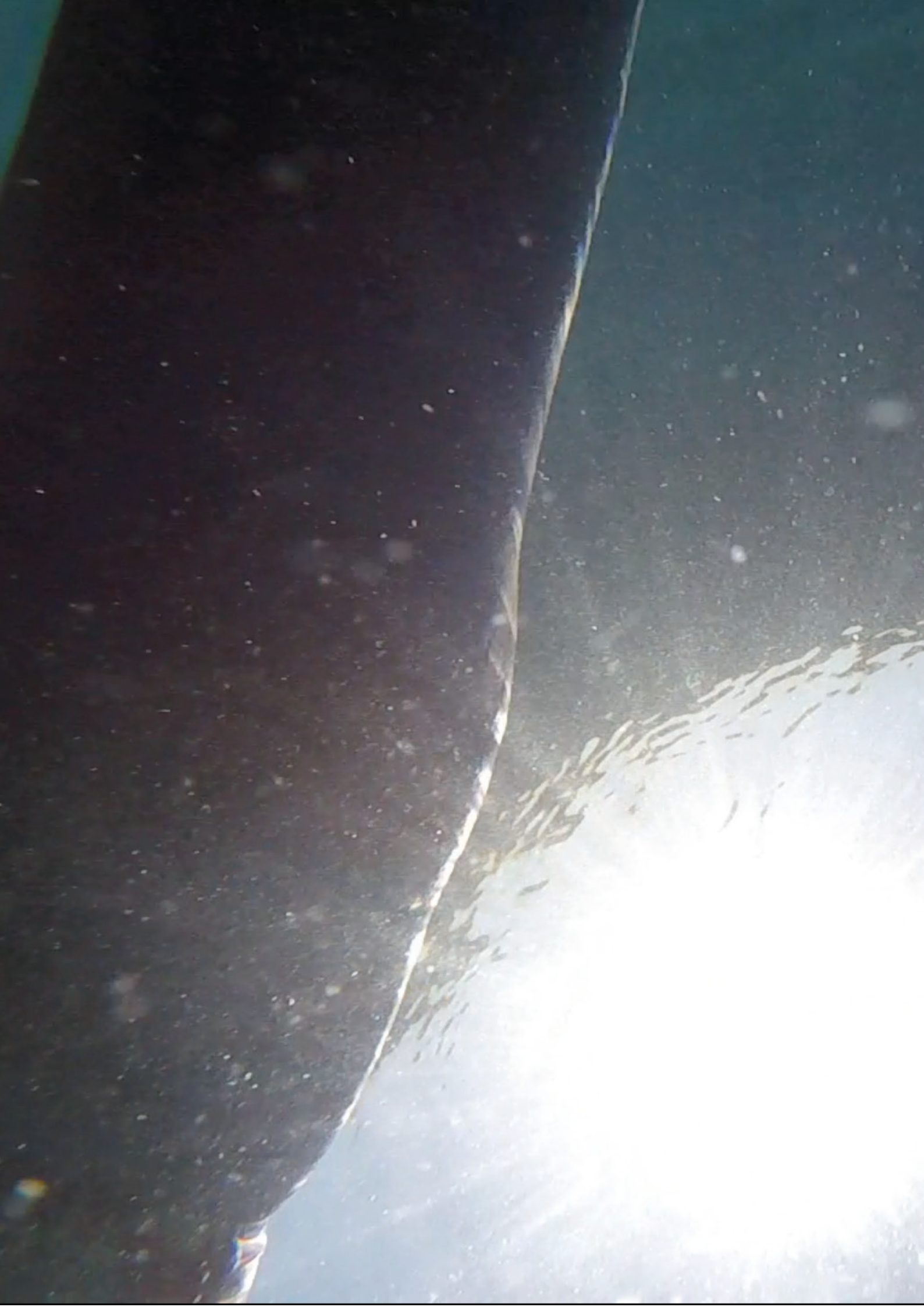
Image 23: In Water, Spain, 2019

A student comes to their teacher with a desire to make autobiographical work about a set of childhood experiences that have had a profound effect on them. The teacher listens to the student, then recommends that the student looks at the work of a canonical artist who, to the teacher, has had experiences just like those that the student describes. The teacher thinks the artist's work could be useful as a reference to the student, something that might inspire the form of the student's work. The student goes away and looks at the work of the artist, which bears some visual similarities to the student's work. Then the student reads about the traumatic experiences that underpin the work of the artist. Comparing their own biography to the artist's, the student feels hampered. They compare their experiences to the artist's, and conclude that their traumatic memories might not be important enough to talk about after all. It seems the influence of another person's experience have clouded their own memories. As a result, they no longer know where their creative impulses start and end.

Through this research I have found that when working with the subject matter of sexual violence, giving traumatic experiences a shape, it is imperative that the voice of the person making the work is foregrounded and protected. It seems counterproductive, maybe even unethical, to bring another artist's work and set of subjectivities into this process. 189

The bodge disrupts the pupil–master dichotomy that has served the idea of a male genius in art. Bodging invites experimentation. As an artist making things up as I go along, I conclude that I will never be a master. Instead, I carry on looking for equality and a nonviolent future in which bodging contributes to a non-hierarchical art world.







# HEADSTONE

## Part Five

### No Garden Urban Pork Belly

This is one of those recipes where most things can be substituted for something similar. You don't have lime, go for lemon, or just a bit more vinegar. No honey, add some dark sugar, same with the oil, whatever one you have will work as long as it's not too flavourful.

400g pork belly in strips with fat (best you can get hold of)

Marinade:

Juice of two limes or lemons

A glug of apple cider or white wine vinegar

192 3 tablespoons vegetable or olive oil

1 teaspoon English mustard or mustard powder

1 tablespoon honey

1 tablespoon dark soy sauce

2 tablespoons ketchup

3 or so garlic cloves, grated

Medium hot chili, halved

3 healthy pinches each of salt, black pepper and dried mixed herbs

Mix all the ingredients for the marinade in a bowl. Put your pork in and coat it well. Set aside in the fridge for at least five hours, the longer the better, maybe even overnight for a late lunch the following day. Turn the pork in the marinade occasionally, if for no other reason than to get excited about eating it soon.

While the meat is marinating, find the best spot in your neighbourhood to light your barbecue. As parks might be crowded or policed, you might be best advised

to take yourself to a bench in a deserted parade of shops. Another alternative is of course to cook this on your doorstep or pavement by your front door. Light your barbecue, once the embers are white, cook the meat for around 20 minutes until the fat has gone crispy. But be sure to nurse it so it doesn't burn.

I love eating this with German potato salad. When emigrating, somewhere between Bremen and Gothenburg, my grandfather omitted the bacon and the stock from his recipe and that is how I cook it.

1kg firm potatoes, peeled

3 teaspoons mustard

2 teaspoons sugar

4 tablespoons apple cider vinegar

6 tablespoons vegetable oil

1 large onion finely sliced, red or yellow will do

1 apple, chopped into small cubes

Some chopped parsley

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Boil the potatoes in water with lots of salt until tender, drain. Beat the mustard and the vinegar together, whisk in the oil, then add the sugar, onion, apple and parsley. Season with plenty of salt and pepper. Cut the slightly cooled potatoes into 1cm slices and mix into the vinaigrette. This is another recipe that will get better if left overnight, as the potato and onion will absorb the flavours.



## The Apple and the Tree (for Evie)

I have been expecting you,  
on breezeless clouds, naked in the hall,  
baking and painting walls.

The eve, as all stills in apple white, crushing over warming surfs.  
You catch me, silly, and by surprise.  
Us, you see, I forget we rush to be early.

Hours ooze, unnoticed, until  
we are blessed in these new sensitivities  
by nan, losing grip of her branches.

My child, unsown, through years  
bruised and hung-up with bitterness.

194 Somehow I kept you from the scrapes.

Within the folds, the mother's love:  
An absent approval to veer,  
then appearing in the creases, ready to carry everyone's hearts.



## Winter Baby

Bending air,  
bolting echoes, cold and hungry.  
Shooting through your lumpy tummy.  
Delayed for a moment,  
as you draw enough air to release another chalky howl.

A sad owl,  
slumped into a cuddle.  
We pass the days,  
just how you must always stay  
clasped, until I dream of:

Falling through new ice on a rushing river.  
I surface, light-headed, cold to the marrow  
with nothing to hold on to.  
My tears melt down your frostbitten cheeks,  
chapped with teething rash and drool.

## A Dog's Dinner

My darling, welcome  
to this mercurial place  
our home and atelier,  
the rubble and screws – it is hardly ideal.

Learn  
not to apologise  
or ask them  
permission.

Always  
tell them to do one  
when they ask you to smile.  
Show them your face and resistance.

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Just listen to me,  
when I say –  
no, not the stairs, nor that chair and  
leave the dog's dinner alone.

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## APPENDIX – THE FRAME AND THE FOLD:

### Violent Autobiography, Photography, and Unfurling From Flatness

#### Introduction

I have a crackly relationship with photography, but in my work as an artist I have been drawn to use it to talk about my biography. I have used photography to create evidence, from memory, of some of the things that continue to pain me. In doing so I have asked photography to come with me into complex and violent narratives. Me and the camera travelled to rural Sweden for the work *Prologue* (2013). We drove through thick and dark forest, then walked along the same tracks that I walked along years ago, only the last time what awaited me when I arrived was sexual violence. I remember it was springtime the last time I came here too; it must have been just after the turn of the millennium. We would have thought a few months earlier that, somehow, life would be so different in this new era. We

212 entered the 2000s with a mixture of fear and excitement, unaware of what the new millennium might bring. More so this year than any other year it seemed. Violence has become the subject matter of much of my artwork after *Prologue*. I am reflecting now on how these experiences of violence sit within my artistic practice as subject matter but also the way they have impacted how I make work.

I am in the southwest of Sweden, in a place where the tarmacked roads give over to ones hard packed with dirt and tufted grasses and weeds growing between tyre tracks. In the summers the roads erupt in dusty clouds when cars pass through, heading on to somewhere else and rarely stopping. On weekends, on the brink of teenagehood, we drank moonshine with coffee in dimly lit cottages. Then we moved along to the lake on mopeds and tractors, our voices and laughter echoed into the forest night.

That particular day, in springtime 2000, I asked my mother if I could go to his house after school, it might have been a Tuesday or a Wednesday, and she prom-



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It was in the springtime and he had only been my boyfriend for two days. It didn't last for long; for some reason he broke up with me a few days later. I couldn't help but feel I was to blame for it all.



ised she would pick me up after work. As I revisit to take the photographs, I am face-to-face with the past, which seems folded into one with the present right here. I am back in the place that I have spent my life running away from, having been brought here by memories that seem more dreamlike, well nightmarish, than real. But after a decade or so of being in a state of amnesia about the whole thing, the anger and disgust that had lingered around intimacy and trust found its true harbour, and hence I am now back on this dirty road.

I am in Sweden to create proof of what happened that time. No, that is not true, let me start that sentence again. I am in Sweden taking photographs of the forests around the inconspicuous village where I spent the first 16 years of my life. As a child, the forest was the only place that I felt safe. There was a pine tree shaped like a teepee that I hid under in winter. I made my way out there on skis through thick, new snow. The density of the silence was immense. I hid and spotted tracks of deer and moose. As the cold was driven away by a timely spring, rivulets of meltwater formed in the thick moss over soft boulders; it seemed like the cleanest water there was.

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I have chanced upon the place where that thing happened. I am standing outside that house, and I am taken back in time. As I stand here, a stone's throw from that pure forest, camera in hand, I cannot believe my eyes when he comes out onto the front porch of what had been his parents' home back then. For a moment I lose the ability to breathe. I am standing to his left partially obscured by a tree, with the camera pressed hard into my stomach to steady it. I take two exposures, one slightly closer to the house than the other. But he has already moved away, out of shot, when the shutter closes for the first time. And of course he does not see me. To him it must still be as if I do not exist. But as I am here, as I have ended up coming here, without any plan or premeditation, to document this part of my biography, I have become determined to make him a part of my past just as I was, years ago, maybe instantly, made part of his.

I am telling you this as truthfully as I can, but I may never stop asking myself:





I asked my mother if I could go to his house after school that day. We would take the bus to get there. My mother promised to pick me up after work.

Figure 2. Prologue (© 2013, Elin Karlsson.)

never came during the assault itself, as I was frozen still. But I have been able to carry the protest through into my art practice. I can see this in the sculptures I make that hardly stand. They are just about balancing, nearly too fragile to last through an exhibition and always made in a rush.

Simon O'Sullivan (cited in Bleyen, 2012) discusses the problems we might come up against when using a medium, like photography, to critique itself, as this necessitates working in the same terrain as that which you wish to undermine. He considers a possible way to work around this through the idea of the glitch, which he speaks about as a window or a pause. Through this glitch, which is described as a break in the norm, a range of paths forward might be revealed. This rupture of the typical creates a moment of critique, or self-reflection, but also a moment of recreation. This glitch is, by definition, the creation of new possibilities (and there might be many).

216 Within the idea of the glitch, photography could move away from flatness. To fold, unfold or crumple the photograph could create topographies in the image that might approach some of those complexities of biography that Jelinek (2003) speaks of. Folding has appeared in works by photographers pushing the boundaries of photography, beautifully creating peaks and troughs that disrupt the photographs' flatness. Connected to the notion of folding and unfurling, the Swedish, London-based artist Åsa Johannesson (2021) uses the photographic print sculpturally to approach the nebulous point where autobiography and photography meet in the series *Skin*. Johannesson describes lifting the top layer of Polaroid photographs to create creased and crumpled impressions as a bastardised use of the common method of emulsion lift. The result is an almost sculptural photograph with folds and creases. Speaking of the works, Johannesson (2021, p.???) describes how 'like my skin, yours is your largest organ. I am not mine, but you are yours. The skin is you'. It seems like this scrunched-up skin is able to suggest something of a multi-latitudinal personhood, which to me speaks about the complexities in biography. While the skin is moving away from portraiture, it seems it could instead be a phenomenological portrait where we might learn about the experience of the artist.





Figure 3. Prologue (© 2013, Elin Karlsson)

How did I not find words or actions to make it stop? Because he really forced me, right? Was my face not pushed so hard into the pillow I felt I may not be able to take another breath? Or did I imagine that? And after it was all done, who was it that came into the room to jest at the sight of my immobile body? I am asking myself these questions, as if, despite of never being able to fully escape that moment, I am unable to remember it at all.

Now I am thinking about what photography has to do with all this brutality (besides how I have come to document the place in order to try to move past it). I ask: was it me he saw, or the woman unfolding her nakedness in the photograph he had pinned to the wall? Through that seemingly innocent teenage-boy token, photography was woven into my experience of violence that day. That photograph, a close-up of a smooth, pink vulva and thighs, remains folded into my fuzzy memory of the space in the cabin in the woods behind his parents' house. The woman in the photograph had long fingernails, shaped into perfectly sharp points, very different from mine. They had been painted with a shiny red sheen and made little  
218 dimples in the flesh on her thighs as she pulled her legs apart to allow the camera to see her. Her nails were like arrows pointing at the target. Andrea Dworkin (1981) speaks about pornography used as a tool in rape. She writes about images and fantasies borrowed from pornography brought into intimate situations, between partners sometimes, as a way to enforce desire. One of the stories she retells begins like this:

She was thirteen, at a Girl Scout camp in northern Wisconsin. She went for a long walk in the woods alone during the day. She had long blond hair. She saw three hunters reading magazines, talking, joking. One looked up and said: 'There's a live one.' She thought they meant a deer. She ducked and started to run away. They meant her. They chased her, caught her, dragged her back to where they were camped. The magazines were pornography of women she physically resembled: blond, childlike. They called her names from the pornography: Little Godiva, Golden Girl, also bitch and slut.

Dworkin (1981) tells of many acts that are mimicked from pornography, carried out, under threat, making these kinds of photographs a device used in rape. Objectification seems to have been just as much directed towards my body as towards that of the unknown woman, who in that moment was subtly and passively situated in relation to his violence towards me. I have come to connect the passivity that sometimes overcomes people during rape (Galliano et al., 1993) to the flat and still photographic surface. This link may be in the immobility that both me and the photographed woman shared in a moment where we are both unfolded for his lust, staying absolutely still. She in a kind of photographic stasis, and me involuntarily, as at this point the pain and humiliation I felt had removed any initial, albeit childlike, curiosity about what might happen inside the cabin. When he finally moved away from me, I remained frozen. I cannot say for how long, but after a while there was a knock on the door, which he stood up to open. The cool, clean air from the forest gently moved over my skin, and I perceived another man enter the room. He made a joke about my body that I have no desire to repeat, then they sat down together on a sofa directly underneath the photograph on the wall from which I could not take my eyes. The man drew apart the curtains and spring light 219 flooded the room. I moved to get dressed.

Writing this, I reflect on the layers of experience that have fed into my understanding of photography as a dogmatic medium that is so perfectly fit to produce what I have come to think of as flatness, a term that I think contains my many frustrations with the medium. Might it be something in the materiality of the photographs themselves – I am thinking of it in its printed, material state. Photographs with a front and a back, four corners and just as many sides. Back then I sent exposed rolls of film taken with my grey point-and-shoot camera to a photo-lab in the post. A few weeks later I received the prints back in colourful paper envelopes. Within its materiality, the rigid limitations in the medium so often reveal themselves as ‘mistakes’ – light flowing through a window that bleaches out the interior and any people in it, or a photograph intended to capture friends by the lake at dusk that comes out as dark as night. Alternatively, it might also be the ways that many people, mostly men, wanted to teach me what seemed like their understanding of and



enthusiasm for photography: my father, my university lecturers and technicians, fellow students and exhibition visitors. Or does this frustration and flatness stem from the harsh, objectifying descriptions that Dworkin (1981) gives of a medium sometimes used to enable hierarchical and violent structures and coerce women into harrowing situations? In what, I conclude, must be approached as a layered understanding, there might be many ways to understand the rigidity photography produces for me. But what seems to connect these layers is that all of them are linked to patriarchal structures that I have, in one way or another, experienced as disappointing, dominating, and flattening my subjectivity, my will, my view of the world. I cannot speak for the woman in the photograph on his wall, but materially unfurling seems to me a way to approach a place away from the flatness of the photograph and from the structures that have disabled my autonomy. I want for us both to erupt from our stillness, like the road outside the cabin door does when a car drives past heading away, going somewhere else.

220 Speaking of the complexities intertwined with autobiographies, Estelle C. Jelinek (2003) argues that women's written autobiographies are particularly multi-dimensional. Jelinek observes that the way in which autobiographies are written differs based on gender. It seems as if each of us carries a unique basket of past experiences, where no content is exactly like another's. Tracing the history of women's autobiographies in the West (from antiquity to the present day), Jelinek works by comparing autobiographies, and argues narratives around women's lives often simultaneously span several registers and have a more complex nature than men's. Speaking about the style of the narrative, Jelinek calls autobiographies written by men one-dimensional and self-confident, while pointing out that women's autobiographies are more often non-linear narratives that project a fragmented self-image, underpinned by a sense of accomplishment at having overcome obstacles and therein finding confidence. Jelinek (2003, p.25) argues that the female autobiographer is both a 'self-aware' author and 'a seeker after self-knowledge', aiming to 'give meaning to some personal mythos'. While straight comparisons between lives, and autobiographies, of different genders, presently seem unnecessary (and Jelinek acknowledges that differences are less clear in more recent works), it is in-

teresting that Jelinek finds that there might be a connection between experiencing life as an Other, living in fragmentation, and the creative voice that one seeks and uses to speak of life.

## **Leaving Stillness Behind**

I hear the wind rustling the thick, heavy branches of the pine trees while a tractor is ploughing somewhere beyond as I walk through the forest to take these photographs. I have regained my movement, and with that I seem to have also found my subjectivity, albeit one that has arrived through violence. The domination of this other person, his will, desire, was forcefully folded into my world. But it is my choice to be here at this moment. As if sensing my tension at returning to a place rife with regret, pain and trauma, the forest seems to stop swaying; my whole world stills as I take the two photographs of his parents' house that become the start of this series. After I released the shutter for the second time, I lower my camera. Then I walk back along the track, towards the car that parked on a grass verge 221 a little down the road from his house. I follow the route that my mother and I had taken years ago, after she picked me up. This time I feel elated, with a sense of unfurling. I feel alive, full of energy and with the intent to capture my perspective of what happened. I am speaking and moving, after lying still and flat, after stoically keeping the violence within, not because of shame but because of pride in myself and of not wanting to be a victim.

The catharsis in the experience of gathering those fragmented memories on film is undeniable. Yet, there is something within the medium of photography itself that stills my movement. The result, the photographs, still seem flat. Not at all like the complicated reality of the violent experience. When I look at the photographs, I cannot see the regret, pain and excitement I felt when I took them. The short shutter time stilled my trembling hands and suspended my flickering breathing. And then, it is as if all of that purge, those heavy memories, were washed out in the processing of the negative. I deeply feel that the photograph manages to violate



When I visit to take these pictures I spot a woman walking with her child. Is it his wife? I wonder. Does she know what he did to me? What would happen if I told her?





Figure 5. Prologue (© 2013, Elin Karlsson)

my perspective, as it flattens my experience into a single, well-exposed and white-balanced mono-perspective image.

I try and work through the flatness by folding text into the work. With a paragraph or two under most images, I try to inject some of that washed away complexity back into the narrative. To connect the places to my memories or imagination of them. Thinking about using photography to criticise its own limitations, Simon O'Sullivan (cited in Bleyen, 2012, p.7) points out that art that tries to produce counter-knowledge can become 'caught by the very thing that it attempts to work against' as it 'necessarily has to work on the same terrain as it were – and thus utilise the same terms'. Within photography's two dimensions it seems so difficult to get at the layered complexities that autobiography includes according to Jelinek (2003). The photograph remains physically flat, a state that is for me anchored in my flattened, silent state during and after the assault. Even in photographs of forests and cottages I see unfolding close-ups of vulvas, and I remember the unspeakable, frozen fear that I felt, even as he moved away from me and let a friend into the room. The fear remained for a long time after, as the school corridors echoed with insults. The photograph will, for me, always be linked to being flat and frozen. Prologue (2013) is a complex autobiography folded into the two dimensions of photography, where any potential for multiple perspectives around the slippery memories of violence is tightly pressed and pushed into a flat shape, sealed with a shiny surface and blank reverse, cropped into a rectangle with perfectly square corners – snip, snip. Thought about like this, photography is unable to turn away from the hierarchical and violent connotations that Dworkin (1981) puts forward.

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At some point I must have left the two of them in the cabin and walked down to the road; this part of my memory is blank. But I must have stood there waiting for my mother to arrive, as I do remember her and I leaving the house and the cabin behind. As soon as I closed the car door I put his actions and the violence to one side. What I held onto instead was a sense of humiliation and failure. It seemed to me that my body had failed me. This is what had left him no other option than to be forceful. As I returned to school, I had a sense



that people around me knew about what had happened. Soon after, during the summer of 2000, as me and my friends lip-synched to Destiny's Child, someone carved insults directed at me on the bridge crossing the river near the school. And near the old mill, on the door of the red cottage someone had simply written 'slut' followed by my phone number. Besides creating a document using photography, I am revisiting to get to know my pain and its connection with this place that I have long ago moved away from, but never quite left behind. While memories come and go, photographs are longer lasting, something that I can keep. Maybe instead of proof of what did occur, they act as a token to support my swaying memory. In *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag (2003) explains that the notion of 'atrocities' depends on photographic evidence to establish that such violence has happened; without it the crime or violence seems unverifiable or unreal. People who have experienced sexual violence often doubt whether it happened. This may be linked to involuntary forgetting of the abuse (Joslyn et al., 1997). For me, this has created a memory that is slippery and disjointed while simultaneously pin-sharp and lasting. In *Prologue* (2013), the autobiographical record works against self-doubt and against the disjointedness of these memories. And this work helps me imagine that there was some justice done. It is a prologue to the rest of my life and the rest of my practice.

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While I am in the village I head towards the bridge near the school. From there it is not far to walk to the old mill. I am looking for any traces that might be left of what was written about me. At the bridge I look to see if the carving is still there. But, more than ten years on, I find no sign of it. Then I walk to the panelled door of the little red cottage near the mill, where someone had written 'slut' in big, black letters. The cottage still stands there, but the writing was gone – but I knew that my mother went down there to whitewash over it soon after it appeared. The white emulsion might have faded over the years, revealing the dark writing, but it had not. As I reflect on these limitations, the fact that I simply cannot photograph something that is not there, about feeling unseen, I think about the hierarchies bound up in the medium of photography. In *Torture and the Ethics of Photography* (2007), Judith Butler links the framing of photography to the ethics of image making and image seeing. Something of what Butler speaks of is reflected in my own experience

of not having any traces to document, and of this event being invisible to the world. Looking specifically at photography in conflict and the creation and exercise of power, Butler suggests that states or governments rely on the photograph as a framing device to control what is seen – and what is not. Butler points out that though the structures behind the framing are not seen in the photograph itself, they can be understood as extensions of societal structures. Of course I cannot expect to be able to photograph the past.

But the sadness and frustration of not having any photographic proof of what happened still lingers. For Butler (2007), the framing points towards who matters in society and, by contrast, who is unimportant. I am reminded of Michel Foucault, and the section in his *History of Sexuality*, Volume 1, on the rape in the village of Lapcourt that he describes as ‘inconsequential’ (Foucault, 1998, p.31). Something that is, in Foucault’s words, simply a part of village life. In my case there was no crime report, nothing raised at school, no one knew my perspective of it. Yet, intimate details about my body seemed public knowledge. The adults around me must have turned a blind eye. With all traces that could have been photographed gone, my sketchy memory around this event lets me down. Reading Butler, the hierarchical framing device that is photography is an extension of the ideas of expendable lives and grievability, where some lives matter more than others. Some people are more valued than others.

In *Torture and the Ethics of Photography*, Butler (2007) argues that photography plays a part in systemic violence (as the medium systematically and invisibly carries out these evaluations), and explains that an ongoing devaluing of people enables violence to be carried out. The frame of the photograph can be thought of as a symbol of something in itself, a representation of hierarchy, of patriarchy, of boundaries, and even of the violence that features in some biographies. Coming up against the hierarchies in the medium of photography triggers a familiar sense of violence, as my autobiography seems invisible and inconsequential as far as photography and society is concerned.

I left the little village where all this took place a few years after it happened. I moved to

a city nearby and finished my last three years of mandatory education. It was not long after that I decided to leave Sweden altogether. Within a few years I had settled in the UK. Looking back now, it seems I might have had an urge to leave that violence behind. Speaking about how external structures fold into our internal worlds, Deleuze (2006) theorises the concept of the fold in his book *Foucault: connected to power*, the fold involves the undoing or rethinking of both sexuality and subjectivity. Through the fold, Deleuze displaces ideas of inside and outside. Thinking about sexual violence especially, this displacement seems very active, as in rape, where violent external worlds are forced into our internal cavities, and I think they then feather out into subjectivities. Deleuze further talks about how we carry with us our subjective experiences, through which the inside is nothing other than a fold of the outside, perpetually doubled or folded into new iterations of existence through which our subjectivity shapes and reshapes.

The assault has folded around me, where it has stayed, sometimes perched lightly, so I hardly notice it, and other times sitting heavier, causing long periods of promiscuity, self-hatred and depression. Humiliation and anger, not rage, became folded into who I felt I was. My subjectivity has become intertwined with the photograph of the vulva, my mother's subtle gestures around the painting of the door, with the carving on the bridge. As the memories of violence have folded into me, I feel I must undermine power where and when I can, to try and expose any structures that I connect to me being sexually assaulted. I have noticed that my relationship with hierarchy is stained by it, as I continually feel I have to protest power. Carol Rambo's (1995) autoethnographic account of her own childhood sexual abuse mentions her own protest. For Rambo, sexual abuse is one of her earliest memories, and her father was responsible. Rambo explains how, from the age of around four, she learned to pee a little in her father's mouth every time he molested her. She found that this gave her a sense of regained power, of carrying out a silent protest that he was unaware of, as she had mastered doing it without him noticing. James Scott (1985, 1990) has written on ways of protesting and showing resistance to power and domination. When under duress of beatings or rape, rather than outrightly and violently protesting, we can instead protest by dragging our feet, lie or pretending not to hear. For me, the protest

Homing in on the violence in their method, Johannesson (2021) continues: 'I cut you out, skinning you from the back that grounds you. Curled up, you are fragile and thin'. Johannesson originally took Polaroid photographs to test their set-up when taking portraits in studio; the Polaroid photographs offered a way to test the composition before taking the final photograph with a large-format camera, but are in themselves something of a by-product. At least until Johannesson used them in *Skin* (2021). Though these works are photographic – they begin as an indexical recording of a person, following the tradition of photographic portraiture – in the process of the emulsion lift and with the crumpling of the surface the photograph loses something of its photographic essence; as the emulsion is lifted, the 'skin' curls up and becomes three dimensional. Faces become less recognisable but more complex. In this multi-dimensional shape, the crinkly, fragile sculptural object begins to speak about the complexity of identity. About this, Johannesson (2021) writes: 'your existence is in doubt, see-through and groundless'. Working in this fusion of sculpture and photography, Johannesson explains that *Skin* is an attempt to use a different language, one that directly violates the medium. In a material sense, it is a photograph beyond flatness. *Skin* upsets not just the historical concepts but the spatiality and materiality of the dimensions. Bringing these ideas towards autobiography and sexual violence, we can think about the fold in an embodied way as undermining the inside/outside dichotomy. Folding places the work as a glitch, to use O'Sullivan's phrase, moving it away from the flat and two dimensionality of photography (Bleyen, 2012). By working photography into a sculptural and multi-dimensional form, by folding and unfurling, it starts to speak about the complexities of biography in a way that registers outside of hierarchies and patriarchal structures. In fact, as a protest against those structures.

## A Parallel Perspective

Unfurling the boat's sail in the very early hours of an autumn day, my father and I look for the sunrise in the Mediterranean, in October 2019. We are out before sunrise to film and take photographs. In wordless communication with me and the wind, my father steers the



Figure 6. Skin 6 from *The Queering of Photography* (© 2017-2021, Åsa Johannesson. Used with permission.)





boat while I line up the shot to photograph the moment the sun will appear in a shimmer of peach and hues of light blue for the very first time, at least that day. The Rolling Stones are echoing from our speakers across the Balearic Sea. As the tunes fade in rhythm with the sea, the sun appears.

I am, I realise, at the earliest possible stage of pregnancy, carrying my daughter. Growing the ultimate displacement of the interior / exterior dichotomy. The baby undermines the idea of separation between me and another, undermines the idea of independence, and clarifies that of reliance, care, vulnerability, the opening and redistribution of folds. In pregnancy and birth, I embody and redefine my understanding of fissures and tears, of breaking out and altering bodily typographies. I have never felt more complete than when I was two for a short nine months, when the two of us were folded so intensely into one complete mesh of out and in. On that early October morning I dove into the mild autumn sea feeling unity with the saline water around me. As I floated, I peered through my camera lens at the newly risen sun; my heart skipped several beats then fluttered, and that is when I first felt with every fibre of me that she had become. In the time that followed, through pregnancy and birth, I experienced a symbolic reversal of the forced entries of my body. Once the nine months had passed, as I was taken over by surges that folded my body back over the baby to empty the womb, the seeds were sown to dare imagine a new future for her and us.

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As we cannot do away with the outside threat of violence, existing within the world is living with violence. But as a subject, one can choose whether to participate or perpetuate the violence. Butler (2021) claims that, whether we like it or not, we are within the force field of violence, and free to pick up the tool to perpetuate it. The woman's body functions within patriarchal society but is also the deliverer of the internalised external that once again becomes external through birth. In photography there is also something about the multiple doublings that seem to offer a release from the bounded singularity (of the singular, flat image discussed above). When the narrative of autobiography is multiplied, in a series or alongside other mediums like text or music, photography seems able to behave

differently. Together, photographs then seem able to expand and create depth in the gaps left between each picture or in the relationship with other media, pushing the boundaries of the medium.

Thinking in terms of the glitch, Nan Goldin's work, the *Ballad of Sexual Dependency* (1985), was when first shown sequenced into a slideshow set to music. Goldin highlights that 'nowadays, people forget how radical my work was when it first appeared. Nobody else was doing what I did' (O'Hagan, 2014). Speaking about her work, Goldin uses a terminology that resonates with the idea of the glitch and also of protest. She embraces not caring about being technically 'correct', nor does she care about taking 'good' photographs. The priority, she says, is always honesty over technical perfection. Goldin describes using photography as a survival mechanism within a complex situation, of losing her sister to suicide and wanting to find an escape from suburbia: 'when I say the camera has kept me alive, I mean it literally' (O'Hagan, 2014, p.???). In Goldin's autobiographical works, which are often highly intimate and challenging, like the *Ballad of Sexual Dependency*, capturing people in domestic settings, often surrounded by violence, drugs or alcohol, but also family and sex, we are told that there is a subject folded into the photographs, and as viewers we look for it with the anticipation of seeing something, an unconscious, come forward, unfurling from the photograph.

In my autobiographical work, in *Prologue* (2013) and even in this appendix my subjectivity has been visualised; it is where it has been created. It is, in a sense, a case of becoming who one is, with violent experiences and all, as a complex and multilayered subject. Thinking about the fold and about topography in relation to autobiography, to memory and to photography, bringing the multi-latitudinal eruption (or disruption) to the image, as seen in Åsa Johannesson's work, makes a lot of sense in countering the hierarchies of photography as argued by Butler (2007). Folding is a partial solution to the issues described in this appendix around the physical flatness of photography that for me has been linked to violence, as a way to upset the one dimensionality of the photograph and let its surface erupt. We can also think about the inclusion of other mediums, such as writing, to fold complex-

ity back into photography, working against the flatness in a gentler, less materialistically upsetting way.

The openings that allow access to our bodies seem particularly crucial points of exchange between the inside and outside, and thus the creation and emergence of subjectivity. These places are in a direct material sense the point of transference of activity, as the folds slide and transform between these spaces. The experience of penetration heightens the sensitivity of oscillating from the outside to the inside. We are touched or approached through our insides, in a continual bond with the sometimes violent outside, which folds into us. For me, there has been pain in this movement, but there is also hope.

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## Key Terms and Definitions

**Deterritorialise:** With this concept Deleuze and Guattari speak about changes to the status quo. Whenever something new is incorporated into something else it is deterritorialised. Whenever that new something is fully integrated it is reterritorialised, but in a slightly altered state from before.

**Interdisciplinary:** Relating to more than one area of knowledge. Used here in relation to

art practice methodologies or artworks that position themselves between dominant disciplines or genres.

**Flatness:** The quality of having a flat surface without any raised parts or indents, but also an unenthusiastic attitude or mood.

**Fold:** The idea of the fold appears throughout Deleuze's writing but becomes particularly mobilised in his writing on Leibnitz and Foucault. It is in essence an idea around subjectivity and how it is created through our relationships with the body, with memory and with time. Foucault speaks about the mastery of the self, and the creation of power through (later Christian) ideals around a domesticised sexuality, where the mastery of one's own urges equates to power inside and outside the home. The creation of the self is a folding of the external into the internal such that the boundaries between the two disappear.

**Materiality** (of the photograph): The idea that the physical qualities of an object are important to how the object is used or understood.

**Unfurling:** Becoming extended from a folded state: for instance, the unfurling of a sail.



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