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Make me yours: the psychodynamics of seduction through works of art

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of
Sheffield Hallam University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Make me yours

The psychodynamics of seduction
through works of art

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ABSTRACT

In *Fatal Strategies*, Jean Baudrillard argues that music and literature are seductive in themselves. Given his later interest in photography and the work of Sophie Calle, it could be argued that seduction is also an attribute of the visual arts. But what makes a work of art seductive? My research is concerned with the relational and psychodynamic aspects of the encounter between the work of the art and the viewer; one that, when seduction operates, is characterised by interplay, flow and conflict.

The first step towards disentangling this problem is to define seduction, a concept that is contingent, ridden with confusion, contradictions and connotative interpretations, even in the gallery space (as recent exhibitions on seduction demonstrate). Any attempt at pinning down the term, however, shows that it is pervasive and as a ruling principle, it operates everywhere – especially where efforts to study it are made. The problem, then, becomes a methodological one: how might one study seduction as it operates in the encounter with works of art? I put forward a subjective, practice-led approach, comprised of three strands: artistic – in particular photography – psychoanalytic and writing practices. All three enact the self-reflexive methodology that is at the core of the contribution my project aims to make and which is constituted of three steps: recognition, capture and reflection.

The context for the research is multiform, interdisciplinary and is located in converging fields concerned with textual and visual material: eighteenth-century libertine novels, in particular *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and the writings of the Marquis de Sade; Giacomo Casanova's memoirs; Frank Sinatra's peculiar arrest in 1938; Sigmund Freud's abandonment of the seduction theory; Søren Kierkegaard's games between Johannes and Cordelia; Karl Marx's commodity fetishism; Naia del Castillo's works, which are linked to Surrealist concerns, and Jacques Lacan's mysterious *objet petit a*, the object cause of desire. All these play a part in delineating seduction.

My own (nearly missed) encounter with a work of art, Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donné*s, and a bold shoe in a New York shop window are used as support for the writing, together with the occasional appearances of a detective – who will provide the forensic gaze required of PhD studies – and other minor characters.

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This submission would have not been possible without the help and support of some people. First, I want to warmly thank my Director of Studies, Sharon Kivland, and my supervisors, Steve Dutton and Tom Fisher. They gave me constant encouragement and well thought out critiques in the five years taken to complete this project. They also organised my psychoanalytic library, introduced me to very interesting people, sent me to analysis and to art galleries, advised me to dress up to write, and allowed me to be seduced by images and objects when I was fiercely resisting it. Most of the beautiful details in this thesis (from references to the lens as seductive to the mention of eighteenth-century court dances) are the result of their comments or our conversations. Without them, I may have completed the project, but I am sure it would not have been either so challenging or so much fun. I hope to continue working with them in some form.

Jaspar Joseph-Lester and Kathy Doherty were there for me throughout the process, offering insightful comments that changed the direction of the research. They also invited me to perform presentations – a pleasure, which they knew I enjoyed. Miguel Santos always asked the most difficult questions in the most elegant and supportive manner. He has been the best PhD companion I could have hoped for. Ester Ehiyazaryan and Matthew White were my hosts: they cooked nice food, gave me wine when I needed it, took care of me and always had a kind word in times of stress. They were much more than friends and I hope one day I can reciprocate everything they did for me. To Tracey Smith, I owe the fact that I have been able to worry solely about the content of the research, as she has always been so helpful with the administrative aspects. I learned a lot from Peter Downes, who patiently helped me install the show at the End Gallery. His lighting brought the images to life.

I am in debt to everyone I met at the conferences and events I attended, for the generosity of their comments and for keeping in touch. Working away from Sheffield was not easy, and I want to thank staff and students at the Glasgow School of Art, the University of Glasgow and the Transart Institute for helping me to keep focused, for always listening to my strange stories about seduction and for generously offering me theirs. I especially must mention Nicky Bird, Stephen Jackson and Vaughan Judge, who assured me that the photographs made sense. I also want to thank masters and PhD students at C3RI who finished and started their degrees while I was there. Their words of encouragement after my presentations made a big difference.

I must also thank Viva Misadventure and Ruth Mills, who made me take my gloves off and walk the walk. They know what I mean. Lorens Holm kindly shared his thoughts with me and pointed out that the pavement wires in my *Breda* photograph are typical of New York. That remark still resonates with me. To my epistolary friend, Linda Herbertson, I owe more than words can say; her letters made everything right, wright, write.

Marilyn Charles at the Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society showed me there is a space for creative practices among clinicians. She – and everyone else at the APCS – made me feel very welcome. Colleen Hill, Tanya Melendez and Tamsen Schwartzman from the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York were remarkable hosts. They invited me to speak as part of an exhibition that, unbeknown to them, contained my most desired object of seduction (Christian Louboutin’s shoes for Rodarte, in pink). They gave me the experience of a lifetime. Barbara Townley and Nic Beech, from the Institute for Capitalising on Creativity, and the editors at Cambridge University Press provided me with writing skills that made the composition of this volume so much easier. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to be part of your book. Thank you also to Robert Wringham from the *New Escapologist*, Gaia Persico and Jools Johnson from Arttra, Leanne Cannon from *New Associations* (British Psychoanalytic Council), and Karen Shook, Books Editor at *Times Higher Education*. Their interesting writing propositions helped to resolve knots in my thinking.

I want to close these lines by thanking Neil, who simply but crucially brought out the seducer in me.

A NOTE ON PUBLICATION

I tested my understanding of Baudrillard's thoughts on seduction in relation to works of art in the paper 'Created to lead astray: Baudrillard's seduction in contemporary artefacts', which I presented at the *Engaging Baudrillard* Conference in Swansea University, on the 6th September 2006.

An earlier version of the parallels between artistic and analytic practices, which I present in chapter two of this text, was published as 'Escape to Your Unconscious' in the *New Escapologist* Magazine, Issue 2, 2009, pp. 55-57.

The paper 'Reflections on seduction', which I delivered at the *Architecture: Exploring Textual and Architectural Spaces* conference at University of Strathclyde on 17th April 2008, explored a woman being stopped in her tracks in front of a jewellery shop and is an early version of chapters two and three.

My Director of Studies, Sharon Kivland, and I worked together to develop the paper 'What the artwork wants: thoughts for, against and around interpretation in art and psychoanalysis' which we delivered at the conference *Research into Practice 2008: the Problem of Interpretation* at the Royal Society of Arts, London, on the 31st October 2008, and aspects of this were later developed in chapter four.

Different aspects of the conclusion were performed at two conferences: I presented 'Seduction captured' at *The Social Life Of Methods*, the 6th Annual Conference of the ESRC Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, on the 2nd September 2010, at St Hugh's College, Oxford; 'Stranger, Seducer' is the title of the paper I delivered at *Transmission: Hospitality* on the 3rd July 2010 at Sheffield Hallam University.

I provided a 20-minute summary of this research at *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*, at Middlesex University, on the 5th June 2010.

In addition to this, I participated in the following events, all of which had a role to play in the development of the research. I contributed to a roundtable of Pedro Almodóvar's film *Volver* (part of the *Association for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society 2007 Annual Conference – Hope for Hard Times: Anxiety, Alienation and Activism*, at Rutgers University, 2nd-4th November 2007) with a short paper entitled 'Mothers, Daughters and Cryptophores'. With 'When Freud Visited the Acropolis', I

introduced a panel entitled 'Psychoanalysis in Doctoral Research', part of an event entitled *Rigorous Holes: Perspectives on Psychoanalytic Theory in Art and Performance Research*, which took place at Chelsea College of Art, on the 29th and 30th May 2007. I made a public presentation, 'That Obscure Object of Research' at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama on 24th January 2008. I participated in 'Practice in a PhD', a workshop for supervisors, which took place at Nottingham Trent University on 25th September 2008. I was interviewed in New York by the Museum at the Fashion Institute of Technology (MFIT) curator Colleen Hill as part of their Fashion Culture Special Educational Programs on the 18th February 2009; the conversation was called *Perversion within Seduction*.

Early in the research, I thought I would develop a series of case studies, one of which would be Philippe Starck's infamous lemon squeezer *Juicy Salif*. Although aspects of this work remain in the thesis, I decided to leave the case studies out. The idea of *Juicy Salif* as an object of seduction, however, was developed in a paper entitled 'Juicy Salif as a Cultish Totem' and delivered at the 'Ars Longa: Establishing Value' session of the conference *The Discipline of Creativity: Exploring the Paradox*, organised by the Institute for Capitalising on Creativity at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama on 2nd May 2007. This paper was then developed into a book chapter ('Juicy Salif as a Cultish Totem', in Barbara Townley and Nic Beech (eds), *Managing Creativity. Exploring the Paradox*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

Many of these events were funded by Sheffield Hallam University and The Glasgow School of Art. I thank both institutions for their support.

INTRODUCTION

A FIRST ENCOUNTER

I will start with a detour, even though I know it is too soon for this kind of liberty. Yet, the diversion will be very productive as circuitous routes are at the core of what this text investigates. Not long ago, I had the opportunity to visit Philadelphia. I had always dreamed of my encounter with Marcel Duchamp's *Le Grand verre* (*La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même*) (1915-1923).¹ I had puzzled over Richard Hamilton's meticulous reproduction housed at the Tate Modern in London; yet, I suspected that seeing the 'definitively unfinished' version, the one with the aesthetic breakage, would answer some of my questions around this enigmatic work of art.² But I was not prepared for what was to happen.

Le Grand verre is in room 182 of the Philadelphia Museum of Art and joins other masterpieces by Duchamp including his 1932 *Green Box* notes and the infamous Richard Mutt signed original urinary, entitled *Fountain* (1968). In the next room, numbered 183, one can find *Étant donnés* (1946-1966), which has not been moved since its permanent installation in 1969. I had not thought much about *Étant donnés*, concentrating on the riddles posed by *Le Grand verre* but the way visitors related to it while I sat in room 182 caught my attention. So I decided to look.

The first thing that left me begging was its title. *Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage*.³ Given ... what is given? Is there anything that is going to be given to me? 'Perhaps the *Green Box* writings can be useful here', I thought. One of the notes reads, in French:

1. The title of the work translates as *The Large Glass (The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even)*.

2. Dawn Ades, Neil Cox, and David Hopkins, explain the importance of the breakage for Duchamp: 'In 1927 both panes of glass shattered while in transit from an exhibition in Brooklyn. When its owner Katherine Dreier brought herself to tell Duchamp of the disaster, he accepted the breakage as a kind of "chance completion", and in 1936 spent some months patiently mending it, finally encasing each panel in two further glass panels, mounted in a wood and steel frame'. *Marcel Duchamp*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1999, p. 94. My naming this version of *The Large Glass* as 'definitively finished' plays on Duchamp's 1923 statement as he stopped work on the *Glass*, declaring it 'definitively unfinished'. Ades, Cox and Hopkins. *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 88.

3. In English, *Given: 1. The Waterfall, 2. The Illuminating Gas*.

Préface 1

Étant donné 1^o la chute d'eau
2^o le gaz d'éclairage,

on déterminera les conditions
du repos instantané (ou apparence allégorique)
d'une succession [d'un ensemble] de faits divers
semblant se nécessiter l'un l'autre
par des lois, pour isoler le signe
de concordance entre, d'une part,
ce repos (capable de toutes les inhomogénéités)
et, d'autre part, un choix de possibilités
légitimées par ces lois et aussi le
occasionnant.

Pour repos instantané faire un
examen

On déterminera les conditions de la meilleure
exposition du Repos extra-rapide (ou la
note extra-rapide (= apparence allégorique)
d'un signal - - - - - etc.

Fig. 1: Marcel Duchamp, *Préface; Étant donné* "1^o la chute d'eau, 2^o le gaz d'éclairage", facsimile (collotype on paper) of manuscript note in *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Green Box)*, 1934, 21 x 12.7 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Louise and Walter Arensberg Collection.⁴

There is more to this title, in the same way that there is more to *L.H.O.O.Q.* than 5 letters.⁵ I cannot help but read thanatos, in the form of an epitaph. The note refers to

4. Source: Michael R Taylor, *Marcel Duchamp: Étant donné*, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009, p. 284. For an English version of this note see George Heard Hamilton and Richard Hamilton's translation in Anne d'Harnoncourt and Walter Hopps, *Étant donné: 1^o la chute d'eau, 2^o le gaz d'éclairage: Reflections on a New Work by Marcel Duchamp*, Philadelphia Museum of Art Bulletin, vol. 64, April–September 1969, revised and updated in 1987, p. 19.

5. If the letters L.H.O.O.Q. are pronounced in French, they are homophonous to the sentence 'elle a chaud au cul' (she has a hot bum), *elle* being the moustached *Mona Lisa*.

a ‘State of Rest’, a ‘choice of Possibilities’, with capitals and underlined, and these led me to Sigmund Freud’s death drive. The title, *Given*, suggests an offering, perhaps posthumous: is Duchamp giving us his body of works?

I had read that Duchamp worked on *Étant donnés* for twenty years, during which most of the world thought he had completely abandoned art to play chess. Like the latter game, *Étant donnés* represents an individual encounter with the work of art; a group of people, small as it may be, would be pressed to see it exactly at the same time. With this thought, and prepared for a punning game of chess – as I know something of Duchamp’s work – I leave the ready-mades and paintings of room 182 to venture into the next room. And like in any great adventure, there are a number of obstacles I have to address. The first one, often forgotten, is one I had already overcome: to see *Étant donnés* one has to go all the way to Philadelphia. In a late capitalist world, where art tours to venues near almost anybody in the Western world, travel is made easy, blockbuster shows are traded and permanent collections are decimated by loans, the site specificity of *Étant donnés* is unheard of.

The second obstacle is a constitutive part of the piece. In the darkness of room 183, at the far end of the Philadelphia Museum of Art – a darkness one has to get used to – I first encounter a wooden door, which Duchamp had sent to New York from Spain. It is mounted on to the wall, with handsome bricks forming an arch in its upper edge. The door is not *any* door, however. This is a door without a handle, a door that is visibly not for opening and closing. This may be one of the reasons why visitors to the Philadelphia Museum of Art that make it all the way to the end of the Modern and Contemporary Art galleries turn around barely after entering room 183. This is what I took great pleasure in observing. With the works *Priere de toucher* (1947), *Fountain*, *Comb* (1916), *50 cc of Paris Air* (1919), *With Hidden Noise* (1916) and *Why Not Sneeze Rose Sélavy?* (1921) among others in the adjacent room, a keen but uninformed visitor cannot be blamed for thinking that the door of *Étant donnés* is also a ready-made.⁶ Either that, or the door just puts people off.

The third obstacle *Étant donnés* presents is only applicable to people like me. This is

6. Hector Obalk, writes: “The only definition of “readymade” published under the name of Marcel Duchamp (“MD” to be precise) stays in Breton and Eluard’s *Dictionnaire abrégé du Surréalisme*: “an ordinary object elevated to the dignity of a work of art by the mere choice of an artist.” “The Unfindable Readymade”, in *Tout-fait. The Marcel Duchamp Studies Online Journal*, vol. 1, issue 2, May 2000, available from <http://www.toutfait.com/issues/issue_2/Articles/obalk.html> [accessed 09.04.10].

not a gender issue –⁷ which is also present but much more delicately than what has often been discussed, as we will see later – an economic, or a racial one. No. As a 4ft 10" human being, the issue is one of height. On closer inspection, one can see that the Spanish door is metaphorically hinged upon two small holes, around which the wood has changed colour, no doubt due to the breath of visitors. The stain in the door both tames and reveals the way of seeing the work, as it shows – and somehow also demands – from where to look. Through the holes, viewers peep and see the other part of the installation. Yet, after having travelled halfway across the world, there I was, helpless, unable to reach the holes on the door. I could not believe it. I jumped: I saw a leg. I jumped again: oh, how light and colourful. This was not working. I took out my digital camera (the museum allows photographs without flash in most of its rooms) and extended my arms up, clicking through the holes. Was this going to be a missed encounter? Would I only be able to see an image, a second rate, shaky, representation?

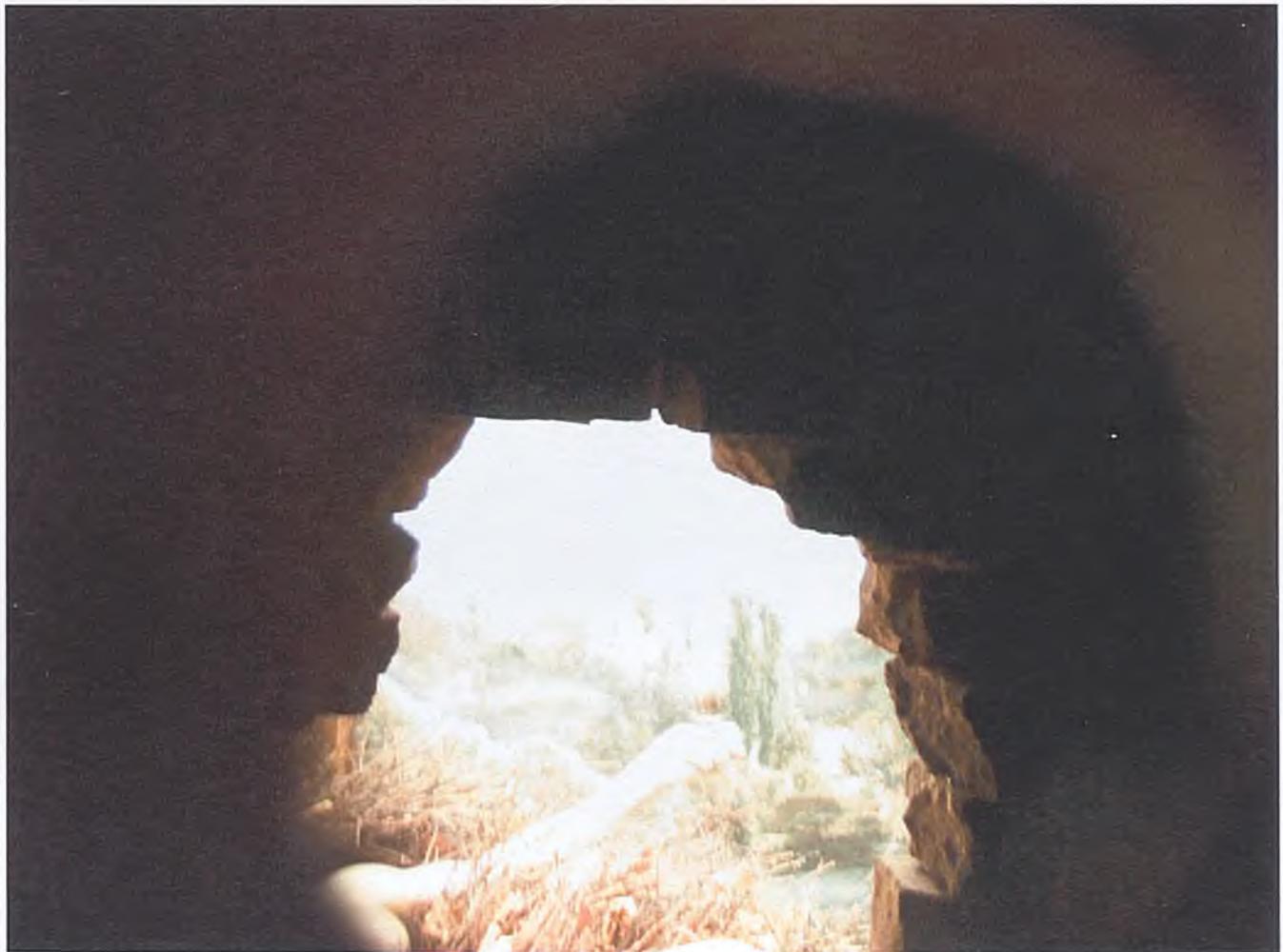
Tired and jet-lagged, I was ready to give up. I stomped back into light and airy 182, with the reassuring *Le Grand verre* and where a bored gallery assistant was sitting. ‘No,’ she giggled when I asked, she did not have anything I could stand on – even though we were sitting a particularly apt bench, but my pleadings and travel dramas only added to her boredom. I was not even worthy of a look. Nothing. Who cared about art, anyway? I walked back to room 183, and resolved to perfect my jumping technique. I was not going anywhere. I was even prepared to ask somebody to lift me – and body contact with strangers is the very last resort – when I had an idea. As a small person, I tend to wear shoes with heels, and, although the ones I was wearing then were not high enough for the occasion, doubling their height would suffice. So I took off one shoe and stood on one leg and two shoes. I could reach now, propping my one-legged body by holding on to the Spanish door. The irritating third obstacle was conquered and I can show you what I saw (Fig. 2).

The last obstacle I had to overcome is the most disconcerting. This piece is viewed from a single and specific point of view, through holes.⁸ I was not prepared for the

7. So why is this piece not about the gendered body? After all, are we not looking at a naked woman? Or are we? I was only too aware of the theories around the bulging genitalia of the naked body, the question of hermaphroditism, and the feelings of throbbing fleshiness felt by some intellectual and critical viewers in relation to the unreal landscape in the background. I must say, my impression is that this body does not only refer to a body, but also points towards a history of representation.

8. The encounter with *Étant donnés* is so personal that, as Julian Jason Haladyu explains, the experience is always very difficult to summarize, let alone document. *One Work Marcel Duchamp: Étant donnés*, London: Afterall Books, 2010.

fact that *Étant donnés* is clearly a work about gaze and looking.⁹ My complete bafflement at something so evident (what else could I have been expecting?) might have been because I had never really seen the piece before. Whereas *Le Grand verre* is a transparent, freestanding structure that can be seen from any point, *Étant donnés* limits the view. Moreover, I was completely excluded from the scene, only partly seeing it from the outside, although even that last word is contentious. Where are we in relation to the Spanish door? In or out; enclosed or excluded? Or both? Yet, even though I was not in the scene of the work, I was in another scene: that of the experience of viewing. I was very conscious of my act of looking. Yet, apart from being a work about gaze and looking, it is also about what one cannot see. I wanted to see the head of the woman, even though I knew that, no matter how or how much I moved, I would not be able to. Is there one, anyway?



9. The references to dioramas, and peep shows, and the teasing of vision within these are literally present in *Étant donnés* but apart from presenting us with our gaze, and converting us into objects in the same way those contraptions and entertainment venues do, this is an installation about a particular kind of looking: looking at art. Evidencing this is its discussion, in visual form, of the two main subjects of the history of art – particularly painting: the nude and the landscape; and its exploration of different media: sculpture, painting, chiaroscuro, photography, assemblage, time-based media, conceptual art – remember the title. Funny enough, though, *Étant donnés* cannot be represented, either in words or images, as in and out cannot be viewed at the same time. It cannot be photographed as a whole. It is an experience in sequence, a little like a film, but one in which the viewer acts on, or lives. Even the shop's clever idea for the unavoidable postcard – a telling of the experience through lenticular photography – misses the point.



Fig. 2: Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés* (behind the Spanish door) at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as experienced by the author.

What one can see through the holes has been well documented – you can see my own images in Fig. 2 – but the strong experiential content of the work requires I record it again, in writing. Straight after the holes is a thick darkness – a darkness, I learn in books, that is velvet-lined. Then, bricks are arranged so that they form a casual but meticulous gap through which I peep at the scene. The scene, with elements of the psychoanalytic primal one,¹⁰ is brightly lit, which immediately challenges my shadow-accustomed eyes. A bucolic landscape, apparently painted over photographic material and reminiscent of the backdrop of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, with a waterfall conveying the illusion of running water, gives way, at the forefront of the scene, to a bed of real twigs which support a naked body, only partially visible, holding the illuminating gas, which does just that, illuminate. I know this scene so well, yet it still feels strange to write about it. Nothing goes with anything, but it has some sort of unity. Is this the scene of a crime? Is the body dead, or about to die?¹¹

Étant donnés continues to baffle Duchamp scholars some of whom find it difficult to place within his work. There have been theories around *Given* being a three dimensional representation of *Le Grand verre*,¹² as some of the themes are re-worked – not least the bride, stripped bare – and they both share elements articulated in *The Green Box*.¹³

10. *The International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis* defines the primal scene as 'the sight of sexual relations between the parents, as observed, constructed, and/or fantasised by the child and interpreted by the child as a scene of violence. The scene is not understood by the child, remaining enigmatic but at same time provoking sexual excitement.' Sophie de Mijolla-Mellor, 'Primal Scene', in Alain de Mijolla (ed.), *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, Gale Cengage, 2005, available from <<http://www.enotes.com/psychoanalysis-encyclopedia/primal-scene>> [accessed 25.04.10].

11. Read about this debate in, for example Jean-Michel Rabaté, *Given, 1° Art 2° Crime: Modernity, Murder and Mass Culture*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2007 (who supports the theory of the corpse), and Taylor, *Étant donnés* (who disputes it).

12. Octavio Paz, among others, wrote about this in *Apariencia Desnuda: La Obra de Marcel Duchamp*, Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2003 (1973), pp. 107–187.

13. Of course, *Étant donnés* could be articulated in the context of *Le Grand verre*, but it also references a number of other works by Duchamp. For some critics, *Étant donnés* means a come back to (some would say a step back) representation. But, as Dalia Judovitz points out, this is not a negation of ready-mades and conceptualism; rather, *Étant donnés* takes Duchamp's groundbreaking ideas to their extreme: is the Philadelphia Museum of Art not a ready-made, when looked at through the holes of the Spanish door? Dalia Judovitz, 'Rendez-vous with Marcel Duchamp: Given', in *Unpacking Duchamp: Art in Transit*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, pp. 195–232. Read the English translation of the *Green Box* in Marcel Duchamp, 'The Green Box', tr. by George Heard Hamilton, in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp (Marchand du sel [1959])*, ed. by Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973, 26–71.

I could write many interpretations about my experience, from what I saw and what I have read in books. Of all the explanations, I found that psychoanalysis lent itself particularly well as a critical approach, due to its Dada and Surrealism connections, its relation to gaze and its portrayal of the body. But historical, technical, psychological, contextual and even phenomenological accounts cannot explain my sudden overpowering attraction to *Étant donnés*. I had been unequivocally seduced, and this is where it all started.

This study is about seduction, as it manifests itself in certain works of art. It is concerned with what happens between seducer and seducee in the seductive encounter. This specific relationship, as will be seen, is governed by conflict. To study it, I have taken a psychodynamic approach, looking at the psychological, cultural and active forces underlying behaviour. Yet, the guiding principle of the research is practice – artistic and others, including looking – as this is what enables a psychodynamic relation with objects and works of art.¹⁴

There are certain rules of engagement I must mention before I set out to explore the complex phenomenon of seduction. The present volume is structured around chapter three, which acts as a pivot on which all the other chapters hinge. Chapter three, *The Scene of a Crime*, is the kernel, the point at which the writing changes, reversing and mirroring itself – and reversibility, as we will see, is a key characteristic of seduction. This chapter introduces Roland Barthes' conceptualisation of the 'still' as what allows us to see, and also makes a case for different modes of writing, using Jacques Lacan's

14. The research is indebted to various works of art, which have inspired it along the way. These will be explored throughout the text and the visual material. What may be more obscure is the influence of a number of literary texts, namely Choderlos de Laclos' *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Marquis de Sade's *Dialogue between a Priest and a Dying Man*, Giacomo Casanova's memoirs *History of My Life* and Vladimir Nabokov's prose. Of all of these, the first three have a direct link to seduction, as they approach issues linked to libertinism. The last inspiration, however, may require a little explanation. The divine details, precision, interest in detectives and detection, unraveling of the story at the end (for example in *The Eye*), narrative structure (*Pale Fire*) and the act of recounting without telling but by showing (as in *Lolita*, *Bend Sinister*, *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight* or *Despair*) are all writing attributes I have kept in mind while constructing this text. Malcolm Ashmore's PhD thesis, more academic in its execution, has also stimulated my writing. See Choderlos de Laclos, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* [1782], tr. by P.W.K. Stone, London: Penguin Books, 1961; Marquis de Sade, 'Dialogue between a Priest and a Dying Man' (*Dialogue entre un prêtre et un moribond* [1788]), in *The Misfortunes of Virtue and Other Early Tales*, tr. by David Coward, New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, pp. 149–160; Giacomo Casanova, *History of My Life, vols 1 to 12 (Histoire de Ma Vie* [1960]), tr. by Willard R. Trask, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997; Vladimir Nabokov, *The Eye (Soglyadatay* [1930]), tr. by Dmitri Nabokov, London: Panther, 1968 (1966); *Pale Fire*, London: Penguin, 1973 (1962); *Lolita*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1959; *Bend Sinister*, London: Penguin Modern Classics, 2001 (1947); *The Real Life of Sebastian Knight*, London: Penguin, 1964 (1941); *Despair (Oichayanie* [1934]), tr. by the author, London: Panther, 1969; Malcolm Ashmore, *The Reflexive Thesis. Wrioting Sociology of Scientific Knowledge*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1989.

work as an example. Often seen as obscure and impenetrable Lacan's use of language reflects the structure and ways of working of what it describes, the unconscious. The second part of the chapter is the transcription of a seductive encounter between an object and a subject. Based on Sadeian dialogues, this piece should be read both as a work and as evidence of seduction. Duality, another trait of seduction, will also make an appearance in chapter three, in the form of this book's *doppelgänger*, the other volume in the submission. While this volume contains mainly text, the other is comprised mainly of photographic images.

On either side of chapter three are the other four chapters, which together with this introduction and a conclusion, form the seven parts of this text. Chapter one, 'The Seduction of Objects and its Problems' sets the context through a review of the existing literature on the topic, including a brief outline of disciplinary areas concerned with seduction (psychoanalysis, consumer studies, captology, criminology), a review of the key arguments in Jean Baudrillard's monograph and the analysis of several examples. I took special care to explore the two main recurrent problems of seduction, as pointed at by extant studies: its definition and its pervasiveness, which paradoxically, makes it difficult to apprehend.

In chapter two, 'Screen as Method', I outline a number of blind alleys through which I went, to arrive at the conclusion that a methodology to study seduction was required. Reviewing existing work on seduction led me to see that it was not a case of studying seduction itself, but of developing a tool to study it, as this was lacking within previous works, mainly focused on philosophical aspects or the techniques of seduction (rather than its observation). So in chapter two, I form a plan, a trap to capture and record instances of seduction and with this, resolve the problem of how to look at this object of study. I form my proposed methodology – the self-reflexive methodology –, which stems from an engagement with three practices – psychoanalytic, artistic and writing – which is developed throughout. I examine a series of parallels between the practices of art making and psychoanalysis. The latter's history is, I argue, valuable for the study of the psychodynamics of seduction, as these also take place in a clinical transference situation.

In chapter four, a detective, with delusions of an analytic and artistic practice will take over me while I rest and prepare for the finale. It will be her task to gather and organise evidence (a dialogue and a photo-book), analysing it using the tool I have provided her with in chapter two, the self-reflexive methodology. A way of reading it, of interpreting what is seen through the methodological instrument, is proposed.

The detective will then put her case forward to a jury or panel and defend it in chapter five. This chapter is outlined as a series of questions and answers that relate the context of seduction, as set out in chapter one, to the work developed in this investigation. This chapter also shows additional visual evidence by other artists, notably Sophie Calle, Naia del Castillo, Lisette Model, Lee Friedlander and Eugène Atget. By putting the work undertaken in my study back into its context, its validity is tested. After chapter five, I return to conclude and close.

This structural arrangement is fairly classical and straightforward (five chapters: literature survey, methodology, empirical study, analysis and evaluation; with an introduction and a conclusion) but you will also notice that after each chapter, there is a visual interlude, evidence of each stage of the investigation that will be used by my detective in her case – and me.

My aim is to formulate a way of studying the seduction exerted by certain works of art from within the seductive relationship. Thus, my original contribution to knowledge is a methodology – a conceptual framework for operation – that facilitates the study of seduction, in particular of works of art. As the investigative work is done from the inside, the capture of seduction is essential to its study and reflection and, thus, the methodology focuses on these two aspects – capture and reflection – as well as recognising the moment where the subject falls for the object. The focus on works of art comes from the fact that this research is concerned with object-subject encounters, rather than with subject-subject encounters. Works of art are seductive in themselves, as we will see in the first chapter, and provide a more complex and open case study than objects of consumption such as lemon squeezers, shoes or electronic goods, which are more openly governed by market rules.¹⁵

The first question my study proposed was ‘what makes a work of art seductive?’ An attempt at answering it showed that there is another question that needs to be asked first. If we assume, given the evidence shown in the literature, that seduction is a pervasive phenomenon, but one that is not completely visible, the only possible way

15. These were also considered as potential objects of seduction for this study and my thought process can be read in the blog I kept throughout this PhD study (Laura González, *A Seductress's Journal*, available from <<http://www.lauragonzalez.co.uk/blog>> [accessed 09.04.10]). I wrote about lemon squeezers (in particular Philippe Stark's *Juicy Salif*) in Laura González, 'Juicy Salif as a Cultish Totem', in Barbara Townley and Nic Beech (eds), *Managing Creativity: Exploring the Paradox*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, pp. 287–309, and about the iPod in 'White worship: the iPod', *Artra: Forum for Contemporary Arts*, 2005, available from <<http://www.arttra.co.uk/features/ipod/ipod.html>> [accessed 09.04.10].

to study it is by provoking it, by becoming part of it so one can understand the hidden and unseen elements that take place. There is no current methodology to do this, however, so my research question evolved, to become an epistemological and methodological one: how might one study seduction as it operates in the encounter with a work of art? The answer to my question is the self-reflexive methodology, a tool that will enable those who are seduced in the art gallery to develop an awareness that the specific relation formed with the work of art is reversible, that they are not passive, but active, and that the encounter is not a fatal one, but one that can bring about self-knowledge. This would thus allow the viewer to avoid the classic literary and tragic positions of Cordelia and the Présidente de Tourvel – which will be explored in this text.¹⁶

The argument to support my claim to knowledge is not provable (or positivist), as seduction is not an object of study concerning logico-deductive processes. It is also not statistically verifiable – at least for the moment – and therefore cannot be strictly classified as probable. My argument, therefore, concerns persuasion: it is plausible (or interpretist), my evidence is sincere and, I hope, will convince my reader. For that, I will appeal to emotions and establish the credibility and legitimacy of my claims with the help of authorities.¹⁷ After all, as Baudrillard wrote, concerning seduction as an object of study: ‘The charm of seduction is first to be an unidentified theoretical object, a non-analytical object and which thus obstructs any truth-theory, leaving room for the fiction-theory and the pleasure of its pursuit’.¹⁸

In line with Baudrillard’s reflection, there is a certain amount of ventriloquism and

16. Both Cordelia and the Présidente de Tourvel are the victims of the seduction of Johannes and the Vicomte de Valmont, respectively. Their stories end tragically, either with loss of honour or death. See Soren Kierkegaard, *Diary of a Seducer* (first published in *Enten - Eller. Et Livs Fragment* [1843]), tr. by Alastair Hannay, London: Pushkin Press, 1999, for an account of Cordelia’s tale; and Laclos, *Liaisons Dangereuses*, for the Présidente de Tourvel’s story.

17. This comment refers to both my mode of enquiry and my writing, which, together with the photographs, is an essential part of the unfolding of my argument. Aristotle divided persuasive, argumentative writing into three categories: *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos*: reasoning, emotion and the authority of the writer. These are the three essential categories that will be brought to bear in my text, supported by visual evidence and the work of others. Declaring this framework allows for the process by which I obtain my results to be recovered by others. This sharing of meaning-making also addresses subjective objections that may arise. Aristotle, *The Art of Rhetoric*, tr. by Hugh Lawson-Tancred, London: Penguin Classics, 2005; Janet McDonnell, *Completing the Doctorate* [workshop], Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, London, 27 June 2007.

18. Jean Baudrillard, ‘Les abîmes superficiels’, in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds), *La séduction*, Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 197–207, p. 197. My translation. The original passage reads: ‘Le charme de la séduction est d’abord d’être un objet théorique non identifié, objet non analytique et qui par là fait échec à toute théorie-vérité, laissant place à la théorie-fiction et au plaisir de son exercice.’

anthropomorphism, of role-playing, of dressing up, and of leaving false clues in my work: in chapter three, a diamond ring speaks. My decisive encounter with *Étant donné*s will return, throughout this material in the form of a writing prop. In trying to build a trap for seduction I take a risk because seduction is used to tending traps and is bound to know all the tricks. Baudrillard knew this very well, but he never had to write about seduction for a doctoral thesis. My area of interest is complex and its boundaries are not always controllable.¹⁹ The issues raised by seduction are controversial and people in the field hold different views on them. As the enquiry is driven by practice rather than *a priori* goals or hypotheses, I experiment, assess and take decisions. Thus I propose a framework for my pursuit, one that is fully declared so the process by which results are obtained can be recovered by others, in turn. Sharing this meaning-making addresses any subjective objections studying seduction from within the seductive relation may raise.

19. The complexity of this research comes from the fact that it interacts with many fields of study, from criminology and marketing, to psychoanalysis, philosophy, design and fine art.

CHAPTER ONE

THE SEDUCTION OF OBJECTS AND ITS PROBLEMS

The concept of seduction is led by controversy, and is characterised by confusion in its terminology, contradictions in its conceptualisation and divergence in the positions of its experts. Seduction's devious nature resists representation, whether in written, verbal or visual form and, therefore, presents an obstacle to systematic investigation. Furthermore, as my encounter with Duchamp's *Étant donné*s shows, it is powerful and overpowering. Seduction seems, on first view, to have agency, yet, it begs the question: How do objects, and in particular works of art, seduce people? Before this question can be answered, however, a prior one must be addressed: What is seduction?

In the sources I consulted and which I examine in detail throughout this study, I found a repetition of themes in relation to the meaning of seduction, starting with the simplest dictionary definition. Etymologically, the term seduction comes from the Latin *se-* (apart), and *ducere* (to lead). Its verb form is defined as 'to lead astray from right behaviour',²⁰ 'to err in conduct or belief'.²¹ Seductive behaviour is often considered 'in contradiction with moral law'²² - a position thought of as positive by some -²³ and tends to be related to sexual matters.²⁴ These recurrent themes of leading and being led astray, erring, morality and sexuality - illustrated here by short cited examples of the many encountered - will provide an undercurrent to this text.

Two examples will help to illustrate and bring together these strands. In 1938, when he was just twenty-two years old, Frank Sinatra was arrested in New Jersey on a charge of seduction, having promised marriage to a woman in exchange for sexual intercourse (see Fig. 3). He was freed two months later upon the discovery that the

20. Henry Fowler and Francis Fowler (eds), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Current English*, 5th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964.

21. Rex Butler, 'Seduction', in *Jean Baudrillard: The Defence of the Real*, London: Sage, 1999, pp. 71-118, p. 71.

22. Maria Tortajada, 'Éric Rohmer and the Mechanics of Seduction', *Studies in French Cinema*, 4 (3), 2004, pp. 229-238, p. 230.

23. Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction (De la séduction [1979])*, tr. by Brian Singer, New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1991; Sebastián Serrano, *El Instinto de Seducción [The Seduction Instinct]*, Barcelona: Anagrama, 2005.

24. Butler, *Seduction*, p. 71.

woman in question was already married.²⁵

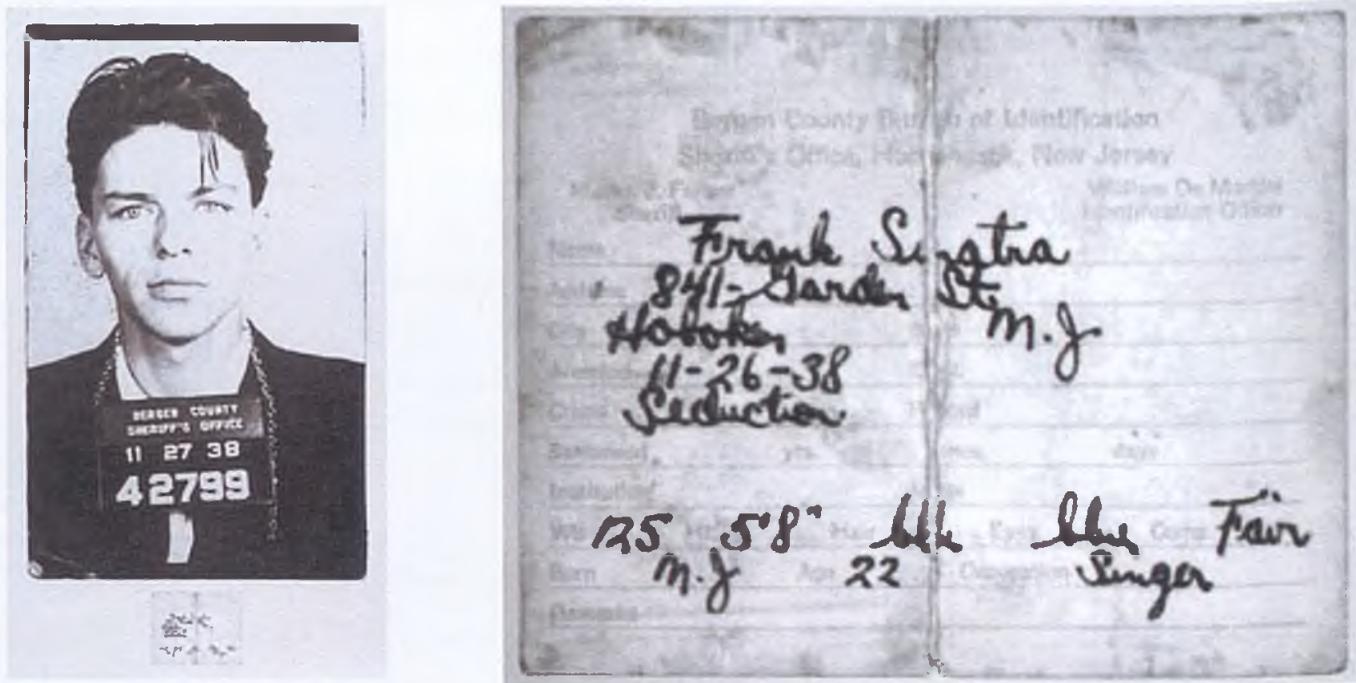


Fig. 3: Frank Sinatra arrested for seduction (photograph, Sheriff's Office, Bergen County, New Jersey, 1938). Right, enlargement of suspect's identification card – shown beneath mug shot on the left image.²⁶

Almost two centuries earlier, in 1770, the English Parliament tried to protect its subjects against rising feminine emancipation by unsuccessfully attempting to introduce the following Act:

All women of whatever rank, profession or degree, whether virgins, maids or widows, that shall from and after such Act, impose upon, seduce and betray into matrimony, any of his Majesty's subjects by the scents, paints, cosmetic washes, artificial teeth, false hair, Spanish wool [a wool impregnated with carmine to color the skin], iron stays, hoops, high-heeled shoes, and bolstered hips, shall incur the penalty of the law now in force against witchcraft and like misdemeanors, and that the marriage upon conviction shall be null and void.²⁷

25. The reversible nature of this story, the fact that the boundaries between the seducer and the victim are blurred, is key to its *modus operandum*.

26. Source: Great Modern Pictures [image] *Sinatra Arrested for Seduction*, 1938, available from: <<http://www.greatmodernpictures.com/pjazz1a.htm>> [accessed 26.01.08].

27. Charles John Samuel Thompson, cited in Arthur Minton, 'All the Perfumes of America', *American Speech*, vol. 21, no. 3, October 1946, pp. 161–174, p. 166.

These two examples allude to the crime of seduction, which applies to men who obtain ‘a woman’s consent to sexual intercourse by promising to marry her’,²⁸ and also used to refer to women who embellished themselves by artificial means or through accessories. The crime of seduction, however, has deep contradictions. Stephen Robertson alerts us to the fact that

Many ‘seduced’ women described acts that had been accomplished as much by violence as by a promise of marriage. Nonetheless, most of those women expressed a desire to wed the man that they accused, rather than to have him sent to prison.²⁹

Despite the apparent precision of seduction’s legal definition, these two vignettes highlight a conflict at the core of the term, which is related to promises –often broken – and also to artifice. The criminal term, although containing some noteworthy points, is not readily applicable to my encounter with Duchamp’s last work. After all, that was about my seduction by an object, not an accountable subject.³⁰

This text is of course not the first attempt at grasping what this elusive thing called seduction might be. There have been a number of attempts to systematise, characterise, qualify and taxonomise seduction. The most relevant example is represented by Jean Baudrillard, as he dedicated a substantial part of his work to the study of seduction, and wrote one of the most extensive studies on the topic.³¹ Much

28. Stephen Robertson, ‘Seduction, Sexual Violence, and Marriage in New York City, 1886–1955’, *Law and History Review*, vol. 24, no. 2, Summer 2006, available from: <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/lhr/24.2/robertson.html> [accessed 26.01.08].

29. Robertson, *Seduction, Sexual Violence and Marriage*, p. 333.

30. This sudden shift from object – *Étant donnés* – to subject – Sinatra and the 1770 Act – and back to the object may be uncomfortable to the reader. In order to address the curious case of seduction exerted by objects, as described in the introduction, I start with Sinatra’s example, to which the reader may relate, given it refers to a subject. The vignette also addresses the issues of reversibility and objectification, pivotal to this enquiry. Later on in this chapter, I introduce Karl Marx’s concept of *commodity fetishism*, a characteristic of capitalist societies, by which objects adopt characteristics related to the social relation between subjects, and relations between subjects assume characteristics reserved for objects. This shift, this sharing of characteristics will become even more evident in chapter three, when a diamond ring speaks.

31. See, for example, Jean Baudrillard, ‘Seduction, or, the Superficial Abyss’, in *The Ecstasy of Communication* (*L’autre par lui-même* [1987]), tr. by Bernard and Caroline Schutze, New York: Semiotext(e), 1988, pp. 57–75; Baudrillard, *Seduction*; Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies* (*Les stratégies fatales* [1983]), tr. by Philip Beitchman and W. G. J. Nieslichowski, London: Pluto Press, 1999. Other approaches, notably those by Robert Greene (*The Art of Seduction*, London: Profile Books, 2004), Julie Khaslavsky and Nathan Shedroff (‘Understanding the Seductive Experience’, *Communications of the ACM*, 42 (5), 1999, pp. 45–49, available from: http://captology.stanford.edu/Key_Concepts/Papers/CACMseduction.pdf) [accessed 04.09.09]), and Jean-Noël Vuarnet (‘Le séducteur malgré lui’, in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds), *La*

secondary literature has been devoted to the examination of his texts and the contextualisation of this concept in his thought.³²

For Baudrillard, seduction is a reigning principle:³³ ‘everything is seduction and nothing but seduction’.³⁴ To address the confusion of the term, he undertook a comparative study between seduction and love in *Fatal Strategies*, extrapolating opposing characteristics for each, which are summarised in Fig. 4.

SEDUCTION	LOVE
Dual	Universal
Appearances	Affects
Immoral, perverse	Ethical
Pact, Challenge	Exchange
Distance	Proximity
Artificial form of illusion	Natural form of illusion
Strategic	Gratuitous
Pagan	Christian
Enigmatic	Mysterious
Ritual	Political
Ceremonial	Pathetic
Rule	Law
Intelligible	Unintelligible
Form	Metaphor
Aesthetic difference	Moral or psychological difference

Fig. 4: Qualitative comparison between seduction and love, adapted from ‘the evil genie of passion’.³⁵

He sees seduction as opposed to production and belonging to the realm of

séduction, Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 65–76) will be examined more in depth in chapter five.

32. Butler, *Seduction*; Heather Marcelle Crickenherger, ‘Baudrillard’s Seduction and Walter Benjamin’s Use of Gambling in The Arcades Project’, in *The Arcades Project Project or The Rhetoric of Hypertext*, unpublished doctoral thesis, University of South Carolina, 2005, available from <<http://www.thefemming.com/lemming/dissertation-web/home/seduction.html>> [accessed 02.02.07]; Mark Fisher and Suzanne Livingstone, *Desiring Seduction*, Cybernetic Culture Research Unit, 1998, available from <<http://www.ccrui.net/archive/seduction.htm>> [accessed 02.02.07]; Greene, *Art of Seduction*; Douglas Kellner, *Jean Baudrillard: From Marxism to Postmodernism and Beyond*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989; Charles Levin, *Jean Baudrillard. A Study in Cultural Metaphysics*, London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1996; William Stearns and William Chaloupka (eds), *Jean Baudrillard: The Disappearance of Art and Politics*, London: MacMillan, 1992.

33. Butler, *Seduction*, p. 71.

34. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 83.

35. Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, pp. 99–110.

appearances: 'to seduce is to die as reality and reconstitute oneself as illusion'.³⁶ For him, seduction is dual, a matter of two, and it involves a duel, a challenging play or game. Baudrillard sees seduction as a principle that is reversible, ambiguous. One can never be sure it really happens. He illustrates this with two examples: Kierkegaard's *Diary of a Seducer* – discussed in *Seduction* and examined more in depth below – and Sophie Calle's *Suite Venetienne* – from *Please Follow Me*.³⁷ In both of these cases, the seducer (Johannes or Calle/the man) is a person, but, in the encounter, a process of objectification takes place.

Another example of systematisation of seduction can be found in Julie Khaslavsky and Nathan Shedroff's study of Phillippe Starck's celebrated lemon squeezer, *Juicy Salif*, where they extract eight characteristics which, they argue, make this object seductive.³⁸ As studies from the fields of material culture, consumption studies, and marketing show,³⁹ the seduction of material objects, related to Karl Marx's conceptualisation of commodity fetishism – which I will explore below – is contingent on late capitalist practices.

There are many visual examples aimed at systematising seduction and I am particularly concerned with those in the enclosure of the art gallery or the museum, even though I acknowledge that these are not the only places where an encounter with the work of art can take place. Recently, London art spaces have seen a proliferation of shows that openly aim to seduce the viewer by means of display.⁴⁰ Manolo Blahnik's 2003 exhibition at the Design Museum is a particularly relevant

36. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 69. He further explains the relation between seduction and production in *Forget Foucault*: 'To produce is to force what belongs to another order (that of secrecy and seduction) to materialize. *Seduction* is that which is everywhere and always opposed to *production*; seduction withdraws something from the visible order and so runs counter to production.' (*Oublier Foucault* [1977]), tr. by Nicole Dufresne, New York: Semiotext(e), 1987, p. 37.

37. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, and 'Please Follow Me' (1983), in *The Jean Baudrillard Reader*, ed. by Steve Redhead, tr. by Dany Barash and Danny Hatfield, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, pp. 71–82.

38. Khaslavsky and Shedroff, *Seductive Experience*, p. 47. I explored this paper in relation to Baudrillard's conceptualization of seduction in my book chapter 'Juicy Salif as a Cultish Totem'.

39. See, for instance, Russell Belk, Güliz Ger and Soren Askegaard, 'The Fire of Desire: A Multisited Inquiry into Consumer Passion', *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 30, Dec. 2003, pp. 326–351; and Stephen Hoch, 'Product Experience is Seductive', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 29, December 2002, pp. 448–454, available from:

<<http://morris.wharton.upenn.edu/ideas/pd/Hoch/product%20experience%20is%20seductive.pdf>> [accessed 07.03.05].

40. See *Boucher: Seductive Visions* at The Wallace Collection – exhibition catalogue ed. by Joanne Hedley, London: The Wallace Collection, 2004 – or *Seduced: Art and Sex from Antiquity to Now* at the Barbican Art Gallery – catalogue ed. by Marina Wallace, Martin Kemp and Joanne Bernstein, London: Merrell Publishers, 2007.

example, as it emphasises a play between functional and contemplative objects.⁴¹ The display was highly theatrical, elaborating on potential narratives, maximising the impact of the shoes' appearance. Each room represented one, often contradictory, aspect of the shoes: cultural significance, technical innovation, architectural qualities, or ethnological value, for example. The precious shoes, however, were out of reach and there was an air of hysteria in the gallery. Constant little cries were being uttered in what is normally a quiet space. As a woman viewer, I can say it was a deeply unsatisfying show, but for that reason, a successful one, a show that left me begging for more because it revealed an 'ironic reverie on the principle of functionality'.⁴²

Let us return to the issue of definition, in an attempt to pinpoint a starting point for my investigation. Rex Butler, in his analysis of Baudrillard's monograph on seduction, gives the most complete definition I have come across: he says seduction is 'the getting of another to do what we want, not by force or coercion, but by an exercise of their own, though often mistaken or misguided, free will'.⁴³ For Butler, seduction is a relational situation in which one element or part of the relationship tampers with the free will of the other, using a 'softer' approach than physical power or threats to get what it wants. The seducer gets the seducee to want what he or she wants, perhaps with the help of a promise, as seen above: for seduction to occur, both desires must conflate, even if they previously did not.⁴⁴ Butler's definition is useful as it highlights the term's play with desire while, through the term 'misguided', maintaining the spatial reference encountered in the Concise Oxford English Dictionary definition. It does not completely rule out issues of morality and sexuality, but does not highlight them either. Butler's wording also differentiates the idea of seduction from others – such as fetishism, attraction, fascination, addiction, or love, for example – which may be confused with seduction. I will address these differences in this chapter.

41. Manolo Blahnik, *Manolo Blahnik* [exhibition], Design Museum: London, 01 February–11 May 2003.

42. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 64.

43. Butler, *Seduction*, p. 71.

44. The psychoanalyst Daniel Sibony explains the nature of the promise in his book on seduction and the feminine. He writes: 'In current opinion, to seduce the other is to tell him what he wants to hear, or to show him what he wants to see, etc. And if what he « wanted » to see is what horrifies him? And if what he « wanted » to hear is the unheard that that puts him « out of himself » and breaks up the limits of listening?' My translation. The original text in French reads: 'Dans l'opinion courante, séduire l'autre c'est lui dire ce qu'il a envie d'entendre, ou lui montrer ce qu'il a envie de voir, etc. Et si ce qu'il a « envie » de voir c'est ce qui lui fait horreur? Et si ce qu'il a « envie » d'entendre c'est l'inouï qui le met « hors de lui » et fait éclater pour lui les limites de l'écoute?' Daniel Sibony, *Le Féminin et la séduction*, Paris, Grasset, 1986 (1982), p. 19.

SEDUCTION AS PRINCIPLE, PHENOMENON, PROCESS OR PRACTICE

Although it reflects the complexity of the term, broadens the scope tightly held around morality and sexuality, and makes its relation to desire explicit, Butler's definition does not address the confusion around the nature of the term that seems to pervade in studies on seduction. For Maria Tortajada, seduction is a 'fundamental human social behaviour'.⁴⁵ It has also been thought of as art,⁴⁶ instinct,⁴⁷ strategy or system,⁴⁸ and experience.⁴⁹ Different perspectives on what seduction is have sometimes even been adopted simultaneously. The paragraph below is an example of this confusion:

By describing the *mechanics* of seduction from the place of uncertainty of the seduced person, it becomes easier to separate the definition from the seducer's intentions, and to grasp the whole *phenomenon* precisely as a dynamic *system* which concerns, above all, the object of the seduction. This importantly allows us to consider the moral evaluations implied in certain definitions of seductive practices as a specific aspect of a more general *behaviour* which has to be understood outside value judgements.⁵⁰

Tortajada alludes to seduction in Eric Rohmer's film *Conte d'Automne* as principle ('more general behaviour'), process ('mechanics', 'system'), phenomenon, and practice. I argue that these different conceptions are in need of clarity and, more important, acknowledgement. They can be classified into four main categories; in each one, the same three elements (the seducer, the act of seduction, and the seducee) are at play, and what changes is the focus on specific aspects of their relationship. The categories, graphically represented in Fig. 5, are as follows:

- *Seduction as principle* integrates conceptions that consider it to be an instinct and behaviour. Seduction is understood as a principle that regulates relations in the world. Authors that adhere to this perspective see the relationship between seducer and seducee as primordial and all acts are acts of seduction. If seduction is to lead astray, the logical problem with this approach is that its ubiquity would

45. Tortajada, *Rohmer*, p. 229.

46. Greene, *Art of Seduction*.

47. Serrano, *Instinto*.

48. Baudrillard, *Seduction*; Fisher and Livingstone, *Desiring Seduction*; Tortajada, *Rohmer*; Crickenberger, *Arcades Project*.

49. Khaslavsky and Shedroff, *Seductive Experience*; Hoch, *Product Experience*.

50. Tortajada, *Rohmer*, pp. 231–232; emphasis added.

blur the path and no opportunity for an off-course direction would be possible. As I will explore, even if all acts are acts of seduction, it does not mean that they are seductive for everyone. The possibility for a seductive encounter, however, is inherent to all acts and objects, for the thinkers in this category.⁵¹

- *Seduction as phenomenon* assimilates seduction as experience and as event. This category is concerned with the context in which the seducer commits the act of seduction that captivates the seducee, and with the nature of each of these elements. Consumption studies, marketing and, to a certain extent, psychoanalytic theory can be conceptualised in this category.⁵²
- *Seduction as process* incorporates seduction as mechanics, system, and art. The seducer, through an act of seduction, entices the seducee. The emphasis is placed in the characteristics and qualities of the act. History, film and literature studies, marketing, consumption studies, and popular psychology mostly belong to this cluster.⁵³
- *Seduction as practice* combines discussions around libertinage. Studies focusing on this aspect are concerned with, and place emphasis on whom, or rather, *what* the seducer is and does. Literature, popular psychology, and biology have studied the figure and role of the seducer through examples such as Don Juan, Valmont, Casanova, dandies, sirens, Medusa, peacocks, and the praying mantis.⁵⁴ Art –

51. This approach tends to take on a philosophical viewpoint and authors include Baudrillard, *Seduction*; Roy Ascott, 'Turning on Technology', in Robert Rindler and Deborah Willis (curators), 'Techno-Seduction. An Exhibition of Multimedia Installation Work by Forty Artists', *Aesthetics and the Body Politic, Art Journal*, vol. 56, no. 1, Spring 1997, pp. 113–132, also available from <<http://www.cooper.edu/art/techno/essays/ascott.html>> [accessed 02.02.07]; Serrano, *Instinto*; and Gilles Lipovetsky, *L'ère du vide: Essais sur l'individualisme contemporain*, Paris: Gallimard, 2001 (1983), and *The Empire of Fashion: Dressing Modern Democracy (Empire de l'éphémère: La mode et son destin dans les sociétés modernes* [1987]), tr. by Catherine Porter, Princeton, N.J.; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1994.

52. Authors include Khaslavsky and Shedroff, *Seductive Experience*; Hoch, *Product Experience*; Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (ed.), *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess, 1887–1904*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1985, excerpts available from <<http://www.haverford.edu/psych/davis/fliess.html>> [accessed 28.01.07]; Jean Laplanche, 'The Theory of Seduction and the Problem of the Other', tr. by Luke Thurston, *International Journal of Psycho-Analysis*, 78, 1997, pp. 653–666.

53. Authors include Greene, *Art of Seduction*, and Tortajada, *Rohmer*.

54. See Greene, *Art of Seduction*; Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View*, Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 2006; or François Roustang, *The Quadrille of Gender: Casanova's 'Memoirs' (Le Bal masqué de Giacomo Casanova* [1984]), tr. by Anne C. Vila, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988, for example.

including the visual arts, literature and film –, and clinical analysis are fields that, among others, belong to this group.⁵⁵

There are, however, some common points in these divergent approaches. Tortajada and Baudrillard agree that seduction depends on appearances;⁵⁶ it is a construction of representation where the seducer can take on a passive role through a display of beauty; or an active one, through, for instance, dancing or talking.⁵⁷

I position myself and this research in the category of seduction as principle, one, however, that requires a practice. The rationale for such a locus is related to the rules of seduction I will now explore.

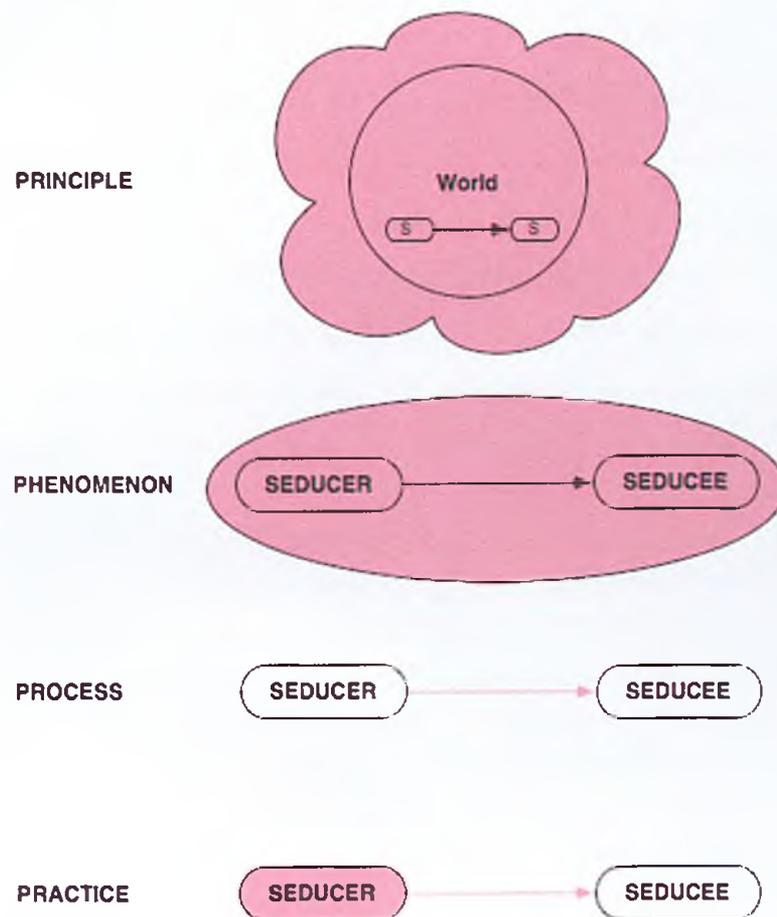


Fig. 5: Seduction as principle, phenomenon, process, practice.

55. Authors include Tortajada, *Rohmer*, Sibony, *Le féminin*; Kierkegaard, *Diary of a Seducer*; Laclos, *Liaisons Dangereuses*; and Roustang, *The Quadrille of Gender*; Frédéric Monneyron, *Séduire: l'Imaginaire de la séduction de Don Giovanni à Mick Jagger*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1997.

56. Tortajada, *Rohmer*; and Baudrillard, *Seduction*.

57. Žižek, *Parallax View*, p. 347.

THE RULES OF SEDUCTION

The definition of seduction is complex, as this is something that applies to many fields of study, from criminology to marketing, from philosophy to popular psychology, and psychoanalysis. Yet, there are a number of constants in all the literature – key texts, objects, and works of art – concerned with seduction. Even if approaches and understandings may be different, all of the materials I consulted observed an underlying set of ideas, hitherto not explicitly formulated as overarching and governing. This is the case whether seduction is thought of as phenomenon, process, practice or principle. Thus, I want to propose four rules of seduction, as follows:

First rule: seduction is pervasive

A lack of clear definition or boundary in the term makes seduction conflicted. The prevailing contradiction, however, is not this, but its pervasiveness, its omnipresence. Thus, this first rule accounts for the fact that, as Baudrillard warns, seduction will seduce everything. Cunningly, fiercely in its challenging nature, it resists efforts at systematisation whatever the approach. Seduction is eternal and its mastery, impossible.⁵⁸ Baudrillard's answer to seduction's power is reflected in the writing style used in his study:

We would say that Baudrillard's writing embodies this disorder, does not try to master it or comment upon it but is subject to it, an effect of it. In speaking of the fundamental seduction of the world, it too wants to be seduced. It is to know that, insofar as what he is speaking of is true, he cannot say what it is, cannot directly imitate it. It is only by driving the inner logic of his writing to its furthest point, by it imitating nothing but itself, that he might somehow capture it, that this seduction might come about in writing or this writing be shown to be an effect of seduction.⁵⁹

Instead of examining the principle, he lets himself be seduced by it, making its workings visible through the practice of writing. Or perhaps he is seducing us, demonstrating it, like an effective master – and putting into practice the second rule of seduction. In any case, Baudrillard's text is written from within seduction and is only *about* it insofar as it is *in* it, inside the seductive relation, with the shortcomings

58. Baudrillard, *Ecstasy*, p. 74.

59. Butler, *Seduction*, p. 101.

that such a short critical distance may have.⁶⁰

This, of course, presents the researcher with a considerable obstacle: the inevitability that everything falls under the spell of seduction, including attempts to examine it. My research is in agreement with Baudrillard and takes seduction as a ruling principle, particularly in capitalist societies. Yet, within that principle, there are practitioners, which can be observed. Through studying the manifestation and actions of the seducer, the most active part of the dyad, something about the general philosophical ground of seduction might be apprehended and a model for it can be devised in order to gain a better understanding of its operation. The approach to the practice, however, has to be left open, at least in this case, as it is precisely the practice that will lead the investigation. Through it – rather than through the phenomenon or process, for example, which focus more on mechanics – the psychodynamic elements will be made manifest.

Second rule: seduction is seductive

The second rule illustrates the fact that, in order to seduce, one has to be seduced first. In his study of Giacomo Casanova's memoirs, François Roustang clearly articulates this principle when narrating the vicissitudes of the Italian libertine. Every love encounter Casanova has starts with words related to a fall, an uncontrollable sidetracking of his thoughts and his path against his will. He is the seducer, but he is also seduced by the same object he intends to lead astray. He then transforms this into strategic thinking aimed at obtaining the object.⁶¹ Baudrillard corroborates Roustang's analysis by blurring the boundaries that separate seducer and seducee: 'the illusion that leads from the one to the other is subtle. Is it to seduce, or to be seduced, that is seductive? But to be seduced is the best way to seduce'.⁶² Moreover, he asserts that seduction always carries a narcissistic element with it; 'it is always a matter of self-seduction'.⁶³ He refers to the myth of Narcissus and his reflection, which he calls 'the superficial abyss of appearances', and which engulfs him. This abyss has no profundity; it contains a secret – its lack of profundity – and instead of being a reflection, it is a deception, a broken promise. Death, for Baudrillard, is the

60. Critical distance in relation to writing is discussed by Jane Rendell in 'Site-Writing', in Sharon Kivland, Jasper Joseph-Lester and Emma Cocker (eds), *Transmission: Speaking and Listening*, vol. 4, Sheffield: Site Gallery, 2005, pp. 169–176.

61. Roustang, *The Quadrille of Gender*. Although present throughout the narrative, this rule is at its most vivid in Casanova's account of his meeting with the castrato Bellino (pp. 54–63).

62. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 81.

63. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 68.

ultimate seduction.⁶⁴

The reversibility of seduction in all its weakness and ambiguity is, paradoxically, also its power: ‘To seduce is to appear weak. To seduce is to render weak. [...] In seduction we enact this weakness, and this is what gives seduction its strength’.⁶⁵ Butler, in his study of Baudrillard’s analysis of Søren Kierkegaard’s *Diary of a Seducer*,⁶⁶ further explains this reversibility:

The ‘perfection’ of his [Johannes’s] crime lies in the fact that she [Cordelia] can never be sure it happened, cannot be certain whether it was he who robbed her of her self-identity or unconsciousness or whether it is this pre-existing loss which is merely reflected in him. It is this doubling without evidence that is the real seduction.⁶⁷

Cordelia does not know whether she is the seducer or the one seduced. In fact, she is not even certain that seduction even happened, as she got herself engaged to Johannes and broke off the engagement entirely of her free will. It is this reversibility in their roles, this dual game, this blurring of boundaries between her and Johannes, which represents the kernel of their story.

This second rule is one that has a special impact for the practitioner, as I will show in the next chapters. Understanding the principle of reversibility is what will make seduction an active practice, avoiding the role of victim that Cordelia adopted. Being engaged in specific forms of art and writing, and also analysis – as analysand – will

64. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 69.

65. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 83.

66. *Diary of a Seducer* is a collection of reflections and letters, which Kierkegaard first published in *Either/Or*. It narrates the encounter between Johannes – the owner of the diary – and Cordelia. Johannes sets himself the challenge of seducing Cordelia – which he does twice – a challenge he likens to a test or a trial and to which he applies himself methodically, learning all he can about her before meeting her. When finally the two meet, Johannes is distant, does not show interest in her but creates an enigmatic persona around him, which Cordelia surrenders to. There are two main acts in this story. In the first, Johannes attracts Cordelia and builds her confidence by showing her ‘all the powers of love, its uneasy thoughts, its passion’ (p. 136). To even further the deception, Johannes finds an inadequate suitor, Edvard, whom he befriends and advises in his courtship. Cordelia, already seduced by Johannes, can only think about him and, eventually, he asks her to become engaged to him. When Cordelia’s confidence in her feminine power reaches its height, Johannes withdraws and the second seduction, the fatal one, takes place: Johannes leads her to break their engagement – the only way out for Cordelia – and to her shame. She gave herself to Johannes and then broke her engagement entirely of her free will, although misguided, of course.

67. Butler, *Seduction*, p. 110.

enable me to find a position from which this reversibility, this changing of positions, is fluid.

Third rule: only objects seduce

This principle comes from Baudrillard, who, in *Fatal Strategies* writes: ‘only the subject desires; only the object seduces’.⁶⁸ For him seduction and desire are intimately interrelated. His statement also allows me to further qualify the diagrammes in figure six:

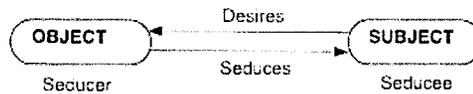


Fig. 6: Seducing object and desiring subject graph.

The seducer is an object – as I will also show in the discussion on French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s *objet petit a* – whether this is by nature or through a process of objectification of a subject, or an aspect of a subject. Therefore, it is also possible to state that what the subject desires is an object, the object of desire – *objet petit a*. The relation of seduction is, therefore, subject/object, rather than subject/subject. It is one of the few points in which Baudrillard and Lacan agree. This may seem rather unclear, given that Lacan also explained that the seducer only desires an object within a structure of perversion. He writes:

There is a high correlation between many perversions and the subjects who are sent for criminological examinations, but this correlation can only be evaluated psychoanalytically as a function of fixation on an object, developmental stagnation, the impact of ego structure, and neurotic repressions in each individual case.⁶⁹

This refers, as I will show below, to seduction as part of a scale, where it is located at the tipping point between pathological and non-pathological behaviour. The

68. Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, p. 111.

69. ‘A Theoretical Introduction to the Functions of Psychoanalysis in Criminology’, in *Écrits. The First Complete Edition in English* (*Écrits* [1966]), tr. by Bruce Fink, New York, London: W.W. Norton, 2006, pp. 102–122, p. 121. In parallel, Baudrillard writes: ‘Worse: perhaps the subject will see itself one day seduced by its object (which is quite natural), and it will become once more the prey of appearance – which is by far the best thing that can happen to it, to it and to science’. Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, p. 83.

psychopathological structures Lacan develops from Sigmund Freud (psychosis, neurosis and perversion) have a clinical dimension and are treatable conditions, but they are also wider structures of personality. As such, seduction is most closely located within perversion – although the position of the hysteric (neurosis) also applies, as I will show from chapter two onwards. Thus, in a structure of perversion, the subject desires an object. Moreover, the subject desires to *be* an object for the other.

In *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, Slavoj Žižek writes of love, the point at which the object of seduction becomes a subject:

The object of love changes into the subject the moment it answers the call of love. And it is only by way of this reversal that a genuine love emerges: I am truly in love not when I am simply fascinated by the *agalma* in the other, but when I experience the other, the object of love, as frail and lost, as lacking ‘it’, and my love none the less survives this loss.⁷⁰

He opposes love to a fascination by the *agalma*, a term that illustrates Fig. 6, particularly the side of the object. *Agalma* is a term borrowed from Plato. It designates the precious object Alcibiades believed to be hidden in Socrates’s body, in the other.⁷¹ It is never clear whether the object is actually there or if it even exists. Nonetheless, it stirs Alcibiades’ desire. Alcibiades, therefore, takes the place of the desiring subject, with the *agalma* as the seducing object. *Agalma* is a precursor of *objet petit a*, the object cause of desire. If we take this rule and place it in relation to the second one, the reversible positions between seducer and seducee, it is possible to argue that this reversibility also takes place between subject and object. Thus, in a seductive encounter, positions between subject/object, and seducer/seducee, are fluid and changing. Cordelia and Johannes’ story is a good example of this, as is my experience with Duchamp’s last work, where the image of myself looking at it converted me into the object of *Étant donnés*’ gaze. In this way, and like the second rule, the fact that only objects seduce has consequences for the practice of art, as I will show.

70. Slavoj Žižek, *The Metastases of Enjoyment: Six Essays on Women and Causality*, London: Verso, 2005, p. 104.

71. Jacques Lacan, *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre VIII: Le transfert*, Paris: Seuil, 2001.

Fourth rule: the choice of an object of seduction depends on the individual subject

Seduction is a principle. Still, the choice of a seductive object is not general.

Although all objects possess the possibility of seducing, there is not one object of seduction, or a type, for everyone – though for some, the clinical pervert for example, it will always be the same object or the same type. The choice of object or – to relate it to the third principle of seduction – what the subject desires, depends on the subject. Victor Burgin relates this to pleasure in art:

That is another part of the specificity of art practice, historically – pleasure is part of it. In a psychoanalytic context, there are as many pleasures as there are individuals. As we know, pain can be pleasurable. Difficulty itself can be a form of seduction.⁷²

This rule is the reason why, in *Diary of a Seducer*, Johannes has to research what Cordelia likes and what she does not, her genealogy and history, how she spends her days, what she is good at, her weaknesses, and even her wardrobe.

NOT SEDUCTION

Seduction is one distinct element in a scale that goes from states of attraction and fascination to the more pathological ones of addiction and fetishism – a perversion. The scale, shown in Fig. 7, presents two thresholds: active/passive and pathological/non-pathological. Love, for example, sits in between the active/passive threshold, as some of its forms (for example, platonic love) can be considered passive, whereas most of it will involve some kind of activity. This relates to the discussion on love and seduction carried out by Baudrillard and Žižek. Seduction also lies in this threshold, as well as in the one between non-pathological and pathological manifestations.

While the definition of seduction I adopt is not inherently pathological – this mostly depends on context, and is not absolute – the incorporation of words such as ‘mised’ and ‘misguided’ alludes to the fact that, sometimes, seduction could take the seducee on a journey from a positive state – of elation, for example – to a negative one – say, of dishonour. The pathological aspects I am briefly discussing here have many dimensions, from social, legal, ethical (as it is related to free will), political (in particular Marxist) to consumer ethics. I do not intend to go in depth into these – for

72. Victor Burgin, ‘Victor Burgin 02.02.05’, in Sharon Kivland, Jaspar Joseph-Lester and Emma Cocker (eds), *Transmission: Speaking and Listening*, vol. 4, Sheffield: Site Gallery, 2005, pp. 106–115, p. 113.

this would be a different research project – and my aim is just to problematise aspects of the definition of seduction that relate to morality and sexuality. For these, the pathological aspect is paramount. I refer to pathology as the study of illness, mental distress and abnormal, maladaptive behaviour. In relation to the scale of seduction the term pathological shows the exhibition of a ‘quality or trait to a degree considered extreme or psychologically unhealthy; (of a quality) possessed or manifested to such a degree; a person with a mental disorder or a pathological compulsion’.⁷³

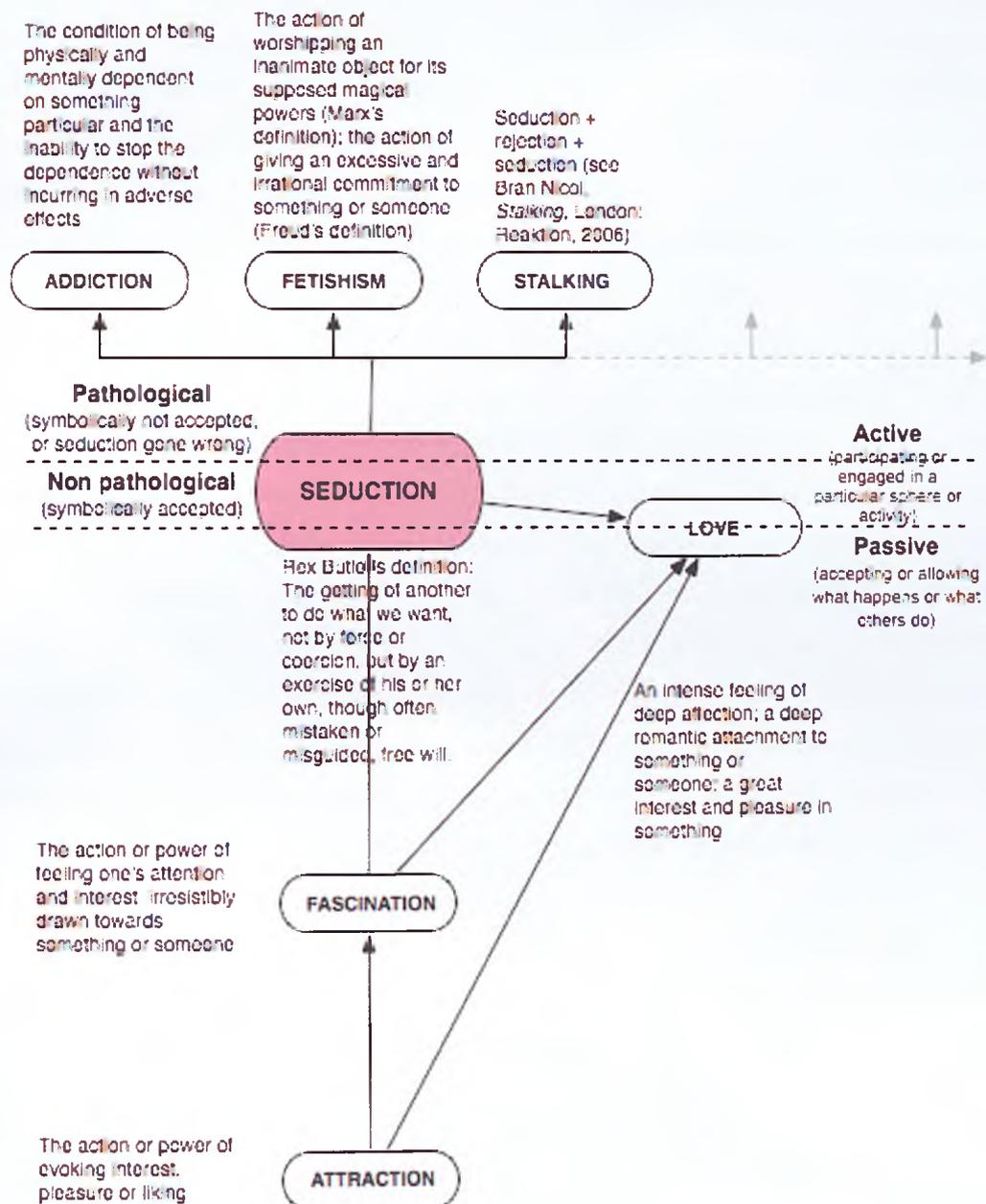


Fig. 7: The scale of seduction.

73. OED Online, Oxford English Dictionary: *Pathological*, *adj. and n.*, draft revision: June 2005, available from <<http://dictionary.oed.com>> [accessed 02.12.07].

These pathological and, sometimes, criminal elements of seduction are evident, for example, in the vignettes discussed above (from Sinatra to the 1770 Act and *Diary of a Seducer*), and in literary narratives such as Choderlos de Laclos's *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, which is one of the best examples of pathological seduction.⁷⁴ This epistolary novel tells the story of two parallel seductions where the rules, in particular its reversible aspect, are evident. First, the Vicomte de Valmont wants to seduce Madame de Tourvel, who is already married. Her innocent prudishness becomes an obsession for him, unbeknown to her. Second, the Marquise de Merteuil wants to seduce Cécile Volanges, corrupting her virtuous character, as she is to marry one of her former lovers. The Marquise de Merteuil and Valmont team up through a bet in which the Marquise promises to spend the night with Valmont if he brings to her written proof of his seduction of Madame de Tourvel. As a favour to the Marquise, Valmont seduces Cécile – who has also, incidentally fallen in love with her music teacher, Danceny – and also succeeds with Madame de Tourvel, whereas the Marquise takes Danceny, Cécile's beloved, as her lover. Seduction, in its reversibility, however, plays a trick on the two schemers: Valmont falls in love with Madame de Tourvel. A jealous Marquise breaks the bet, which Valmont won, prompting him to confess. Spitefully, he advises Danceny to go back to Cécile, abandoning the Marquise. She retaliates by telling Danceny how Valmont seduced his lover, the consequence of this being fatal for Valmont as he is killed in a duel. Before dying, Valmont takes revenge on the Marquise by giving Danceny compromising letters, forcing her to leave France and announcing a shameful illness she has contracted, which leaves her face permanently scarred. The story thus ends with Valmont dead, the Marquise ruined, Cécile back in the convent from where she came (her mother learned of her being seduced), Danceny unable to have his love reciprocated, and Madame de Tourvel ill with a fever provoked by the news of Valmont's death. The misleading and misguiding of this tale's characters' free will still makes them all responsible for their fates. Their end is the result of the Marquise and Valmont's pathological seduction as seducers and seducees, in whose web the other three characters find themselves.⁷⁵ In *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* the pathological aspect of

74. Laclos, *Liaisons Dangereuses*.

75. Gender in relation to seduction is also patent in the tale, and it is one of the most balanced accounts, showing that both men and women can be seducers and victims, as opposed to other libertine novels, for example Diderot's *The Indiscreet Jewels* or the Marquis de Sade's narratives, and even Kierkegaard's *Diary of a Seducer*. Denis Diderot, *The Indiscreet Jewels (Les bijoux indiscrets [1748])*, tr. by Sophie Hawkes, in *The Libertine Reader: Eroticism and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century France*, ed. by Michel Feher, New York: Zone Books, 1997, pp. 344–541; Marquis de Sade, *Philosophy in the Boudoir (Philosophie dans le boudoir [1795])*, tr. by Joachim Neugroschel, London: Penguin, 2006.

seduction can be taken literally as a behaviour that brings disease and death.

Seduction can also, in some cases, lead to states of addiction and fetishism, where the object of seduction dominates the subject, making it dependant upon it. Fascination and attraction, on the lower end of the scale, refer to one's attention, interest and liking being drawn towards something. In these two cases, however, promises are not made and the free will of the receiver remains intact. Although one could rightly argue that these states contain an element of activity, since attention is diverted, the lower levels of engagement have prompted the threshold described in the diagramme, as such a distinction may be useful to differentiate the term at the centre of my text from others often confused with it.

What is common to these elements, what makes them belong to the same scale, is the notion of interpellation, of being called out by an object.⁷⁶ Louis Althusser coined the word interpellation in relation to ideology and how this changes individuals into subjects by hailing them, calling out to them: 'Hey, you there!' Interpellation involves recognition, interaction, identification and identity formation, as the usual answer to this hailing is 'Yes, it really is me!'⁷⁷ In seduction, particularly, the object, in its primordial quality of player of a principle, also interpellates the subject, supplementing Althusser's 'Hey, you there!' with 'Look at me! Take me! Make me yours!'

I have also encountered confusion between the seductive object and the fetish object. Although there may be situations in which these overlap (for example, where the seductive object becomes a fetish object, in the progression in the scale of seduction), these two qualities are distinct. There are two competing uses of the term 'fetishism': one clinical and one related to political economy, as a quality inherent to commodities.⁷⁸ This research is closer to Karl Marx's notion of commodity fetishism

76. Apart from in love, as Žižek discussed, where the subject is not interpellated by an object, but by another subject, which is why the arrow is diverted to a different path in my graph.

77. Louis Althusser, *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards an Investigation)*, 2007 [1970], tr. by Ben Brewster, available from: <<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/althusser/1970/ideology.htm>> [accessed 02.12.07].

78. I have simplified the meanings and uses of the term *fetish* here for clarity purposes. In his study of the fetish in architecture, Mark Wigley offers a very good genealogy of the term, 'coined at the intersection of discourses rather than within them'. For him, the term is critical, as it questions the status of the object and, by extension, of discourse. It translates between radically different systems, but does not inhabit them. Both Freud and Marx's conception of the fetish would fit this description, the systems being reality and psychic space, cultural systems or systems of production. Baudrillard also thought about the fetish (mainly in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign*) and his account is summarized and examined by Wigley. Mark Wigley, 'Theoretical Slippage: The Architecture of the

[Footnote continues]

than Sigmund Freud's clinical concept for the following three main reasons: first, it is significantly connected to the third rule of seduction and to Baudrillard's assertion that seduction is something objects *do*. Secondly, Marx's idea is primordial, essential and operates as a principle in commodities and in the capitalist world in which this study is immersed, in a similar way to seduction. Thirdly, commodity fetishism is intimately related to the phenomenon of commodification, as process undergone by certain areas of social interaction, including art. For now, I will address Marx's definition, discussing it in relation Freud's term, but relegating this to the background in order to show the enigmatic qualities of objects and how all objects can become objects of seduction and, by extension, fetishes.

Before Krafft-Ebbing's conceptualisation of the term in relation to sexuality, a fetish was an inanimate object of worship, as those found, in the eighteenth-century, in primitive religions.⁷⁹ This etymology allows to understand why and how Marx

Fetish', *Fetish*, *The Princeton Architectural Journal*, vol. 4, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, pp. 88–129, p. 88.

79. Dylan Evans, *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 63. Since Krafft-Ebbing's adoption of the term in a clinical setting, fetishism is a deviation, a perversion that occurs when sexual excitement is dependent on a particular object, usually inanimate – a shoe, a special shine on the nose. This object acts as a symbolic substitute, in contrast to the phobic object, an imaginary substitute. These two terms – symbolic and imaginary – take us to Lacan whose theorising, from 1953 onwards, turns around a classification system known as the 'three orders': the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic (Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, pp. 133–134; see also Alan Sheridan's glossary at the end of his translation of Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse [1973])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Alan Sheridan, New York: W.W. Norton, 1981). The most succinct explanation of how these registers operate can be found in Žižek. In a game of chess, the Symbolic would be the rules of the game, the way the pieces are allowed to move; the Imaginary would be represented by the pieces themselves (a knight instead of a messenger, for example) whereas the Real would be the contingent circumstances affecting the game (Slavoj Žižek, *How to Read Lacan*, London: Granta, 2006, pp. 8–9). Although they interact and relate in various and complex ways, these realms are distinct from Freud's two classic triads: the Unconscious, Pre-conscious and Conscious; and the Id, Ego and Super-Ego. Freud asserts that fetishism is an almost exclusively male phenomenon as it relates to the horror of castration (Sigmund Freud, 'Fetishism' (*Fetischismus* [1927]), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, under the general editorship of James Strachey in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson, 24 vols, London: Vintage, 2001, vol. 21, pp. 147–158. *Passim* reference to the complete works of Sigmund Freud is made through the abbreviation SE, followed by the volume number in Arabic numerals and the page range, as is customary when referencing this author). Lacan, with his argument that the penis is a fetish object substituting the phallus, readdressed this gender imbalance, establishing that, thus, fetishism can be a female activity (Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, pp. 63–64). This is important to my argument, as I develop an essentially feminine position. Whereas a complete study of the term fetishism and its relation to objects and subjectivity would constitute a separate study in its own right, its differentiation from the seductive object and fetishism as a feminine perversion are of relevance to this research. I also take into account psychoanalytic approaches to the study of fetishism and the gaze in relation to contemporary cultural manifestations (see, for example, Henry Krips, *Fetish. An Erotics of Culture*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

adopted the term commodity fetishism in his discussion of capitalist societies.⁸⁰ Marx titled his fourth section of the first volume of *Capital*, ‘The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret’. In that section, he coined the term commodity fetishism, arguably one of his major contributions to the field of political economy, which signals the complicated relation between objects and people. Marx opens with a definition of commodity: ‘[it] is, first of all, an external object, a thing which through its qualities satisfies human needs of whatever kind’.⁸¹ However, he also warns that ‘a commodity appears at first sight an extremely obvious, trivial thing. But its analysis brings out that it is a very strange thing, abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties’.⁸² Commodities have two types of value associated with them: use-value – what satisfies human need – and exchange-value – a quantitative measure that converts a product into a commodity by relating it to other commodities.⁸³ It is this latter value, an ideal and social one (that is, collective, as it applies to many subjects) that appears to be natural to the object, and which contains the ‘metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties’ that make commodities contradictory, riddle-like, obscure to interpretation.

Marx’s use of the term fetishism in his coining of commodity fetishism is radically different to Freud’s conception, who understood it as ‘a psychological condition of a subject, whose desire transforms the significance of particular objects’.⁸⁴ Freud’s conception also differs from Marx’s in that it has psychoanalytic individuality, that is, it applies to one subject, rather than a collectivity. To understand Marx, we must return to the definition of the fetish preceding Freud and even before the Enlightenment, and to the understanding of commodity as value rather than a physical object. For Marx, the fetish character of commodities is inherent to them insofar as they are commodities. So, in commodity fetishism, commodities are not fetishised by individual consumers – that may be termed, instead, consumer fetishism.⁸⁵ Commodity fetishism is a product of the social relations of production characteristic of capitalism. When we think of commodities, we think of their use-value and their exchange-value, but the labour that goes on to producing them is not instantly graspable within them. This is what Marx refers to when he writes of the

80. Karl Marx, *Capital. Volume I (Das Kapital. Kritik der politischen Oekonomie, I. Bd. [1867])*, tr. by Ben Fowkes, London: Penguin, 1976.

81. Marx, *Capital*, p. 125.

82. Marx, *Capital*, p. 163.

83. Peter Osborne, *How to Read Marx*, London: Granta, 2005, pp. 12–14.

84. Osborne, *How to Read Marx*, p. 11.

85. Osborne, *How to Read Marx*, p. 11.

fetish character of commodities:

The commodity-form, and the value-relation of the products of labour within which it appears, have absolutely no connection with the physical nature of the commodity and the material [*dinglich*] relations arising out of this. It is nothing but the definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things.⁸⁶

Put simply (and simplifying a complex concept), Marx is saying that, in capitalist societies, a commodity ‘stands on its head’, as social relations take the form of relations between things, and material relations are established between persons.⁸⁷ According to Osborne, because commodity fetishism is an effect of something ‘purely social’ (exchange value) hiding its social basis, it ‘performs an internal critique of capitalism’s aspirations to be a rational social form’.⁸⁸ Thus, Marx brings the term ‘fetishism’ back to its etymological roots in Portuguese – *feitiço* – which relates to charm and sorcery and also ‘artificial, skillfully contrived’.⁸⁹

Commodities share some aspects with seduction, in particular their mysterious character, which is one of their traits as described by Marx, and by Baudrillard in relation to seduction.⁹⁰ Furthermore, Žižek points out that the most elementary definition of seduction comes from Marx’s *Capital*: ‘they do not know it but they are doing it’.⁹¹ And even after Žižek re-works Marx’s formulation to adopt Peter Sloterdijk’s ‘they know very well what they are doing, but still they are doing it’⁹² one could argue, based on the above, that seduction, and by extension desire, is the ideological principle of capitalism, a thesis supported by, among others, José Antonio Marina in his study of the ontology of contemporary desire.⁹³

86. Marx, *Capital*, p. 165.

87. Marx, *Capital*, pp. 163–166.

88. Osborne, *How to Read Marx*, pp.19–20.

89. Thomas Albert Sebeok, ‘Fetish signs’, in *Signs: An Introduction to Semiotics*, second edition, Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2001, pp. 115–126, p. 115. There is here, of course, also a relation to colonialism which could be explored but which, due to the boundaries of this study, will here remain unexamined.

90. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, pp. 79–85.

91. Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, London: Verso, 1989, p. 28.

92. Žižek, *Sublime Object of Ideology*, p. 29.

93. José Antonio Marina, *Las Arquitecturas del Deseo: Una Investigación Sobre los Placeres del Espíritu* [The Architectures of Desire: An Investigation of the Pleasures of the Soul], Barcelona: Anagrama, 2007, pp. 18 and 30.

The definition of commodity adopted by Marx, together with the rapid development of capitalism,⁹⁴ led to the conceptualisation of commodification, a term used to explain the ‘transformation of relationships, formerly untainted by commerce, into commercial relationships, relationships of exchange, of buying and selling’.⁹⁵

Although this term was first coined in 1977, its processes and social implications are already criticised by Marx and Engels through their concepts of commodity fetishism – discussed above – and alienation, and in *The Communist Manifesto*: ‘The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage labourers’.⁹⁶ Commodification gives economic value to things not previously thought of in those terms, converting them into tradeable commodities.⁹⁷ This includes, for example ideas (their tradeable status expressed through intellectual property and copyright laws), identities, sports (through their professionalization), education and health systems (though their privatisation) and, of course, art (through its commercialisation).⁹⁸ The commercialisation of art and its impact in the practice of artistic creation has sprung a heated debate, largely still unresolved,⁹⁹ arguing the function of culture and, by extension art, in the capitalist world.

ART, FEMININITY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

The central idea to the ‘commerce-and-culture’ debate postulates that commerce and culture are becoming increasingly inseparable and harder to tell apart. Nigel Whitley argues that the most interesting culture arises from commercial opportunities (advertising, creative commercials and popular culture) suggesting that the role traditionally fulfilled by high art is now satisfied by some manifestations of commerce.¹⁰⁰ He sees the origins of the commerce-and-culture debate in the cultural

94. See, for example, Todd McGowan, *The End of Dissatisfaction? Jacques Lacan and the Emerging Society of Enjoyment*, Albany: SUNY Press, 2004. Enjoyment and dissatisfaction, or rather, disenchantment, will return in the conclusion to this research.

95. Brian Basgen and Andy Blunden (eds), *Encyclopedia of Marxism Glossary of Terms: Commodification*, 2004, available from: <<http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/c/o.htm>> [accessed 03.12.07].

96. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto (Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei [1848])*, tr. by Samuel Moore, London: Penguin Books, 2004, p. 6.

97. For works of art that talk overtly about this process, see the collaborative works of Neil Cummings and Marysia Lewandowska, *Chance Projects (1995-2008)*, available from <<http://www.chanceprojects.com/>> [accessed 30.07.10].

98. Basgen and Blunden, *Commodification*.

99. See, for example, Julian Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

100. Nigel Whitley, ‘High Art and the High Street. The “Commerce-and-Culture” Debate’, in Russell

and socio-economic changes that started taking place with the arrival of Pop Art – and are associated with postmodernism. In the 1960s, the life-style approach to culture, where contemplation and critical attitude are traditionally part of high culture, gives way to images understood as commodities that can be consumed.¹⁰¹ Whitely, of course, contends this through stating that first, the commerce-and-culture debate sees culture as a form of legitimisation and homogenisation, where there is no difference between being consumer or spectator; second, that design has displaced the type of engagement of high culture but cannot replace it; and third, that culture, through a distancing mechanism, offers some generalisations on the condition of society. He makes the case for high culture through highlighting the two main roles that culture plays in society: that the aesthetic realm, where culture is placed and whose main function is contemplation, offers a distinct and unique type of engagement, even if not wholly disinterested; and that high culture plays a crucial role in providing critical discourse, especially in the case of two tendencies developed in the 1960s: de-materialised art and politicised culture.

The ‘commerce-and-culture’ debate discusses the different functions of art and design and their relation to capitalism. With the rise of semiological approaches that help de-mythologise the artefacts of high culture, the impact is reversed for design objects, which acquire the status of art.¹⁰² This, argues Whitely, changes the approach of spectators from a critical, contemplative, reflective and relatively disinterested one to a ‘knowing’ one, which does not necessarily provide the viewer with an insight into society’s condition and ideology.¹⁰³ The primary function in design (function and value for money) is overruled by its tertiary function (status and possession value). Culture, on the other hand, is seen as entertainment. Levelling culture down to the values of commerce results in a dangerous loss of the aesthetic realm and critical

Keat, Nigel Whitely and Nicholas Abercrombie (eds), *The Authority of the Consumer*. London: Routledge, 1994, pp. 119–137.

101. The genealogy in this argument, however, is debatable, as this phenomenon is not exclusive to postmodern culture: one might also see this in Dutch genre paintings of the seventeenth-century, for example.

102. As I discussed in ‘Juicy Salif’.

103. Whitely, *High Art and the High Street*, pp. 132–133. Although some of these characteristics – critical, contemplative, reflective and disinterested – may appear to be knowing in the epistemological sense, Whitely refers to ‘knowing’ (with inverted commas) as aware of cultural capital. He refers to these ‘knowing’ viewers as ‘sophisticated but it is at the level of distracting (and often engaging) activity with little significance or generalizable criticality. [...] (A)uthority is supposed to have moved away from producers, or even an awareness of the intended values of the artwork, and now appears to reside with the consumers. And so authority is little more than liking or disliking, of being *entertained*. It is less a matter of learning, experience, judgement and discrimination, and more a matter of the “personal choice” of the consumer’ (p. 132, 134–135).

discourse. The authority of culture moves away from producers or the value of the work of art to the consumer; from learning, judgement, and discrimination to personal choice. Whitely concludes his analysis with a defense of high culture: far from being elitist and intolerant, he says, high culture provides a sense of otherness from the consuming experience, promoting reflection, understanding and criticality. This position is crucial in relation to seduction, as my aim is to show this shift from personal choice to critical reflection.

Changing the focus from more general culture to the specificities of contemporary art, recent advances in this debate see Julian Stallabrass disproving the common conception that contemporary art lies in a zone of freedom of expression and of market forces by destroying some of the myths surrounding it.¹⁰⁴ Placing it in the context of neoliberalist economics and globalised markets, he looks at links between art, politics, and economy since 1989.¹⁰⁵

Trying to invalidate the idea of art's autonomy, he looks closely at its tense association with the market – through the impact of corporate and state sponsorship and a rise in auction houses' interest in contemporary art – the professionalisation of the artists through the university, where an elite discourse, often in contradiction with state and business objectives, is created, and the museum – an institution that has entered global competition and therefore expansion, branding and corporate relations. He also discusses the rise of global biennials, the political implications of such contexts and their impact on artists' works. He explores art's relation to commodity, mass culture, and fashion, arguing that what allows art to compete with mass culture's own powerful imagery is its self-referential discourse both in words and works, and the creation of spectacular pieces artificially limited in production (videos and photographs, for example) that are combined with a watered-down conceptualism. Stallabrass claims that in order for art to remain distinct from mass culture, it needs to hide its links with the market and the current neoliberalist economy – a consequence of capitalism.

He challenges art's fundamental 'unknowable' condition by looking at two main discourses that conceal its uniformity: academic writing, dominated by archaic models; and art criticism, which promote an all-round positive view of the eclectic

104. Stallabrass, *Art Incorporated*.

105. Parallel to this runs Charlie Gere's argument that art is the new religion. See Charlie Gere and Michael Corris, *Non-relational Aesthetics*, London: Artwords Press, 2008.

and diverse contemporary art world. He puts forward the argument that views about art are beginning to change by looking at two recent accounts: Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*,¹⁰⁶ a study on the use of social interaction as an aesthetic medium, and Paul Virilio's *Art and Fear*,¹⁰⁷ an analysis of the ethics of contemporary art (including genetic manipulation) and its use for instrumental purposes. Stallabrass analyses tensions in contemporary art by separating them into three categories: use of art's uselessness; the wide but exclusive appeal of its elitism; and conflicts between art's new modes of making and its relation to production. He concludes by describing four strategies art and artists could adopt to exploit these tensions and escape from capital's servitude: iconoclasm; political activism; the exploitation of technological means to side step the system (for example, internet art); and the production of works with explicit use.

As seen in the two ten-year apart debates described above, the commerce-and-culture debate produces tensions between what art's function may be and its place in (or out of) the capitalist system of production. The commodification process has implications for the study of seduction in art, as hailing techniques, similar to those employed in the marketing and advertising of products are more or less overtly present in art and its machinery (museum advertising, private view events, educational programmes in galleries, etc.). Thus, the study of these processes is essential to ground the present project in a contingent and contemporary context in which art practices take place.

If the position of this project in relation to seduction is to consider it as a practice in a principle, studying seduction itself may be problematic, if not impossible (remember the first rule). Yet, one may identify and study seductive objects (and, also, seductive works of art). Through summoning seduction, practice redefines our relation to it, as seducers, or seducees. Baudrillard offers many examples of this in his study, mainly from the fields of music and literature.¹⁰⁸ Butler argues that it can be concluded, from an analysis of these examples, that music and literature are 'themselves seductive'.¹⁰⁹ If we also consider Baudrillard's later interest in artists such as Sophie Calle and his attempts to relate her work to themes developed in *Seduction*,

106. Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics (Esthétique relationnelle)* [1998], tr. by Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods, Dijon: Presses du Réel, 2002.

107. Paul Virilio, *Art and Fear (La Procédure silence)* [2000], tr. by Julie Rose, London: Continuum, 2006.

108. Baudrillard, *Seduction*.

109. Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies*, p. 107.

one may argue that visual arts can be added to the category of things seductive in themselves.

Seduction may be a universal principle. Objects of seduction, however, are not universal even though there are some instances where certain objects, like the iPod or the Mona Lisa, for example, are a wide success in relation to the promises made by its marketing strategies. There is a sexual asymmetry when it comes to seduction¹¹⁰ and generally, those who identify themselves as men do not like the same things as those who identify themselves as women. The same applies to the choice of object in relation to gender. Given its subjective (but not personal) approach, this project is specifically grounded in relation to feminine seduction and assumes a heterosexual dimension.¹¹¹ My argument sides itself with Michael Biggs' discussion around subjective approaches in art and design doctorates, which, in his view, are not only legitimate, but appropriate.¹¹² Baudrillard dedicated the first of his three sections on seduction to the argument that it is essentially feminine, which is not to say female.¹¹³ He also acknowledges that this is a relation in need of further study.¹¹⁴

Given this, it may be unclear why this study will be adopting Lacanian psychoanalysis – coupled with some aspects of object relations, photographic theory and art criticism – as its intellectual territory, especially as Lacan's approach has often been seen as problematic in relation to femininity.¹¹⁵

110. Darian Leader, *Why Do Women Write More Letters Than They Post?*, London: Faber, 1996.

111. The feminine and heterosexual dimensions particular to this project are not the only ones, and the choices made are contingent with the researcher and the subjective approach taken. This problematic, although I address it in the text, manifests itself in various ways, one of which is the recurrent and unconscious gendering of the ring in chapter three as 'he'. While care has been taken to replace all of the references with 'it', the recurrent slip of the keyboard is interesting and raises issues around seduction, which form part of the gender question addressed in the conclusion as further research. Sinatra's arrest and the 1770 Act are also examples of this gendering in relation to the choice of an object.

112. Michael Biggs, 'On Method: the Problem of Objectivity', in David Durling and Ken Friedman (eds), *Proceedings of the Conference Doctoral Education in Design: Foundations for the Future*. La Clusaz, France, 8–12 July 2000, Stoke-on-Trent: Staffordshire University Press, 2000, pp. 209–214.

113. See the section entitled 'The Ecliptic of Sex'. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, pp. 4–49.

114. Levin, *Baudrillard*, p. 33. Daniel Sibony specifically examines the relation between seduction and the feminine, from a psychoanalytic point of view (see his work, mentioned above, *Le féminin*) and this study will draw primarily on his work, Baudrillard's and that of Jacques Lacan. Femininity will be adopted as a position in relation to the choice of an object and the rapport established with it. The study will not be concerned, however, with feminism or feminist strands in psychoanalysis, as this is not its intellectual context. I will endeavour, nonetheless, to point out any theoretical issues related to feminism arising from my subjective approach to art making and seduction.

115. See, for example, Monique David-Ménard, 'Lacanian Against Lacan', tr. by Brian Massumi, *Social Text*, no. 6, Autumn 1982, pp. 86–111.

First, I have given consideration to Lacanian theorists and practitioners working on femininity, specifically the works of Parveen Adams, Joan Copjec, Dianne Hunter, Sharon Kivland, Mignon Nixon, Kaja Silverman and Colette Soler.

Secondly, psychoanalysis is a relational clinical practice. This has resulted in methodological consequences for this project. Attention to this aspect of psychoanalysis liberates this study from a merely interpretive analysis of seduction, which may have ensued from theoretical models. Furthermore, through an examination of the parallels between artistic and analytic practices, transference,¹¹⁶ Lacan's Four Discourses – in particular the *Discourse of the Analyst* – and his *objet petit a*, I will argue, in chapter two, that psychoanalysis, like art, is a seductive practice.¹¹⁷

Thirdly, desire and lack are at the centre of the clinical practice of psychoanalysis. As I will show, seduction and desire – in and through *objet petit a* – are constituted in a dialectical relationship that is key to the workings of seduction in the gallery space and the consulting room.

Fourthly, psychoanalysis has thought extensively about the problem of the object (see, for example, Melanie Klein, D. W. Winnicott, as well as Lacan and Freud).¹¹⁸

116. In the clinical setting, transference refers to the relationship between patient and analyst, as it develops during treatment. In analysis, as something is transferred, from past to present, into the room where the analysand finds herself and to the person of the analyst, situations are worked through not by remembering, but by re-living and re-enacting them. Listen to Adam Phillips in Lisa Appignanesi, *Freudian Slips, 4: Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*, [Radio Programme] BBC, first aired on Thursday 17 March 2005 at 3.45pm, available from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/science/freudianslips.shtml> [accessed 22.08.09]. Of course, transference is evident in most relationships (friends, teaching situations, PhD supervision) but the context of analysis, the *privileged enclosure*, the rules of engagement, and the analytic hour – the tool of analysis, which allows unseen things to be made visible – heightens it (Susie Orbach in Lisa Appignanesi, *Freudian Slips*). Transference has a transforming effect. If transference is love, as Freud asserted, that love is first and foremost a love of knowledge (*wissentrieb*). Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954 (Le séminaire I: Les écrits techniques de Freud [1975])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by John Forrester, New York: W.W. Norton, 1991, p.109; Freud, 'Observations on Transference-Love (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psychoanalysis III)' (*Bemerkungen über Die Übertragungsliebe [1915]*), SE 12, pp. 157–174; Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 212.

117. John Forrester, *The Seductions of Psychoanalysis. Essays on Freud, Lacan and Derrida*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

118. My approach to psychoanalysis falls in between two schools: Lacanian – promoting a return to Freud's texts – and Object Relations – placing emphasis on Freud's drive theory and the importance of early relationship formations. Whereas the intellectual territory of this research is firmly anchored within Lacan's writings, Object Relations will help me address some of the relational issues around object and our choices. Object Relations places especial emphasis on childhood and child psychoanalysis, which is why I do not go any further with it. Lacan, on the other hand, helps me to bridge between anthropology and philosophy – through phenomenology – as his teaching was

Thus psychoanalysis will help to examine the crossing between the phenomenological thing, through the psychoanalytic object – *objet petit a* – to the work of art, and the position of the object in the gallery space and the consulting room. Chance encounters and the finding and re-finding of an object will be key to my engagement with art through practice.

Lastly, seduction has a peculiar place in psychoanalysis. Freud devised a theory he called *Neurotica*, and which later came to be known as the seduction theory, a misnomer.¹¹⁹ In his 1896 letters to his friend Wilhelm Fliess, Freud explains his discovery of instances of childhood seduction in most of the hysteria and obsessional neurosis cases he was treating, thus finding a possible causal link for the afflictions.¹²⁰ On the 14 August 1897, however, he writes ‘I no longer believe in my *neurotica*’, describing how he had understood that the seductions recounted by his patients were fantasies.¹²¹ This came to be known as the abandonment of the seduction theory.¹²² Seduction, as a clinical term and as recounted by Freud, is, according to Baudrillard, the ‘lost object’ of psychoanalysis¹²³ and it is believed that this rejection allowed the practice of psychoanalysis, as we know it today, to emerge, as Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis note:

It is traditional to look upon Freud’s dropping of the seduction theory in 1897 as a decisive step in the foundation of psychoanalytic theory, and in the bringing to the fore of such

influenced by Claude Lévi-Stauss and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, among others. Object Relations was formed by British analysts and its main exponents include Melanie Klein, D. W. Winnicott and Wilfred Bion. Lacan criticises the Object Relations approach to psychoanalytic treatment in Seminar II. *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II: The Ego in Freud’s Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955 (Le séminaire, livre II: Le moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique de la psychanalyse 1954–1955 [1978])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Sylvania Tomaselli. London: W. W. Norton, 1991.

119. Laplanche, *Seduction and the Problem of the Other*, p. 653; Freud and Masson, *Complete Letters*, Cathy Caruth, *An Interview with Jean Laplanche*, 2001, available from <<http://www3.iath.virginia.edu/pmc/text-only/issue.101/11.2caruth.txt>> accessed 28.01.07.

120. Freud, Letter 52, ‘Extracts from the Fliess Papers’ (in *Aus den Anfängen der Psychoanalyse*, ed. by Marie Bonaparte, Anna Freud and Ernst Kris [1950]), SE 1, pp. 173–280, pp. 238–239. In *Neurotica*, Freud ‘specified the childhood erotic experiences which were precursors to the adult neurosis’. Doug Davis, ‘A Theory for the 90s: Freud’s Seduction Theory in Historical Context’, *Psychoanalytic Review*, 81(4), 1994, pp. 627–640, p. 633.

121. Freud, Letter 69, *Fliess Papers*, pp. 259–260.

122. Masson, *Complete Letters*. See also, Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson, *The Assault on Truth: Freud’s Suppression of the Seduction Theory*, London, Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984.

123. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 55.

conceptions as unconscious phantasy, psychical reality, spontaneous infantile sexuality and so on.¹²⁴

The significance of Freud's seduction theory in relation to his thoughts on trauma and fantasy is very important to the development of my methodology and its application. Despite the confusion of its definition and the pervasiveness overriding any attempts to study it, a synthesis of the approaches to seduction taken by different areas – and not least psychoanalysis – and a discussion of terms related, but distinct from it, can help to shed some light on its workings. In order to study seduction as exerted by certain works of art, focus has to be shifted from the principle itself, and onto the examination of seductive practices.

124. Jean Laplanche and Jean Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis* (*Vocabulaire de la Psychanalyse* [1967]), tr. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1973, p. 361. How Freud's rejection of the seduction theory allowed the development of psychoanalytic practice is explained by Shirley Nelson Garner ('Freud and Fliess: Homophobia and Seduction', in *Seduction and Theory: Readings of Gender, Representation and Rhetoric*, ed. by Dianne Hunter, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 86-109). There, she explains how the end of the friendship between Freud and Wilhelm Fliess over a professional matter and, later on, the seduction theory, also had an effect in the transference Freud felt with regards to his ears, nose and throat doctor. Freud worked through the transference in his self-analysis, which in 1900 gave rise to the publication of his major work 'The Interpretation of Dreams' (*Die Traumdeutung* [1900]), SE 4 and SE 5.



1.1



1.2



1.3



1.4



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1.7



1.8



1.9

CHAPTER TWO

SCREEN AS METHOD

FINDING A METHODOLOGY TO STUDY SEDUCTION

Given the problems around definition and pervasiveness outlined in the previous chapter, how am I – an artist, researcher, and would-be-doctor – to investigate seduction? Studies on the topic are in no agreement about the kinds of activities one could undertake to do so, making the search for an integrated methodology, finding an off-the-shelf answer applicable to works of art, out of the question. The problem has to be addressed with a certain amount of creative thinking, so perhaps I have already answered my own question, in part at least. Being an artist offers an array of methodologies one could use to investigate seduction (reflective journals, representation or visualisation techniques, for example). Yet, on their own they would not be able to surmount the obstacles I have found in other studies. My starting point is, therefore, Claude Levi-Strauss's *bricoleur* approach, integrating different methods from a variety of fields of study. I initially considered a number of possibilities ranging from purely theoretical ways of working, which would perpetuate some of the troubles Baudrillard had encountered when writing his text, to a phenomenological enquiry (particularly through the works of Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty).¹²⁵ Aspects of the blind alleys through which seduction took me (and which, of course, I followed) remain with me even in the submission of the evidence here. In my journey, I encountered these blind paths in libraries, in the street, and, above all, the studio. There were elements of recognition and self-reflexivity in this process, as it is not dissimilar to the approach to work an artist has – these elements will, in a few pages take a foremost position in the research.

There were also, however, a number of productive paths: I recognised the workings of seduction in Sigmund Freud's abandonment of his *Neurotica*, in what the texts told me about transference and in Jacques Lacan's outline of a theory of desire. Psychoanalysis seemed suited to provide me with the evidence I needed to build my case. The question was how. My early investigations into the nature of desire and of the experience of desire (mainly in phenomenology) left me wondering if all I could do was to study seduction from the safe distance of theoretical formulations. In books and journals my object of study was slipping away more that ever. Seduction was not

125. See, for example, Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology*, London: Routledge, 2000, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (*Phénoménologie de la Perception* [1945]), tr. by Paul Kegan, London, New York: Routledge, 2002.

going to come to me. For that matter, psychoanalysis was not going to materialise in my studio either. It was then that three realisations, separate, but in hindsight intimately related, managed to turn around the problem of a methodology to study seduction.

FIRST REALISATION

The first realisation was that, when it came to psychoanalysis, reading Freud and Lacan was like learning the Highway Code. For this research, which focuses on phenomena, processes, experience and practice, I needed to find an equivalent to driving the car. So from April 2005 to January 2008, I engaged in the practice of analysis, as *analysand*.¹²⁶ Every Thursday, I would ring the doorbell of a house and would be shown into the consulting room. It was decorated in dark green, with puzzling prints on the wall, many books and journals and a closed laptop computer of the same make and model as mine (and which had to do with my transference as it instigated an instant affinity with my analyst, though the choice of object). I was only allowed a five-second glimpse of these surroundings before I did what I had come to do, lay down on the couch, while simultaneously I heard my analyst take his place in his chair, outside of my field of vision. When ready, I would start talking and fifty minutes later he would say: 'That is all the time we have for today'. My analyst and I stopped seeing each other as time and money (the two most important constants in the work of analysis)¹²⁷ became difficult. He was the one who suggested ending it, or at least taking a break, so I could make works of art. My analysis was complex and really hard work; a good Freudian couch is never comfortable,¹²⁸ but it gave me much material to formulate a methodology in relation to seduction.

Every week I took notes of my sessions, which I typed, like a good student, keeping

126. Shoshana Felman argues that, according to Lacan, psychoanalysis is, first and foremost, a practice, a practical engagement of patient and analyst, the concrete process of an analysis. This comes before the idea of psychoanalysis as a method, a technique or a theory. Shoshana Felman, *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight: Psychoanalysis in Contemporary Culture*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 57. See also Bruce Fink, *A Clinical Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis: Theory and Technique*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1999. *Analysand* is an equivalent term for *patient*. It establishes a clear relation between doctor and patient, analyst and analysand, through the root of both words.

127. See Freud, 'On Beginning the Treatment (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis I)' (*Zur Einleitung Der Behandlung* [1913]), SE 12, pp. 121–144.

128. Herbert Muschamp, 'The Talk: Icons; Freudian Slipcovers', *The New York Times*, 8 October 2006, available from

<<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9400E6D91630F93BA35753C1A9609C8B63&sec=&spn=&pagewanted=all>> [accessed 05.02.09].

misspellings, wrong words, and inserting thoughts, interjections and images of the works of art I talked about in the session. I indexed every entry with keywords, kept a database of topics, hoping to find a pattern, something. I ended up with a text similar to this one, of around 40,000 words. What could I do with it? I could use quotations in my thesis but that may bring the experience back into the realm of theoretical concerns, and my analysis had been, above all, a performative action, something more akin to practice (artistic practice, I mean) than theory. My clinical diary became a work, providing material for various manifestations. The work is a book based on Sandor Ferenczi's diary¹²⁹ and the Enigma codebook. I designed the layout and the typography, with occasional advice from experts. I could not let anyone read it. The pages are skin pink and so is the main text colour. In order to read it, the viewer would have to deface it, perhaps colouring the pages with a pencil so the printed letters appear. After all, they are there, available; like the unconscious, they speak, but not readily understandable. Keywords and section headings, printed in red ink, are legible; that is all the reader needs to know about my unconscious. Why would anyone want to know more? Without the details, it is evident what one will find there – the Highway Code. I made images visible, and I included letters and invoices for my sessions, marking money and time, getting into the routine of the sessions and the process of exchange. These were the enigmatic traces of the intense engagement of my analysis.

This journey helped me to understand how much of a seductive practice psychoanalysis is – mainly due to transference – and allowed me to establish a number of parallels between art and analysis. As practices, they are especially well suited to each other; they are both realms in which questions and answers circulate. There are a number of elements with equivalence in both. According to Vincent Dachy, this analogy between art and analysis is one of the many that could be derived from problematising and relating two threefold interactions: Art, with the artist, the work, and the viewer; and psychoanalysis, with the analyst, speech and the analysand.¹³⁰ Although one could also argue for dissimilar elements in both practices,

129. Sándor Ferenczi, *The Clinical Diary of Sándor Ferenczi (Journal Clinique (Janvier-Octobre 1932) [1990])*, ed. by Judith Dupont, tr. by Michael Balint and Nicola Zarday Jackson, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1995. Reading Ferenczi's diary inspired me to work with my text as it was written, without editing it (although the text colour would perform a kind of editing, or erasing) and without picking parts of it to create other work. Ferenczi's writing, although edited, conserves a raw quality and a contradiction – perhaps a consequence of working through – related to the practice of psychoanalysis. This I found important to the integrity of my own clinical diary.

130. Vincent Dachy, 'One or Two Things? A Few Remarks about Psychoanalysis and Art', in Sharon Kivland and Marc du Ry, *In the Place of an Object, Journal of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research*, vol. 12, Special Issue 2000, pp. 17–23, p. 18.

looking at the similarities will enlighten the motivations behind my methodological choice.

Art and analysis are practices, whose aim can be put in relation to the impossible, which, in turn, relates to the Freudian *Thing*, the inaccessible object of desire, called *objet petit a* by Jacques Lacan.¹³¹ This is, arguably, his major contribution to the field of psychoanalytic practice and theory. *Objet petit a* is a complex concept, in flux throughout Lacan's work. This algebraic formula, normally left untranslated, refers to the little other (*autre*, in French), which in Lacanian theory relates to reflexivity, identification and the Ego, as opposed to the big Other, the radical alterity of language and the law. *Objet petit a* is the cause of desire: not the object to which is desire is directed, but that which provokes desire.¹³² It is unspecularizable, it resists symbolisation and has no representation or alterity. *Objet petit a* evolves from earlier formations such as Plato's *agalma*, which I mentioned in chapter one. Desire is paramount to Lacan's thought: in its unconscious form, it is 'at the heart of human existence and [is] the central concern of psychoanalysis';¹³³ *objet petit a* mobilises this force. Paradoxically, the *objet petit a* is also the object of anxiety. It is a lack, a void, around which the drives (to which I will return) circle. As such, obtaining it and satisfying desire is impossible. Attempts, however, are made through partial objects, which stand in for *objet petit a*.

Whereas the link between the impossible, *objet petit a* and psychoanalysis is made evident in the consulting room (it is an active part in transference), the link to art may seem more tenuous. Yet, art can also be put in relation to the impossibility of reaching *objet petit a*. As Bice Benvenuto writes:

Art and psychoanalysis are practices of the impossible on the path of initiation to the mystery, the beyond discourse. Their search is for a pure language, ideally coinciding with the Thing itself; not a familiar reflection of ourselves but a going towards

131. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 65–119. *Das Ding*, The Thing, is a concept Freud separates from that of object, stating that the Thing is a lost object. It is difficult to pinpoint where exactly Freud discusses the term, as it appears throughout his work, first in his 'Project for a Scientific Psychology' (*Entwurf Einer Psychologie* (1950 [1895]), SE 1, pp. 281–397. Jacques Lacan, however, in his return to Freud's texts, studies the concept in Seminar VII. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959–1960* (*Le séminaire, livre VII: L'éthique de la psychanalyse* [1986]), ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Dennis Porter, London: Routledge, 1992, pp. 43–70.

132. Bruce Fink, 'Object (a): Cause of Desire', in *The Lacanian Subject. Between Language and Jouissance*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, pp. 83–97, p. 91.

133. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 36.

the most foreign and intimate land. And reaching it ... is impossible.¹³⁴

It is precisely this fall between its unconscious aim – *objet petit a* – and reaching it that is fundamental to the practice of art; in a similar way and as argued by Dany Nobus and Malcolm Quinn, knowledge and its failure are constitutive of the practice of psychoanalysis.¹³⁵ Darian Leader argues that art tries to represent what is impossible to see because it was never there, while speaking about the effects of the system that creates it: it has the same function as jokes. He illustrates this by discussing Duchamp's unwillingness to being pinned down by a signifier, a rejection of language that leads him not to produce work that represents him. The fact that the work will be inevitably tied down to the signifier once it is seen by viewers, creates contradictions in the field of objects: works are often something and their opposite.¹³⁶ The tripping and trapping inherent to seduction has much in common with this fall on the path towards the impossible, as my next chapters will show.

There are a number of received ideas around these practices. The analyst does not begin the session by inviting the analysand to talk about her mother, as one sees in films; success does not always depend on the creative 'genius' of the artist as biopics of modernist painters show. These received ideas are fuelled by a lexicon that permeates our culture. From Picasso to Oedipus, art and psychoanalysis are represented and discussed, even by those who do not engage in the encounters proposed by these practices. As both deal with issues common to many viewers or analysands, some of the work required will involve dismantling and challenging these assumptions, contending with the analysand and the viewer's resistance to enter into the intersubjective transference offered. Received ideas are not new to seduction either, as I showed in the previous chapter. It constantly has to contend with sexual and moral matters that limit its full workings.

Both practices take place in **specific contexts**, the consulting room and the gallery space, for example.¹³⁷ These contexts are often governed by institutional conventions.

134. Bice Benvenuto, 'The Impossible', in Kivland and du Ry (eds), *In the Place of an Object, JCFAR*, pp. 45–59, p. 59.

135. Dany Nobus and Malcolm Quinn, *Knowing Nothing, Staying Stupid. Elements for a Psychoanalytic Epistemology*, London: Routledge, 2005.

136. Darian Leader, *Stealing the Mona Lisa: What Art Stops us from Seeing*, Washington D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2002.

137. While the consulting room is usually the constant context in which analysis takes place – although I have known some sessions to take the form of telephone conversations – the gallery space is one of the many contexts in which an encounter with art may happen. Others may be fields, shop windows,

[Footnote continues]

In the case of the consulting room these include time and fee of the sessions, carpets, cushions, chair, couch, prints, paintings, books, objects; in the gallery space, white walls, ceiling light, a discreet desk, a fire hose ...¹³⁸ Both Mignon Nixon and Brian O'Doherty coincide in naming these particular settings the 'frame'.¹³⁹ These frames provide the constants in which the process takes place.¹⁴⁰ According to Donald Winnicott, this environmental provision, the arrangement of place, is a condition to the work of analysis, essential to the unbinding that needs to be done.¹⁴¹ The viewer and the analysand are in the world of an other, since works of art and analysts will not easily come to one's home. These spaces, the gallery and the consulting room are, in the words of the psychoanalyst Chris Oakley, 'privileged enclosures'.¹⁴²

The issue of setting raises very interesting and complex points and I want to acknowledge again here my assumption of the gallery as a 'situation' of art, which is, of course, reductive. There are other defining frames, more importantly the discursive frame which houses the process and/or the object. In the absence of a gallery this frame is made even more manifest. Likewise, in the absence of a chair and a couch, what are the essential elements that make an analysis it, and not something else? This is a rhetorical question in the context of this study, but an interesting one for future research. Seduction is dependant on a context, but not on a specific one; that is, the context will promote certain behaviour but seduction can take place almost in any context. This is why it is closer to the setting in which art takes place than that of the analytic relation. Yet, the setting of seduction, the place

studios, private dwellings, books, almost everything and everywhere. Yet, I will use the gallery space for argument's sake, as it is a context most viewers will recognize as having specific rules of engagement, as I describe. The gallery is, thus, to be understood as a contextual frame, which could, and often is, something other than a gallery.

138. Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Berkeley, CA. and London: University of California Press, 1999.

139. Mignon Nixon, 'On the Couch', *October* 113, Summer 2005, pp. 39–76, and Brian O'Doherty, *White Cube*.

140. Nixon, *Couch*, p. 47.

141. D.W. Winnicott, *Psychoanalytic Explorations*, London: Karnac Books; Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1989. I am conscious that I am assuming that the gallery is the frame for art, and this is not entirely accurate. The consulting room is a clearer case as it consists not of décor but of objects that can be replicated anywhere and also, importantly, used for the practice. The opposite is true of a gallery: there are rarely objects other than the art. Yet, what I am trying to point out is that in the specificity of these places the encounters happen.

142. '[W]hat is exemplified here is the privileged enclosure. At one level the analytic space, behind closed doors, the locus of seduction, a place of the wildness of intimacy, for believe it or not, all this does exist, which is not to say that it happens to all.' Chris Oakley, 'A Disturbance of Memory on the Acropolis – A Response', in Kivland and du Ry (eds), *In the Place of an Object, JCFAR*, pp. 141–160, p. 149.

in which it can and does take place is essential to its working as is shown in the stories of Casanova, Johannes and Valmont.¹⁴³ The seducer always takes the context, the frame into account, be this a carriage, or the bedroom. There is no one specific context for seduction, yet, the context is specific *to* the individual seduction, and the encounter happens, in part, thanks to it.

These privileged enclosures are testimony to an enigmatic encounter, governed by **particular rules of engagement**, conventions and quasi-ritualistic behaviour. In a gallery, the distance between viewer and work is calculated, voices are lowered, behaviour is socially controlled, walking happens at a certain pace.¹⁴⁴ In the consulting room, the positional relation between analyst and analysand is precise, rules about laying down on the couch and not looking at the analyst are observed, talk outside of the couch is kept to a minimum, the analysand is free to ask, the analyst is bound not to answer. However, within those conventions, there is also space for almost anything to happen. One could, acting out one's anxiety, get up in the middle of analysis and look at the analyst in the eye; or, in a *passage à l'acte*, just leave. In a gallery, the light could turn itself on and off, as in Martin Creed's *Work No 227*.¹⁴⁵ The whole space could be taken up by a nightmarish vision, as happens in Mike Nelson's complex installations.¹⁴⁶ The couch and the physical or virtual floor line of the gallery have an essential role in managing this engagement: they keep analyst and analysand, object and viewer apart,¹⁴⁷ separate, disentangled; unless otherwise required, of course. The manuals of the classic seducers or the newly devised popular psychology texts are more or less explicit step-by-step guides of the rules of engagement needed for each particular seductive encounter and setting.¹⁴⁸

143. Casanova, *History of My Life*; Kierkegaard, *Diary of a Seducer*; Laclos, *Liaisons Dangereuses*.

144. My thinking of these parallels was very much inspired by Sharon Kivland's *Art and Psychoanalysis* seminars lectures at Sheffield Hallam University, which I attended between October 2005 and February 2006. In them, she made parallels between lovers, work and viewer, and analyst and patient.

145. Tate Britain, *Turner Prize History: Artists: Martin Creed, 2003*, available from <<http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/turnerprize/history/creed.htm>> [accessed 11.02.07].

146. Rebecca Duclos, *Mike Nelson: Triple Bluff Canyon*, Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, 8 May–4 July 2004, available from <http://www.surrealismcentre.ac.uk/publications/papers/journal2/acrobat_files/duclos_review.pdf> [accessed 11.02.07].

147. Nixon, *Couch*, p. 50.

148. Particular rules of engagement pertain, also, to a politics of sexuation, to the relation between men and women, and their own relation to loss and jouissance, the beyond desire. Although I want to acknowledge and mention this, it falls outside my remit here; it is, as I explain in the conclusion, one of my pointers for immediate future research. Yet, a good beginning for this can be found in Bruce Fink's exploration of Lacan's statement 'There is no sexual relation', in which he explores the phallic function and ~~Woman~~ as Other to herself, in Jean-Claude Milner's study on Man and Woman as inscribed in language, and in Colette Soler's exploration of Lacan's perspective on women. Fink, *The Lacanian*

In Darian Leader's *Stealing the Mona Lisa: What Art Stops Us From Seeing*,¹⁴⁹ one finds an example that illustrates another key characteristic shared by art and analysis: their relation to **distance** and **absence**. This example further links art and analysis as practices of the impossible. Exploring the theft of Leonardo's *Mona Lisa* from the Louvre, carried out by Vincenzo Peruggia in 1911 and the subsequent queues of people wanting to look at the empty space left by the stolen painting, Leader explores what art can give people, its relation to desire, and the visual seduction it represents. He proposes that, rather than humans being image-capturing devices, it is in fact the other way round: images are human capturing devices, especially in their absence.¹⁵⁰ People seeing the empty space of the *Mona Lisa* did not queue for the sight of the actual painting. Leader plays with the idea of desiring objects, of objects embodying the enigmatic, invasive and malevolent dimension of the look of the Other, our internalised image of language and the law.¹⁵¹ Luring and deceiving are, for Leader and for Lacan, intrinsic to the image.¹⁵² What we cannot see, what is lacking from visual reality is what attracts our look. He illustrates this with examples from Francis Bacon's work, which, for Leader, include something that resists being turned into an image (a scream, a breath of air). This absence from the field of vision is based around an impossibility rather than a prohibition. Desire and seduction rely on a certain distance, even absence as described in Leader's example; or the impossibility to obtain the desired object.¹⁵³ Distance to the analyst is necessary for transference, and thus, for the treatment to take place.

Subject, pp. 98–125; Jean-Claude Milner, 'Extracts from *For the Love of Language*' (*L'Amour de la Langue* [1978]), tr. by Ann Banfield, in *Jacques Lacan, Critical Evaluations in Cultural Theory*, ed. by Slavoj Žižek, vol. II: Philosophy, London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 319–341; Colette Soler, *What Lacan Said about Women: a Psychoanalytic Study* (*Ce que Lacan disait des femmes: Étude de psychanalyse* [2003]), tr. by John Holland, New York: Other Press, 2006.

149. Leader, *Stealing the Mona Lisa*.

150. In Seminar XI, Lacan explains this further with the help of Choang-tsu's dream of himself as a butterfly. 'But this does not mean that he is captivated by the butterfly – he is a captive butterfly, but captured by nothing, for, in the dream, he is a butterfly for nobody. It is when he is awake that he is Choang-tsu for others, and is caught in their butterfly net.' *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 76.

151. To illustrate this, Leader used the example of masks, especially in the work of Pablo Picasso. See *Stealing the Mona Lisa*, p. 42.

152. See Lacan's part two of Seminar XI, entitled 'Of the Gaze and *objet petit a*', *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 65–119.

153. See Steve Dutton, Percy Peacock and Steve Swindells' exhibition *Kayakoy* shown in Pekaio, Toronto, and Catalyst Arts Belfast, in 2000 and 2001. The work took as its motif an abandoned ghost village converted into a tourist attraction. They show that the attraction of absence is not only a defining characteristic of a work of art. In addition, Anthony Vidler argues that distance and proximity play an important part in different phenomena related to engagement, from estrangement to neighbourliness. Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space. Art, Architecture, and Anxiety in Modern Culture*, Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 2000.

In the analytic room and the gallery space, **resistance and commitment** are both present. Whereas the former is inevitable, the second is required for the encounter to develop. Resistance is structural to the practice of analysis.¹⁵⁴ A riddle-like resistance is also necessary to put works of art into play. A prime example of this is Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés*. Although numerous attempts have taken place, everything about it resists interpretation: from its title, to its choice of materials and its imagery.¹⁵⁵ Sometimes, it even resists contemplation, as in the story of my first encounter with the work, an encounter that led me directly to seduction and to this writing.

Gaze is present in analysis room and in the gallery space. Lacan separated the concept of gaze from that of look, the latter being concerned with the organ of sight and with the subject.¹⁵⁶ For Lacan, gaze is an object that cannot be assimilated or represented. It is fundamentally linked to *objet petit a*, the object cause of desire, as it is the partial object of the scopie drive, how *objet petit a* manifests itself through the scopie drive.¹⁵⁷ When the analysand takes her place on the couch, the analyst normally sits at her head.¹⁵⁸ In the presence of its absence, in its separation from the

154. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 166.

155. See, for example, the following attempts: Taylor, *Étant donnés: Judovitz, Rendez-vous with Marcel Duchamp*; d'Harnoncourt and Hopps, *Étant donnés*; Jean-François Lyotard, *Les transformateurs Duchamp*, Paris: Editions Galilée, 1977; Juan Antonio Ramirez, 'In the Orbit of *Étant donnés*', in *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even (Duchamp, el Amor y la Muerte, Incliso [1993])*, tr. by Reaktion Books (translator's name is not given), London: Reaktion Books 1998, pp. 173–196 and "'Given in the darkness...'" (Love and Death)', in *Duchamp: Love and Death, Even (Duchamp, el Amor y la Muerte, Incliso [1993])*, tr. by Reaktion Books (translator's name is not given), London: Reaktion Books, 1998, pp. 197–248; David Joselit, 'Modern Machines: From the Virgin to the Widow', in *Infinite Regress: Marcel Duchamp, 1910–1941*, Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1998, pp. 111–156; Octavio Paz, '*Water Writes Always in *Plural' (*Apariencia Desnuda: la Obra de Marcel Duchamp [1973]*), tr. by Rachel Phillips, in *Marcel Duchamp: Appearance Stripped Bare*, New York: Arcade Publishing, 1978, pp. 91–180; Penelope Haralambidou, 'The Stereoscopic Veil', *arg: Architectural Research Quarterly*, vol. 11, issue 01, March 2007, pp. 36–52, and *The Blossoming of Perspective: A Study*, London: DomoBaal editions, 2006; and Marcel Duchamp, *Manual of Instructions for Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage*, New Haven and London: Philadelphia Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2009 (1987).

156. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 72. The impossible alignment between them has been studied by Lorens Holm in his analysis of Albrecht Dürer's third woodcut. Lorens Holm, 'Rejoinders 1. The Scene of the Crime', *Room 5: Arcade*, issue 2, April, London: The London Consortium, 2002.

157. A fuller explanation of drives and the way they work is provided in chapter four.

158. 'Without exerting any other kind of influence, he invites them to lie down in a comfortable attitude on a sofa, while he himself sits on a chair behind them outside their field of vision. He does not even ask them to close their eyes, and avoids touching them in any way, as well as any other procedure which might be reminiscent of hypnosis. The session thus proceeds like a conversation between two people equally awake, but one of whom is spared every muscular exertion and every distracting sensory impression which might divert his attention from his own mental activity'. Freud, 'Freud's Psychoanalytic Procedure' (*Die Freud'sche Psychoanalytische Methode [1904]*), SE 7, pp. 247–254. p. 250.

voice that speaks, gaze plays an important part in transference, that dual, challenging and complex relationship between analyst and analysand. Elements of a transference relation can also be found in the gallery space, as will be seen later, in the discussion around the *Discourse of the Analyst*. Freud's concept of scopophilia,¹⁵⁹ where the act of looking, and the experience of being looked at are associated with pleasure,¹⁶⁰ is particularly relevant in the contexts of art and psychoanalysis. In terms of seduction, Baudrillard argued that it is mainly a matter of appearances, manifested visually.¹⁶¹ The key similarity between art and psychoanalysis, the one that encompasses all others is the fact that both are relational practices focusing on an object, be this the art object or the analyst.¹⁶² This relation, and in particular the place the object occupies in the gallery space and the consulting room, concerns seduction (remember, seduction belongs to objects). This place is linked to Lacan's *objet petit a*, the object at the centre of psychoanalytic practice, and it is related to his theory of the Four Discourses and the position of the analyst in the *Discourse of the Analyst*. This discourse complements other three: those of the Master, the University and the Hysteric and examine different relationships within structures of various social bonds, or situations of power.¹⁶³ The discourses contain the same elements: a number of letters that circulate and, not fixed, assume a discourse. These four elements, always in the same order, are then rotated to occupy one of four different positions, each with a specific role: truth, the agent, the other and loss/product (Fig. 8):

- The signifying other, the place from which one speaks, or knowledge (represented by S_2)
- *objet petit a*
- The barred subject, or subject of speech ($\$$)

159. Freud developed this concept throughout his work and it appears in many of his texts, most notably, in 'The Psychoanalytic View of Psychogenic Disturbance of Vision' (*Die Psychogene Sehstörung in Psychoanalytischer Auffassung* [1910]), SE 11, pp. 209–218; 'Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality' (*Drei Abhandlungen zur Sexualtheorie* [1905]), SE 7, pp. 123–245; and 'Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (*Triebe und Treibsicksale* [1915]), SE 14, pp. 109–140.

160. Lacan also links gaze to satisfaction. In Seminar XI, he writes: 'The gaze may contain in itself the object a of the Lacanian algebra where the subject falls, and what specifies the scopie field and engenders the satisfaction proper to it is the fact that, for structural reasons, the fall of the subject always remains unperceived, for it is reduced to zero'. *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 76–77.

161. See, for example Baudrillard's chapter on the secret horizon of appearances in *Seduction*, pp. 53–59.

162. Relational, in this context, refer to relatedness, something that enables or constitutes a relation. It is, of course, also connected to Nicolas Bourriaud's concept of Relational Art, or Relational Aesthetics, where human relations and their social contexts are at the centre of the work. See my discussion of Stallabrass' *Art Incorporated*, and also of Object Relations in chapter one.

163. See Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse, 1969–1970 [1991])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Russell Grigg, New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

- The Master Signifier, or a signifier outside of the chain of signification (S_1)

In the *Discourse of the Analyst* (Fig. 9), Lacan places *objet petit a* as representing the analyst in the commanding position. This position is that of the subject-supposed-to-know (*sujet supposé savoir*): the analysand believes the analyst holds the key to her symptom, but the position is only illusory – even though this illusion is what brings the analysand to the consulting room – as knowledge cannot be found in any subject, but, instead, in the intersubjective relation.¹⁶⁴ Thus, this is how analysis takes place: the analyst interrogates the divided subject (S), the analysand. Her split shows through ‘slips of the tongue, bungled and unintended acts, slurred speech, dreams’.¹⁶⁵ These constitute the master or single signifier (S_1), which also represents the end of an association, something that stops the analysand’s speech, a signifier that is lost. Through analysis, this lost signifier is first, isolated; secondly, questioned and connected to other signifiers in a dialectic relationship (S_2); and thirdly, got rid of.¹⁶⁶

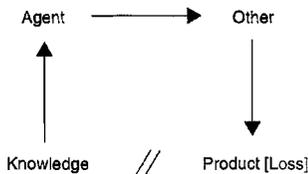


Fig. 8: Structure of the Four Discourses.¹⁶⁷

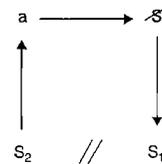


Fig. 9: The *Discourse of the Analyst*.

Following on from the parallels between artistic and analytic practices, I want to outline here the first of two propositions, key to this case. If certain works of art can bring *objet petit a*, the cause of desire and anxiety into being and are its manifestation, they therefore occupy, in the gallery space, the position the analyst occupies in the consulting room. This idea is neither new nor mine. Although Lacan did not explicitly form a Discourse of the Work of Art, in his seminars (especially VI, XI, XVII and XXI), he suggested a possible relation between the viewer and the object similar to that facilitated by analytic practice. The work of art in the place of the

164. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 197. Lacan further links the intersubjective nature of analysis to transference. In Seminar XI, he writes: ‘As soon as the subject supposed to know exists somewhere [...] there is transference’. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 232.

165. Fink, *The Lacanian Subject*, p. 135.

166. Slavoj Žižek, *Jacques Lacan’s Four Discourses*, available from <<http://www.lacan.com/zizfour.htm>> [accessed 07.07.06].

167. Both Figs. 7 and 8 are adapted from Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*.

analyst is something not thought about in many psychoanalytic studies of cultural objects, since the common position is to analyse the work. It also means that we, the viewers, in the right conditions and context, adopt the position of the analysand, with the object revealing our symptom, something of ourselves we might not have known about.

Since Lacan, this has been worked through by, among others, Parveen Adams, in her contextualisation of Mary Kelly's *Interim* show.¹⁶⁸ It has been considered by Robert Samuels, in his examination of Lacan's interest in art, especially Aragon's poetry and Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors*.¹⁶⁹ The mechanics of 'work of art as analyst' have been displayed in the art exhibitions curated by Sharon Kivland and held at the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research, the talks accompanying them and the subsequent journal publication.¹⁷⁰ More recently, it has been discussed at psychoanalytic conferences, seminars and exhibitions, most notably the *Psychoanalysis And The Creative/Performing Arts Seminars* at the Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies in London.¹⁷¹

If *objet petit a* is the object cause of desire, what is its relation to seduction? In chapter one, I introduced Baudrillard's conception of their link, which I then used to establish the third rule of seduction, its domain being that of the object. If we take a Lacanian position, however, we can see that seduction and desire relate to each other as if their structure was that of a Möbius strip, a topological surface with one single side and only one boundary component. As the two sides are continuous, a crossover from inside to outside and back is possible. However, when one passes a finger round the surface of the Möbius strip, it is impossible to say at which precise point the crossing takes place. To paraphrase Slavoj Žižek, seduction is not a simple reverse of content, 'we encounter it when we progress far enough on the side' of desire itself.¹⁷² This is seduction's reversibility, upon which Baudrillard placed so much emphasis.

168. Parveen Adams, 'The Art of Analysis: Mary Kelly's "Interim" and the Discourse of the Analyst', *Rendering the Real, October*, vol. 58, Autumn 1991, pp. 81–96.

169. Robert Samuels, 'Art and the Position of the Analyst', in Richard Feldstein, Bruce Fink and Maire Jaanus (eds), *Reading Seminar XI: Lacan's Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995, pp. 183–186.

170. Sharon Kivland and Marc du Ry (eds), *In the Place of an Object*, *Journal of the Centre for Freudian Analysis and Research*, vol. 12, Special Issue 2000.

171. Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, *Psychoanalysis and The Creative/Performing Arts Seminars*, 2007, available from <http://igrs.sas.ac.uk/events/seminar/sem_psycho_Arts.htm> [Accessed 19.02.10].

172. Slavoj Žižek, *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*, London: Verso, 1991, p. 230.

Seduction, in and through *objet petit a*, seduces desire and then moves on. Thus, I want to advance here the second proposition: the place the analyst and the work of art occupy, that of *objet petit a*, is, within the relational context of a discourse, the place of the seducer. Beyond space, rituals and relations, seduction emerges from the object, whether in the form of an analyst (for the analysand) or a work of art (for the viewer). This is what I am here to show.

SECOND REALISATION

The second realisation came to me in New York, which I visited for the first time in 2007 when I attended a work-related conference, taking place at the Hilton Hotel in Manhattan (1335 Avenue of the Americas). During the first night of my stay, heavy snow fell and I woke up to see the city covered with a metre of snow and temperatures reaching minus 11C. Going anywhere with my unsuitable footwear was impossible, so I was restricted within a radius of a few streets. Thinking about something to do during my free time, I looked in the yellow pages and discovered that the Manolo Blahnik shoe shop was just in the road perpendicular to the hotel (31 W. 54th St). As soon as I had the chance, I ventured over. It was Sunday morning but the street was full of people as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) is just across the street. The first time round, I missed the shop. Maybe I was hoping for queues of people trying to get in, just like the MoMA has a vast number of visitors trying to get a glimpse of Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger*. I retraced my steps, putting extra care this time, until my eyes set on a big shop window, disproportionate, without light or signs but with a distinct stiletto sandal in black patent leather, with ankle laces, open toe, and a pink rhinestone heel on display. To mark the moment of my encounter, just as one marks encounters with famous landmarks, I took out the camera and snapped. I could not get the shoes (the shop was closed and, in any case, one could not browse, a small sign on the door warned me, but could only enter by buzzing the door bell, which hinted at having to make an appointment). I could, at least, get the memento of *I was here* that photography sometimes offers. What I got from that, however, was something more, as you can see in the page following this chapter.

The image resulting from my encounter is the kernel of what I had been trying to study and represents a turning point in the process. It is an unsettling image. It does not quite fulfil the purpose of the snapshot, as it seems composed of two fused images, digitally merged. The photograph, with my evident grin of pleasure at having

encountered the object stirring my desire, is the collision between that desire and the *Breda* shoe (as it is called) in the screen of the shop window.¹⁷³ The boundaries of the two elements – me and the shoe – are blurred and, one cannot easily determine what is inside and what is out. Moreover, the image captures the context as the snow, the particular New York-style pavement wires, a yellow taxi and the entrance to the MoMA are also reflected. The image is placed then – winter – and there – New York City. When printed, converted into a photograph rather than binary code or pixels on a computer, the image satisfies some of my desire, at least for a moment. Could it be that the action of photographing gives me an alternative way to *have* instead of purchasing the object?¹⁷⁴ Could I be *it*, in a sense, as I am absorbed into the object and by it in the *Breda* photograph?

I initially showed the image to various people, both formally and informally,¹⁷⁵ to free associate – to bring it back to psychoanalytic technique – about what may be going on in the picture, what they saw represented therein.¹⁷⁶ The answers were very varied, with most people noticing, before anything else, my smile, a smile of having found what I was looking for.¹⁷⁷ What those groups of viewers pointed at, in concept cloud form, can be seen in Fig. 10.

173. The act of naming the shoe is, of course, very significant. It attempts to bridge the gap from object to subject and, as Lacan discussed in Seminar I, it is key to the subject's position – also related to Lacan's experiment of the inverted bouquet, which I will explore later – and to the ability to make sense of the world. He writes: 'in the constitution of the world [...], everything depends on the position of the subject. And the position of the subject [...] is essentially characterised by its place in the symbolic world, in other words in the world of speech. Whether he has the right to, or is prohibited from, calling himself *Pedro* hangs on this place' (p. 80). 'Everything begins with the possibility of naming, which is both destructive of the thing and allows the passage of the thing onto the symbolic plane, thanks to which the truly human register comes into its own' (p. 219). Lacan, *Freud's Papers on Technique*.

174. I use the word *purchasing* because, of course, photographing is also a form of consumption.

175. These included posting the image on various peer message boards online, showing it to my Glasgow School of Art Master of Research in Creative Practices student group, the conference *Architecture: Exploring Textual and Architectural Spaces* (University of Strathclyde, 15–17 April 2008), where I presented a paper entitled 'Reflections on Seduction', which constitutes a very early version of this text, and a number of presentations at Sheffield Hallam University, with varying degrees of formality.

176. This, Serge Tisseron argues, is part of the assimilation and symbolisation processes characteristic of photographs and a method of work that the photographer Doisneau used. See Serge Tisseron, *Le Mystère de la chambre claire. Photographie et inconscient* [The Mystery of the Camera Lucida. Photography and the Unconscious], Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1996, p. 29.

177. The *Breda* photograph also referred me to issues of narcissism, self-exploration and self-construction, as we will see later, but more as in the work of Francesca Woodman than in that of Cindy Sherman, that is, more exploring issues around self-perceptions of identity and womanhood than constructed identity and social roles of women: femininity, but not feminism.

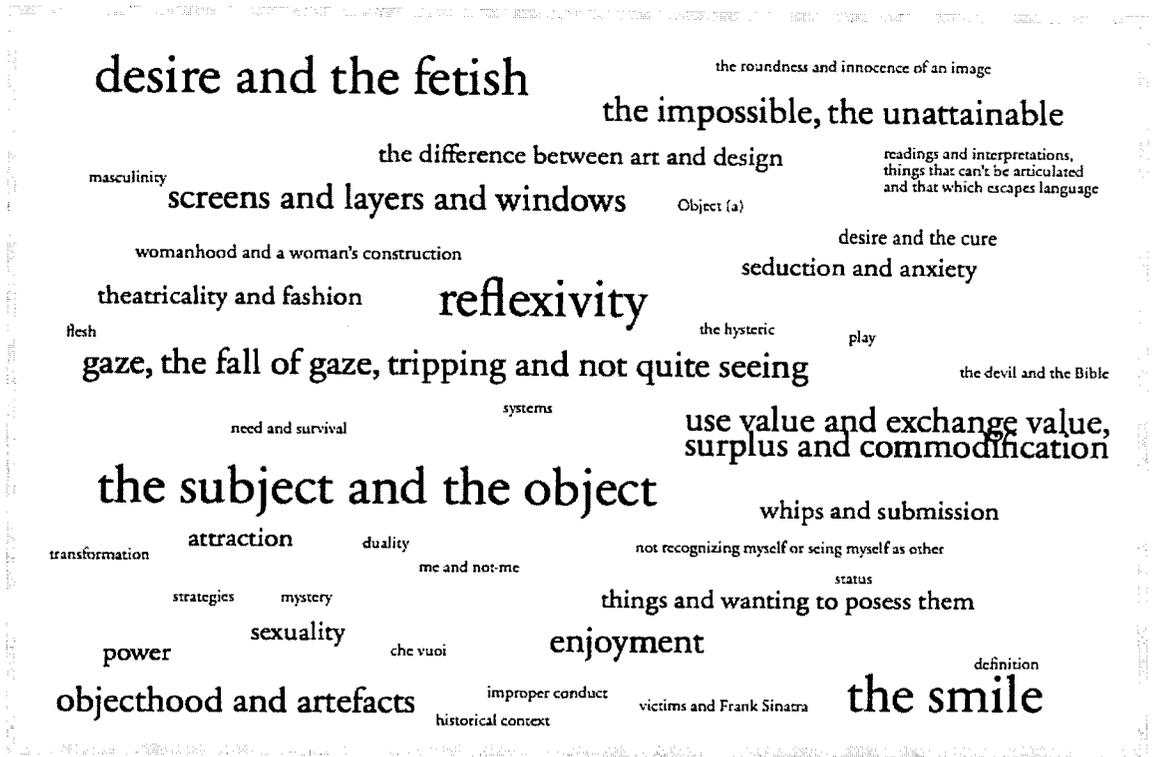
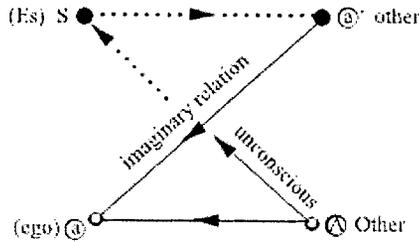


Fig. 10: Concept cloud of informal responses to the *Breda* photograph.

I mentioned in my first chapter that seduction is a matter of two. Yet, relating this photograph (and the viewers' comments) to Lacan's Schema L (Fig. 11) hints at the fact that this is, instead, a three or four-fold relation. The same, according to Bruce Fink, happens in analysis. In his discussion on Lacan's paper 'The Direction of the Treatment', he identifies at least four parts to the relation: 'the analyst as ego and as dummy (or dead man, that is, essentially as the Other with a capital *O*) and the analysand as ego and as subject of the unconscious'.¹⁷⁸ In Schema L, the imaginary relation is established between the subject-ego (*a*) and its image-the other (*a'*). Any relation between the subject of the unconscious (*S*) and the big Other (*O*), the agency of the law, is interrupted by the imaginary. The rapport between *S* and *a'* is fictional and failed, for it is always mediated by the axis *a-a'*. The only possible relation in the schema, *a-a'*, is imaginary and phantasmatic, and obstructs any symbolic relation. *A* is on the other side of the obstruction, on the side of language. The aim of analysis, the talking cure, would thus be to traverse this imaginary barrier.

178. Bruce Fink, *Lacan to the Letter. Reading Écrits Closely*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004, p. 5.

Fig. 11: Jacques Lacan's Schema L.¹⁷⁹

A parallel can be established between a-a' and the subject-object in the *Breda* photograph, with the screen as an imaginary construction of wholeness and unity, where the object is mine and I am the object's. As I will show, this refers to Lacan's mirror stage.

The effect this had on the project let itself be felt quickly. It shook the practice element of my study to the point of abandoning the quest to create objects of seduction (which can be seen between the previous chapter and this one). It made me realise that what I wanted to create, the objects of my seduction, already existed and in order to study such a slippery topic, I had to look first for real instances in which it manifests itself rather than try to create the contexts for it. If I did not know what made something seductive, how was I to create the context?⁹ I was going about it the wrong way and what the photograph showed is that capturing seduction was possible under certain circumstances. My artistic practice changed, from object-based to lens-based, a technique with which I had to get to grips quickly (although also acknowledging that my aim was not to become an expert in photography). The results of my struggle and my experimentation form much of the content of this doctoral case. This shift from object to lens is crucial, as it suggests that the lens is already seductive, and that it has properties which objects lack (and also vice versa, of course). This, as I will explore in chapters three and five, relates to the creation of the image of an image, the image in fantasy.

THIRD REALISATION

The third realisation is the natural conclusion stemming from the two other realisations, and as such, it seems overly simple in hindsight: To study seduction in

179. The source for this schema is Lacan, *The Ego in Freud's Theory*, p. 109. The legend in the book calls this schema 'the imaginary function of the ego and the discourse of the unconscious'. It is called Schema L because its shape is reminiscent of the Greek letter for 'L'.

and through practice is not enough, rather it has to be presented in a way that elicits the concept of practice, that shows its workings rather than talks about it or reports on the findings. It became clear to me, after my analysis and my encounter with the *Breda* shoe, that a further layer of practice – writing – in all its creativity, histories, and forms could be used. By this I mean the use of fiction, of drama, characters, and role-play, and of different genres as a form of practice bringing about seduction. After all, seduction and writing are inextricably linked, as I show in the conclusion to my case. To engage in this practice makes sense, since much of what brought me to study seduction was either literature,¹⁸⁰ or works of art that have a strong textual component (Sophie Calle, for example, or even Duchamp and his *Green Box*). The result of this area of practical investigation is this text.

METHODOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

The conclusion of the methodological explorations I went through at the beginning of the research, and the ensuing engagement in practice, is the creation of a self-reflexive methodology to study seduction. Here, I make my methodological argument. The approach I have taken is threefold, and encompasses my three realisations: It involves photography, analysis, and writing.

My methodological strategy is influenced by Lacan's mirror stage,¹⁸¹ his answer to Freud's problem of how the ego is created, and the issue of narcissism. Seduction, as we saw before, is always a matter of self-seduction. The mirror stage is crucial in the construction of subjectivity; in it an infant sees itself externally for the first time and recognises its own image in an illusion of wholeness.¹⁸² The stage develops the child's

180. For example, Laclos's *Liaisons Dangereuses*, in its epistolary form; Casanova's diaries *History of My life*, together with Stefan Zweig and François Roustang's studies. Stefan Zweig, *Casanova: A Study in Self-Portraiture (Drei Dichter ihres Lebens: Casanova, Stendhal, Tolstoi [1928])*, tr. by Eden and Cedar Paul, London: Pushkin Press, 1998; Roustang, *The Quadrille of Gender*. See also Marquis de Sade's dialogues in *Philosophy in the Boudoir*.

181. For a full exploration of the mirror stage, which will only be discussed in passing in this thesis, the reader may approach the primary literature: Lacan, 'The Mirror Stage and Formative of the I Function as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience' in *Écrits*, pp. 75-81 and 'Aggressiveness in Psychoanalysis', *Écrits*, pp. 82-101. An excellent exploration can be found in Dany Nobus, 'Life and Death in the Glass: A New Look at the Mirror Stage', in *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Dany Nobus, New York: Other Press, 1999, pp. 101-138. Bice Benvenuto and Roger Kennedy write a short introduction in 'The Mirror Stage (1936)', in *The Works of Jacques Lacan*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1986, pp. 47-62. The reader may also want to bear in mind that there are variations on the mirror stage throughout Lacan's work.

182. Nobus explains this illusion of wholeness, and its relation to the child's self-image, further: 'for the mirror image gives the child an impression of relative physical maturity long before it has reached that stage. In the mirror, the child is able to see itself as a unity before it is actually capable of acting in an independent manner. For this reason, the child is eager to adopt its reflection in the mirror as an image of itself. *Mirror Stage*, p. 108. The image offers the child a 'coherent me'.

imaginary, a realm that for Lacan has ‘connotations of illusion, fascination and seduction, and relates specifically to the dual relation between the ego and the specular image’.¹⁸³ The imaginary is rooted in the subject’s relationship to the body in its image, which is seductive, imprisoning the subject. This image of itself is what fixes the subject forever. Lacan further links the image and imagination to deception and the lure, something seduction and art know about and which is evident in the tripping and trapping manifested in the *Breda* photograph. Like the infant, the seducee has, in front of the object of seduction, a moment of recognition. This moment makes the child, and if I follow the parallel, the seduced, suspend the fact that their bodies are inadequate, in short, their fundamental split. It also brings about an illusion of wholeness, of similarity, and of autonomy in relation to the image. Thus, the mirror and the relation to the object provide an illusion of control. In the mirror stage, the infant becomes a subject. The child sees itself in space, and in relation to others, as well as objects. It recognises itself in the image and, at the same time, sees itself as others see it. A literal mirror is not always necessary for identification with one’s image to take place, but Lacan conceptualised a ‘mirror experience’ as a crucial paradigm.¹⁸⁴ This moment of recognition is not only narcissistic. It is not only a fascination with the child’s own image, as the infant also makes a connection, through the reflection, to others, from where a struggle for dominance ensues: this is why Lacan sites it within his theory of aggression.

Indeed, the mirror stage is ‘decisive for the installation and maintenance of self-consciousness’, a fundamental ontological experience explaining human fascination with images in general. In the mirror stage, the image constitutes the child, rather than the other way around.¹⁸⁵ The mirror stage sets up the scene of phantasy for all future seductions. It is the blueprint for all scenes, forever, and structures all sexual phantasies. It fixes the subject and all future relations – including those of seduction – are constituted by and are dependant on it. The image the child sees in the mirror is an ideal *I*, an ideal-ego, one that can never be realised.¹⁸⁶ Schema L can, of course,

183. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p.82.

184. Nobus, *Mirror Stage*, p. 106. See also Russell Grigg, ‘From the Mechanism of Psychosis to the Universal Condition of the Symptom: On Foreclosure’, in *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Dany Nobus, New York: Other Press, 1999, pp. 48-74, pp. 56-57.

185. Nobus, *Mirror Stage*, p. 103-104 and 114.

186. Nobus, *Mirror Stage*, p. 117. Here, I want to make a point, tangential to this research but important in relation to the mirror stage: the determination of the child occurs retrospectively. That is, the self-image the child adopts depends on events posterior to the mirror stage, in retroaction (*Nächtraglichkeit*). Nobus, *Mirror Stage*, p. 122. A note on the ideal-ego, and the difference between this and the Ego Ideal may also be useful here. On this Žižek writes: “‘ideal ego’ stands for the idealized self-image of the subject (the way I would like to be, the way I would like others to see me); Ego-Ideal is the agency whose

also be linked to the mirror stage. The relation between the subject of the unconscious (S) and the Other (A) – and also that between S and a – is always mediated by the imaginary, the image of ourselves and our body, and the image of others.

The ego (the *I*, as the German word *Ich* denotes) is an agency formed by identification with the image in this stage. Yet, this process is also alienating in a structure similar to paranoia: the ego has a paranoid structure, the structure of a symptom. The ego is the site of resistance to psychoanalytic treatment.¹⁸⁷ A relationship is formed between the ego and the image, and what Lacan calls the little other of reflexivity (a) is created.¹⁸⁸ But the visual field is also structured by symbolic laws¹⁸⁹ that bring us back to morality and interdependence, issues related to seduction, as Sinatra found out in 1938. Giving comes with taking; boundaries and roles are fluid and contradictory in the mirror stage in a similar way than in the seductive encounter:

Similarly, it is by identifying with the other that he experiences the whole range of bearing and display reactions – whose structural ambivalence is clearly revealed in his behaviors, the slave identifying with the despot, the actor with the spectator, the seduced with the seducer.¹⁹⁰

gaze I try to impress with my ego image, the big Other who watches over me and impels me to give my best, the ideal I try to follow and actualize', *How to Read Lacan*, p. 80. See also Juliet Flower MacCannell, 'On the Inexplicable Persistence of Strangers', *Transmission Annual: Hospitality*, London: Artwords Press, 2010, pp. 106-115.

187. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 51.

188. I realize my text brushes quickly over complex concepts that may require a little more explanation. I will briefly outline some key aspects here in order to help the psychoanalytically un-initiated to understand my methodological outline and to provide further sources of reference. The ego (*Das Ich*) corresponds to the Freudian triad developed in his second topological metaphor (Freud, 'Lecture XXXI: The Dissection of the Psychological Personality' (*Neue Folge Der Vorlesungen Zur Einführung in Die Psychoanalyse* [1933]), SE 22, pp. 57-80). The ego is an agency, which interacts and is related to the Id (*Das Es*) and the Super-ego (*Das Über-Ich*). The Ego is the mediator between the impulsive urges of the Id, the demands of the Super-ego and the external world. It is the agency that acts as a watchman between the unconscious and the conscious, putting in play defense mechanisms (such as repression), when required. See, for example, Michael Kahn, 'The Unconscious', in *Basic Freud*, New York: Basic Books, 2002, pp. 15-34.

The imaginary is a Lacanian concept. Lacan developed the idea that psychic life takes place in three interrelated realms: the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic. Although the comparison is somewhat reductive, some parallels can be established between the Real and the Id, the Imaginary and the Ego, the Symbolic and the Super-ego.

189. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 91-92.

190. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 92.

It may seem that the mirror stage is a matter of two (as I wrote about seduction). Yet, there are relational issues to the mother and the child's phantasy, which make it (and seduction) more a matter of three or four, as I explained with the help of Schema L. The object in the mirror stage, the image, is always on the side of the subject – seen and internalised by the subject – and does not speak at all.

A self-reflexive methodology is one that re-enacts and replays some aspects of the mirror stage.¹⁹¹ In the same way as the mirror function can be supplied by a variety of encounters (with another child, a reflection, a real mirror), this methodology can be comprised of different methods and techniques, even crossing disciplines, as I have done here. But what are the key characteristics of a self-reflexive methodology? First, there must be recognition in the object, be this an inanimate thing, the analyst, the beloved, or a text. One needs to see oneself through an other that has addressed one. Often, this is a matter of position and relation. As Bernard Burgoyne writes: 'In any work of art the eye of the viewer cuts into the image of the body – the line of vision proposes to cut into the shell of the object's unity, it cuts into the viewer's body as "the recognition of the pleasure of the painting" has its way'.¹⁹² The screen regulates this relationship and through it, a new space appears, in which the object and I are positioned together, in close proximity, despite the distance between us outside of the image.

This is similar to what happens in Lacan's experiment of the inverted bouquet.

191. The mirror stage is where self-consciousness appears. Lacan took this element from the philosophy of Alexandre Kojève and, since my methodology involves self-reflexivity, it may be useful to outline its relation to self-consciousness. Nobus relates self-consciousness to objects. He writes: 'This typically human quality differs from consciousness, insofar as the latter merely involves the passive awareness and contemplation of material objects in the outside world. For self-consciousness to arise, a creature must express a desire (*Begierde*) to fill its own emptiness, by actively engaging with non-material objects, self-consciousness also distinguishes itself from self-sentiment (*Selbst-gefühl*), which is typical of a non-human animal state of mind. Animal desire converges on beings and things, whereas human desire moves beyond these given objects to act upon a non-being, which is nothing else than another desire. This non-biological, 'human desire for another desire' does not prevent a human being from trying to acquire a material object, but he or she will be more interested in gaining recognition (*Anerkennung*) for this act and being given the right to possess the object, than in the possession as such. Nobus, *Mirror Stage*, p. 111. Self-reflexivity includes self-consciousness (note the use of recognition) but, added to it, is a preoccupation with agency and social roles. Speech – speaking of itself – is paramount for the attainment of self-consciousness (Nobus, *Mirror Stage*, p. 112) and, I would argue, gaze – seeing oneself seeing – is key to self-reflexivity. Later on, with Paul Crowther's methodology, I will further explore self-consciousness. He defines self-consciousness as the ability to ascribe experiences to oneself, which correlates with Nobus and Kojève's view. Paul Crowther, *Art and Embodiment: From Aesthetics to Self-consciousness*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993, p. 150.

192. Bernard Burgoyne, 'The Line of Vision', in Kivland and du Ry (eds), *In the Place of an Object*, *JCFAR*, pp. 32–37, p. 33.

Lacan's fascination with the visual starts from his first seminar, in which he discussed an optical experiment. A concave mirror, a plane mirror, a box, a vase, a bouquet of flowers and a viewer are arranged in relation to each other so that the bouquet and the vase are made to appear together. This 'togetherness', this recognition, is totally dependent on how and where the viewer is positioned in relation to the objects, and how she names them (remember Lacan's 'to call himself Pedro'). This, in his words, is testimony to the 'strict intrication of the imaginary world and the real world in the psychic economy.'¹⁹³ Recognition, however, is not identification, strictly speaking. It is a momentary, subjective resonance, related to the fundamental lack that constitutes the subject. As such, recognition is on the side of the subject, not the object. It is a calling into being of that lack, bringing it forth from the Real. A relational situation facilitates the moment, but recognition is a subjective, individual experience.

Secondly, this specific relation between object and subject, must be captured. Analysis, for example, does this through speech, a signifying chain, with all the problems this entails. In the capture, the tricking elements of seduction (its reversibility), the entanglement and the relation between object, subject and his or her free will should be made evident while at the same time retaining its contradictory nature for the viewer. A fixed position in the *Breda* image is shown as impossible; it does not happen, as it should in photography. There is a movement towards and back – as I will write about in chapter five – like in the eighteenth century court dances, a finding and disappearing, a falling away out of the picture. Pictures are well placed for capturing. As I explained in the discussion of Darian Leader's *Stealing the Mona Lisa*, they lead the eye, they are a lure to the eye. Lacan takes this further with the concept of *dompte regard*, a counterpart to the *trompe l'oeil*, a taming of the gaze, 'that is to say, that he who looks is always led by the painting to lay down his gaze'. This is also related to the idea of *tour*, a trick (*truc, trucage*), also a turn, which makes the drives trick/turn around the object.¹⁹⁴

Thirdly, the resulting image should enable thinking, interpretations, commentary, contextualisation, and further associations, mainly in the form of the question *what is happening?* Reflexivity does not only denote the optical property associated with mirrors, it also means to think in a particular way, to reflect. Serge Tisseron argues that the activity of photographing is particularly apt for bringing about this sort of

193. Lacan. *Freud's Papers on Technique*, p. 78. See also Sharon Kivland, '[Last Year]', *Angelaki, Journal of Theoretical Humanities*, vol. 9, no. 1, London: Routledge, April 2004, pp. 15–28.

194. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 109 and 168.

mental process. In short, Tisseron suggests that to photograph is to think, and a correlation is made between it and psychic structures. ‘To take a camera to the face or chest, to frame, to press the shutter, are as much forms of encounter with oneself as with the world’.¹⁹⁵ Writing, and psychoanalytic practice can be equally reflective and efficient in revealing the self in the particular seductive act. Reflection also provides the framework for an analysis of seduction, embedded in the process.

The three-step self-reflexive methodology (recognition, capture and reflection) is specifically developed to study visual seductions. This is not only appropriate to art, the field of study of this research, but also to seduction as a matter of appearances, as in my analysis of Baudrillard’s text in chapter one. It also relates to the Lacanian imaginary, where illusion, fascination and the relationship to the image are located, and is rooted in the subject’s relation to his or her own body. Still, the methodology may be applicable to other disciplines if the three principles are followed.¹⁹⁶

The self-reflexive methodology is this project’s contribution to the problem of studying seduction from within. As such, it is far from being established. The approach may be considered, to a certain extent, as suboptimal, given the researcher becomes part of the object of study, subject and object at the same time. However, with such an object of study, pervasive and reversible, a study from within is the only practical tool – that is, deriving from the practice of seduction – to examine psychodynamics effectively. The self-reflexive methodology is needed to be able to capture what is required for an analysis and its use is therefore reasonable, as I will go on to explain in the next three chapters. Its flaws and biases (these exist, of course, and I will be very clear about them) will be taken into account and explored when the full case is presented for examination. One may then discover that flaws can have an unusually high power of seduction, as what is missing and lacking is then filled in with phantasy.

There are precedents for aspects of this methodology, in particular, Malcolm Ashmore’s thesis on reflexivity, and Paul Crowther’s methodology for self-consciousness.¹⁹⁷ Crowther devises a theory aimed at outlining the minimum

195. Tisseron, *La Chambre claire*, p. 16. My translation. The original reads: ‘tenir un appareil devant le visage ou sur la poitrine, cadrer, appuyer sur le déclencheur, sont des formes de rencontre avec soi autant qu’avec le monde’.

196. It could be applicable, for example, to the realms of literature and consumption explored by Rachel Bowlby in *Shopping with Freud*, London: Routledge, 1993.

197. Ashmore, *The Reflexive Thesis*; Crowther, *Art and Embodiment*.

conditions for being a person, for having self-consciousness. This comprises three capacities and three specific ways of using them. There is an obvious parallel here with my three-step methodology and my three areas of practice. The capacities are, first, *attention*, or the capacity to be receptive to sensory stimuli; secondly, *comprehension*, the ability to organise the stimuli, differentiating between sameness and difference; and thirdly, *projection*, the ability to posit situations other than those in the immediacy. The employment of these capacities in three specific ways brings the *self* into consciousness. First, *reversibility*, the awareness of other agents; secondly, *species-identity*, the ability to see a shared existential space and a basic set of psychical conditions as oneself, the social context; and thirdly, *personal freedom*, the inauguration of action in relation to choices and decisions.¹⁹⁸ Although this falls outside the remit of this research, it may be interesting to map Crowther's theory to Lacan's mirror stage and Baudrillard's notion of reversibility. For the moment, I am concerned with the evident parallels that can be established with the methodology I have devised. In the same way that self-consciousness is a precursor of self-reflexivity, so are these capacities and ways of using them *a priori* requirements for self-reflexivity. This, particularly in relation to reversibility and personal freedom, relates to seduction as a principle and, I could argue further, that seduction is a specific way of interfering with the ways of using the capacities that make someone a person, self-conscious.

In his PhD thesis, later published as a book, Ashmore creates a method, reflected in his writing style, to study a problem in the sociology of scientific knowledge, a field which is part of what it is trying to criticise. The situation and status of Ashmore's object of study is similar to the one in which I find myself: to study seduction thoroughly, bridging some of the problems encountered by other researchers, practitioners, and thinkers, I have to do it from within. This means that I am at the mercy of seduction, under its influence. The self-reflexive methodology is the tool I have devised to approach the problem. This methodology is, in its essence practiced, focusing on images.

198. Crowther, *Art and Embodiment*, pp. 150–151.

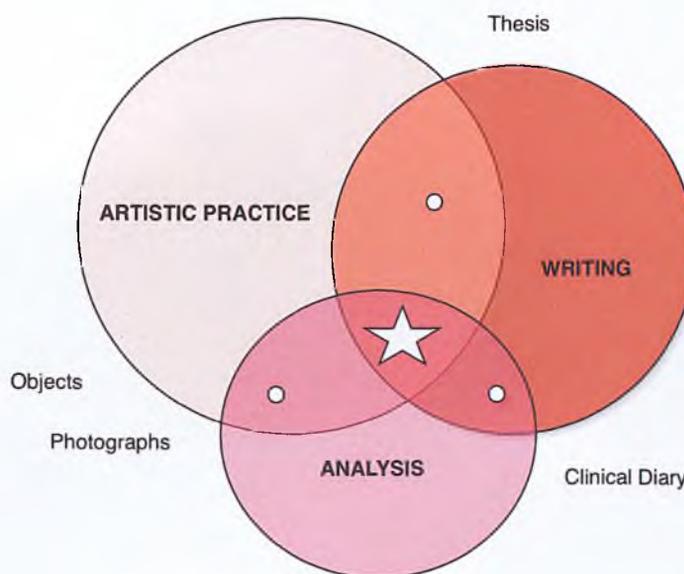


Fig. 12: Schema of my particular approach to methods within the self-reflexive methodology.

The particular approach, the specific methods I have chosen in my self-reflexive framework are artistic practice, psychoanalysis, and writing. At the intersection of these activities (see Fig. 12), is where the particular outcomes can be found: works of art, objects, situations, occurrences and incidents that appear throughout this narrative, whether with full introductions or through the back door, quietly sneaking in. The practices and outcomes lead to the star, located at the intersection of my strategy; the star is my specific contribution to knowledge: the self-reflexive methodology and what it yields.

I have challenged seduction by making art (and in particular photographs), going to analysis and detecting through writing – more on which will be discussed in the next chapter, when we meet our detective, the one who will help to gather and make sense of the evidence, as well as present it in front of the jury. For the time being, reader, stay alert for clues to the mystery.



CHAPTER THREE

THE SCENE OF A CRIME

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXPERIENCE OF THE MATERIAL (A DEMAND)

This chapter will adopt seduction's way of working: that is, its reversible strategy.¹⁹⁹ I will relate a specific case of seduction, an example of many encountered as part of my research but one that is, at the same time, pivotal for this enquiry. It contains the clues to the situation, and it is necessary to observe these before going into the analysis and evaluation of what has been found, and present the case for examination. The purpose of the chapter is to show the work of seduction.

The text has a counterpart, in the form of another book, one with photographs. The chapter and the photo-book are not sequential but are interlinked. This text will also unfold itself into two parts, again, these are not sequential, rather, are interlinked, an exegesis and a dialogue. The exegesis introduces the notions of voice, stills, and documents before reflecting on the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*, in which I presented a set of photographic images. I then discuss the concepts of scene and screen in relation to a crime and finish the section with a note on writing. The chapter, in the dialogue, becomes witness to a scene of seduction.

The photo-book, similar in appearance and dimensions to this text, is the visual counterpart to the dialogue, which, for full effect, should be read aloud, enacted.²⁰⁰ The two books should be experienced simultaneously, together. Displayed on the same table, or similar prop, the gaze should move from the text to the images. The

199. According to Baudrillard 'every structure can adapt to its subversion or inversion, but not to the reversion of its terms. Seduction is this reversible form' *Seduction*, p. 21. Also, he wrote: 'It [seduction] knows (this is its secret) that *there is no anatomy*, nor psychology' (p. 10). The human geographer and Baudrillard scholar Richard G. Smith defines reversibility as 'a vital concept informing Baudrillard's reassessment of linear notions of progress that came to dominate the modern world. Reversibility is predicated on Baudrillard's belief, and his observation, that systems have within them a kind of built-in ability to undermine themselves by their very functioning.' *The Baudrillard Dictionary*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p. 182. Reversibility's exit from the linear is key to its distinction from subversion - the taking of another linear path, parallel to or crossing the original one - or inversion - the change of direction in the same linear path. Reversibility is important to the experience of the material because this chapter exits the linear structure of reading by involving the photobook and different methods of writing. Although, necessarily, chapters three, four and five relate to the previous chapters, the structure is not one of linearity but could, perhaps, be described as a spiral or container, with multiple points of reference but which, at the same time, distances itself somewhat from the previous writing, and attempts to undo it, to reverse it (with Baudrillard's meaning).

200. I found inspiration for the layout of the pages of the photo-book in Martin Parr and Gerry Badger's excellent anthology: *The Photobook: a History. Volume I*, London: Phaidon, 2004; and *The Photobook: a History. Volume II*, London: Phaidon, 2006.

reader-viewer should create a rhythm for turning pages, and investigate the images back and forth as lead to by the images themselves, or the text. The argument is unfolded in each.²⁰¹

The images in the photo-book are stills of an act of seduction, a scene (scenes, in their lovely or repulsive qualities, are seductive). As act and scene, seduction moves, is not static. It might be a surprise, then, to encounter photographic images, instead of a time-based medium, for example. Seduction, much like the *filmic* of which Roland Barthes writes, can only be captured through its residue, its document, although, of course, one is *of the other*:

The still, then, is the fragment of a second text *whose existence never exceeds the fragment*; film and still find themselves in a palimpsest relationship without it being possible to say that one is *on top of* the other or that one is *extracted* from the other.²⁰²

The picture of research material I present is therefore constituted of fragments: voices (without gazes), stills (without movement), document (without encounter). However, as Barthes points out, these documents, stills, and voices, despite containing traces, are independent of that which they are related to; they have their own entity. They are also, in a way, secondary, mediated material, but this – not only fragments but also art – enables seduction to be captured. While they are not strictly ‘seduction’, they contain seduction within them.

DOCUMENTS (WITHOUT THE ENCOUNTER)

I will start by examining a series of documents without the encounter, because these were the first to occur and induced the voice and stills. These documents without an encounter are, paradoxically, an attempt to provoke that encounter and also an attempt to organise the material. They have a certain amount of failure embedded in them – although I am aware that it is precisely this failure that might make them seductive. I exhibited a series of photographs, documents of seduction, in May 2008

201. This is what, in previous chapters, I have referred to as the trap, modelled on the one I fell into when I went to New York City and found myself transfixed in front of the shop window. Of course, I am being careful here, as one should not announce traps too much in advance, and certainly not spell them out. But I have to acknowledge the tone of the writing, because, perhaps, it may appear as too careful a tone, with something almost protective and insulating. This tone sets up a form of aesthetic encounter – I have been warned of its similarities to Italo Calvino’s *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller* – but it could also be perceived as limiting in terms of a critical encounter. The next two chapters will set this critical encounter.

202. Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*, tr. by Stephen Heath, London: Fontana Press, 1977, p. 67.

at Sheffield Hallam University's End Gallery. The images constitute a *scene of a scene*, for seduction is somewhat removed from the viewing of the photographs. The viewer is a witness to a scene of seduction, but does not experience it, for most part – there is an exception, as I will explain. The exhibition, however, was a necessary step for me to take in order to understand the conditions of seduction and the gallery, both when they worked and when they did not. The show allowed me to consider the importance of the encounter when referring to seduction as a practice. In the exhibition, seduction was mostly located in the picture plane, inside the images, in what was depicted. This is particularly true of the images displayed in the main floor of the gallery, which consisted of large-scale inkjet prints, displayed un-mounted and supported by eyelets and nails. These were a document of an instance of seduction, and as such, only fully intelligible to me, who was at the original scene.²⁰³

There were other instances, however, where a quality of that scene was replicated. This happened on the mezzanine floor and, curiously, with some of the first images I took (nothing to read into this, it is just a curious incidence for me, a kind of a circular joke). These images, entitled *Arcade*, were taken when I had not yet fully understood the seductive possibilities of the still and the lens. They have very low resolution and are the product of a moment of wonder at the reflection of my own shoes in the midst of such shiny rings. As such, they are not expertly framed, nor can they be printed in large format without 'noise'. Still, I took a decision I had not taken with the others: I separated them from the wall and the viewer by means of a glass and a golden frame. The size of the prints and their more obvious conversion into objects (shiny, golden objects at that) made them look like eyes, even gave them the power of gaze. Eyes and gaze are recurrent ideas during my walks through Glasgow Argyll Arcade and at times, I am convinced the rings have eyes and are looking at me, in the same way as Lacan felt the sardine tin in the water was looking at him.²⁰⁴

The exhibition had instances of successful replication of seduction, and unsuccessful

203. But this is only possible to recognise afterwards, in the construction and reconstruction of the event, in its retroaction, afterwardness or *après-coup*, translations of the psychoanalytic *Nachträglichkeit*, a concept I will explore later on. See Jean Laplanche, *Problématiques VI: L'après-coup*, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2006.

204. Lacan uses this story to explain the situation of the gaze. He was in a small boat, fishing, when one of his company pointed at a sardine can in the water, exclaiming 'you see that can? Do you see it? Well, it doesn't see you!' The can cannot see him since it does not have eyes, but it does look at him. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 95. Lacan even made a parallel between the story of the sardine can and jewels, which relates to my experience in Argyll Arcade. In pages 96–97 of Seminar XI he writes: 'the point of gaze always participates in the ambiguity of the jewel. And if I am anything in the picture, it is always in the form of the screen, which I earlier called the stain, the spot.'

ones. It is thus that this element of practice – the exhibition – led the research, in particular the choice of the format of its final submission, which aims to replicate the conditions surrounding the small images, rather than the large prints. As such, the images in the photo-book are not documentation of the big images (as can be seen from a quick comparison between the photographs in the photo-book and the images at the end of this chapter); the photographs have been re-worked, re-created, re-edited to be coherent in the book format. The book is not a catalogue, it is a *work*.²⁰⁵ The choice of a photo-book is motivated, first, by its relation and interaction to this text, also in a book format. Secondly, the issue of scale was important in the exhibition, and the book takes that into account. Thirdly, the small images in the show were the only ones removed from direct contact with the materiality (and vulnerability) of the photographs, as in the large images the photographic paper was directly presented and the mode of hanging was on show through the holes, the nails and the eyelets. The book, through the framing achieved by its material appearance – its production, editing, and binding – through its pages, gatefolds, variable layout, and the temporal element of viewing associated with it, reproduces the strangeness of the *Arcade* photographs.

STILLS AND VOICES

The stills and the voices both relate to the scene of a crime, the crime being, as Sinatra knew well, that of seduction. It is not exactly the same crime, however, as what happens in the images and the dialogue is not strictly against the law – not yet, anyway.²⁰⁶ The criminal nature relates to the moral issues discussed in chapter one, bringing about a certain element of shame or wrongness to the person who finds herself to be the victim.²⁰⁷ I am writing of a scene, and if the reader is not convinced

205. So *where is the practice?*, one may ask. Martha Graham, in her autobiography *Blood Memory* attempts a definition of practice, which is, I think, well suited to the practice of seduction. She writes: ‘To practice means to perform, in the face of all obstacles, some act of vision, of faith, of desire. Practice is a means of inviting the perfection desired.’ Martha Graham, *Blood Memory: An Autobiography*, London: Macmillan, 1992, p. 4. The practice is the performance in front of the objects, the capturing through photography, the writing about them and the collection, editing and decision making that goes into the creation of a photo-book, facing all the obstacles to deliver a vision on seduction. Some of the obstacles faced are, of course, related to the exhibition I am reflecting on.

206. The ‘yet’ refers to the ambiguous nature of seduction, its reversibility, and photography. In *The Perfect Crime*. Baudrillard wrote: ‘Photography, too, is the art of dissociating the object from any previous existence and capturing its probability of disappearing in the moment that follows. [...] This machination of the Nothing, which means that things contradict their very reality, may be conceived as either poetic or as criminal. All that is unintelligible is criminal in substance, and all thinking which fuels this enigmatic machination is the perpetuation of this crime.’ *The Perfect Crime (Le crime parfait [1995])*, tr. by Chris Turner, London: Verso, 1996.

207. Seduction assumes certain norms, their transgression, and the ensuing shame. Crimes also require norms and their transgression. This may help us to pose an interesting question in relation to

[Footnote continues]

of its criminal nature (in that wider sense), I will call upon Peter Wollen's description which he formulated in the context of an exhibition that took place at the UCLA's Armand Hammer Museum of Art and Cultural Center in 1997. This show, called *Scene of the Crime*, brings us back to contemporary works of art. Wollen writes:

Crime scenes present us with both a surplus and a dearth of meaning. They are full of resonances of inexplicable dread and destruction. At the same time they can appear stupidly banal and vacuous. As we enter the terrain of the crime scene we enter a world in which meaning seems overwhelming in its presence yet strangely insubstantial. Something happened which we cannot quite grasp or understand. In our minds such a space seems a kind of anti-space, a space of negativity which is extraneous to the ordered space of everyday life. The anti-space is haunted. It is as if an alien has landed there and left a weird message for us to decode, challenging us to make sense of things that seem odd and out of place, that usher us into a world in which evil has bubbled up to the surface and punishment has fallen inexplicably upon the innocent.²⁰⁸

Is not this reflected in the *Breda* photograph? I admit that there is less 'dread and destruction' (unless one applies this to the visual plane, the broken perspective), 'evil', 'punishment' and certainly 'innocent' than in a murder scene, for example. In fact, there is much pleasure in my smile and in the pink rhinestones of the shoe's heel; yet, there is also banality, vacuousness, and references to everyday life which are rendered extraneous, overwhelming meaning (*what is going on here?*, asked the *Breda* photograph's very first audience), incongruousness, anti-space (what is in and what out? Is there anything in or out?), coded messages. Is not also what Wollen recounted applicable to the scene in *Étant donnés*? Jean-Michel Rabaté in his book on art and crime, dedicated a whole chapter to arguing that what one can see through the peepholes is not a bucolic scene, a woman lying down and perhaps sleeping, but rather she is a victim, a corpse.²⁰⁹ The crime in Rabaté's case is, of course, much more tangible than seduction. Still, the scenes share aspects of the incongruity of the space in which they are set, and the riddle they present to the viewer. The approach I have taken with the photo-book and the dialogue aims to reconstruct, to replicate, the conditions of the *Breda* photograph, for, if these are isolated, reproduced, and

consumption. Is it a shameful activity, and, if so, why? This will remain unanswered for the purposes of this research, but the question is one that, ultimately, relates to the seduction objects of consumption exert in us.

208. Peter Wollen, 'Vectors of Melancholy', in *Scene of the Crime*, ed. by Ralph Rugoff, Cambridge MA, and London: MIT Press, 1997, pp. 23–36, pp. 25–26.

209. The chapter is called 'Duchamp's fait-divers: murder as "ready-made"' in Rabaté, *Art and Crime*, pp. 33–77.

analysed with the help of the self-reflexive methodology the process of distillation will lead to knowledge about seduction. This is what the next two chapters will undertake.

The space of the scene in the *Breda* photograph and in the photo-book is not the city, the high street, or the shop. The scene of the crime is the screen of the shop window, where object and subject conflate and where the seduction is made visible.²¹⁰ The screen, as I will show through the analysis developed in the next chapter, fulfils the double function of making the encounter possible and visible (if one stands in the right position, as in Lacan's experiment of the inverted bouquet I introduced earlier). The glass of the screen in my examples is only one of many possibilities. Kaja Silverman speaks of photography as screen, for example.²¹¹ The letters in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* and the *billets doux* of courtship are also examples of screens, where seducers and seducees can hide, reveal or expose themselves. Screens are, in my images, the locus for pleasure, and for anxiety.²¹² There is a danger with screens, and, of course, screens also protect from danger. However, as Lacan warns us in the experiment of the inverted bouquet, the image that appears is imaginary, and, thus, deceptive.²¹³ Screens relate to fantasy, self-seduction and narcissism. They are moments of encounter, sometimes impossible, between the object and the subject, as they appear together, and the subject gets a little bit closer to *objet petit a*. Not in vain, Lacan's formula for fantasy is $\$ \langle \rangle a$, read 'the bared subject in relation to the object'.²¹⁴

210. My description of shop windows located in the city, may quite rightly remind the reader of Walter Benjamin's *Arcades Project*, where the city takes an anxious dimension, and later studies on the work, such as that of Susan Buck Morss, and Esther Leslie. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project (Das Passagen-Werk [1972])*, tr. by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin. Cambridge, MA. and London: Harvard University Press, 2002; Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project*, Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1989; 'The City as Dreamworld and Catastrophe', *October*, vol. 73, Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, Summer, 1995, pp. 3–26; Esther Leslie, *The Benjamin Papers*, available from <<http://www.militantesthetix.co.uk/waltbenj/benjpp.htm> [accessed 05.09.10].

211. Photography as screen is a concept I will develop in the next two chapters. Kaja Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, New York; London: Routledge, 1996.

212. For a discussion on architectural and social spaces, material culture and the pursuit of pleasure, especially in relation to femininity, see Jane Rendell, *The Pursuit of Pleasure. Gender, Space and Architecture in Regency London*, London: The Athlone Press, 2002. For an exposition of urban environments as spaces for anxiety, including psychopathologies, estrangement, spaces of distraction and, more importantly, crime scenes, see Anthony Vidler, *Warped Space*; and Victor Burgin, *In/Different Spaces: Place and Memory in Visual Culture*, Berkeley, London: University of California Press, 1996, especially the chapters 'Seiburealism' (pp. 109–116) and 'The City in Pieces' (pp. 139–158).

213. Lacan, *Freud's Papers on Technique*, p. 78.

214. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 60. Lacan developed this matheme in the context of the Graph of Desire, appearing in *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre V: Les formations de l'inconscient*, Paris: Seuil, 1998, and in 'The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire', *Écrits*, pp. 671–702.

And then there are scenes, which have a bearing in a clinical situation, from the traumatic impact of the ‘primal scene’ to the scene of fantasy,²¹⁵ a framing that is closely linked to seduction. Screens and scenes feature in the psychoanalytic literature, mainly in Freud’s *Screen Memories*,²¹⁶ and Lacan’s theory of the gaze, which he considered to be one of the four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. Here, I will go more in depth into its relation to a psychoanalytic framework of visual art and seduction. In *Seminar XI*, he presents two diagrammes, distinguishing the look and the eye from the function of the gaze (Fig. 13).

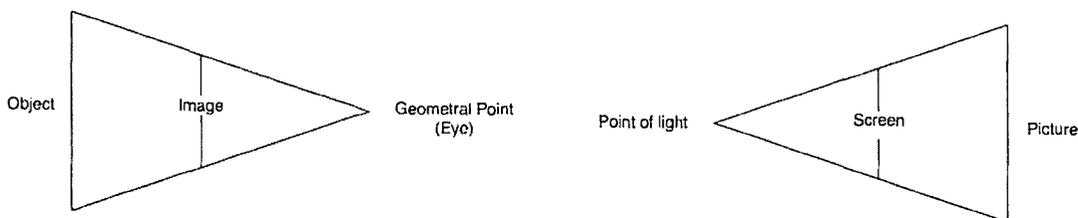


Fig. 13: The line and the light.²¹⁷

I introduced the concept of gaze in the previous chapter, as one of the parallels between art and psychoanalysis but what concerns us here is the significance of the screen as a regulator of the function of gaze in the field of vision, which, in turn, is integrated in the field of desire.²¹⁸ For this, we need to return briefly, visually, to the experiment of the inverted bouquet, and the issue of position arising from it (Fig. 14).

215. Dylan Evans writes: ‘Lacan also uses the term ‘scene’ to designate the imaginary and symbolic theatre in which the subject plays out his fantasy, which is built on the edifice of the real (the world). The scene of fantasy is a virtual space which is framed, in the same way that the scene of a play is framed by the proscenium arch in a theatre, whereas the world is a real space which lies beyond the frame (...) This notion of scene is used by Lacan to distinguish between *acting out* and *passage to the act*. The former still remains inside the scene, for it is still inscribed in the symbolic order. The passage to the act, however, is an exit from the scene, is a crossing over from the symbolic to the real; there is a total identification with the object (*objet petit a*), and hence an abolition of the subject.’ *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 168. I will write more on fantasy, and its relation to scenes and trauma in chapter five.

216. Screen memories are usually childhood memories appearing in later years and used to shield a repressed event. These memories, idealising, unusually clear and apparently insignificant are compromise formations, screening a traumatic event from consciousness. Freud, ‘Screen Memories’ (*Über Deckerinnerungen* [1899]), SE 3, pp. 303–322.

217. The diagramme is a reproduction from Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 91.

218. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 85. In the field of vision, *objet petit a* is the gaze, p. 105.

The experiment of the inverted bouquet, and its positionality, complements other two accounts by Lacan, which I briefly mentioned earlier, but I think will be useful to bring here, so I can lay down all the elements of his theory of gaze. First, the idea of the *dompte regard*, the taming the eye, as much as the tricking of it, which is fundamental to the act of seduction (a seducer does not want a struggling subject, of course). Secondly, the account, in Seminar XI, of his encounter with a sardine tin, while in a rowing boat, and his feeling that it was looking at him. This incident illustrates the trapping in and of the gaze.

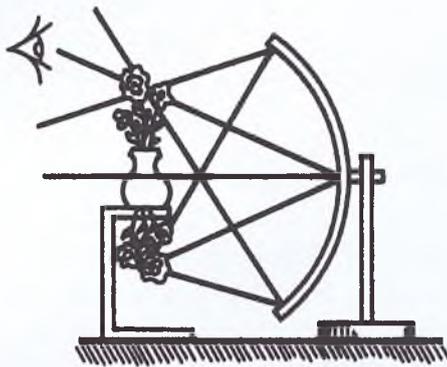


Fig. 14: Experiment of the Inverted Bouquet.²¹⁹

With these elements in mind – position, taming and trapping – I can now explore Lacan's schemas for the scopie register. The first of these two schemas (which Lacan did not deem topological enough and are therefore to be understood as vehicles for thinking)²²⁰ represents the classic perspectival space, in which light enters the geometrical point – located in the viewer's eye – producing an image. In the second, which he associates with the phenomenon of anamorphosis,²²¹ the point of light, Lacan argues, emanates from the object and is the place where everything that looks at me is situated.²²² This light, in its brightness, blinds the viewer who has to protect her eyes with a screen (think of a hand in a bright sunny day). The screen, with its

219. The diagramme is taken from Lacan's Seminar I, *Freud's Papers on Technique*, p. 78.

220. Malcolm Bowie, *Lacan*, Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1991, p. 190.

221. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 79–90.

222. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 95.

rupture of space, is thus what protects and also what allows for the image to be mapped, to be seen.²²³ Lacan then joined the two diagrammes (Fig. 15).

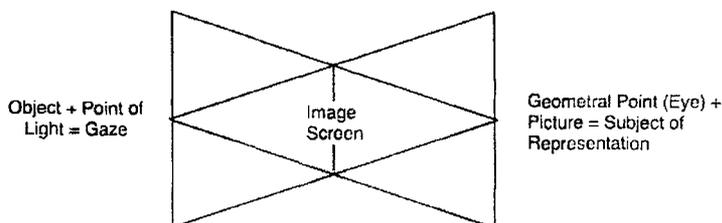


Fig. 15: What is a picture? The functioning of the scopic register.²²⁴

In the dialectic of the eye and the gaze, Lacan warns that ‘there is no coincidence, but, on the contrary, a lure’.²²⁵ As a viewer, I am turned into a picture, ‘the function in which the subject has to map himself as such’.²²⁶ If looked at closely, this third diagramme seems to represent perfectly the structure of the images of this research, from the *Breda* photograph to those in the photo-book.

The conceptualisation of photography – another screen, of course – as a crime scene has a history too. Ralph Rugoff attempts to draw together an aesthetic of the forensic in his exhibition *Scene of the Crime*. More recently Henry Bond’s PhD thesis, published later as a book in which he imagines Jacques Lacan as a forensic investigator, develops a methodology of rephotographing apparently negligible details of real crime scene photographs and reads them in the context of the three clinical structures (neurosis, psychosis and perversion), which follow three mechanisms found in Freud’s work, and which Lacan revisits (repression, or *Verdrängung*; foreclosure, or *Verwerfung* and denial, or *Verleugnung*, respectively).²²⁷ It is difficult

223. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 93–94.

224. The diagramme is adapted from Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 106.

225. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 102. Moreover, Lacan establishes the pre-existence of the gaze and its lure with the phenomenological argument: ‘I see only from one point, but in my existence I am looked at from all sides’ (p. 72), which is what the subject in the dialogue and the photographs is about to find.

226. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 100.

227. Henry Bond, *Doubly Inscribed Objects and Privileged Signifiers: an Exploration of the ‘Optical Unconscious’ of the Crime Scene Photograph*, Unpublished PhD thesis, Cheltenham: University of Gloucestershire, 2007, published as *Lacan at the Scene*, Cambridge, MA. and London: MIT Press, 2009.

to deny a seduction for detection and forensics in art, as Bond demonstrates in his analysis of Sophie Calle's *L'Hôtel* and Mike Mandel and Larry Sultan's *Evidence*. Rugoff, however, also warns against the different aims of real-life criminology (or forensic photography) and art:

our search for meaning engages us in a goalless activity of speculation and interpretation, of tracing the links between our emotional responses and the ideas that arise alongside them [the works of art] or that may in fact be triggered by them. The study of these relationships, not the solution of a puzzle, is the pleasure we may pursue as viewers.²²⁸

In his essay 'Open Letter to Detectives and Psychoanalysts: Analysis and Reading', Patrick French admits that truth, in the form of the revelation of the crime or the criminal, is disappointment because our engagement with the exposition of the crime, with the scene, is not passive, does not conform to a pre-existing meaning; rather, meaning is produced 'through a transferenceal play with the text and with other texts'.²²⁹ His open letter refers mainly to the practice of analysis, and to texts and our engagement with them, but his assertion also applies to the visual, and therefore is pertinent to the self-reflexive methodology and the three modes of practice I develop here (art, analysis, and writing).

Before this text changes direction – through a pivot, a slight swivel, a graceful twirl, rather than a u-turn – I want to make a comment on the practice of writing in relation to revealing, to making a phenomenon visible. Lacan's writings, often criticised for their obtuseness, function, literally, like an example of a proposition.²³⁰ Madan Sarup writes that 'Lacan's writings are a rebus because his style mimics the subject matter. He not only explicates the unconscious but strives to imitate it'.²³¹ At the same time,

228. Ralph Rugoff, 'Introduction', in *Scene of the Crime*, Cambridge MA. and London: MIT Press, 1997, pp. 17–22, p. 18.

229. Patrick French, 'Open Letter to Detectives and Psychoanalysts: Analysis and Reading', in *The Art of Detective Fiction*, ed. by Warren Chernaik, Martin Swales and Robert Vilain, New York: St. Martins Press, 2000, pp. 222–232, p. 222.

230. Bond, *Doubly Inscribed Objects*, p. 32.

231. Madan Sarup, *Jacques Lacan*, Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992, p. 80. Jane Gallop equates the experience of reading Lacan to that of undergoing analysis, 'complete with passion, pain, desire to know, transference'. *Reading Lacan*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985, p. 53. Susan David Bernstein takes it further and asks whether readers of Lacan suffer from hysteric symptoms. 'Confessing Lacan', in *Seduction and Theory: Readings of Gender, Representation and Rhetoric*, ed. by Dianne Hunter, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 195–213.

his syntax, his euphonics and composition are also seductive,²³² in the precise sense of the word used in this research and explained in chapter one. It leads astray. According to Bond, reading his texts produces a similar effect to the analysis session itself, as the subject's demands are frustrated.²³³ This is because, as Baudrillard did with seduction, Lacan makes the Thing itself, the object cause of desire and, consequently, the unconscious – his and our unconscious, an unconscious in which one can find recognition – speak in his text, provoking discomfort.²³⁴ Thus, like Lacan and Baudrillard, my text aims to let seduction speak – perhaps also causing some discomfort – rather than to speak *about* it, which would just drive it away. It will do so, however, in a way that it will also allow for its analysis, its critique, which I will develop in the next chapter. There, a number of new voices will be heard.²³⁵ An artist, a detective, and a doctoral candidate will make appearances. So will a seducer and a seducee. Sometimes these voices will be separate; sometimes they will be merged into one (the reader will notice I have had to adopt a number of disguises in order to carry out my work). Most of the time, they will appear unannounced.²³⁶

232. Nobus and Quinn, *Knowing Nothing*, p. 70.

233. Bond, *Doubly Inscribed Objects*, p. 33.

234. Bond, *Doubly Inscribed Objects*, p. 32. And we know, from Baudrillard, that the unconscious seduces: 'For what is most damaging to psychoanalysis is the realisation that the unconscious seduces: it seduces by its dreams and by its concept; it seduces as soon as the id speaks and even as the id wishes to speak.' *Seduction*, p. 55.

235. In 'Writing in the place of listening' (in Sharon Kivland and Lesley Sanderson (eds), *Transmission: Speaking and Listening*, vol. 1, Sheffield: Site Gallery, 2002, pp. 15–28), Jane Rendell explores the relation between autobiographical writing, critical distance, voice and the 'I' who speaks and writes, all of which will be problematised in the remainder of this text. Rendell, together with other authors, continues to explore some of these concerns and their links to space in 'Architecture-Writing', the second section of the collected volume *Critical Architecture*, ed. by Jane Rendell, Jonathan Hill, Murray Fraser and Mark Dorrian, London: Routledge, 2007, pp. 85–162.

236. This chapter found inspiration in Marx's statement at the end of his *Commodity Fetishism* section in *Capital* ('If commodities could speak...' see note 243 below). The main sources for the writing can be found in Ashmore, *The Reflexive Thesis*; Marquis de Sade's works, in particular his *Priest and Dying Man* and *Philosophy in the Boudoir*; Jean Genet's *Le balcon* [1956], Paris: Gallimard, 2002; Oscar Wilde's 'The Critic As Artist', in *Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, Glasgow: HarperCollins, 1994 [1948], pp. 1108–1155; Gregory Bateson's 'Metalogues', in *Steps to an Ecology of Mind: Collected Essays in Anthropology, Psychiatry, Evolution and Epistemology*, London: Granada, 1973; and Mary Ann Francis' editorial piece for the *Journal of Visual Arts Practice*, vol. 7, issue 3, 2008, pp. 199–204. All of these texts are written, fully or partially, as dialogue and all have a didactic, moral or critical undertone, which I tried to reproduce in my piece. The capture of knowledge and a critique of seduction (from within) is what I aim to achieve by using this type of writing.

Vladimir Nabokov's *Pale Fire*, Theodor Adorno's 'Subject-Object' (in *Aesthetic Theory (Ästhetische Theorie* [1970]), tr. by Robert Hullot-Kentor, London: Continuum, 2004, pp. 215–231) and Jean Michel Rabaté's discussion on why crime and detective novels are seductive (in *Art and Crime*) have influenced the thinking and structure of the narrative. Arthur Conan Doyle's 'A Case of Identity' [1891] (in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, London: Penguin, 1981, pp. 33–50) and Freud's 'Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria' (*Bruchstück Einer Hysterie-Analyse* [1905]), SE, 7, pp. 1–122 provide the background

[Footnote continues]

THE SCENE OF A CRIME

I followed her from the door of her flat, not far away.²³⁷ She caught my attention a few days ago, as her walking pattern was strangely repetitive in its *staccatos*. What I mean to say is that she stopped and started for no understandable reason, seeming to daydream, taking refuge in a world of fantasies²³⁸. The face was relaxed, mouth open, eyes watering, yet it was intense. I had seen that look before. *I* had last been struck with it in New York City. I suspected she was experiencing what I did then. I was in luck: observing someone else go through the different stages was going to be crucial for my investigation. When I saw her, immobile in the middle of a busy street, captivated, trapped in herself, I wanted to catch seduction more than ever. Why, the reader may ask. Why the need to apprehend a normally harmless (although potentially deadly)²³⁹... what was it anyway? No crime or pathology fits like it should. What I am after is more like a mutant virus, a fractal, an act difficult to witness yet all around us.²⁴⁰ Yes, it had taken over, so my shaking, in anticipation at the opportunity

for my play with the word 'case' – history, story, study ... Johannes and Cordelia, from Kierkegaard's *Diary of a Seducer* helped to build the characters.

My psychoanalysis, as recounted in the last chapter, also had a bearing in the type of exchange narrated here, even though it is clear that the analyst and analysand do not operate like this subject and this object. Still, the work of art can sometimes occupy the place of the analyst in the consulting room (Kivland and du Ry (eds), *In the Place of an Object*), and sometimes, so do objects behind the glass of a shop window. The first season of the HBO television series *In Treatment*, helped to construct some of the dialogue, especially in relation to the configuration of conflict and how the object tries to draw out of the subject what she does not want to hear (*In Treatment*, Season 1 [DVD], HBO Home Video, 2009).

237. Who this mysterious 'I' is will be fully explained in the remainder of the text. While the present chapter is concerned with showing evidence, the next will focus on its analysis, the taking apart of each of its constituent elements. For now, I refer the reader to Lydia Marinelli and Andreas Mayer's work *Dreaming by the Book: A History of Freud's 'the Interpretation of Dreams' and the Psychoanalytic Movement* (*Träume nach Freud, Die 'Traumdeutung' und die Geschichte der psychoanalytischen Bewegung* [2002]), tr. by Susan Fairfield, New York: Other Press, 2003. In this book, they examine Freud's work and its relation to the practices of writing and dreaming, and his own self-analysis, as well as the text's place as the founding work of the discipline.

238. 'I explained that I had begun to stop still in the street, unable to move at all, either backwards or forwards. Recently, I had stood in the same place for an hour – suspended, paralysed, dead – reading and re-reading an advertisement, unable to get to work on time'. Hanif Kureishi, *Something to Tell You*, London: Faber and Faber, 2008, p. 89.

239. The film *Tony Takitani*, directed by Jun Ichikawa and based on a short story by Haruki Murakami, provides a good example of a potentially deadly seduction. Tony's wife, Eiko Konuma, has an all-consuming obsession for designer clothes. When her husband asks her to downsize, she agrees – as the argument is logical – but, on her way to the shop to take back her expensive garments, she realises she cannot live without them and commits suicide in a moving, yet shocking, scene (*Tony Takitani*, directed by Jun Ichikawa [DVD], Axiom Films International, 2006).

240. 'We seem to have become conduits for a fractal form of seduction, where we theorise aimlessly, as this is the only way anything can be thought without adding to simulation. And yet, there is a positive thought of theory emerging: theory as resistance, as oddness, as continual motion, as replication of simulation without being it, and as the playful polemic Baudrillard's own thought takes. Theory, for Baudrillard, is also subject to qualitative judgment: it must not be critical, it must be seduction, a paradox, or a strange attractor.' Paul Hegarty, *Jean Baudrillard: Live Theory*, London: Continuum, 2004, p. 8.

for understanding that just opened in front of my eyes, was justifiable. And that is why I followed her. It certainly paid off. What is recounted next is a transcript of a recording I made. I did not hear it at the time, as the street was buzzing with the morning rush and the voices were barely audible. It was the only time out of many long watches that I happened upon something like this. I do not want the reader to think a dialogue like this is a common circumstance, as otherwise I would be accused of incompetence for not being able to conclude a case. Still, I need to show the material so the reader does not think I am involved in a wild goose chase. Coming across such clear evidence of this crime is a rare occurrence, and it brought a new lease of life to the inquiry, making the end point tangible again. I was able to record the dialogue thanks to my borrowed DPA 4060 – a professional miniature condenser, prepolarised, omnidirectional microphone. I was sceptical of gadgets, but a blind alley of thought and action made me take the plunge and try a new approach.



Argyll Arcade, Glasgow, Scotland – 8.32am on a winter Tuesday in 2009.²⁴¹

Object Hey, you! ...²⁴² Yes, you! Could you come here, please?

Subject [*With uncertainty, talking to herself, although both sensitive to the unfamiliar address, but also with a sense of 'here we go again'. In short, in contradiction and conflict*] Why would an object so beautiful, so aloof, address me? I am reticent to reply, but I am also curious. It is so shiny and enticing ...
5
[*guilty, but resolved*] I am going to look.

10 *She turns and instead of being converted into a pillar of salt, the bright diamond eyes have the effect of weakening the subject, rendering her a little more helpless. It is compelling and she gets closer. Her mouth is open; no sound is uttered.*

Object Here I am. I am offering myself to you, blatantly, openly ... [*to itself*] Well, not so blatantly or openly, since I cannot talk.²⁴³ Anyway, I was made to

241. Argyll Arcade is a nineteenth-century shopping arcade in Glasgow, where most of the outlets in the covered street are jewellers' shops.

242. The notion of interpellation, of being called out by an object – as I discussed in the section on 'not seduction' in chapter one – is linked to the development of subjectivity in the child in the context of Lacan's mirror stage.

243. In a note on pages 176–177 of *Capital*, Marx writes: 'If commodities could speak, they would say this: our use-value may interest men, but it does not belong to us as objects. What does belong to us as objects, however, is our value. Our own intercourse as commodities proves it. We relate to each other merely as exchange-values.' What the object is for, its use-value, is brought to it by makers and users. Yet, what makes an object seductive, is its exchange-value, the way it relates to other similar objects. I

[Footnote continues]

be looked at in this way by you, it is my destiny and I hope we will soon reach an agreement by which you will do everything I tell you.

15 *This is like a dream for her, both in the oniric and the aspirational sense; a disturbing, a traumatic dream, though, because the ring's voice is uncanny. She relates it to the unease and the fright she might get if, one morning, her own reflection in the mirror started talking to her, in her own voice. An inanimate thing speaks and she cannot take this for granted. The ring should have been dead, and it suddenly started to move. It is comical too, as when a table*
 20 *starts to dance, animated. She snaps out of it.*

Subject *[Defiant, suddenly alert, not powerless anymore, still curious]* Why would I do that? I mean ... there seems to be nothing in it for me; I have my life, things to attend to, places to go. Whereas you ... well ... you are behind glass.

25 Object Of course I am, it is evident and I do not hide it. You will do as I tell you because you will not be able to resist. I am too much for you. Besides, you will also get something out of this engagement: you will find knowledge about yourself that you cannot quite understand now. You will only be able to get there, though, if you follow exactly what I say. To the letter. It
 30 will be a matter of listening. What you will find at the end may be pleasurable (and then again, it may not be. It is different with everyone). But I can assure you that the risk will be worth it.

Subject *[Slightly offended]* You know how many others before you have asked me for the same thing? They have all offered me a paradise of self-knowledge,
 35 a more embodied presence in the world, a kind of magnanimity, a mindfulness. Yet, I am cautious. My heart has been broken too many times and all I am left with is a late journey to work, anxiety, and self-doubt. I have read enough about it too. I know that, in most cases, the story tends to end badly. Why should I listen to you? Of course I will not
 40 be able to resist. Everything looks wonderful when it is out of reach,

am also relating here Marx's passage to Freud's uncanny. Commodities, in general, cannot speak but jewels have been known to talk in certain fictional stories, mainly related to the seductive practices of the libertines (see, for example, Diderot's *Indiscreet Jewels*, although, of course, the jewels in our case and those in Diderot's story are not of the same kind. Or are they? His refer to women's genitals). A jewel case also features in one of Dora's dreams, as something she wants to save from a fire. Freud, *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*.

behind a screen. Everything looks possible too. What makes *you* different from the 3-carat, white gold ring next to you?

Object Good point. I know I have competition, for Marx branded us with fetish qualities that make us mysterious,²⁴⁴ all equally mysterious until
 45 purchased, had or worn.²⁴⁵ I, however, have something to say for myself, I am distinct, unique, already yours, even if you do not know it. There are qualities only *I* can offer, for my shape, my weight, my shine, my clusters, my symbolic status, my material and my own hopes already have a place within you, a place that needs to be filled. I can see in your eyes that it
 50 already hurts when you think of that void that has never been touched. Is this particular *paradise of self-knowledge*, as you put it, not tempting enough? [*Shivering slightly*] Think of the gratification, the delight ... oh ... the enjoyment!

Subject You are trying to sell yourself to me but you forget that I am experienced
 55 in these matters. Besides, I already have you ... [*Deviously*] You must have realised that, in previous days, I have come here with a camera and have taken photographs of you ... I am not going to deny it. I like you, I think you are pretty and interesting, but no more than that. There are other ways of satisfying whatever it is that I am feeling, other ways than *having*
 60 you ... These screens – the glass in the shop, and the one of the camera lens, both separating us –²⁴⁶ are important, vital even. They keep us apart, but also bring us together visually, if we both adopt the right position.²⁴⁷

Object [*Interrupting her flow before she launches into an exegesis of Lacan's experiment of the inverted bouquet*] I am no philosopher, no wise object. I
 65 am a simple platinum and diamond ring. But even *I* know that images, however well thought through, constructed, and executed, never fill the

244. In the section on *commodity fetishism* of the first volume of *Capital*, Marx writes: 'The mysterious character of the commodity-form consists therefore simply in the fact that the commodity reflects the social characteristics of men's own labour as objective characteristics of the products of labour themselves, as the socio-natural properties of these things.' (p. 164). In my work, the commodity named Object, also adopts another socio-natural characteristic of men, namely speech. Object speaks like a person, a seducer, with a certain reference to the character of Valmont in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*.

245. Because if purchased, had, worn, they are no longer commodities.

246. There is a third screen in this relationship, which neither the object nor the subject identifies: the screen of the gaze, as explained by Lacan in Seminar XI, and as explored in the previous section of this chapter. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 91–119.

247. With the attention back on Lacan's optics and his experiment of the inverted bouquet, we return to the first step of the self-reflexive methodology – recognition.

place of the model, of the thing they are depicting.²⁴⁸ The satisfaction they provide, if any, is always temporary and vacuous. Have you ever known any fulfilled collectors or artists?²⁴⁹ Whether the images you took of me live in your pocket, scrapbook, wall of your home or the art gallery, they will never assuage your desire, for this is what all this is about.

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Subject Not all images are representation, you are being reductive there. Consider Marcel Duchamp. However much you want to think of *Étant donnés* as representation, it provides the viewer with much more, most of which is unutterable, and has no place in language. Some of the experience of encountering it is ineffable ... What you are proposing to me, that I follow every word you say, happened to me once. It was in an art gallery. It was intense, and wonderful, and an eye opener (literally, of course). But also heart wrenching. I was impotent, I could not do anything about it other than see myself fall. Part of the pleasure was taken in the fall, but it is still a fall, and it still hurts. I turned to photography to be able to look at what happened to me.²⁵⁰ I needed to understand. I know I may be taking out some of the thrill of the actual encounter but, after last time, I need some kind of parachute – the parachute of knowledge, of research, of an investigation. I am not saying this is safer. Far from it. It is just a little more controlled. I am still jumping, and jumping from a great height. Moreover, walking around with my camera, I hope to replicate some of the experience; first, for myself, mainly through doing, and then, for others, through seeing. In the images I have taken of you, in the same way

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248. Could the object be talking about Freud's *Das Ding* and Lacan's *agalma/objet petit a*, which I examined in the previous chapter?

249. For an analysis of the [dissatisfied] desire of collectors, see Jean Baudrillard, 'A Marginal System: Collecting', in *The System of Objects* (*Le système des objets* [1968]), tr. by James Benedict, London: Verso, 1996, pp. 91–114. He wonders whether collections are ever meant to be finished and whether the last object in a collection is not the collector him/herself. He qualifies collecting as a 'discourse addressed to oneself' (pp. 113–114). He also links it to perversion. I will explore the position of the pervert in relation to objects of seduction in chapter five. Walter Benjamin also considered collecting, notably in 'Unpacking my Library: A talk about Book Collecting' (*Illuminations: Essays and Reflections* [*Illuminationen* [1955]], tr. by Harry Zohn, New York: Schocken Books, 2007 [1969], pp. 59–67). In her paper 'The Politics of Friends', Esther Leslie linked this activity to a German proverb, which fascinated Benjamin who titled so one of his essays, *Einmal is Keimal* (Once is as good as never). She mentioned that Benjamin thought of collecting as a Sisyphus task, stripping things of their commodity character by possessing them, a kind of lover's value, she said. *Transmission: Hospitality* [conference], Sheffield Hallam University, 1–3 July 2010.

250. Serge Tisseron argues that photography has made discourse possible, especially in relation to illnesses, by liberating the look from horror and shame through constructing a protective screen between the illness and oneself and, thus, facilitating its 'introjection' first in medicine, then in society. Tisseron, *La Chambre claire*, p. 24.

90 as with Duchamp, I have included myself in the picture plane.²⁵¹ Our
encounter is also a matter of narcissism, not only desire. And there is also
the matter of the fetish object to consider...²⁵²

Object If you want me to know about Duchamp, I will. I can be pliable, as much
as you want, in fact. I'd do and be anything you want me to, so long as you
95 surrender your will to me.²⁵³ I'll be your fetish if that is what you want.
That is the deal I want to propose to you. After all, it is your void I am
reaching towards. You are right in thinking this is about narcissism: it is
all about you, as you say, but in order for this to be realised, in order for
this to be a matter of getting rid of that itch, of filling out that lack at your
100 core, of touching you,²⁵⁴ you need to give up representation, all my rivals,
everything else, and fall for me.

Subject I suppose you are right in asking me that. [*Pitifully*] You have a displayed
price, so I could impulsively open that door and have you, buy you. The
fact that I can do just that is the downside of your situation. *Étant donnés*
105 never demanded of me what you are because it was not even within the
realm of possibility. I could never *have it*. It could not talk to me until I
got there, when I finally travelled to Philadelphia – remember it took me a
few years between the first call, in a generic library book on modern art,
and my encounter – it addressed me with the voice of a siren, or a snake

251. As seen in my introduction, one can only access the scene in Duchamp's *Étant donnés* through the peepholes in the Spanish door. This has the effect of making the viewer self-conscious to the point that one sees oneself looking through the peepholes and, by extension, becoming part of the work of art. Lacan argued that the anamorphosis in Hans Holbein's painting *The Ambassadors* (the use of the geometrical dimension of vision) also captures the viewer within the painting, as if it was a trap. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 92.

252. The matter of the fetish object is explained in chapter one, in the discussion around Marx and Freud's different conception of the term. The subject here refers mainly to Marx's view but, in the nature of the dialogue, there is scope for the pathological, as described by Freud, in *Fetishism*. This, however, would only come about after the moment of seduction, and after the recording of the dialogue, an *après coup*.

253. The ring keeps telling the subject it will be whatever she wants, but what does the ring really want? W. J. T. Mitchell asked this question. His answer was to be looked at, desired. 'What do Pictures "Really" Want?', *October*, vol. 77, Summer 1996, pp. 71–82. I return to this question and Mitchell's view in note 434.

254. In his 'Preface to the Translation of Bernheim's Suggestion' (in H. Bernheim, *Die Suggestion und ihre Heilwirkung* [1888]), SE 1, pp. 73–87, Freud wrote: 'What distinguishes a suggestion from other kinds of psychical influence, such as a command or the giving of a piece of information or instruction, is that in the case of a suggestion an idea is aroused in another person's brain which is not examined in regard to its origin but is accepted just as though it had arisen spontaneously in that brain.' (p. 82) Is this not what the object is trying to do?

110 charmer.²⁵⁵ I did not understand the work (in space, construction or
 meaning) and wanted to know. I did not realise that, through the process I
 was going through, I was being elevated to be dropped, brutally, as soon
 as I tore my eyes away from the peepholes. I kept going back to the room,
 until closing time. Just one more time, I said to myself. The promises the
 115 work made me ... But I am being led astray by my thoughts and we are
 mixing art and consumption, although I know that, occasionally, they may
 be part of the same phenomenon. The reason why I chose you, as a
 subject for my photographs, is simple: walking through the arcade every
 day, I realise you operate a little like a work of art, a paradigmatic one, at
 120 that. Just like *Étant donnés*. The power you have over me is seopic. With
 you, it is all about seeing, and not seeing. You blind me, you call me and
 you make me look at you. Yet, you are distant, unattainable, impossible
 for me to obtain fully, even if I purchased you. My experience of you is
 purely aesthetic, visual. I contemplate you. Perhaps Duchamp was also
 125 drawn in that way to the woman's body,²⁵⁶ or the cow's skin, or the whole
 scene. You have meaning, which, of course, with the help of my cultural
 determination, I assign. You make me think of bad things, of touching
 you, of stealing you. And I know that most of it is due to the fact that you
 are displayed in a particular way, with special lighting, with distinct
 130 surroundings. You are curated, in a way.²⁵⁷ [*Surprised, as if realising it for
 the first time*] And that is exactly what I aim to do, with my images.

255. Sirens and charmers are two of the stereotypical seductive characters, according to Robert Greene (*Art of Seduction*, pp. 5–16 and 79–93). Others include the rake, the ideal lover, the dandy, the natural, the coquette, the charismatic and the star. Greene also develops a typology for the anti-seducer, and eighteen different stereotypes of seducer's victims. As mentioned above, he has also generated a 24-step seduction process, which I will look at in chapter five.

256. Jean-Michel Rabaté, among others, makes a connection between the body in *Étant donnés* and the murdered body of the Black Dahlia (Rabaté, *Art and Crime*, pp. 33–77), which is dismissed by Michael R. Taylor in favour of a link to the [live] body of Maria Martins, Duchamp's lover (*Étant donnés*, pp. 194–197). By chance – as the link has never been established – I found a photograph by Henri Cartier-Bresson, *Italy, 1933*, which Duchamp must have seen, depicting a feminine body in a similar position (although submerged under water) and whose head has also been left out of the picture plane. Perhaps it is that precise position of the body that haunted Duchamp?

257. The subject here is merely observing that whoever displayed the object, took some decisions as to the aesthetics, the narrative, the surrounding objects, the lighting, the dressing, and the care of it. The subject is not proposing that window dressing is comparable to curating.

- Object Art never satisfies,²⁵⁸ you know that. It does not even promise to do so. It may give pleasure, sometimes, but you also spoke of a certain pain and loss. I, on the other hand, I can deliver on what I am promising you ...²⁵⁹
- 135 Subject [*Resisting, taking a step back as if the floor separating her and the object was hot*] You are not the only precious thing, you know? You are underestimating my power to create – and frame – images and objects ... I could have you, if I wanted to ... In fact, how do you know I do not already have a better object than you, fully mine and just not
- 140 conspicuously displayed? [*Changing her position completely, walking towards the object again, slowly, inviting*] How do you know I am not replacing you for an other? You have not seen my images of you; maybe you will fall for them too, for the perfect illusion they create of a universe in which you and I are suspended in that eternal world of love at first sight ...
- 145 Object [*With confidence, as if, for a long time, it had been waiting for the opportunity to say these words*] When I hailed you, you looked, as if you had been expecting this encounter. I have been observing you for some time and, every morning, on your way to work, you come through this arcade even though it lengthens your journey. I have noticed the way you look at me.
- 150 You do it covertly, with the corner of your eye, or with an excuse. You have photographed me a few times, drawn me many others. You want me. You may have jewels at home; sentimentally or financially valuable, no doubt. Still, there is a specific quality in me you desire. [*Glinting more than ever*] You wonder what it would be like to have me, to possess me, to wear
- 155 me, to show me to other people.²⁶⁰ How will it make you feel? You will walk taller, appear more beautiful, more elegant, more sophisticated, more appealing. You have visualised what it will be like to touch me for the first time, a touch of recognition, no doubt; you have an idea of my weight, of my shape in your hand, and the temperature of my metallic

258. Sharon Kivland, *Art and Psychoanalysis* [seminar lectures], Sheffield Hallam University, October 2005–February 2006.

259. Fulfilling promises made in relation to espousing value or connections to personal goals is, according to Julie Khaslavsky and Nathan Shedroff one of eight characteristics of seductive objects. They study these in the context of captology (computers as persuasive technology) and Philippe Starck's lemon squeezer *Juicy Salif*. Khaslavsky and Shedroff, *Seductive Experience*. I examined *Juicy Salif* as a seductive object in relation to Lacan's *objet petit a* in 'Juicy Salif'.

260. The object is appealing to the subject's fantasy, and in turn, to the scene. Fantasies and scenes have fixed visual qualities (bringing us back to the still), as scenarios to stage desire. As such, they also fulfill a protective quality. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 60.

160 body. You have thought of me in relation to your clothes, your shoes,
your bags, those other jewels. And the difference with those other things
is that I am not one more item on that list. I am the pivotal piece around
which everything else circles.

165 Subject [A different shade of red from that of winter's cold on the cheeks... Blushing, as
if she had suddenly discovered the object could access her innermost thoughts]

Object Who knows what could happen for you if those thoughts became a
reality. Who could you be, who could you meet, where could you go? In
which ways could you think of yourself? But to know what lies ahead, to
make it a reality, you know what you need to do ...

170 Subject [Groan. Sigh. Moan. Lament. Still speechless. She produces a symptom, akin to
the hysteric's loss of speech or a little object, such as a bone, stuck in her throat]²⁶¹

hhhhhHHhHHHhHhHHhhhhHHHhHHh
HHHhHhHHWhHWhWhHHHhwWwww whWWhhhWWHWhhhWHHWhhwhwh

WHWHH **W** WWWhwhwhwhHWhWh WhW WH WhW h Ww whh

hHHhgHEgegGGGGgggGGHHEg **RRR** eggegghgeg

G_n

GhgZhZhWwlxxz **ZW** Tgzzz

Hh_h

261. In *The Plague of Fantasies*, Žižek writes: ‘Or – with respect to truth: the Real *qua* trauma is not the ultimate ‘unspeakable’ truth which the subject can approach only asymptotically, but that which makes every articulated symbolic truth forever “not-all”, failed, a bone stuck in the throat of the speaking being which makes it impossible to “tell everything”. *The Plague of Fantasies*, London: Verso, 2008 (1997), p. 277. Žižek further elaborates this in “Grimaces of the Real, or When the Phallus Appears’ (*Rendering the Real, October*, Vol. 58, Autumn 1991, pp. 44–68). He analyzes screams in film, with particular reference to Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin*, Alfred Hitchcock’s *The Birds* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, and Edward Munch’s painting *The Scream*. He writes: ‘what is “stuck in the throat” is precisely the voice qua object, the voice that cannot burst out, unchain itself and thus enter the dimension of subjectivity. [...] the exemplary case of the voice qua object is a voice that remains silent, a voice that *we do not hear*’ (p. 49). He classifies screams in these works and relates one kind, a scream *vocalised with deferral* – evident in Francis Ford Coppola’s *The Godfather Part III* – to self-reflexivity, as the scream is only heard when the viewer perceived its silence (p. 50).

Object [*Excited*] I would shine so much, I would blind you, like *Étant donnés*, with the difference that you would be able to carry me with you, look at me whenever you want.²⁶²

175 Subject [*She returns, transformed*] Yes.

Object [*More quietly*] You know how precarious this situation is; you know from experience, I would venture to say, how quickly it can all change. What we have is special. This kind of fit is difficult to find. I am what you are looking for, your completion. I am what will give you strength while still puzzle you. I am what will make you move and act (if not act out). I am what you fear, and what you want, what you fear-you-want.

185 *At the trigger of the sound of the word 'fear' she regains some of the ground, as if her revealed weakness and the object's confusing words had given her a strength she did not know she had, an understanding of the power she holds. She composes herself, breaths deeply and looks straight into the jewel's eye. She arranges the position of her feet to show the full effect she knows she has, from previous charm offensives she had undertaken.*

Subject Are you not speaking yourself from a position of desire? Oh ... Excuse my intellectualising. What I mean to say is that I also sense fear and wanting in you. I can tell by the way you look at my hands when I move them to make my point ... They possess features that captivate you; perhaps, the possibilities they contain, the skins and textures they touch, the places they go to. I think you would do anything to come with me ... Is it not *you* who desires me, rather than the other way round? For you to leave the window would be to transgress. You dream of things and sensations you have only heard about thus far. [*Excited about her realisation*] Warm flesh

262. In his novel *Hopscotch*, Julio Cortázar recounts a similar story – also one of seduction – involving a screw: ‘In one of his books Morelli talks about a Neapolitan who spend years sitting in the doorway of his house looking at a screw on the ground. At night he would pick it up and put it under his mattress. The screw was at first a laugh, a jest, a communal irritation, a neighbourhood council, a mark of civil duties unfulfilled, finally a shrugging of shoulders, peace, the screw was peace, no one could go along the street without looking out of the corner of his eye at the screw and feeling that it was peace. The fellow drop dead of a stroke and the screw disappeared as soon as the neighbours got there. One of them has it; perhaps he takes it out secretly and looks at it, puts it away again and goes off to the factory feeling something that he does not understand, an obscure reproval. He only calms down when he takes out the screw and looks at it, stays looking at it until he hears footsteps and has to put it away quickly. Morelli thought that the screw must have been something else, a god or something like that. Too easy a solution. Perhaps the error was in accepting the fact that the object was a screw simply because it was shaped like a screw. Picasso takes a toy car and turns it into the chin of a baboon. The Neapolitan was most likely an idiot, but he also might have been the inventor of a world. From the screw to an eye, from an eye to a star ...’ Julio Cortázar, *Hopscotch (Rayuela* [1963]), tr. by Gregory Rabassa, London: Harvill Press, 1998, p. 376.

you will surround in your circle, the touch of hair ... oh ... hair! And sweat! No, no, it is *you* that wants me.

Object Maybe it is not so simple, maybe it is not a matter of position, as you mentioned before, but of flow of something ineffable – call it energy, sparkle, desire ... That is what makes us a perfect match. I admit that you are attractive. Alluring things like me tend to pick bewitching peop ...

Subject [*Cutting right in, sarcastic and in control, pretending to have had enough*]
Bewitching, nonetheless! Sorry, I am not convinced by your compliment.

205 *'You will do everything I tell you' ... Well, it seems that she is thinking it will be exactly the opposite way round. She begins to walk away, sure that the tide is changing and the object will soon be imploring her. She wants it.*

Object You'll come back.

She comes back.

Subject [*Perplexed at the insolence*] Excuse me?

210 Object Sorry for being presumptuous but I did think you would come back. If not now, you would have calmed down while at work, and realised going away was a mistake because you need me. You have always done so, since you were a child and used to play with your mother's jewellery, pretending to be a diva, an operatic *Grande Dame*, a *Prima Ballerina*. Don't

215 you think I know?

220 *The subject is paralysed again but, this time, she does not have the rosy cheeks induced by her first arrest, or the redness of shame of the second. She is white, colourless. Still, there is fire in her, a pale fire. She is also beginning to weep. As her defences seem to crumble at the mention of her childhood and her fantasies – a combination that represents her Achilles tendon – the object takes its chance. It is experienced in the art of lures and, like in the last stage of a bullfight, it goes for the final thrust. For both of them, this could be a matter of life and death.*

Object [*Compassionately*] Come, come. Get closer, crouch down. Despite the screen that separates us, or perhaps because of it, you can see what it will be like for me to be yours [*thinking to itself: and you, mine ...*]. I promise you relief, and pleasure. Do it, now or never.

Subject [*Surprised at her sudden decisiveness, confident of her step, as if it was her who was in control, not reluctant at all, remorseless. Still, a little tired and defeated, powerless. She does not like to be seen crying in public.*] You are right; I give

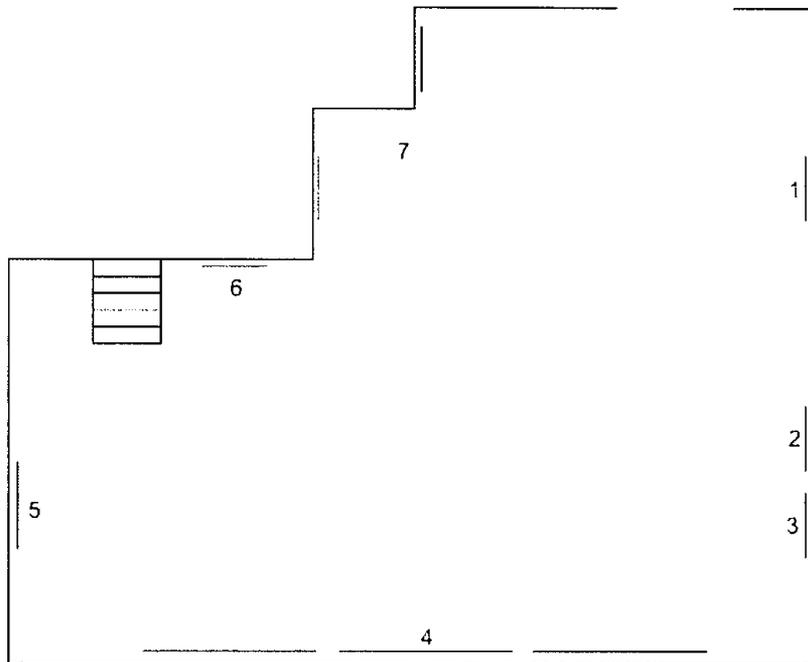
230

in. I want you; I have wanted you since I first saw you in one of my idle walks. Since then ... It was a matter of time ... Just make me yours.

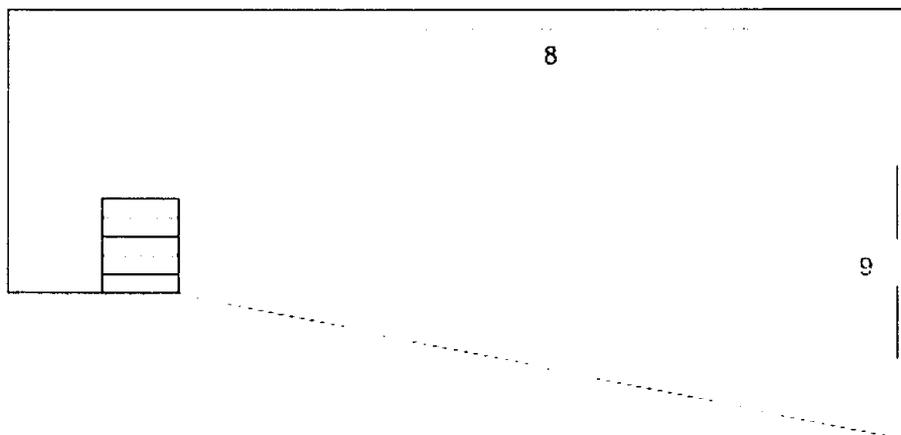
Object No, no. Make *me* yours.

Very close by, a bell is audible and, as the shop door opens, a bright light blinds the detective's eyes.

Gallery Plan



1. 'Beheaded'. Inkjet print on gloss, 2008
2. 'Shoes by day'. Inkjet print on gloss, 2008
3. 'Shoes at night'. Inkjet print on gloss, 2008
4. 'A Case of Seduction (Approach – Statement of Intent – Surrender)'. 3 inkjet prints on gloss, 2008
5. 'Headless'. Inkjet print on gloss, 2008
6. 'Agent Provocateur'. 2 Inkjet prints on gloss, 2008
7. 'A matter of two'. 2 Inkjet prints on gloss, 2008



8. 'Gucci'. 5 Inkjet prints on gloss, 2008
9. 'Arcade'. 2 inkjet prints on gloss, gold frames, 2008

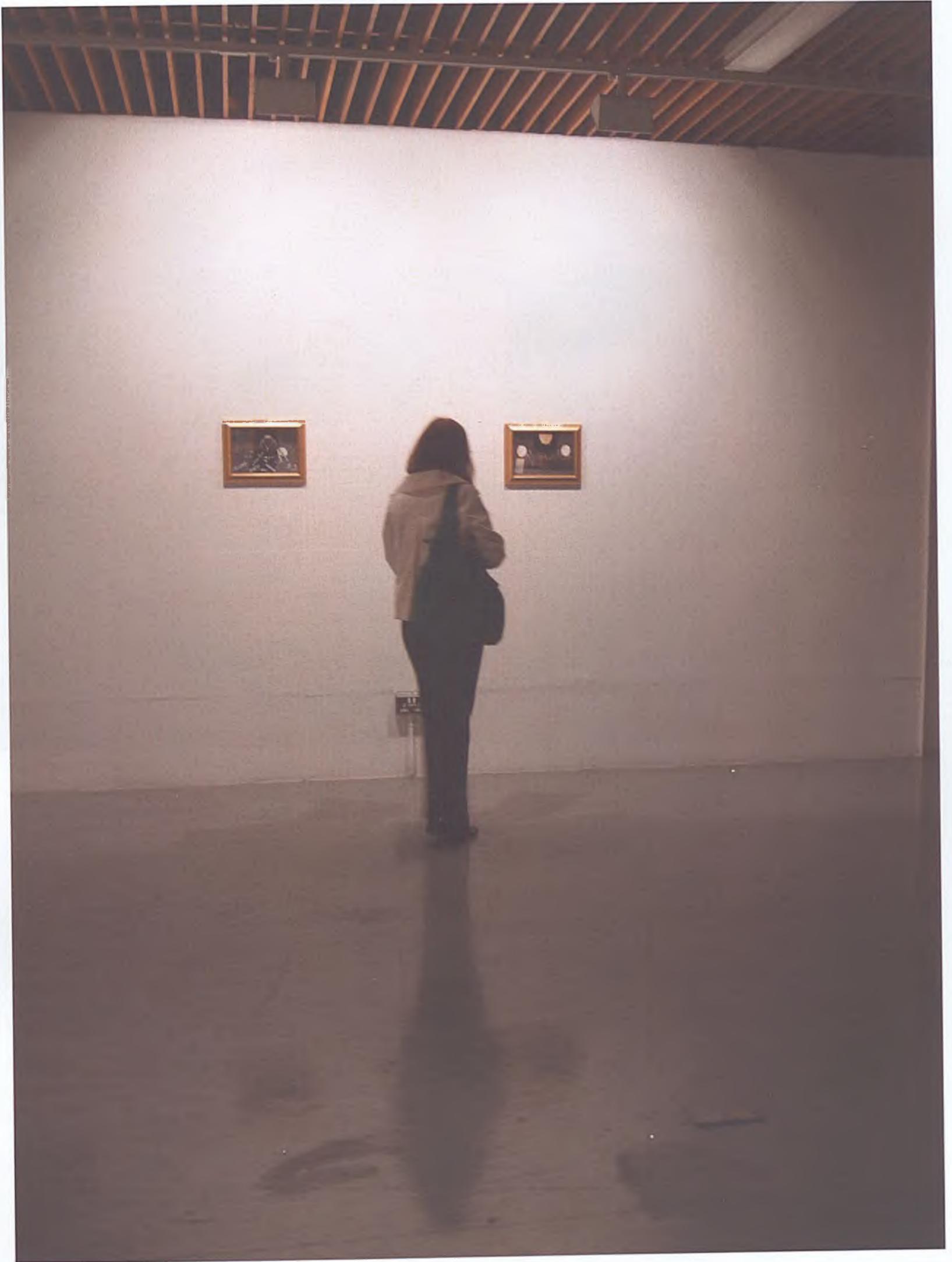


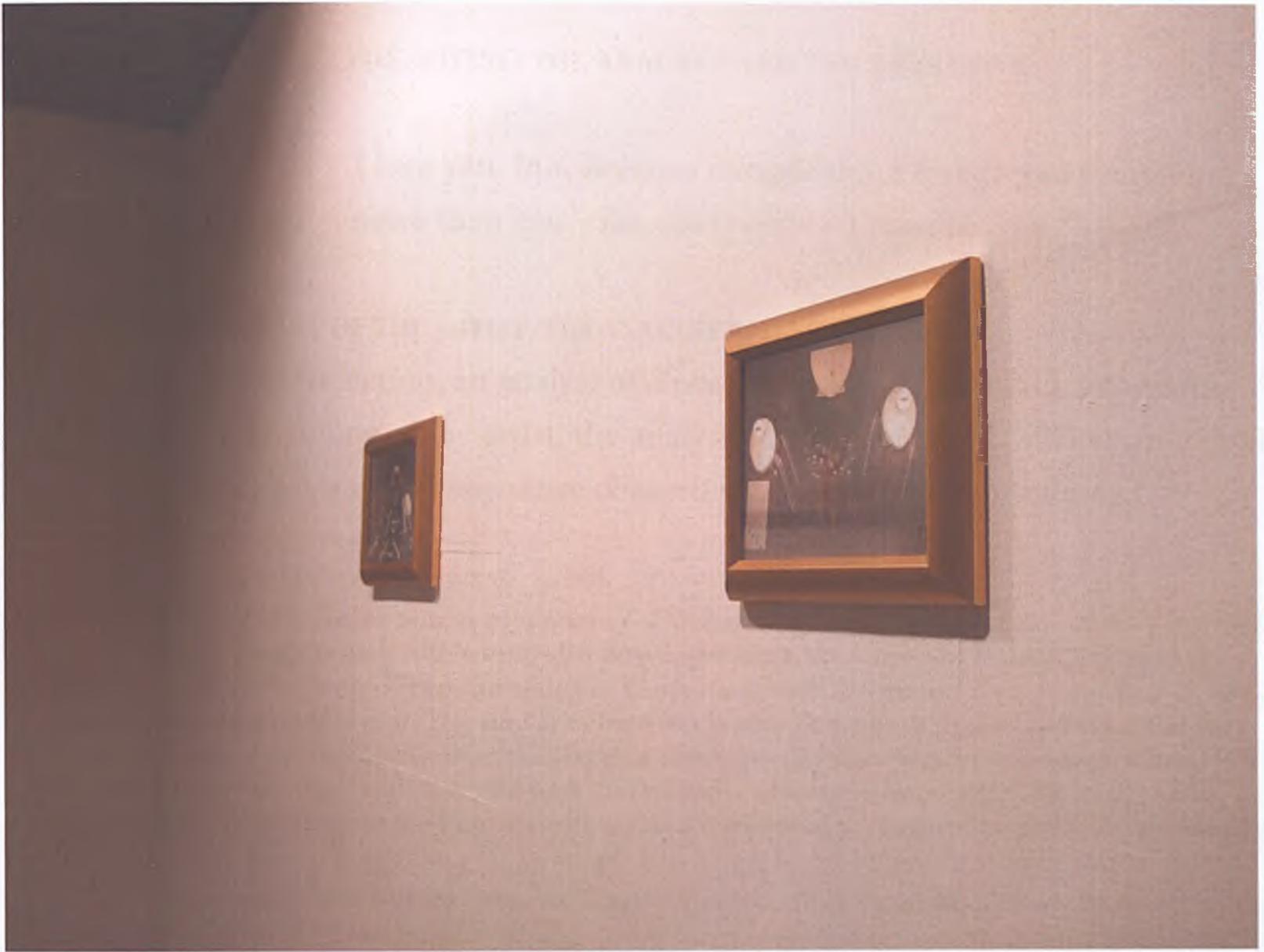












CHAPTER FOUR

THE ARTIST, THE ANALYST AND THE DETECTIVE

I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you – the *objet petit a* – I mutilate you.²⁶³

THE FORENSIC GAZE OF THE ARTIST, THE ANALYST AND THE DETECTIVE

I am an artist of detection, an analyst of clues. I double up, threefold, alternating between the positions of the artist, the analyst, and the detective.²⁶⁴ They are not all that different, anyway.²⁶⁵ They share characteristics in relation to training,²⁶⁶

263. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 263.

264. These positions are, of course, reminiscent of Walter Benjamin's figures of the city in *The Arcades Project*: the flâneur, the man with a sandwich board, the rag-picker; and also Susan Buck-Morss' archaeological-detectivesque reconstruction of Benjamin's work. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*; Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing*. The similarity between Walter Benjamin's figures and the artist, the analyst and the detective comes from the fact that these are not characters, but positions with specific roles and characteristics, with agency which, in this way, enter the social realm. This is, of course, related to Lacan's theory of the Four Discourses, as I introduced in chapter two and revisit in chapter five.

265. Despite the lack of literature exploring this three-way analogy (apart from Henry Bond's PhD thesis and its ensuing book – *Doubly Inscribed Objects and Lacan at the Scene* – and Sharon Kivland's work *A Case of Hysteria*, London: Book Works, 1999) I have explored correspondences between each of the three pairs. Parallels between analysts and detectives have been examined by Michael Shepherd, Patrick French, Slavoj Žižek in his study on film detection, Bruce Fink and Lacan himself, with an analysis of Poe's story 'The Purloined Letter' (Michael Shepherd, *Sherlock Holmes and the Case of Dr. Freud*, London: Tavistock, 1985; French, *Open Letter*; Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture*, Cambridge MA., London: MIT Press, 1991; Bruce Fink, *The Psychoanalytic Adventures of Inspector Canal*, London: Karnac Books, 2010; Jacques Lacan, 'The Purloined Letter', in *Seminar II*, pp. 191–205; Jacques Lacan, 'Seminar on the Purloined Letter', in *Écrits*, pp. 6–48. The similarities between art and analysis, which I explored in the previous chapter, have been looked at by many authors, including Kivland and du Ry (*In the Place of an Object*), and Parveen Adams (*Mary Kelly*). Art and detection is the central object of study in, among others, Ralph Rugoff's work on the scene of the crime (*Scene of the Crime*), and Rabaté's study on art and crime (*Art and Crime*). Slightly peripheral but still related to the links between detection and psychoanalysis, through its case studies, is the work of Georges Didi-Huberman, Patrick Mahony and Anthony Stadlen. Didi-Huberman presents photographic evidence and a convincing case around the performative elements of hysteria in *Invention of Hysteria: Charcot and the Photographic Iconography of the Salpêtrière (Invention de l'Hystérie [1982])*, tr. by Alisa Hartz, Cambridge, MA. and London: MIT Press, 2003. Stadlen and Mahony both work on Freud's case histories, especially Dora. Stadlen's work focuses on an investigation of the people behind the pseudonyms, whereas Mahony's argument centres on Freud's practice and his transferenceal relation to Dora (Patrick Mahony, *Freud's Dora: a Psychoanalytic, Historical, and Textual Study*, New Haven, CT., London: Yale University Press, 1996; Anthony Stadlen, 'Dora's illness', *The Times Higher Education Supplement*, 14 June 1985. Stadlen has mainly conducted his research through his *Existential Psychotherapy & Inner Circle Seminars*, available from <<http://anthonystadlen.blogspot.com/>> [accessed 25.09.10] and recently participated in a radio programme examining Dora's case: Marya Burgess, *Dora: The Girl Who Walked Out On Freud* [Radio Programme], first aired on Wednesday 1 September 2010 at 11:00 on BBC Radio 4, available from <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00tj566>> [accessed 25.09.10].

266. The question of training to be an analyst has been long debated in the field, starting with Freud and Lacan. The latter set up the controversial pass, a system by which a panel would decide on the competency of the analyst. Similarly, one could ask the question, what makes an artist, or a detective? All three professions need a level of training – in drawing, perhaps, or the use of equipment, or

[Footnote continues]

transference and the acquisition of knowledge,²⁶⁷ the task I have at hand and must not forget. Let me recap on where I am: there is a suspected crime, seduction, and I must gather enough material to put forward a case that will show its functioning through works of art. For that, I have set up a number of visual and auditory traps, obtaining evidence. I will now proceed to detect the workings of seduction, conducting my analysis by breaking the dialogue and the photo-book – the evidence – into constitutive parts with the help of my tool, the self-reflexive methodology. This will require me to take an inquisitive attitude, to turn a forensic gaze²⁶⁸ to what I have in front of me.

Before this, I want to outline the context, to give you general lines of who my peers are, and how they work, so I can establish my credentials. I will show you I am the right person for this task. My work comes from a long line of metaphysical professionals since our activity was recognised after the murders of the Rue Morgue were solved:²⁶⁹ from C. Auguste Dupin, Sherlock Holmes and Father Brown, to

historical issues in the field – but also require the exercise of a fresh perspective in practice and thus forgetting a lot of what has been learned in order to be able to attain a position of ‘non-knowledge’, or to be original, or to think outside of a given framework. See, for example, Freud’s notion of *evenly hovering attention*, which I introduce later. The training of the detective may seem at odds with that of the analyst and the artist, as there is no framework for ‘detective studies’ currently being offered – although, arguably, forensic science could be a valid route for this profession – and most detectives learn *on the job*. Yet, a parallel could be established between first, knowing – the use of the equipment, how to detect if someone is following, how to hide, the weight of a charged firearm, who’s who in a case – and then, forgetting, in order to see without making assumptions or bringing personal histories and, thus, find the clues to solve the case.

267. What does one do with the knowledge acquired through analysis, the exercise of detection and insights gathered in the encounter with a work of art? Dany Nobus and Malcolm Quinn argue that knowledge itself is not constitutive of psychoanalytic practice, but, rather, its failure (*Knowing Nothing*). In *In the Place of an Object*, Dany Nobus writes: ‘Traditional psychoanalytic fishing involves throwing out a huge net with the smallest of meshes in order to catch as many animals as possible. A different style of psychoanalytic fishing involves releasing all the animals in one’s nets and investigating the residues. The difference is that in the first case, one is desperately trying to catch the animals, whereas in the second case one is merely trying to catch dirt.’ (p. 109). In this investigation, I am trying to catch dirt, not animals; the clues are in the residues of seduction. ‘The Uncanny Displacement of Protection – Analytic Reflections on “Ornament in the field of vision”’, in Kivland and du Ry (eds), *In the Place of an Object*, JCFAR, pp. 97–109.

268. Mariana Valverde identifies the key feature of the forensic gaze as ‘the close attention to the physical traces left not only by criminal activity but by everyday activity on people’s bodies and clothes, on floors, walls, gardens and objects’ (‘The Authority of the Detective and the Birth of the Forensic Gaze’, in *Law and Order: Images, Meanings, Myths*, London: Routledge, 2006, pp. 77–89, p. 83). The term ‘forensic gaze’ has been used in relation to art by, among others Carlo Ginzburg in his study of Giovanni Morelli’s critical method, Jean Michel Rabaté in his analysis of Atget’s photographs of Paris, and Ralph Rugoff in the conceptualisation of his exhibition *Scene of the Crime* (Carlo Ginzburg, ‘Morelli, Freud and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method’, tr. by Anna Davin, *History: Workshop*, No. 9, Spring, 1980, pp. 5–36; Rabaté, *Art and Crime*, pp. 78–110; Rugoff, *Scene of the Crime*).

269. Edgar Allan Poe’s Dupin trilogy (‘The Murders of the Rue Morgue’, 1841; ‘The Mystery of Marie Rogêt’, 1842 and ‘The Purloined Letter’, 1844) is seen as the birth of the analytic detective story, more on which later. For analyses of Poe’s narratives, see Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney

[Footnote continues]

Philip Marlowe, Lieutenant Columbo, Hercules Poirot and many others ...²⁷⁰ but I am jumping the gun, here, however. Let me explain to you what this term – metaphysical detection – means.

The naming comes from studies conducted by Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney who write:

A metaphysical detective story is a text that parodies or subverts traditional detective story conventions –such as narrative closure and the detective’s role as surrogate reader– with the intention, or at least the effect, of asking questions about mysteries of being and knowing which transcend the mere machinations of the mystery plot. Metaphysical detective stories often emphasise this transcendence, moreover, by becoming self-reflexive (that is, by representing allegorically the text’s own processes of composition).²⁷¹

Thus, this is the structure of my narrative: a self-reflexive process (although in a more concrete way than through an allegory, for this needs to afford me a degree) that narrates self-reflexivity. It is in this game of mirrors, between the object and the subject, that I hope to trap seduction, to detect and capture it *in flagrante delicto*, that is, seducing.

Patrick French has articulated the work we do (that of detection) as a play between transference and interpretation – which, going back to the parallel characteristics of art and analysis I discussed in chapter two is very apt indeed. His scale finds, at the

(eds), *Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story from Poe to Postmodernism*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999; and John T. Irwin, *The Mystery to a Solution: Poe, Borges and the Analytical Detective Story*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994.

270. Apart from the ones listed in my text, lesser known metaphysical detectives also include those created by Jorge Luis Borges, Paul Auster, Witold Gombrowicz, Vladimir Nabokov, and Georges Simenon. For a full chart exploring the genealogy and thematic links of all these detectives, see Merivale and Sweeney (eds), *Detecting Texts*, p. 18.

271. Merivale and Sweeney, *Detecting Texts*, p. 2. John T. Irwin sees the analytic detective story as one of the branches of the metaphysical detective story. Edgar Allan Poe dedicated the first pages of ‘The Murders of the Rue Morgue’ to an exegesis of the qualities required for obtaining analytical knowledge, which Mariana Valverde summarises: ‘the analytical mind combines strong logical powers with two other things: a quasi-intuitive sixth sense about human frailties and a computer-like vast storehouse of assorted, non-specialised information’ (*The Authority of the Detective*, pp. 79–80). With Poe’s accounts of Dupin’s detections as their paradigm, analytic detective stories focus of deduction and analysis rather than adventure and drama. This ensues in caricaturesque depictions of character and, sometimes, rather poor solutions. As Borges put it in ‘Ibn Hakkam al Bokhari, Dead in His Labyrinth’: his character, ‘steeped in detective stories, thought that the solution of a mystery is always less impressive than the mystery itself’ (quoted by John T. Irwin, ‘Mysteries we Reread, Mysteries of Rereading: Poe, Borges and the Analytic Detective Story’, in Patricia Merivale and Susan Elizabeth Sweeney (eds), *Detecting Texts: The Metaphysical Detective Story from Poe to Postmodernism*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999, pp. 27–54, p. 28).

bottom, the preternatural detectives (for example, Holmes, Poirot, Columbo), who interpret the material with a minimum of transference engagement. At the top, he places the postmoderns²⁷² (among whom we can find Raymond Chandler and Paul Auster's detectives), situating psychotic Tom Ripley, an anti-hero but sharp observer created by Patricia Highsmith, as fallen off this map.²⁷³ As for me, I would say I fall somewhere in between: I interpret; yet, I engage with the material in a transference relationship, just as the analyst makes a diagnosis before any diagnosis is possible to see what the diagnosis might be.²⁷⁴ It is a wild diagnosis, that of seduction as crime, but one that will help to see it for what it is.²⁷⁵ My position in this case,²⁷⁶ and also my role, is one that falls between an artist, an analyst and a detective, whose attitude is a mixture of:

1. A Socratic position, or position of ignorance ('I only know I know nothing'): a Socratic philosopher does not use knowledge gained through the object to confirm his own knowledge. Despite the fact that they might have spent years learning concepts and techniques, being trained to take up their roles within

272. The definition and characteristics of what constitute a postmodern detective story are contentious, and their discussion falls outside the remit of this research. As an introduction, McHale, cited in Merivale and Sweeney, defines it as a shift from the hermeneutical to the ontological, a warning against the quest for knowledge (Merivale and Sweeney, *Detecting Texts*, p. 15). Common characteristics of postmodern detective fiction are self-reflexive writing, self-awareness, a questioning of the text (and of fiction in general) through its form.

273. Tom Ripley may seem out of place in a discussion around detectives, as the main plot in the five novels in which he features is not to solve cases, but to deal with the consequences of his murder of Dickie Greenleaf in *The Talented Mr. Ripley* (the first novel), which brings about twelve additional murders. Yet, his engagement with the context, his observation of clues, and his attention remind one of the work of detection. The reader, consequently, identifies with him. French writes: 'the problem for Patricia Highsmith's psychotic hero Ripley is how to negotiate a series of shifts in identity and avoid a confrontation with himself. In this case, the detective, as narrator, becomes the criminal: this is transference gone wild to the extent of the destruction of identity and the annihilation of the middle man, a transgression of the rules of the genre.' French, *Open Letter*, p. 225. Thus, with Tom Ripley, our transference (as readers) with this dubious detective is manipulated, done and undone, as if it had gone wild.

274. Private record of a tutorial with Sharon Kivland, 29 November 2008.

275. 'Wild diagnosis' refers to Freud's 'Wild Analysis' a text in which he narrates a treatment given to a patient by an uninitiated doctor, disregarding psychoanalytic theory. It is, therefore, a methodological deviation. The term 'wild', however, does not necessarily hold a negative connotation in psychoanalytic terms. As Roy Schafer shows, 'today recourse to the concept wild analysis plunges us into theoretical debate' [about methodological approaches]. Roy Schafer, 'Wild Analysis', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, vol. 33, 1985, pp. 275-299, p. 276. He argues that the interpenetration and mutual influence of different methodological strategies does not denote wildness, but is at the core of the creation of psychoanalytic meaning (p. 280). In my attempt to diagnose seduction as crime, I aim to show that, with the help of this kind of psychoanalytic, methodological wildness, the object of study can be seen in a different way, from a different point of view, even if one is at the centre of it -- hence my detective. Freud, "'Wild' Psycho-Analysis' (*Über "Wilde" Psychoanalyse* [1910]), SE 11, pp. 219-227.

276. This position was described as that of the artist and the analyst by Dany Nobus in a lecture delivered at Wimbledon School of Art on 1 February 2005. *Session on Psychoanalytic Method*.

the social structures, artists and analysts need to shed some of this knowledge in order to undertake their work. They start from this atopia, this paradoxical position where knowledge is mysterious.

2. A Zen Master, or paradoxical position: the Zen master produces enigmatic statements, rather than masterful, to facilitate dynamics (for example those of the object). It neither gratifies nor frustrates the demands but brings the process further by denying total rationality and challenging knowledge.

3. A Detective, or the inquisitive and fallible position: when confronted with a Divine Detail (that which defies explanation, challenges and resists being fitted to any given model), the detective formulates a hypothesis. He is not scared of discarding it if the Divine Detail is not able to verify it. Instead, he formulates a new one, even if this contradicts the first one.

There are many Divine Details in this case, which will be unveiled with the help of the self-reflexive methodology. My hypothesis – as a detective would have it – is my diagnosis – as I take the position of analyst: seduction is a crime difficult to apprehend, in the face of which I must show inventiveness and some lateral thinking.

Before I launch into my analysis of the evidence, I must make clear what the self-reflexive methodology is for and what is its historical background. In the summer of 1897, Sigmund Freud began his most heroic feat: a psychoanalysis of his own unconscious. Freud's self-analysis, which mostly took the form of thirty-minute sessions each day, had a beginning but not an end date.²⁷⁷ Despite being incomplete, it bore fruit in the form of key thoughts (the interpretation of dreams, infantile sexuality) and a methodology: the constant analytic hour. Freud's self-analysis is not far away from the self-reflexive methodology I am proposing to use. Like his, my tool is an instrument for research, one that will bring about the conditions under which it is possible to study seduction – just like microbes under a microscope are visible, but rarely outside it. So, following from my description of the methodology in chapter two, I will now show you how to look at it.

277. Ernest Jones, 'Self-Analysis (1897 –)', in *Sigmund Freud life and Work, Volume One: the Young Freud 1856–1900*, London: The Hogarth Press, 1954, pp. 351–360, p. 360.

SEDUCTION AT THE SCENE

What I found in the recording – which I transcribed word for word for you – and the images astounded me. Thus far, I had not been able to find such a good confirmation of my suspicions. It goes without saying that there are other similar and pertinent examples that I will relate to you in due course. These however, although instructive, are not as useful as the event I have analysed because they are *faits accomplis*. What sets this case apart is that, to understand, I was able to see its workings in action, rather than the result – the havoc – created. The fact that it all happened around a shop was a surprising realisation but, come to think of it, consumption was a perfect cover. My object of study could disguise itself at ease in the most obvious of places (behind shop windows, for example, or in the texts, explanations and cultural meanings of the gallery). Just as in *The Purloined Letter*, I must learn from the detective Dupin, move to his position from the one I find myself in, which is closer to that of the French Police.²⁷⁸ And, like the artist Sophie Calle, I must enter a game of following, where the act, recorded through photographs, enables the follower and followed to gain knowledge about their roles and, eventually, reverse them.²⁷⁹

Let me summarise the context for the two scenes (the one seen and the one heard), adding a few technical details to what I have witnessed. A woman identified as *subject*, displays strange behaviour on her way to work: despite having to rush to attend to her duties on time, she finds herself unable to move. She is in distress, even if this is not a hysteric fit. The traumatic encounter is uncanny, and generates immense tension. This is the injurious effect of seduction, the crime. The cause of this conduct seems to be related to a diamond and platinum ring, which speaks to her. The diamond, a natural one whose size is 1.00 carat and its cut is round brilliant, is very

278. In Edgar Allan Poe's short detective story, M. G—, the Prefect of the Parisian police consults Dupin on a case he finds baffling. The Queen received a compromising letter and was interrupted in her reading by the King and the Minister D—. She covered the letter, hiding its significance. The King did not notice anything but Minister D—, knowing the Queen could not protest, stole the compromising letter. Knowing the letter could only be hidden in the Minister's apartment, the Parisian Police did the more thorough of searches to no avail. Dupin, however, deduced that the letter could only be hidden in the most obvious of places: in full view on the mantelpiece, so proceeded to recover it and exchange it for one of his own writing. In his seminar on the Purloined Letter, Lacan examines the effect the letter has on characters as it changes hands. Its routes and displacements determine the actions and destinies of the characters. He divides the circuit of the letter into two scenes, each with three positions (mirroring the Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic) as follows: Scene 1: the blind (King), the complacent seer (Queen) and the robber (Minister); Scene 2: The blind (Queen); the complacent seer (Minister), the robber (Dupin). The pattern of these two scenes leads him to create a third scene, the one taking place at the time of reading where the blind is the Minister, the complacent seer is represented by Dupin and Lacan himself takes the position of the robber. Benvenuto and Kennedy, 'The Purloined Letter (1956)', in *The Works of Jacques Lacan*, pp. 91–102. Edgar Allan Poe, 'The Purloined Letter', in *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*, London: CRW Publishing, 2003 [1839–1850], pp. 220–244.

279. I will discuss Sophie Calle's detectives and followings in chapter five.

sparkling. Its clarity – the gauge of how clear and flawless the gem is – is defined as internally flawless (IF). Very few stones are perfectly flawless – most contain at least minor mineral inclusions or tiny cracks. The more visible those flaws are, the less valuable the stone is considered. Its clarity makes this one of the highest quality diamonds and, consequently, one of the most expensive. The diamond is placed as a D-colourless (the top place) in the GIA grading scale. The ring is made of 950 platinum (which means 95% of the weight of the alloy is platinum, with 5% made of another metal), hallmarked by the London Assay Office. The mount is a 6-claw, Tiffany-style type. All of this makes the current value of the ring over £20,000, at the time of writing this report.²⁸⁰

The seduction of the subject by the object follows the trajectory of the drive,²⁸¹ its purpose being to follow its aim, rather than to obtain its goal, to arrive at its destination – although a goal is implicit in the aim, of course. This is what makes aims circle around their object, to follow a repetitive movement to obtain enjoyment. Lacan structures the drive's circuit through the passive voice (*to make oneself be seen*) and identifies four partial drives, two linked to demand (D) – oral and anal drives and two linked to desire (*d*) – scopie and invocatory drives.²⁸² All drives are sexual but only represent its enjoyment dimension; all drives are the death drive. All drives are 'excessive, repetitive, and ultimately destructive'.²⁸³ They are the partial manifestations of desire (so this is where the term *partial drives* comes from). They circle, incessantly, around *objet petit a*, by revolving around its manifestations, in this case, the diamond ring.

280. My investigation showed me that diamonds can be natural or lab created and are classified according to the 4Cs: carat, cut, clarity and colour. See the Gemological Institute of America, *A Guide to Understanding Diamonds and GIA Grading Reports*, available from <<http://gia4cs.gia.edu/>> [accessed 24.08.09]. In her work *Auto Portrait Pending*, the artist Jill Magid displays an empty ring setting and a contract she has signed with a company, in which she makes arrangements to become a diamond when she dies. She has used diamonds in at least two other works: *Shirley's Diamond* and *The Salem Diamonds*. See *Auto Portrait Pending* [work], 2005, available from <<http://www.jillmagid.net/AutoPortrait.php>> [accessed 20.11.10].

281. Drives are the forces supposed to lie behind the tensions caused by the needs of the *Id*. Freud, 'An Outline of Psycho-analysis' (*Abriss Der Psychoanalyse* [1940]), SE 23, pp. 139–208.

282. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 47–48.

283. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 48.

I follow the self-reflexive methodology – a method of detection – and through it, I develop an understanding of certain concepts in relation to seduction.²⁸⁴ Some are psychoanalytic and some originate in previous analyses of seduction (predominantly Baudrillard’s, but there are others). Thus, this is what the analysis through the self-reflexive methodology (schematically outlined in Fig. 16) will focus on: the evidence of the invocatory and the scopie drives of the subject; that is, the manifestation of her desire as it circles around the ring (itself a manifestation of something more than the ring, *objet petit a*).

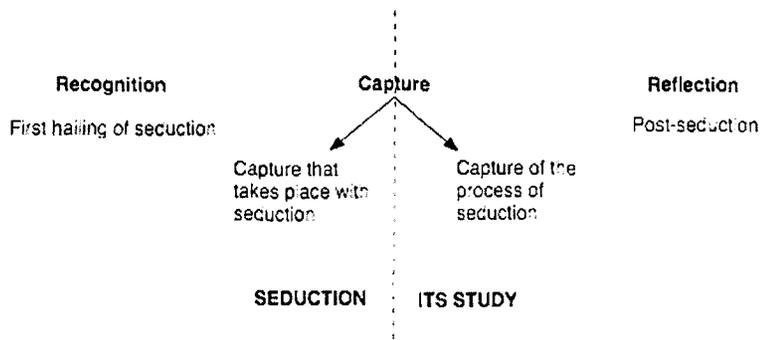


Fig. 16: The self-reflexive methodology.

THE INVOCATORY DRIVE IN SEDUCTION

In the examination of the dialogue between the subject and the object, and the invocatory drive, certain street work is required – the capture *of* seduction. The moment of recognition and the capture *by* seduction can be then analysed in the forensic evidence acquired – the dialogue – and, through a reflection, an investigation of public and published records on the crime, a case is brought forward. Let me start at the beginning.

Recognition

The power of rings is well known.²⁸⁵ When the ring speaks to her, the subject stops.

284. In its circling around seduction, this chapter also touches on concepts that relate to seduction. Though the invocatory drive, language and the body, reversibility, and the psychoanalytic concepts of *evenly hovering attention* and resistance are explored; through the scopie drive, the feminine subject, self-portraiture, performativity, acting out, *trompe l'oeil*, the lure, afterwardness, position and anamorphosis, *passage à l'acte* and the act of photographing in relation to seduction are examined.

285. Remember, for example, Frodo’s adventures in J.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* and his struggle with the jewel that wanted to be worn, or the ring in Diderot’s *Indiscreet Jewels*.

This is what I have to analyse to understand how seduction is operating in Argyll Arcade and solve the case; it is therefore a matter of linking the ring's speech to the subject's halting. There are two steps to the process of seduction, first, interpellation, or hailing – in the sense outlined in chapter one; then, the more sophisticated operation: recognition.

The interpellation – the 'Hey, you!' – is what we are witnessing in the first lines of the dialogue and refers to the ring's speech. But interpellation is only the first step towards seduction. Many rings may have spoken to the subject without her stopping or even giving them any attention. Why does she stop for this one? For recognition – the seduction *per se* – to take place, the subject has to identify, see and accept herself within the object, or understand the object as a part of herself that is beyond herself, a surplus (*objet petit a*, as Lacan stated in the text I quoted at the beginning of this chapter, is a surplus for which the subject is willing to go beyond pleasure, into jouissance, the mutilation it mentions). The object, the initial seducer – the relation is more complex, as we will see – knows this for it refers to it in its pleading: the paradise of self-knowledge (L. 27–28, 51),²⁸⁶ the lack (L. 99), the void (L. 50, 96), the destiny of conflation of this particular subject and object (L. 13) relate to this missing element in the subject which, the object claims, has its exact shape.

It is in this recognition that the psychodynamic elements of seduction take place and the imaginary awakens to the possibilities seduction offers. For this to happen – and, by extension, for recognition to occur – the subject has to position herself in such a way as to be able to see herself through the other. Real and imaginary worlds, just like seduction and desire, have to enter into a reversible relation. Furthermore, they lose themselves into each other – see how the subject and object voices blur. Lacan, citing Roger Caillois in Seminar XI, explores the function of mimicry in stick insects and links it to that of the picture and art.²⁸⁷ In both there is an assumption of an image, a recognition and a lack, which, of course, refer us back to the mirror stage and the fixity and constitution of a self-image though a reflection the child recognises as his, and is confronted by it. Yet, as Bernard Burgoyne reminds us, this recognition in the mirror and the image is a misrecognition, one that pierces the subject.²⁸⁸

286. Line numbers referring to the dialogue will be used throughout the chapter to reveal and exemplify aspects of seduction's workings in the context of the self-reflexive methodology.

287. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 100. Lacan discusses Caillois conceptualisation of the *ocelli*, and their relation to eyes. I did mention in chapter three, my conviction that the rings were eyes and they were looking at me ...

288. Burgoyne, 'The Line of Vision', *In the Place of an Object*, JCFAR, p. 33. On the issue of misrecognition, Dany Nobus writes: 'A human being can couple his or her image to basically any object

Capture

Capture in this context refers to two processes: first, the literal capture of the subject by the ring (part of the process of seduction) and the recording of this operation (part of the method of studying seduction). Capture, as Lacan writes, is a condition of the field of vision and, I would venture to expand, also the domain of the voice.²⁸⁹ For Lacan, vision captures the subject and his or her relation to desire. In my case, my particular trap is set to capture subject and object, in a relation of seduction.

Let me start with a discussion on the method for recording seduction, as, in the case of the dialogue, it is the easier of the two. Capturing the dialogue was a patient process, one that required a lot of trial and error, a long time spent following the subject. I had to borrow espionage equipment, wait, and listen intently for it to happen, trying out various settings and contexts. In my stake out, I visited shoe shops, fabric outlets, lingerie boutiques, an assortment of department stores and, of course, art galleries and museums. I had to detect and record whatever would give a clue as to seduction's ways of working, getting close enough to the subject's thoughts and reactions, as well as her words. What I witnessed could have happened anywhere if any of the coveted objects had spoken.

When it happened, the subject stopped, and saw herself in and through the ring for two reasons: the look of the ring and the sound of the ring when it speaks.²⁹⁰ The ring's look had begun its capture of the subject before we entered the scene, before the recording of the dialogue, as the mirror stage had established all further relations

in the environment; no object is perfectly suitable to complement a human being's self-image' (sic). *Mirror Stage*, p. 116.

289. 'For us, the geometral dimension enables us to glimpse how the subject who concerns us is caught, manipulated, captured, in the field of vision.' Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 92.

290. Lacan identified voice and gaze - the two pieces of evidence I discuss here - as manifestations of *objet petit a*, and of the drives related to desire. While gaze will be explored later on in the chapter, this section concerns the voice, the partial object of the invocatory drive, of which Mladen Dolar writes: 'There is a rudimentary form of narcissism attached to the voice that is difficult to delineate since it seemingly lacks any outside support. It is the first "self-referring" or "self-reflective" move, but as pure auto-affection at the closest to oneself - an auto-affection that is not re-reflection, since it is seemingly without a screen that would return the voice, a pure immediacy, where one is both sender and receiver in one's pure interiority. In a deceptive self-transparency one coincides in both roles without a gap and without a need for any exterior mediation.' Mladen Dolar, 'The Object Voice', in *Gaze and Voice as Love Objects*, ed. by Renata Salecl and Slavoj Žižek, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1996, pp. 7-31, pp. 13-14. The recording and transcription of the voice in the dialogue acts as exterior mediation, the text as screen. Moreover, it is addressed to the object, or the subject, and fulfils a role in communicating. Voice is the vessel for speech. But that does not mean that the dimension of self-seduction Dolar refers to (and which mostly relates to the imaginary) is obliterated.

for the subject, including this one. The ring's strategy is long term and it was just waiting for the right moment to initiate the approach, a time when the subject was already half-conquered. To obtain the subject, the ring – through its voice – uses a language that can be qualified as coy, words that reflect the experience of what most of us may have said in a similar situation.²⁹¹ The subject follows the object in this game. The language they use is one of courtship, of chat up lines, of wanting to be recognised by an other. It is also explicitly sexual (thrust, touch, body, warmth ...) which plays a part in drawing the subject's attention, and keeping the object's interest. See, for example:

- References to touch: L. 50, 100, 127, 157, 158, 191, 196
- References to the body/flesh: L. 125 (Duchamp), 160, 195
- References to warmth: L. 195

The fact that both enter this game of mirrors, this dance around each other is testimony to seduction's reversibility. Around line 182, the subject understands that she is not the victim in the situation (both are). Baudrillard explains this shift:

Traditionally, the seducer was an impostor who employed subterfuge and villainy to achieve his ends – or at least who believed he was employing them. For the other, by allowing herself to be seduced, by succumbing to the imposture, often voided it, stripped the seducer of his control. In effect, he falls into his own trap for having failed to consider seduction's reversible power.²⁹²

Reversibility, as I pointed out in previous chapters, is at the core of seduction; it is one of its ruling principles. It is what makes it so slippery, so difficult to apprehend. It comes coupled with challenge, and, together, they represent seduction's strategy. Gerry Coulter studies the graph of reversibility in Baudrillard's thought and defines it as that which allows 'to see systems playing a central role in their own demise',²⁹³ an in-built self-destructive mechanism. Seduction has this, for when the object is

291. Although she studied a different type of writing, Claire Kahane offered me insights into the ring's voice in 'Seduction and the Voice of the Text: *Heart of Darkness* and *The Good Soldier*' in *Seduction and Theory: Readings of Gender, Representation and Rhetoric*, ed. by Dianne Hunter, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989, pp. 135-153.

292. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p 176-177.

293. Gerry Coulter, 'Reversibility: Baudrillard's "One Great Thought"', *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, vol. 1, no. 2, July 2004, available from:

<http://www.ubishops.ca/BaudrillardStudies/vol1_2/coulter.htm> [accessed 01.10.09]. One could also relate this reversibility to Freud's death drive, thanatos, a kind of reversible mechanism in each of us.

obtained, seduction is no more; it moves elsewhere.

The capture in the dialogue – as opposed to *of* the dialogue, which refers to my crafty recording strategy and my patience – evidences how seduction tricks its victims, by entangling them, by playing with their free will reversibly, and by making them change positions within their encounter.

Reflection

While the other two steps of the trap I have devised to capture seduction – recognition and capture – are relatively descriptive, reflection is the most difficult one to complete. But it is the one that will ascertain that seduction did happen, through relating the recognition and capture to the context in which seduction operates (consumption, desire, art, objecthood, love ...)

The three steps developed here constitute a methodology, which can be carried out though a number of *methods, techniques and modes of operation*. Thus, these are the flaws of the system: it is budding, new, generic (in terms of how open it is for each of the disciplines to which it can be applied, providing only principles of operation), and has to contend with an extremely sophisticated object of study, inside which the detective, the artist and the analyst are placed (there could be others too). There is a real risk of falling for it. Still, it is necessary for a reflection on the recognition and the capture to take place, to provide meaning to what has happened to the subject, so that we do not find ourselves in the position she is in, which is reminiscent of Cordelia in *Diary of a Seducer*.

A framework for the analysis needs to be established prior to undertaking the reflection, otherwise, it could become a ramble. The one chosen in relation to my evidence, is based on the artist Daniel Spoerri's work *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance*.²⁹⁴ In this book, Spoerri isolates the elements laying on a blue table, giving them a number and methodically describing them and any associations he experienced (such as where the objects came from, who gave them to him, their history). As these make him refer to other objects in the same table, a dense web of interconnections is established, always coming back to the starting point, the objects on the table. The evidence is always referred to and only a modicum of sidetracking is

294. Daniel Spoerri, *An Anecdoted Topography of Chance*, London: Atlas Press, 1995. Spoerri first produced this work, detailing the objects on the blue table as encountered on 17 October 1961 at exactly 3:47 p.m. for an exhibition in Paris in 1962.

allowed. I will start with the dialogue, looking at different aspects of it, and relating it to the context of seduction I outlined in previous chapters. Through line numbers, I will come back to the dialogue. Thus I am able to lose myself in a methodical way, without getting *completely* lost. This method, which Spoerri compares with that used by Sherlock Holmes,²⁹⁵ is somewhat reminiscent of psychoanalysis, as it works on free associations, and it also has elements of what Freud described as *evenly hovering attention*, a state of reverie or meditation allowing the mind to be aware of more than one dimension at once, refusing to make one thing more important than others. It is akin to listening with certain indifference, but with engagement and interest. As Wilfred Bion writes, the psychoanalyst engages without memory or desire.²⁹⁶ This mode of reflection is particularly appropriate for the task at hand, as I will be focusing on words and voices, on the auditory.²⁹⁷ So, underneath my detective's trench coat, lies an analyst's attire – a not too ostentatious suit, formal but comfortable, not saying too much, with, perhaps, an accessory – and, underneath still, the array of an artist.

It is early morning, and the subject is rushing. Presumably, as it is a Tuesday, she has to go to work. It is plausible that they are expecting her there at 9 a.m. given that it is few minutes before then and she is walking fast. There are a few public transport stops and stations near by, but she is taking the opposite direction. In her rush, she stops. Something has led her astray, has asked her to make a decision between getting to work on time or stopping to look at something. Both will have consequences – one, perhaps, more than the other – and, of her free will, she chooses the latter. Rings do not speak but, that morning, this one did just that.

I suspect, from the confidence with which she walks into Argyll Arcade, that she has

295. 'I have set out here to see what the objects on a section of this table might suggest to me, what they might spontaneously awaken in me in describing them: the way Sherlock Holmes, starting out with a single object, could solve a crime; or historians, after centuries, were able to reconstitute a whole epoch from the most famous fixation in history, Pompeii'. Spoerri, *Topography of Chance*, p. 23. Further along, on page 24, Spoerri places himself in the position of Sigmund Freud when describing the room on the fifth floor of the Hotel Carcassonne, where the table was located and, in the appendices, he undertakes a topographical reconstruction of a criminal act (pp. 211–212), all examples of the forensic gaze needed to put the self-reflexive methodology to work.

296. Wilfred Ruprecht Bion, 'Notes on Memory and Desire', *Psychoanalytic Forum*, vol. II no. 3, 1967, pp. 271–280. *Evenly hovering attention*, also named *free floating attentiveness*, requires indifference and engagement, and this may seem, at first, to be at cross-purposes. The analyst needs to be actively engaged in the act of listening, with interest and attention. Yet, she also needs to be indifferent in terms of the content of the analysand's speech, not giving more emphasis or importance to aspects of the narrative just because they have cultural importance attached to them. This means that, in analysis, the account of someone's death may have the same weight as the purchase of new curtains, for example.

297. In order to *evenly hover* my attention, I played back the voices in the dialogue on a loop.

been thinking about this ring for a long time, and that it is a daily pleasure for her to take this detour to look at it once more. Today she must be feeling slightly vulnerable as the ring's words have a visible effect on her. She looks weak, helpless and the ring renders her speechless (L. 9, 170). To the un-initiated outsider, it looks as if she talking to herself.²⁹⁸

In order to understand, from this dialogue, how seduction operates, it is important to conduct the analysis from the positions of the subject and the object, and also to examine the specificities of the encounter itself.²⁹⁹ The position adopted by the subject comprises three main elements. First, she listens to the ring, even though, strictly speaking she should not be there (L. 37–38). Second, she believes the ring can solve some of her problems. And, third, she resists³⁰⁰ the advances of the ring with the following arguments: she is more important than the ring and therefore, why should she care? (L. 21–23); there are many other rings and precious things (L. 33–42, 136); she has been in the same situation before and was victorious (L. 54–55, 87–91); she already has the ring (or another similar object), anyway (L. 55–60, 137–142); the ring might not deliver on its promise (L. 36–39); this is all about her, and not the ring (L. 90–92); the ring is too demanding (L. 104–106); it is all a matter of context rather than about the ring itself or her lack (L. 122–124); she shows an intellectual knowledge of the situation (L. 61–64, 72–73, 90–92); she sublimates (L. 81–85).³⁰¹

298. The helplessness and lack of speech are related to trauma and fantasy, as I will show in chapter five. Remember the formula for fantasy: $S \ll a$, where S is our subject, a is the ring and the relation is established through \ll , the screen.

299. It is precisely this approach, incorporating the key players involved in the principle of seduction, as well as their interaction, which is missing in existing frameworks, as I mentioned in chapter one and will be further explored in chapter five.

300. In psychoanalysis, the term resistance denotes 'whatever disturbs the progress of the work', as described by Freud. For Lacan, resistance is structural to the work of analysis as it shows a conflict between desire and speech. Resistance is a sign that the patient cannot move any faster in the interpretation of her present state. He sees it as a positive thing, mainly, only presenting an obstacle to the treatment when the analyst responds to the patient's resistance (an imaginary lure, in the realm of her ego), which is also his own. He firmly places resistance on the side of the object by distinguishing it from the concept of defence (sublimation, repression etc.): 'whereas defences are relatively stable symbolic structures of subjectivity, resistances are more transitory forces which prevent the object from being absorbed in the signifying chain'. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, pp. 166–167.

301. Sublimation is a defence mechanism, the process by which libidinal energy is transformed into a cultural endeavour, and thus acquiring social value. This is the case when the subject takes photographs of the object. Darian Leader looks at the Freudian concepts of sublimation, drives and the Thing in relation to art practice. The main aim of the libido and death drives (eros and thanatos) is satisfaction. Sublimation, part of the process of desiring, seeks satisfaction in change itself as supposed to fixation. Sublimation, he argues, is an arc artists fail to complete. In fact, sublimation in itself, is not possible because of the risk involved (the death drive controlling libido and the ego becoming the object of the death drive), the only alternative is *sublimating* (the verb). Pure desire, when manifested, makes no sense as it goes against the symbolic values of society. However, when artists show their own desire, society recognizes that and gives value to the work of art. The [beauty of the] work functions as a screen beyond

[Footnote continues]

The object's proposition is a clear one: it makes promises to the subject in exchange for her doing what it wants out of her free will. To convince her, to lead her astray, the object tries anything within its power. First, it addresses her specifically; it shows it has observed her before and has a stock of specific details to bring up as necessary, to make her feel addressed individually (L. 13, 147–153). Secondly, it keeps focus on an abstract quality it knows about but she does not – the lack, the void it keeps mentioning – (L. 49–50, 96–97, 98–100, 167, 178–180, 199–200). Whether this lack is real or stands in for a lost object that was never hers in the first place (as Lacan would have it), is not of primary importance in this reflection. What matters is that the object is able to hang on to this concept and create a need in the subject, bringing about some anxiety and discontent.³⁰² The subject is not able to express what this need is, so also hangs on to the object's articulation. And thirdly, it feeds on her resistance in these ways: following her in her intellectualising of the situation (L. 43–45, 93–94); agreeing with her when necessary – as this shows understanding and awareness of the situation – (L. 25, 43, 93–95, 200–201), contradicting her to show faults in her reasoning (L. 63–67, 198–200, 210); asserting its distinctiveness (L. 45–49, 134, 151–163, 172–174); playing on what she does not know (L. 25–28, 48–50); tempting her with risk (L. 30–32, 50–52); tempting her with enjoyment (L. 52–53, 224–225); referring to desires that have been with her her whole life (L. 153–157, 212–215); putting itself down when required – playing dumb – (L. 64–65); being pliable enough to show she is not being forced into the situation – the give and take factor – (L. 93–95, 223–224); defaming its rivals (L. 100–101, 132–134, 152–153), showing it commands the situation (L. 207), showing compassion (L. 222).

In this encounter, the positions of subject and object change: the subject takes control of the situation (L. 135–140, 187–197, 202–203); the object regains control (L. 207). This shows that resistance is as essential and strategic as reversibility. The encounter, as heard and transcribed here, does not in itself have catastrophic consequences, but any repercussion is played to its maximum and taken out of context (for example, the ring portrays itself and is believed to be, by the subject, life changing).

The use of the methodology is beginning to have an impact, as knowing changes the seductive situation in which one finds oneself. Through the analysis of the dialogue, I

which is the Thing, an empty space, a void, and thus creates a space between itself and the place it occupies. This emptiness is what helps to create the work. *Stealing the Mona Lisa*.

302. Greene, *Art of Seduction*, pp. 203–210.

have been able to understand how reversibility and the play of resistances are involved in the process of seduction.³⁰³ These are not normally known in this context or even acknowledged. If the subject had been aware of them, it could have had a consequence, perhaps even a positive one for her (although who knows what power brings to its holder). Yet, the subject falls time and time again for the ring's words (I.102–103, 164–165, 170–171, 216–218, 228–230) and its look, as we will now see.

THE SCOPIC DRIVE IN SEDUCTION

It surprised me to hear, in the dialogue, that the subject photographed the object a number of times. 'You must have realised that, in previous days, I have come here with a camera and have taken photographs of you ...' she says in lines 55 to 57 of my transcription. As soon as I read that I realised I needed to see the images to understand what went on between them (a blind dialogue is only a partial object), even if that meant breaking and entering. So I did. And I understood that the reach of seduction did not stop with the ring. There were many other objects vying for her attention both before and at the time the dialogue took place: shoes, handbags, scarves, necklaces, bracelets, brooches, and all manner of underwear. No doubt, there will be many others afterwards if we do not get to the bottom of the situation. I want to present my case to the jury so that seduction can be, once and for all, identified, confronted. The analysis of the images in the book refer to the scopic drive and the aim of applying the self-reflexive methodology to them is to turn thinking principles into seeing principles³⁰⁴ so that seduction is made visible.

Recognition

In the photographic evidence, the subject recognises herself as much in the object as

303. What kind of dialogue this is and whether it takes place internally in the subject's head – that is, she imagines it – or not, does not really matter to the case, as seduction would be operating anyway. In my last chapter, I will focus more clearly on fantasy and its role in seduction, which will elucidate this issue.

304. The shift from thinking principles into seeing principles paraphrases Edward Tufte, when he describes his book *Beautiful Evidence*: 'The central claim of the book is that effective analytic designs entail turning thinking principles into seeing principles. So, if the thinking task is to understand causality, the task calls for a design principle: "Show causality." If a thinking task is to answer a question and compare it with alternatives, the design principle is: "Show comparisons." The point is that analytical designs are not to be decided on their convenience to the user or necessarily their readability or what psychologists or decorators think about them; rather, design architectures should be decided on how the architecture assists analytical thinking about evidence.' This is the role of the images in the photobook: to gather visual evidence to demonstrate principles and mechanisms of the exact moment of seduction hitherto left un-analyzed or only discussed through text. Mark Zachry and Charlotte Thralls, 'An Interview with Edward R. Tufte', in *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 13(4), pp. 447–462, p. 450–451.

in her own image and the conflation of the two through the screen.³⁰⁵ Two things come to mind instantly as I leaf through the images, – which you are seeing edited and presented in a book: that the subject is a female subject and that the feminine subject is herself. Both of these will influence her recognition in the object. Let me address self-portraiture first.

This is seemingly a private practice but with relevance to a public audience. A great number of assumptions are made about self-portraiture, especially through the medium of photography. As Angela Kelly writes, it tends to be associated with self-indulgence, vanity, and narcissism, yet rarely with self-awareness.³⁰⁶ It is perceived to be the expression of the photographer-model's unique vision, but the fact that self-portraits are a part of a collective experience we all share is rarely examined. Self-portraits purport to reveal the inner character of the subject, as opposed to just a likeness and we can find, in *Make Me Yours*, conventionally stereotyped poses adopted for the camera – and the object. The subject is performing, and this, as Baudrillard ascertained, is linked to the crime of seduction.³⁰⁷ The performativity of the subject brings about an element of theatricality to the photographs, as discussed by Philip Auslander. He divided the photographic residues of performances into two categories, documentary and theatrical. One can see glimmers of the latter in the photo-book, as the 'space of the document ... becomes the only space in which the performance occurs'.³⁰⁸

The difference between the images in the book and my own recognition within the *Breda shoe* – the one that precipitated the creation of the self-reflexive methodology – is that *Make Me Yours* shows femininity and the seducer-seducee's positions as reversible. The subject performs the feminine in front of the object and, in that performativity, she recognises herself. Baudrillard privileged the feminine over the masculine in relation to seduction, and contained the feminine – and by extension, seduction – in the realm of appearances. He wrote: 'now woman is but appearance.

305. This, of course, refers to the Lacanian screen and his mirror stage as discussed in chapters three and two, respectively.

306. Angela Kelly, 'Self-Image. Personal is Political', in Liz Wells (ed.), *The Photography Reader*, London: Routledge, 2003, pp. 410–416. A similar point is made by Laura Cummings in *A Face to the World: On Self-Portraits*, London: HarperPress, 2010.

307. 'This is why the piece [of seduction's performance] takes on both the aesthetic form of a work of art and the ritual form of a crime.' Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 100.

308. Philip Auslander, 'The Performativity of Performance Documentation', in *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, 84, vol. 28, no. 3, September 2006, pp. 1–10. p. 2.

And it is the feminine as appearance that thwarts masculine depth,³⁰⁹ and further, 'this strength of the feminine is that of seduction'³¹⁰. For him, this femininity is not a historical or a political issue (and therefore not a *feminism*), but one of position.³¹¹ This position is reinforced by the camera – as I will discuss below – which allows the subject to develop a consciousness of the self, exploring how she sees herself with the object and how much that self-image defines her behaviour and her role within seduction. Yet, as Kaja Silverman formulates, this raises questions in relation to the gaze and the screen. She asks: 'How does one face a camera, or anticipate one's "photographic" capture?'³¹²

Capture

That takes place with seduction

If seduction belongs to the realm of appearances, then its most comfortable territory is that of the visual. But for Baudrillard seduction removes something from the order of the visible and this symbolic veiling also occurs in relation to the body 'as such' – the social body and, in his words, the obscene body.³¹³ He explains the blurring and confusion that ensues from seduction through the characteristics of the *trompe l'oeil* – a style of painting that deceives the viewer making her believe it is real – and the double. He writes:

With this forward decentering effect, this advance towards the subject of a mirror object, it is the appearance of the double, in the guise of trivial objects, that creates the effect of seduction, the startling impression characteristic of the *trompe l'oeil*: a tactile vertigo that recounts the subject's insane desire to obliterate his own image, and thereby vanish. For reality grips us only when we lose ourselves in it, or when it

309. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 10.

310. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 7.

311. '[I]t must be said that the feminine seduces because it is never where it thinks it is, or where it thinks itself. The feminine is not found in the history of suffering and oppression imputed to it – women's historical tribulations (though by guile it conceals itself therein)... In seduction the feminine is neither a marked nor an unmarked term. It does not mask the "autonomy" of desire, pleasure or the body, or of a speech or writing that it has supposedly lost(?). Nor does it lay claim to some truth of its own. It seduces. To be sure, one calls the sovereignty of seduction feminine by convention, the same convention that claims sexuality to be fundamentally masculine.' Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 6–7.

312. Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, p. 196. She answers this question by a study of the pose in relation to Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Still* series of photographic self-portraits, contextualising them, primarily, with the help of Lacan's scopic drive (as I developed in chapter three), and Wilhelm Flusser's *Towards a Philosophy of Photography* (*Für eine Philosophie der Fotografie*, [1983], tr. by Anthony Mathews, London: Reaktion Books, 2000).

313. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p.33–34.

reappears as our own, hallucinated death.³¹⁴

He further relates these characteristics to the moment when the child discovers his own image in the mirror – Lacan’s mirror stage – but vacates the illusion of the *trompe l’oeil* from being founded in a realism of execution. Instead, he recounts the effect of seduction as a break in reality; rather than a surplus of reality, it is a feeling of seeing oneself fall, a seizure, a disintegration. Is not this what our subject is experiencing in front of her objects? Is not this what she captured in these images, where the visual is shot to pieces, where it is difficult to see what is happening in representational, perspectival terms? Is not this a neat way to account for the double bodies and the blurring that occurs as she crouches to see how a necklace would look on her, as happens in 33. *Surrender*? This is the Real – as accounted for by Lacan – breaking into reality through the *objet petit a*, making us recognise that what we perceive as reality is staged, and has been undermined by seduction, with its reversibility. But this break in reality is tamed by the picture, the photograph (the taming of the gaze, *dompte regard*). The taming, in its relation to the scopie register, is situated within the psychoanalytic domain of repetition (as Lacan pointed out in his discussion of Louis Aragon’s poem *Contretemps*).³¹⁵ The subject is trying to make sense of the Real of recognition by taking pictures, yet she is compelled to do it again and again and again.

The viscosity of seduction, its appearance in the form of an illusion – that of having the object – irrupts in the subject’s everyday reality, and this rupture suspends space and time. This is why she was late for work; she lost her points of reference.

Of the process of seduction

The capture of the process of seduction widens the spiral formed by its reversibility. In a sense, the photographic camera serves to seduce the object that was seducing the subject. This means that some of the issues discussed by Baudrillard in relation to what happens to the body and reality when seduction takes place are redefined if this process is recorded successfully. Baudrillard took photographs and wrote about the process. For him, to photograph, is to devoid the object of all its characteristics and this converts it into an enigma; that’s the price to pay for its seduction.³¹⁶ In an

314. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 62.

315. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 17–18 and 79.

316. Jean Baudrillard, ‘For Illusion Isn’t the Opposite of Reality ...’, in *Photographies 1985–1998 (Fotografien)*, ed. by Peter Weibel, tr. by Susanne Baumann and others, Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 1999, pp. 128–143, pp. 130–131.

analysis of Baudrillard's images and texts, Rex Butler examines the concept of gaze and its circular quality in relation to photography: we photograph objects that look at us and objects look at us because we photograph them. He links this quality to Roland Barthes' *punctum* as developed in his book *Camera Lucida*,³¹⁷ a quality independent of technique or aesthetics.

Photography is thus an invocation to the object to emerge from the disappearance of the subject. As the *punctum* cannot be targeted, for Baudrillard photography always requires a *passage à l'acte*, a precipitous, all-at-once act.³¹⁸ A *passage à l'acte*, however, is not simply an act, such as, for example, *acting out*. Evans establishes Lacan's differences by stating that *acting out* is a message addressed to the Other and, therefore, the subject remains in the symbolic scene. A *passage à l'acte*, on the other hand, involves exiting the scene altogether, a breakout from the Other and into the Real.³¹⁹ This is really traumatic, as there is a falling out of the scene, a complete vanishing of the subject's position. Everything disappears: Every symbolic reference, every frame.³²⁰ A *passage à l'acte*, a reaction against anxiety, is dominated by *jouissance* (enjoyment), transgressive in essence, which links the pleasure principle to the death drive. It is the enjoyment that goes beyond the pleasure principle. A *passage à l'acte* entails 'a dissolution of the subject, for a moment, the subject becomes a pure object'.³²¹

For Baudrillard taking photographs produces rapture, delight. He writes: 'You think you photograph a particular scene for the pleasure it gives. In fact, it's the scene that wants to be photographed'.³²² If a scene wants to be photographed, though, it is

317. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida (La chambre claire [1980])*, tr. by Richard Howard, London: Vintage, 2000.

318. Rex Butler, 'Baudrillard's Light Writing Or Photographic Thought', *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, January 2005, available from: <http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol2_1/butler.htm> [accessed 21.11.09]. Butler argues that Baudrillard's language may not be so distant from psychoanalysis. He relates Baudrillard's thought on photography to Žižek's understanding of Lacanian fantasy, especially the fantasy of the primal act in which the subject is able to look at something in great proximity without being seen. This is what Baudrillard suggests is at stake in seduction: disappearance in order to allow for the exchange between subject and object. He also links this to Lacan's split subject in which the subject is accounted for in the symbolic order of signs as well as being the empty place for which these signs stand in. Butler then discusses *objet petit a* as that which is removed from the field of vision but, at the same time, frames it. The split subject, he concludes, is the hole created by *objet petit a*, which then makes subject and object equivalent.

319. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, pp. 136-137.

320. A *passage à l'acte* happens in the dialogue from L. 170 onwards.

321. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 137.

322. Baudrillard, *For Illusion ...*, p. 129.

because it refuses to yield meaning, it resists reflection. Photographing is a silent act of disappearance – just like death – that is its trap.³²³ The subject in the photographic evidence in *Make Me Yours*, goes from a disappearance, an encounter with the Real, to a final reconciliation with the Symbolic (see images 44 to 46, entitled *passage à l'acte* and the last, 47. *Enacting or, Shall I say, Acting Out*). In the *passage à l'acte* images, the frame begins to disintegrate – only *begins* – for photography is a frame and it would be impossible to photograph its complete disappearance. In them, a void appears, and the subject is partly engulfed by the object. What was previously an image of a merging of inside and outside, an encounter with a seductive object, gives way to an exit from the frame supported by the screen.

I wrote, before my detour through the *passage à l'acte*, that Baudrillard argues for a necessary acting precipitously, or 'all at once' in photography. For him, seduction does not occur when a subject is exchanged for an object, as happens when a photograph of someone is taken. That is merely simulation. Photographic seduction is constituted by an *irreversibility*, a 'quality [that] exists only in retrospect, as an after-effect of the taking of the photograph itself, as what is simultaneously brought about and done away with by it. We realise it perhaps, but only too late, in the very form of its loss.'³²⁴ It may seem contradictory that what is key to photographic seduction is an irreversibility, when I have been arguing that the principal strategy of seduction is precisely *reversibility*. This, however, when considered in relation to this case – which seeks to find a way of studying seduction – makes sense. What is presented through the photographs is not seduction itself; this takes place over time and is difficult to capture wholly, as I argued at the beginning of chapter three, with a discussion on the still. Yet, its appearance and its loss are visible and evident in the images, sometimes even simultaneously. The irreversibility to which Baudrillard alludes is the reverse of seduction's reversibility, which, in double play, is a sign that the camera was successful in seducing seduction.

The technical issues involved in the capture of seduction – the use of mirrors or similar devices, and of chance, unmediated processes and 'felt' moments rather than the actual use of the eye –³²⁵ makes the photographer confront herself rather than separating her from the subject of the image. A depiction of how she appears to others, a kind of acceptance of self, ensues. It is not completely devoid of self-

323. Baudrillard, *For Illusion ...*, pp. 131 and 135.

324. Butler, *Baudrillard's Photographic Thought*.

325. Kelly, *Self-image*, p. 416.

exploitation, as this is a vulnerable position in which she finds herself. Yet, in the images, a change, related to the capture, seems to take place. Whereas the first images are descriptive of the situation – the enchantment she feels in front of the object – the subject soon begins to take notice of herself in the encounter, to perform in front of the object and, more importantly, to perform the capture by using the camera as an appendix, or a prop. The camera appears by her side, or consciously in front of her (note the defiance in 23. *Hand*) at the same time as the full force of her body emerges (see 20. *Flesh*, 21. *Mouth*, 22. *Body*, and, especially 35. *Surrender II* and 36. *Intent II*. These last two images have a high sexual content, as the rings and other jewels seem to climb under her skirt). That embodiment is the turning point in the photographs, after which, the confrontation with the Real (the *passage à l'acte*) and the reconciliation with the symbolic scene (the enactment) occur.

In the case of our subject, it is the doubling of the screens – the shop window and the photographic lens – which make the capture of the object and of seduction possible. These screens also work as a lure, or a trap. This, in Lacanian terms, involves a *double deception*, a ‘deceiving by pretending to deceive’ and has its genesis in language.³²⁶ We are in Baudrillard’s territory of the double and reversibility again, the demise of seduction by itself. The classic example of a lure, as cited by Evans, is ‘telling a truth that one expects to be taken for a lie’,³²⁷ but in relation to our case, one could put forward the proposition that the lure of the lens-and-shop-window screens put forward a truth that one expects to be taken for an image. Even Lacan seems to hint at it:

Only the subject – the human subject, the subject of the desire that is the essence of man – is not, unlike the animal, entirely caught up in this imaginary capture [of the lure]. He maps himself in it. How? In so far as he isolates the function of the screen and plays with it. Man, in effect, knows how to play with the mask as that beyond which there is the gaze. The screen is the locus of mediation ... the screen re-establishes things, in their status as real.³²⁸

This image creation draws on the fetishistic nature of photography and also the

326. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 104. This double deception also applies to jokes, as Freud ascertained in his monograph on the subject. Jokes are reversible in nature and, like dreams, act as screen for the unconscious, as a porous membrane, its manifestation, but also shielding the repressed. Freud, ‘Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious’ (*Der Witz und Seine Beziehung zum Unbewussten* [1905]), SE 8.

327. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 104.

328. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 107.

fantasy of the street photographer to be invisible in relation to his object, which marks his $\$$ relation ($\langle \rangle$) to a .³²⁹ But more on this later.

So, it would seem that in order to capture the process of seduction, one would have to devise a method where the actual ways of working of seduction itself are replicated and documented. This is what the self-reflexive methodology does: it is a screen that plays seduction's reversibility, through a game of appearances, to capture the moment of a gap in reality. This moment – a suspension in time – and this gap – an opening of space – need to be reflected upon if the workings of seduction are to be unveiled.³³⁰

Reflection

The suspension in time can be more clearly explored through the psychoanalytic concept of *Nachträglichkeit* – afterwardness, deferred action or *après coup* – as it warrants attention in relation to seduction, time and causality. Afterwardness designates a phenomenon where impressions, experiences, or traces of memory become active or gain significance, as they are re-lived, as a result of re-experiencing an event. Afterwardness has eclipses and active moments,³³¹ just as seduction operates in the subject actively – when she walks through the arcade – or passively – when she is not near the object, but is still seduced. Laplanche, in his examination of this concept, gave it a reversible direction: a deterministic or progressive one (favoured by Freud) in which the past conditions the present, or a hermeneutic or retroactive one, in which elements of the past are interpreted in relation to the present situation.³³² It is possible to consider afterwardness as a combination of these opposing terms without incurring in a contradiction if we consider what Jean

329. For a study of the relation between photography and fantasy, read Victor Burgin, 'Photography, Phantasy, Function', in *Thinking Photography*, ed. by Victor Burgin, London: The Macmillan Press, 1982, pp. 177–216.

330. Victor Burgin studies psychoanalytic space and time in relation to visual representations in film and photography in *In/Different Spaces*, and in 'Looking at Photographs', in *Thinking Photography*, ed. by Victor Burgin, London: The Macmillan Press, 1982, pp. 142–153.

331. Laplanche, *Problématiques*, p. 20.

332. Jean Laplanche, 'Notes on Afterwardness', in *Jean Laplanche: Seduction, Translation and the Drives*, ed. by John Fletcher and Martin Stanton, tr. By Martin Stanton, London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1992, pp. 217–223.

Laplanche terms the ‘implantation of the [other’s] enigmatic message’.³³³ If we also consider Baudrillard’s assertion that ‘everything is seduction and nothing but seduction’,³³⁴ it is precisely this phenomenon, present in our relation to the world throughout our lives, that allows for the other – the diamond ring – to address enigmatic messages to us and therefore opening up a double direction in our experience of individual time. The encounter explains something of the past – or at least acknowledges something enigmatic there – and a future action is asked of subject – a promise is made in exchange. This is why the subject cannot move, why she is late for work when she encounters the ring.³³⁵

If the capture of seduction involved suspending a moment in time, the production of the photographs seems to have expanded time. Talking to experts in photography revealed that the subject used different capturing devices – no doubt to experiment in relation to results – the most common one being the Mamiya 645 (a medium format analogue camera). This means two things in relation to time and the gaze: that the subject took the photographs blind (in comparison to recent digital photography advances, where the image to be taken is displayed in a screen), and that duration was enlarged due to the time it took to develop the negatives and to scan them at the 4000 d.p.i. resolution I found them in (which, according to the experts, means that each image took in the region of 25 minutes to appear in the computer monitor and the process had to be repeated numerous times to avoid a phenomenon known as *Newton rings*). The use of the Mamiya was followed by photographs obtained with a Fuji Finepix F430 (a digital compact, point-and-shoot, camera), a Nikon D40 (a digital SLR) and a camera phone.

The choice of images for the cover of the photo-book was dictated by a will to explain the process to the reader, almost as if it was viewed from the outside, externally – even though these were also taken by the subject. Once within the pages, the position

333. Laplanche relates these progressive and retrogressive modes to interpretation, which in turn relates to the task asked of reflection. He writes: ‘So we arrive at this idea: even if we concentrate all our efforts on the retroactive temporal direction, in the sense that someone reinterprets their past, this past cannot be a pure or factual one – a ‘raw given’; it contains rather in an immanent fashion something that comes before – a message from the other. It’s impossible therefore just to hold a hermeneutic position on this – that is to say that everyone interprets their past according to their present – because their past already has something deposited in it that needs to be deciphered, which is the message of the third person’. Laplanche, *Notes on Afterwardness*, p. 222.

334. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 83.

335. Moreover, on the subject of suspension of time, Baudrillard wrote: ‘Photography produces a kind of thunderstruck effect, a form of suspense and phenomenal immobility which interrupts the precipitation of events’. He called this effect the ‘freeze-frame’. Baudrillard, *For Illusion ...*, p. 134.

changes and we are within the phenomenon. The images in the photo-book have three points of reference: the body (with a dominance of issues of scale, focus, and double images), the object (where the colours of the object dominate the image), and the photograph itself (where most of the performativity takes place). The layout of the photo-book is my own work. In the process of organising the images, I realised that their relation to the page and to the reader needed to remain active, rather than give itself up too quickly to the act of looking. So, each page is designed with the image in mind, revealing or obscuring in the fold of the book as much as necessary to understand the seduction between the subject and the objects.

The relation between subject and object, mediated by the camera and the shop window, is not that of a 'mirror reflection, in which the subject finds himself transformed – not a mirror phase, in which the subject establishes himself within the imaginary'. For, as Baudrillard acknowledged, 'all this belongs to the psychological domain of alterity and identity, not seduction'³³⁶ (although this domain has a bearing in terms of psychodynamics, which obviously did not interest Baudrillard). Instead, the seductive relation is one where distance and proximity alternate. Both are desirable and desired but the increased proximity, or closing in of the object, comes, it seems, at a price.³³⁷ The price is a distortion, a blurring, a scotomisation of the retina and, by extension, the lens. The images entitled *Surrender* (numbers 33 and 35) and *Intent* (numbers 34 and 36) are examples of this: when the camera is too close, it either focuses on the object or on the subject. This does not break the seductive link between the two, but, rather, creates a discontinuity of vision. As Žižek writes:

The Object can be perceived only when it is viewed from the side, in a partial, distorted form, as its own shadow – if we cast a direct glance at it we see nothing, a mere void ... The Object, therefore, is literally something that is created – whose place is encircled – through a network of detours, approximations and near-misses.³³⁸

336. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 68. His quote, however, does not mean that alterity, the other, is not involved in seduction. Quite the opposite. What Baudrillard is trying to do is to distance the other in seduction from the self as other, as involved in a mirror reflection, psychology and the imaginary. It seems to relate (although I suspect Baudrillard would contest it), to Lacan's little *autre*, *a*, as it appears in his schema I. (Fig. 11). Because there is an other (rather than self as other), distance and proximity become even more prominent aspects of the relation.

337. Henry Bond, *Lacan at the Scene*, p.173. He cites Michelangelo Antonioni's film *Blow Up*, as an example of the price paid for proximity to the object photographed.

338. Žižek, 'Courtly Love, or, Woman as Thing', in *The Metastases of Enjoyment*, pp. 89–112, p. 95.

The effect reminds one of an anamorphosis, although in a different way from what Hans Holbein the Younger created in his painting *The Ambassadors*³³⁹ because, to see the object clearly, one would have to step back *in* the scene itself, rather than in front of the photograph, unlike the effect in the painting. Any distortion – of scale, focus, position and doubling – in *Make Me Yours* is photographic.

Before I finish writing the notes for my case and summarise in preparation for my presentation to the jury, there is one claim that I need to contend in relation to the self-reflexive methodology and the gaze. Lacan writes:

of all the objects in which the subject may recognise his dependence in the register of desire, the gaze is specified as unapprehensible. That is why it is, more than any other object, misunderstood (*méconnu*), and it is perhaps for this reason, too, that the subject manages, fortunately, to symbolize his own vanishing and punctiform bar (*trait*) in the illusion of the consciousness of *seeing oneself see oneself*, in which the gaze is elided.³⁴⁰

In the photographs, the eye sees itself seeing itself and, in its separation from gaze – as mentioned in chapter two – cannot coexist with it. The images revolve around the lure represented by the screen and, although they are visual, they do not concern themselves directly with the eye (for this would be a different work). My trap is not directly aimed at the eye (it is not a *trompe l'oeil* and does not want to trick vision), rather, it is set for seduction and the object's gaze. This, however, given Lacan's taming of the eye, the *dompte regard* I wrote about earlier, will inevitably involve some tricking of the eye. Thus, if the first response to them is 'what do I see?', it means the trap is working.

The gaze, the scopic drive – which, like all drives, is libidinal – is present since the mirror stage, fixing the subject in relation to her desire. Through the act of photographing, the subject relives this moment of recognition. The camera, more precisely its lens,³⁴¹ brings about the gaze, through which the light is embodied and through which, in the words of Lacan, I am photo-graphed.³⁴²

339. Notoriously discussed by Lacan in *Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 85–90.

340. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 83.

341. The lens and, in analogue cameras (like, for example, the Mamiya 645 the subject used), also the mechanism, which has mirrors to trap the light.

342. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 106.

OPENING STATEMENT FOR THE CASE

I am approaching the material gathered cautiously. It has been my decision to assemble a case with the evidence of my investigation, but the reality appears to have an uncomfortable edge. I am trying to learn from previous inquiries, Sherlock Holmes' search for Mr. Hosmer Angel's identity³⁴³ and Sigmund Freud's explorations of Dora's hysteria.³⁴⁴ Like theirs, my case is a puzzling one and I hope that showing what I have found to a jury, together with testimonies, will help me. My search has found many clues, as outlined in this and previous chapters; still, seduction operates. I am even dubious of uttering its name, as the mere mention is enough for me to fall under its spell. It is like a siren's song.

The case is set. In addition to the crime – seduction – I have the scene – the arcade, the shop window – and the weapon – a continuous reversibility. Yet, who is the culprit? I am torn, for the position of the criminal is seductive in itself, perhaps more than that of the detective. This is acknowledged by Rabaté, who cites Freud's correspondence with Oskar Pfister: 'without a little of this criminal disposition, nothing [in relation to the work of analysis] can be accomplished'.³⁴⁵ Furthermore, he directly links the work of analysis to that of the artist, terming both as unscrupulous.³⁴⁶ Maybe there is no culprit ... I cannot help but shake my head and return my gaze to the book of photographs of the young woman and her words, the only physical manifestations of seduction allowing me to look at it straight and for as long as I need to. The object suddenly seems more playful than criminal. It is not the perpetrator, but the victim; and so is the subject.

I know by now that seduction eludes the grasp of those who attempt to confront it directly. Its character is volatile, often linked to moral, sexual and criminal concerns. Did I ever mention that Frank Sinatra was convicted of an offence of seduction? It

343. Conan Doyle, *A Case of Identity*.

344. Freud, *Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*.

345. Rabaté, *Art and Crime*, p. 14. He translated directly from Freud's German, not happy with the published English translation. Freud's sentence reads: 'Ohne ein solches Stück verbrechertum gibt es keine richtige Leistung', and I verified the translation, especially concerning the word criminality (verbrechertum), which in the English edition seems to have been translated as *sensitive*. Sigmund Freud and Oskar Pfister, *Psychoanalysis and Faith: The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Oskar Pfister*, ed. by Heinrich Meng and Ernst L. Freud, tr. by Eric Mosbacher, London: Hogarth Press, 1963, p. 35.

346. 'Discretion is incompatible with a satisfactory description of an analysis; to provide the latter one would have to be unscrupulous, give away, betray, behave like an artist who buys paints with his wife's house-keeping money or uses the furniture as firewood to warm the studio for his model. Without a trace of that kind of unscrupulousness the job cannot be done'. Freud and Pfister, *Psychoanalysis and Faith*, p. 38.

usually operates in dual situations – it tends to appear to be a matter of two, although I know more is required – and involves making another to do what it wants. But do not worry; force and coercion are not part of its elegant *modus operandum*. Instead, it will play with the victim's free will. Sometimes, as the evidence in the photographs shows, it may even be pleasurable. Do not be fooled, though, its power is mighty, and this is why I am being vigilant and also careful in my argument, taking it step by step and stopping when necessary.

My gathering of clues, my trap, is, therefore, a way of calling it into play. By following a seduced subject and getting to the residues of her seduction (recording conversations and presenting them; acquiring her photographs and organising them) I am inviting seduction to appear again.

The images I have chosen for the book, like the conversation presented, are the traces of a very particular seduction, one of many, for this is a serial offender with whom we are dealing. What we have before us, however, would have baffled Holmes and intrigued Freud. They are the remnants of one woman's journey through contemporary shopping arcades with their obscene displays. There are many arcades; this phenomenon and the ensuing incident are following her everywhere. Did hysteria, obscenity and a certain obsession come across in the dialogue?

The work of gathering the evidence has born some fruit, but the results produced can only mean something if analysed with the right tools. This is why the book and the transcription of the dialogue are prominent. As evidence to be put forward to a jury, it allows for a more direct experience, and this immediacy, when talking about seduction, is the only way to even catch a glimpse of it. Still, always something escapes, in speech and in gaze. This is also the case elsewhere: in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* we do not see the exact moment of seduction, as it is related to us by letter. A tool or a mechanism such as a capturing lens, a gallery, an analytic hour, the mysterious space of the pages of a book (of letters, of images), are necessary, for to look at it directly would blind us. In this case, and given the nature of my enterprise and the authorities to whom I have to defer judgment, a book, with the trappings of the photographs and the text, with its narrative yet repetitive mode of encounter – the turning of pages is such a familiar, yet strange action when one does not know, or remember, what one is going to find next – is my most powerful proof. Of course, I know that my case only brings one side of seduction, sees it from one position, but I hope that my argument for its pervasive nature is noted.

The crime represented is manifest in the way it repeatedly stops the woman in her tracks, making her unable to look elsewhere. This, of course, has consequences, causes her trouble; she loses precious time (apart from her free will). She is late wherever she has to go, inevitably very late, as she cannot resist seduction's call. The question she asks is: 'What does the object want from me?'

This is impossible to answer, for finding a satisfactory response would bring everything, everything that had happened between them, crashing down. I do not think either of them would want that so the question has to remain in play. Still, there are things around what happened that can be looked at, as I have done through the self-reflexive methodology.

What is produced through the methodological application is interesting, I think, but also odd. It is a critical reflection on the text and the images of an encounter, or, perhaps, an interpretation of it. Either way, it is interesting and odd because there is a sense of having read a fiction. Did the ring really speak?³⁴⁷

I am shaking my head again. This case of seduction is becoming complex but I know it can only be solved by locking eyes with it and falling – down and hurting, or in love – into its game. I will, no doubt, be tripped, if I have not been already. The more I attempt to understand it, however, the more I find myself playing its game.

347. This feeling may come about through the 'preciousness' of the text. This chapter, and the next, are about stopping the text from being precious, in order to highlight when it is self-consciously becoming precious, its fetishistic qualities (which are there, of course, as it is a work). The characters are dramatic, and, sometimes their voices cannot be distinguished from each other and from my own voice. In this self-reflection, voices become blurred and reversible, in the same way the photographs do. What is inside and what is outside; who is wearing what?

OBJET-SUPPOSÉ-SAVOIR

A CLINICAL DIARY

LAURA GONZÁLEZ

SESSION 10: THURSDAY 07 SEPTEMBER 2006
Keywords: anxiety, pressure of the self, commitment, transference, Big Other

SESSION 11: THURSDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2006
Keywords: symptom, cure, hysteria, Big Other

SESSION 12: THURSDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2006
Keywords: treatment, Big Other, demande d'analyse, doubt

SESSION 13: THURSDAY 28 SEPTEMBER 2006
Keywords: art practice, creative block, parallels between art/analysis, identity, symptom, symbolic order, desire, clinical diary, death drive, discourse of the analyst, gaze, pressure of the self, psychoanalytic theory, self that is not the self (ego ideal)

SESSION 14: THURSDAY 05 OCTOBER 2006
Keywords: mind and body, identity, symbolic order, clinical diary, pressure of the self, resistance, unconscious

SESSION 15: THURSDAY 12 OCTOBER 2006
Keywords: analyst, analytic practice, art practice, Big Other, clinical diary, commitment, creative block, desire, identity, mother, pressure of the self, resistance, transference, treatment

SESSION 16: THURSDAY 26 OCTOBER 2006
Keywords: Big Other, analyst, anxiety, commitment, desire, dream material, identity, mother, parallels between art/analysis, pressure of the self, self that is not the self (ego ideal)

SESSION 17: THURSDAY 02 NOVEMBER 2006
Keywords: mother, anxiety, Big Other, commitment, denial, desire, identity, pressure of the self, self that is not the self (ego ideal), symptom

SESSION 18: THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2006
Keywords: anxiety, art practice, clinical diary, desire, doubt, identity, mother, parallels between art/analysis, pressure of the self, psychoanalytic theory, resistance, transference, treatment

SESSION 19: THURSDAY 23 NOVEMBER 2006
Keywords: anxiety, Big Other, denial, desire, dream material, identity, mother, pressure of the self, clinical diary

SESSION 20: THURSDAY 07 DECEMBER 2006
Keywords: analyst, anxiety, cure, desire, gaze, identity, mother, symptom, transference, treatment, unconscious

SESSION 21: THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER 2006
Keywords: analytic practice, Big Other, commitment, cure, demande d'analyse, doubt, gaze, objectivity, parallels between art/analysis, psychoanalytic theory, symptom, treatment

SESSION 22: THURSDAY 21 DECEMBER 2006
Keywords: analytic practice, art practice, commitment, cure, identity, parallels between art/analysis, psychoanalytic theory, resistance, symptom, transference, treatment

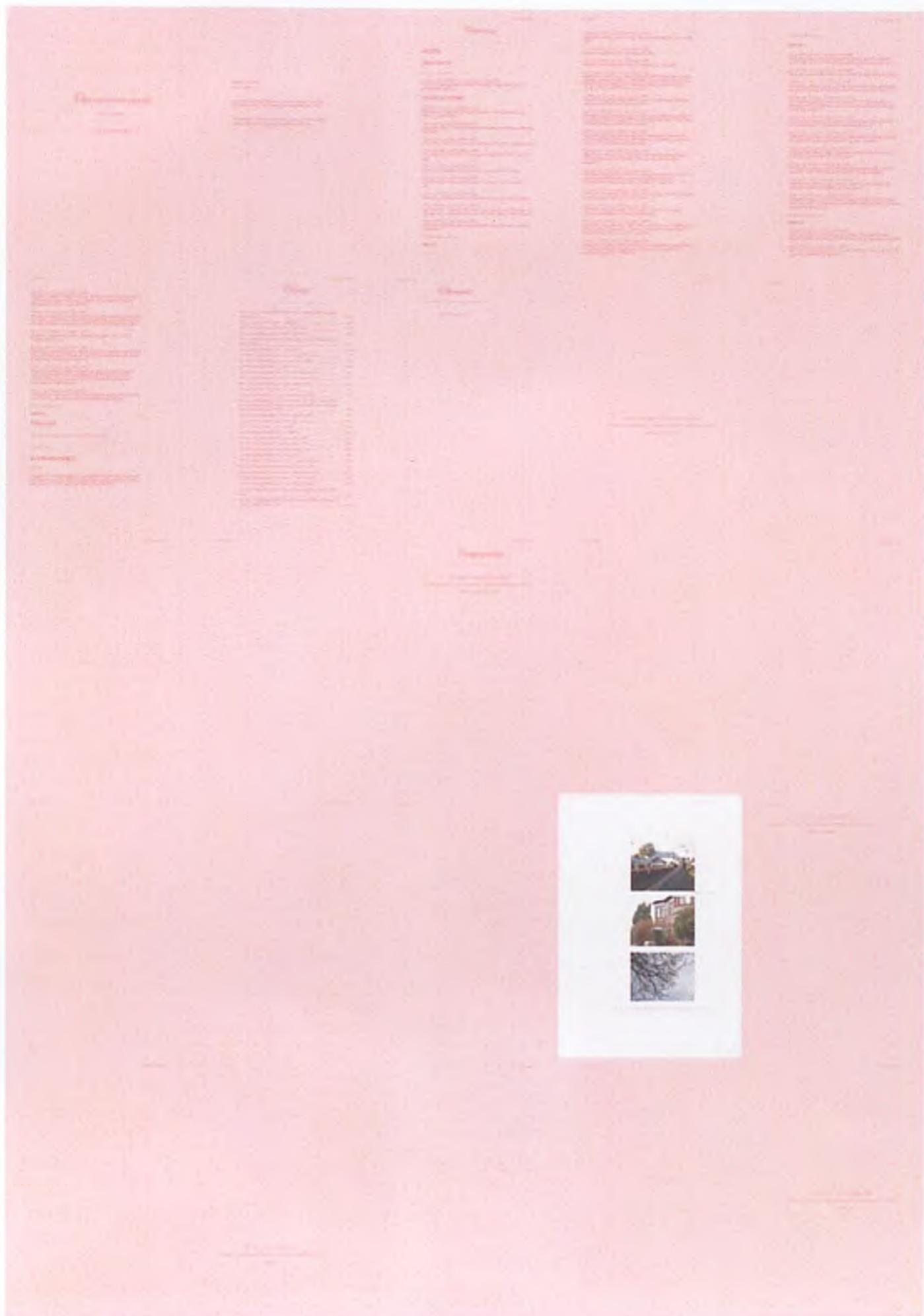
CLINICAL DIARY

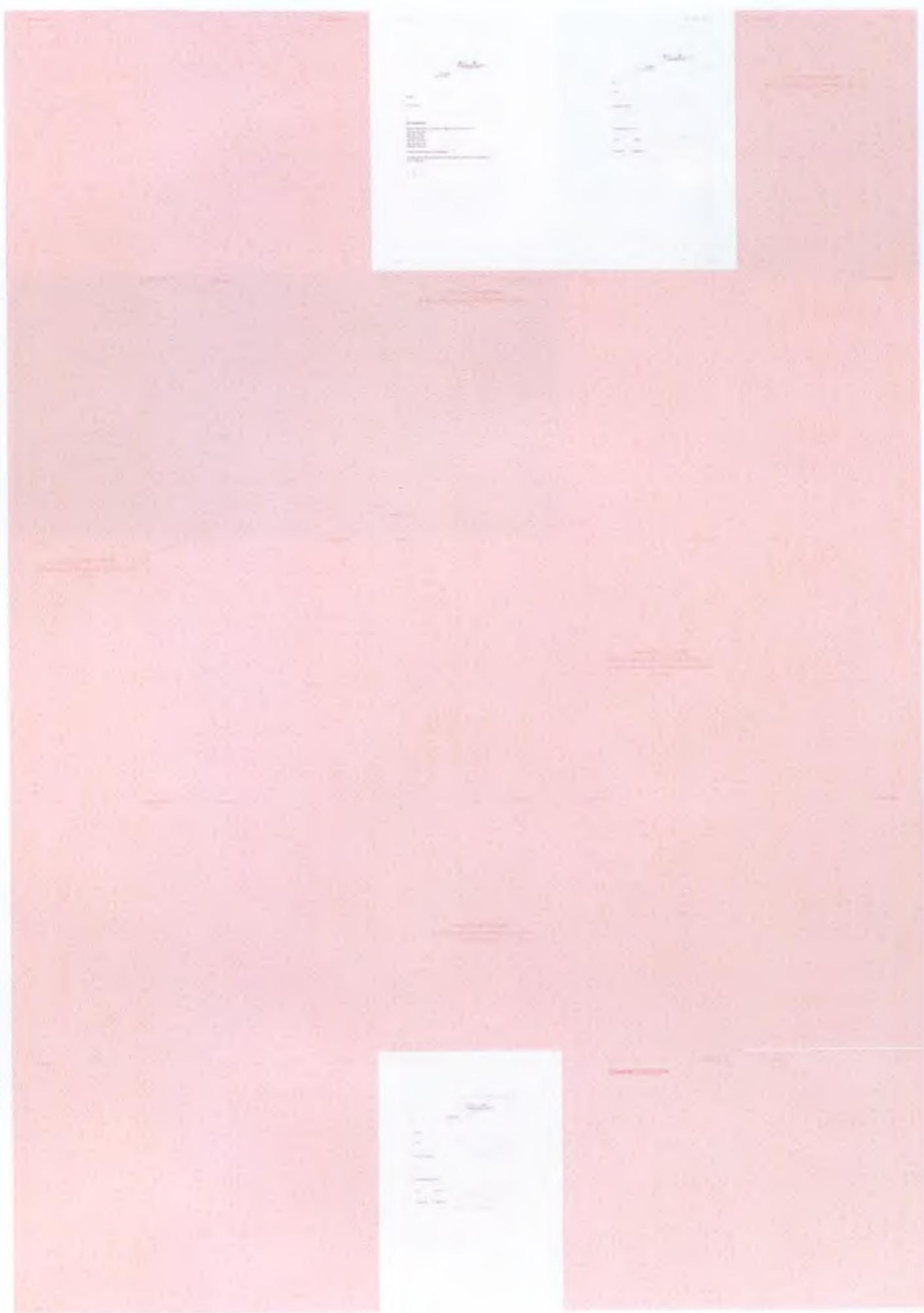
SESSION 3: THURSDAY 18 MAY 2006

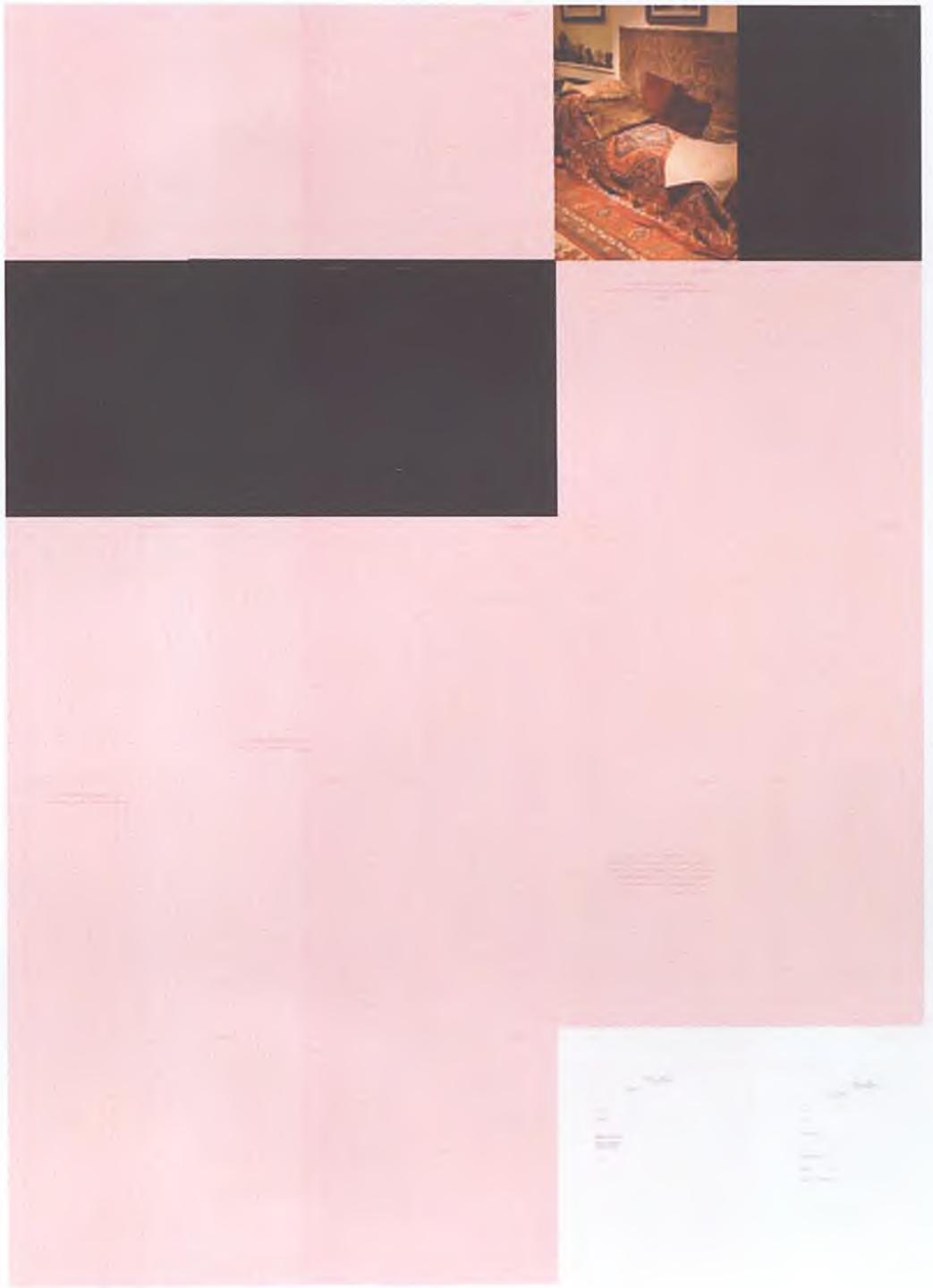
KEYWORDS: PRELIMINARY MEETINGS, DEMANDE D'ANALYSE, ANALYTICAL PRACTICE

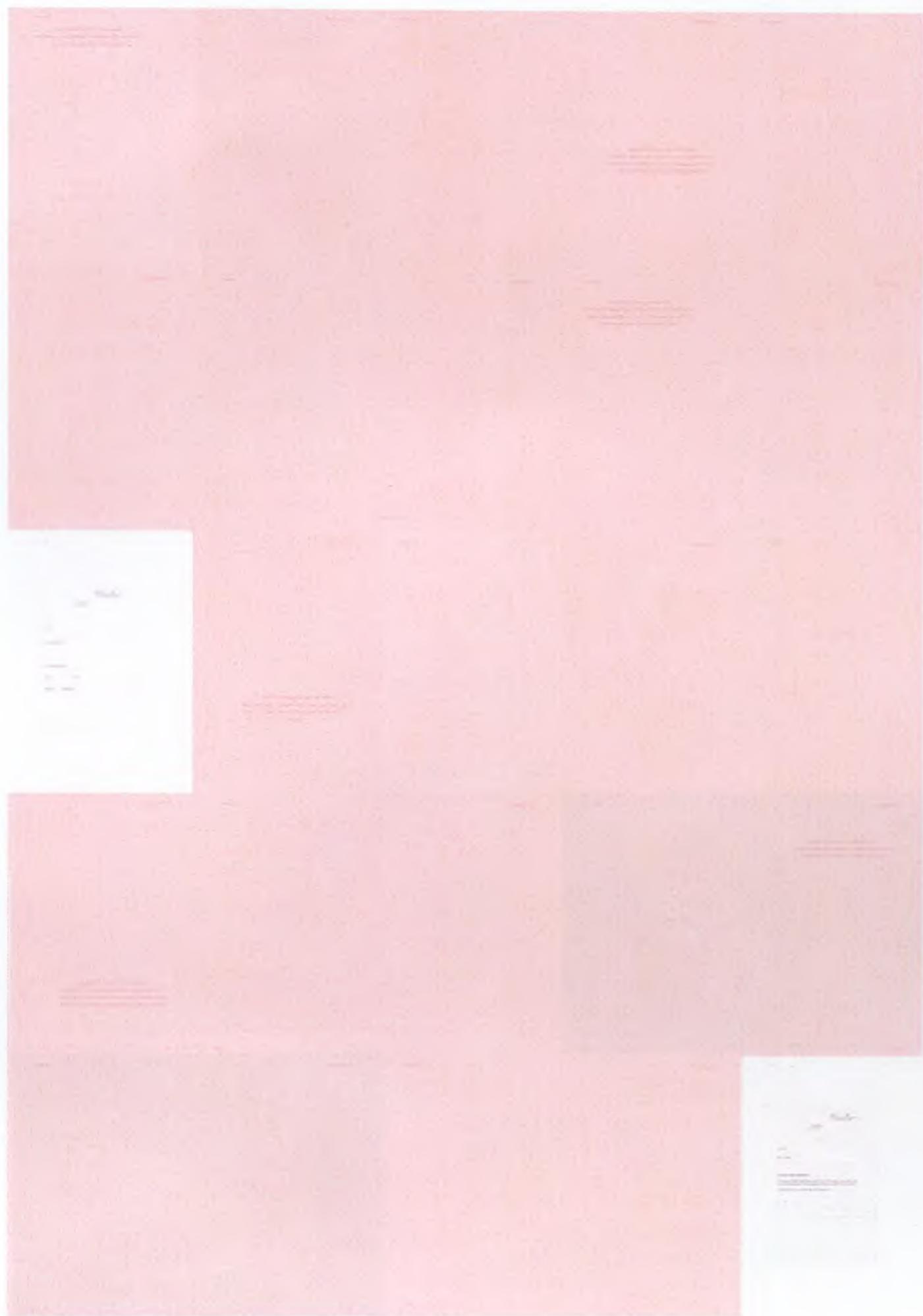
KEYWORD INDEX

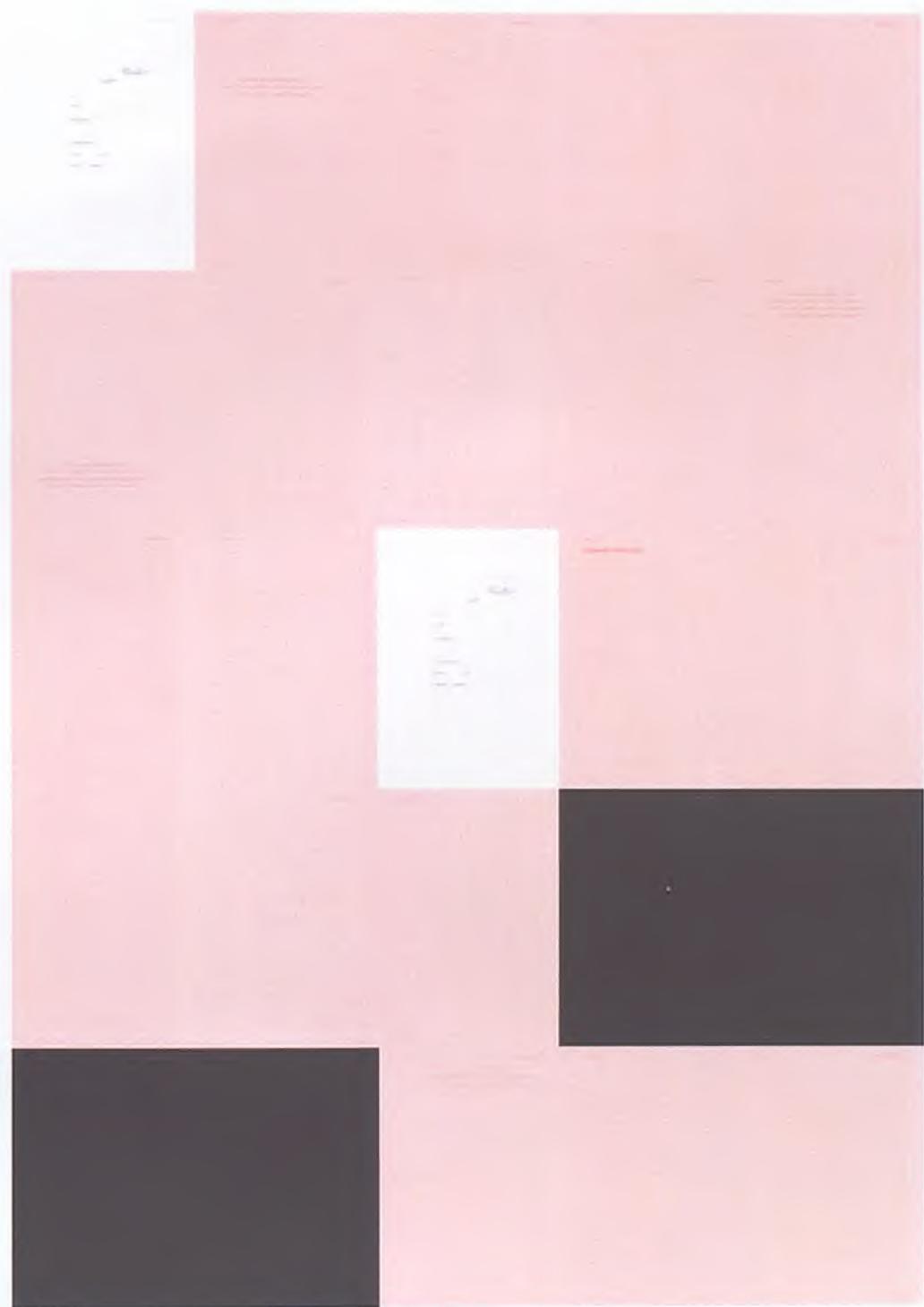
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- analyst*, S0, S1, S5, S15, S16, S20, S25, S32, S35, S36
- analytic practice*, S3, S4, S15, S21, S22, S25, S26, S27, S30, S31, S32, S35, S36, S38, S39
- anxiety*, S10, S16, S17, S18, S19, S20, S23, S24, S26, S27, S30, S31, S33, S35, S36, S37, S38, S40
- art practice*, S8, S13, S15, S18, S22, S29, S33, S35, S36, S38, S39, S40
- Big Other*, S10, S11, S12, S15, S16, S17, S19, S21, S24, S28, S29, S32, S35, S36, S37, S39
- clinical diary*, S2, S6, S13, S14, S15, S18, S19, S28, S34, S40
- commitment*, S10, S15, S16, S17, S21, S22, S25, S28, S30, S35, S36, S37, S39
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- care*, S6, S8, S11, S20, S21, S22, S25, S26, S34, S35, S36, S38, S39
- death drive*, S7, S13, S23, S25, S27, S32, S33, S37
- demande d'analyse*, S0, S1, S2, S3, S6, S12, S21, S26, S33, S39
- denial*, S7, S17, S19, S23, S27, S29, S30, S32, S33
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- discourse of the analyst*, S9, S13, S36
- doubt*, S12, S18, S21, S39
- dream material*, S8, S9, S16, S19, S23, S30, S35
- gaze*, S4, S13, S20, S21
- hysteria*, S11
- identity*, S8, S13, S14, S15, S16, S17, S18, S19, S20, S22, S23, S24, S26, S27, S28, S33, S34, S37, S38
- mind and body*, S14, S29, S30
- mother*, S1, S15, S16, S17, S18, S19, S20, S23, S24, S31, S32, S34, S35, S40
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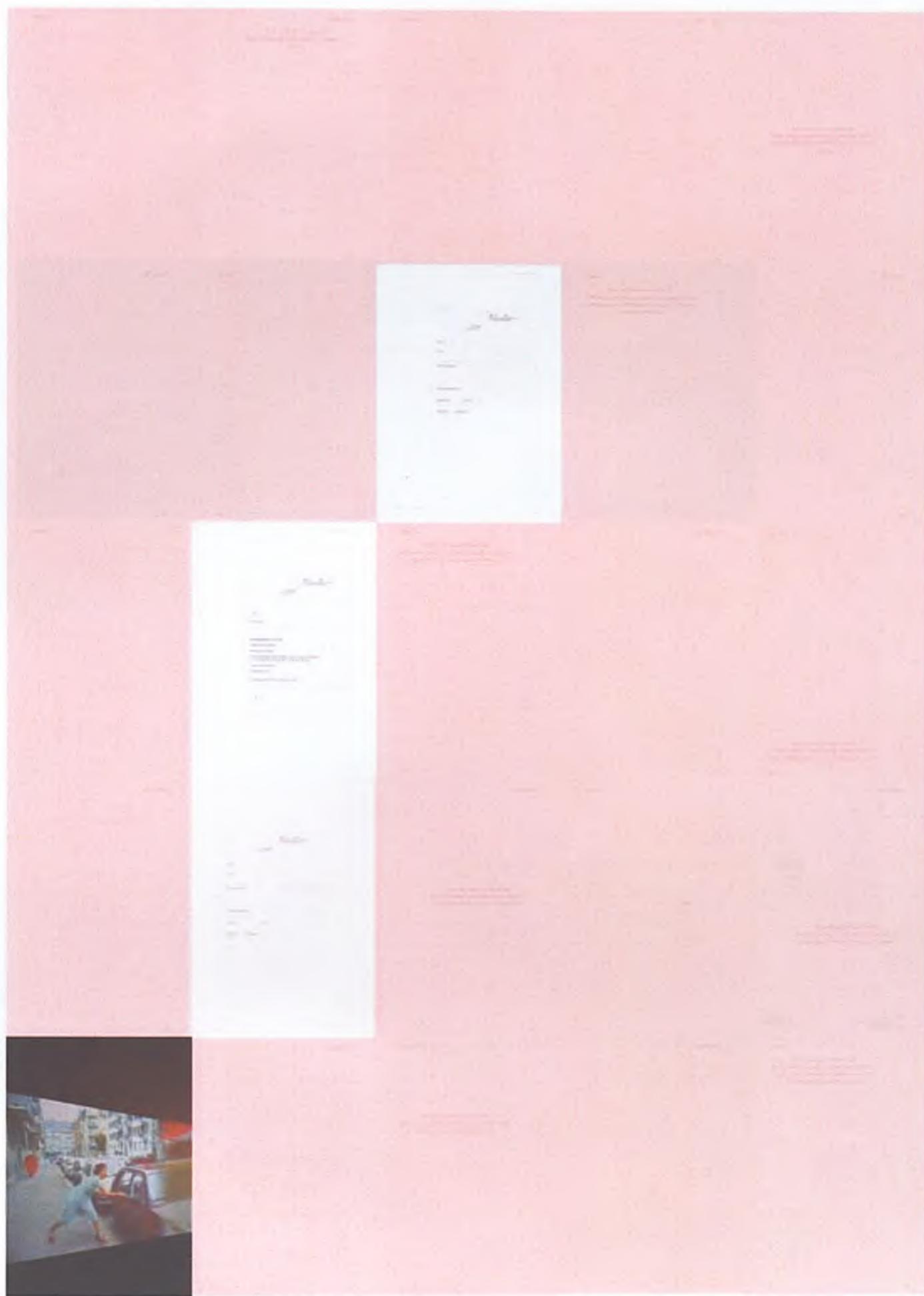


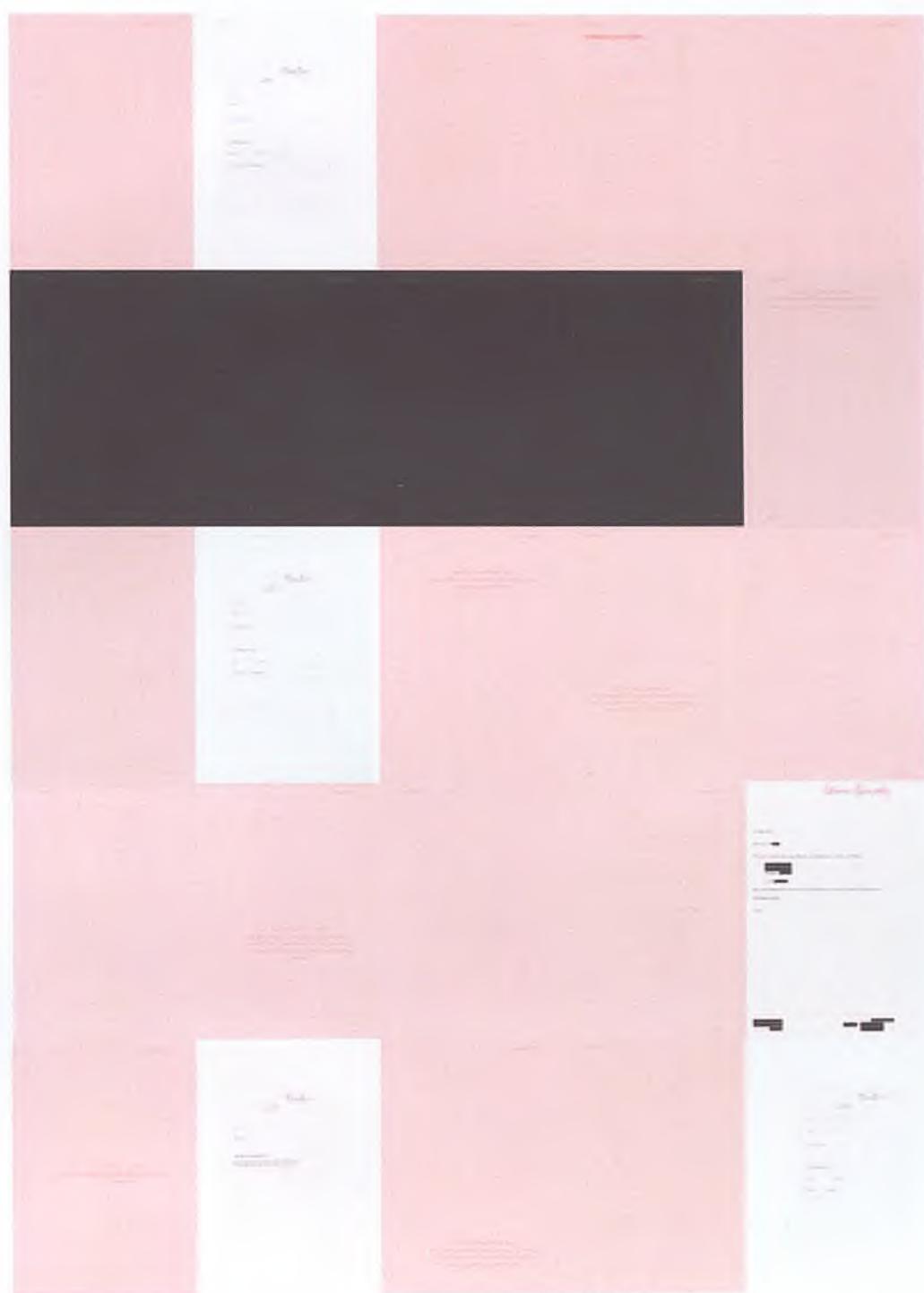


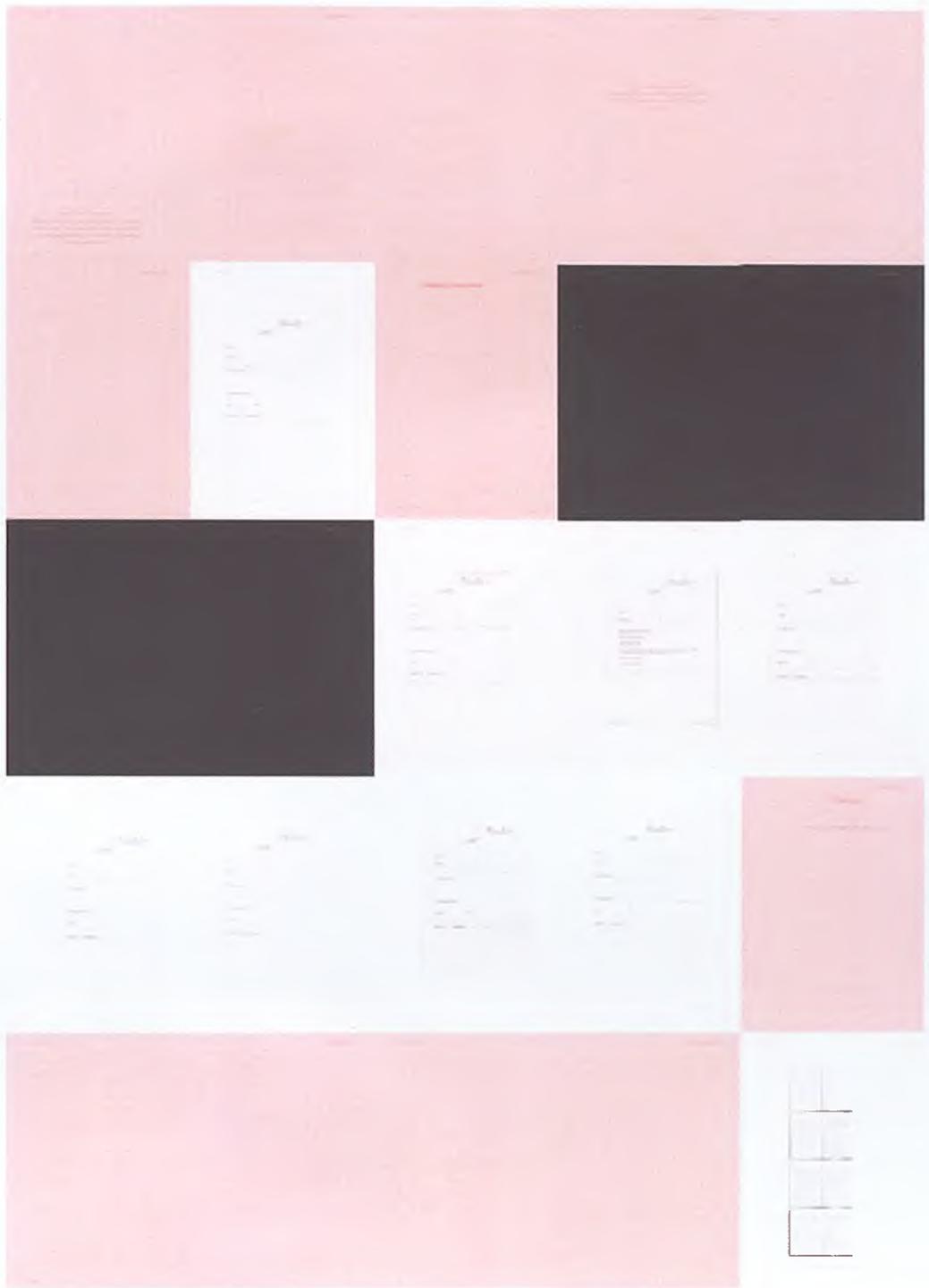


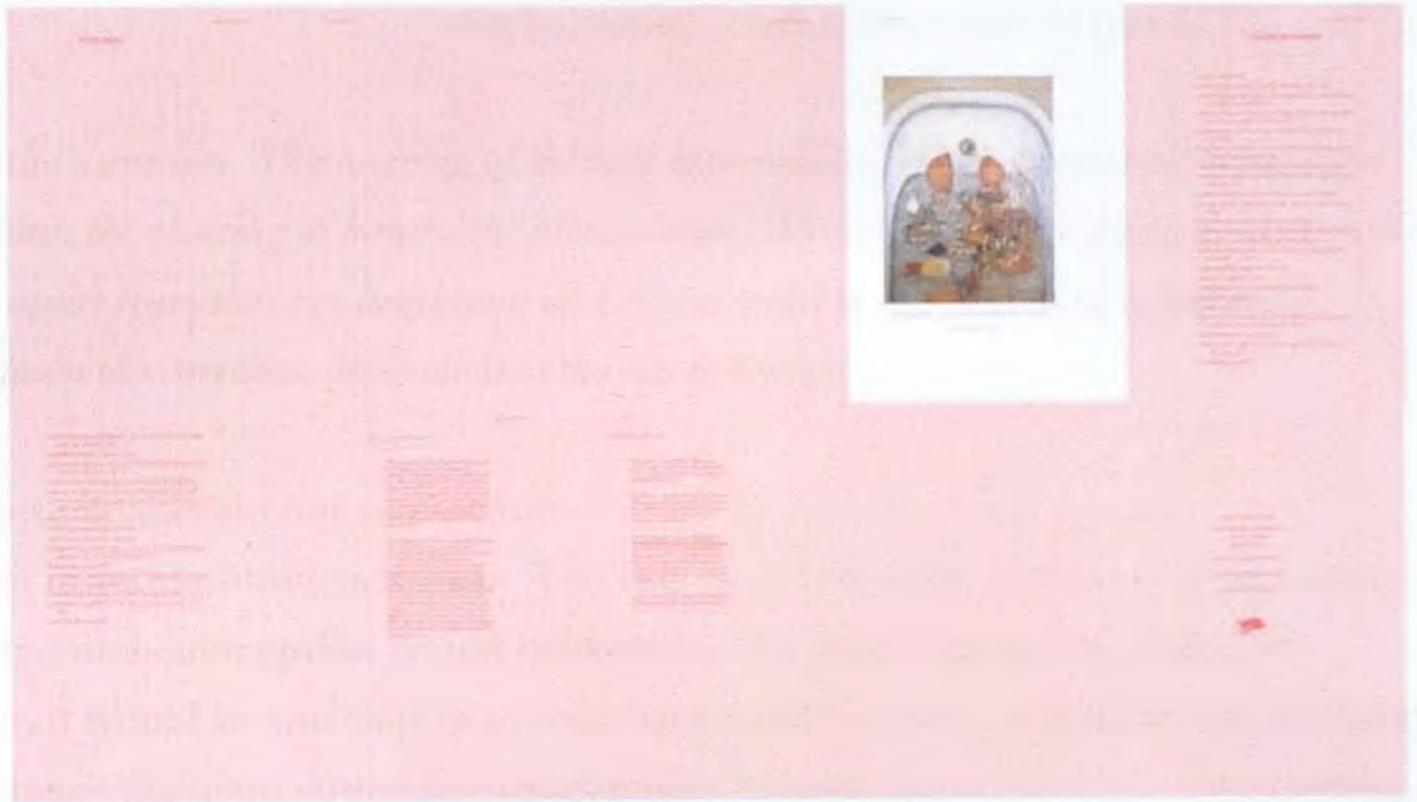












CHAPTER FIVE

A CASE OF SEDUCTION

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, exhibit number one is what the seraphs, the misinformed, simple, noble-winged seraphs, envied. Look at this tangle of thorns.³⁴⁸

We enter the scene late. The hearing of the case has commenced. We have only missed the introductions, the shaking of hands, the pleasantries. We know they are going to start tearing seduction apart from the very beginning and do not want to miss anything substantial. Rushing down the corridor, we come into the room to hear...

... but these images do not seduce me.

Seduction is a ubiquitous principle. Yet, this does not mean that everything seduces everybody. Such conception would undermine the sophisticated workings of seduction, it would be too easy to operate and would render seduction's reversibility and resistance (its main strategies) inoperative. What is more, the case I am putting forward is not one where I set to find a universal seductive object. That is an impossible task and one where, if I were to take it forward, I would have to assume a presumptuous position of mastery. Instead, it is a matter of creating the conditions under which seduction can be seen and recorded, to be further studied. This is similar in the encounter with a work of art. I have already argued, at the beginning of my report, that all works of art are seductive, although, of course, not seductive to everyone. The viewer of the work of art must create his or her own environment or conditions to such an extent that it is the very setting of the scene, which becomes compelling. (*This scene is also similar to money, with the meaning Marx gave it, she thinks. It does and does not exist at the same time*). This is not a diagnosis of why people are seduced, although some thoughts on this may be ventured. Therefore, the key to this case is not whether the images, the objects, or the works of art seduce everybody; rather, it focuses on what makes it seduce somebody and how this takes place. For this, a few examples of seduction suffice. Thus, the fact that the images in the photo-book do not seduce you is not relevant. Still, you will be able to apply the self-

³⁴⁸ Nabokov, *Lolita*, p.11.

reflexive methodology to instances where you have been seduced by some specific thing.

Do all objects possess the possibility of seducing? I mean, what would a non-seductive encounter be?

If we start from Baudrillard's principle that 'everything is seduction and nothing but seduction',³⁴⁹ then yes, all objects have a possibility of seducing. We are constantly called, constantly hailed by things around us.³⁵⁰ We do not always respond. That is a non-seductive encounter: when one decides not to act or react to the call of the object in any way. It refers to the first and fourth rules of seduction, as I outlined them in chapter one: seduction is pervasive, but the choice of object depends on the individual subject and her response. If one is not seduced, though, it does not mean he or she is repelled, for resistance is essential to seduction as I showed in my analysis. Just remember how violently the *Présidente de Tourvel* rejects Valmont when, all along, she was interested in him ... The opposite of seduction would be indifference. An erotics of indifference, perhaps.

You portray seduction as a crime. Isn't this an exaggeration? Are you not using hyperbole to create a dramatic effect in your narrative? After all, if it is a principle, as you claim in the material you have submitted to us, we would all be criminals, as we are seducers and seducees.

Not at all; we, seducers and seducees, are the victims! There is a crime called seduction for which one can still be put in jail in certain states in the US. As seduction means to play with someone's free will, it may involve behaviour and ways of working that are not always, shall we say, transparent. The Oxford English Dictionary's second definition of crime does give a wider sense for the term, where a violation of the law is not *de rigueur*. Instead, a crime is 'an evil or injurious act; an offence, a sin', a 'wrong-doing'. It is also a 'charge or accusation',³⁵¹ and it is in these last two senses that I contextualise seduction, like Baudrillard did (see note 303): (*still nervous, a little too vehemently, getting up*) I am making a charge against its injuriousness.

349. Baudrillard, *Seduction*, p. 83.

350. Later on in the hearing of the case, the evidence for this – which refers to Capitalism and its use of seduction as its key strategy – will be brought forward.

351. OED Online Oxford English Dictionary, *Crime, n.* Second edition, 1989, available from <<http://dictionary.oed.com>> [accessed 11.07.09].

All right, calm down ... The examples you cite of cases of seduction, namely *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, Kierkegaard's *Diary of a Seducer* and Casanova's memoirs have more or less tragic endings. The same is arguable for your encounter with Duchamp's *Étant donnés* and the woman's fall for the ring ... You also talk about crime, sin, injury and wrongdoing. Can seduction be a positive thing?

Do you mean whether seduction can involve a change, from a (negative) situation to a more positive one?

Yes.

Insofar as seduction involves play, rather than *homeostasis*, a kind of play which, for it to work requires the players not to obtain their aim, then the answer is no. Only when the energy (shall I term it libidinal energy?) is in flux, there is seduction.³⁵² This energy tends towards *jouissance*. *Jouissance*, however, is complex: it goes beyond enjoyment itself, beyond the pleasure principle, and it is put in relation to the death drive. It is in the beyond and in this death drive that the more negative state of seduction can be located. One always gives up something to enter a seductive relationship; there is always a loss, whether it is the loss of time, money, honour, or one's freedom. And as always with seduction, things are reversible too, ambiguous and in movement; the system holds an undermining mechanism. Casanova's complete memoirs are a great example of seduction as constructive.³⁵³ Overall, his is a positive tale of self-knowledge. But one could read the tragedy in it as well, of course, as his womanising, his seducing, made him an exile from his beloved city.

You are categorical in your link between seduction, sexuality, and morality. Is this really so clear and so universal?

These are two of the characteristics that make seduction. So far, I have not found a single example that does not concern sexuality and morality, although perhaps the concepts need to be explained in this context. Sexuality and morality are not meant in the way they are used in common speech, for example by the media (although, even there, they do use seduction strategies). Seduction raises moral issues, or ethical, if you want, in the seducer-seducee pair.³⁵⁴ The energy that circulates

352. This libidinal energy refers, of course, to the drives, as described in chapters two and four.

353. Casanova, *History of My Life*.

354. Ethics is understood as a group code, for example social ethic or work ethic, whereas morals refer to a personal code, differentiating right from wrong. Seduction raises issues about both, for example

between them is always libidinal, in the psychoanalytic sense, which is not synonymous with sexuality as popularly represented, but, rather, is related to the drives of desire, (the invocatory and scopoc drives, as I have argued). *Libido*, a Latin term meaning desire, want and amorous love, is defined as the instinctual energy related to pleasure and which underlies mental activity;³⁵⁵ in short, a motor principle for actions.

Pornography and sex, on the other hand, in their brutality and especially as they are portrayed in film and television, have little to do with seduction, as Baudrillard writes at the beginning of his book: it is the ‘transsubstantiation of sex into signs that is the secret of all seduction’, seduction ‘is a game, sex is a function’.³⁵⁶

Lacan points in his seminar on Ethics that morality relates to the social bond, which ‘goes back to the fraternity and this implies a horizontal level of relationships between equals’.³⁵⁷ The social bond is, in turn, related to jouissance and to the object. With the Four Discourses (introduced in chapter two), Lacan shows that the social bond is established by renouncing jouissance and the satisfaction of the drive (the impossibility and impotence relations in the equations), as this satisfaction implies the enjoyment of objects that could belong to others ... see, for example his *Discourse of Capitalism*.³⁵⁸ For Lacan, ‘Ethics is not simply concerned with the fact that there are obligations, that there is a bond that binds, orders, and makes the social law’.³⁵⁹ Ethics are essentially related to desire and, thus, to seduction and the drive – not in vain he has a section of his seminar entitled drives and lures, a section within a

individual morals of the seducer/seducee and the wrongness or rightness of their actions in relation to their beliefs (see for example Valmont’s attitude to marriage in *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*), but also capitalist ethics, as shown in my discussion of Lacan’s position on the social bond. Ethics are, of course, linked to morals in that, as we will see below, for social relations to take place, the moral or personal code needs to develop at a horizontal level. Before the group ethic is the personal moral.

355. Michèle Pollak Cornillot, ‘Libidinal Development’, in Alain de Mijolla (ed.) *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, Gale Cengage, 2005, available from <<http://www.enotes.com/psychoanalysis-encyclopedia/libidinal-development>> [accessed 30.09.10].

356. The section ‘The Ecliptic of Sex’ (pp. 3–49) makes this argument. Jean Baudrillard, *Seduction*. The quotes in the text come from pages 13 and 21.

357. Paul Verhaeghe, ‘Social Bond and Authority: Everyone Is the Same in Front of the Law of Difference’, *Journal for the Psychoanalysis of Culture and Society*, vol. 5 issue 1, March 2000, pp. 91–96, p. 91. This is, of course, an ideal, as Lacan’s Four Discourses examine relations of power, an agent in relation to an other, which is, therefore, not equal.

358. The hearing will address the Discourse of Capitalism in a few pages.

359. Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 75.

discussion of sublimation. He reinforces the point I am making of seduction as a principle, taking as his departure point Freud's text 'Civilization and its Discontents'. Desire is man's tragedy, one that raises ethical questions in relation to the Other, just as seduction does. The 'traversal of the fantasy' is for Lacan, the only possible ethical position.³⁶⁰

There is a small pause. They leaf through the evidence they were sent a few weeks ago before they address the research approach.

Your research question, is it methodological, ontological or epistemological?

This is a very interesting issue. The question has changed as the research has progressed. It began with an understanding that seduction is one of the ruling principles of the world as we know it, of late capitalist societies and of our mode of relation to each other and works of art, through the social bond. Therefore, it was formulated as an ontological question: 'what makes a work of art seductive and how does a work of art seduce viewers?' While looking at the material available, I discovered what I called the 'first problem of seduction': its definition. As I worked through the material, it occurred to me that the gap resided in the formulation of a practical approach to this problem. Instead of just creating a discourse about and around it, I wanted to show it. This is when the question became more methodological: 'how can objects of seduction in art be created?' But the 'second problem of seduction', its pervasiveness, showed me that this was an impossible task, at least for now. I discovered this second rule precisely through the practice, as everything I engaged in seemed to fail, although in an interesting way. Seduction was playing with me. Without abandoning the methodological stance completely, the question took an epistemological turn and became a matter of how could one know and study seduction from within the seductive relationship.³⁶¹

360. To read about the relations between Lacan's ethical position, and the history and practices of psychoanalysis, refer to Bice Benvenuto, *Concerning the Rites of Psychoanalysis; or the Villa of the Mysteries*, London: Routledge, 1994; for a relation between ethics, capitalism and philosophy, read Lorenzo Chiesa and Alberto Toscano, 'Ethics and Capital, Ex Nihilo', *The Dark God, UMBR(a)*, no.1, 2005, pp. 9–23.

361. Until I took the epistemological turn, the methodological and the ontological questions were big players. I found this reflected in arts practice-led research projects I came across at conferences and workshops, as a justification of art as knowledge, in that it reframes what we think we know and how we think we know it. It is also something I discussed often in my supervisory meetings, especially with Steve Dutton.

You discuss, through narrative and text, the problems of seduction and the extant research on the subject. You review the methodologies used by others, and, through the gaps left by existing approaches you develop your own, which you apply to the evidence we have here and analyse it in depth. I follow the process so far. The way you have presented it to us takes the form of a book of words (with some images) and a book of images (with some words), which double each other. In the book of words, however, there are sets of images that follow each of your narrative expositions – your chapters – and I think these are out of place in your presentation. Why are they separate, why do they run in parallel, why are they there in the first place?

I imagine you have heard about the recent debates on practice-led research, and the production of knowledge through artefacts and works of art.³⁶² In this specific case, works produced and encountered have had a decisive effect on the direction of the research, as I answered to your previous question. The *Breda* photograph directed a major shift from an engagement in the creation of objects (where seduction had me completely seduced – and unaware) to a focus on the seductive relation and its capture through photographs. The public show of images led to the presentation of the evidence in the form you have in front of you and the clinical diary elaborated on the ideas of femininity, performativity, resistance, and transference, which you can see are vital to the argument of the case.

Just like in psychoanalysis, mistakes have a paradoxical meta-significance in this project; my practice mistakes, so to speak, or, more correctly, blind alleys, have a determining repercussion in the direction.³⁶³ Thus, they also constitute evidence:

- The failed objects after chapter one are proofs of the problems of seduction, which I highlight in the text
- The *Breda* photograph, which follows chapter two, as I have argued, was the turning point, the proto-seduction of the case

362. For a few examples of these recent debates in the UK and the US, see Arts and Humanities Research Council, *AHRC, Practice-Led Research in Art, Design and Architecture, 2007*, available from <<http://www.ahrc.ac.uk/About/Policy/Pages/Evaluation.aspx>> [accessed 05.02.09]; also Katy Macleod and Lin Holdridge (eds), *Thinking Through Art: Reflections on Art as Research*, London: Routledge, 2006; James Elkins (ed.), *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art*, Washington: New Academia, 2009; Michael Biggs and Henrik Karlsson (eds), *The Routledge Companion to Research in the Arts*, London: Routledge, 2010.

363. My initial feelings were similar to the exasperation Freud's patients experienced with regards to their 'mistakes'. Still, paying attention to theirs and mine had useful consequences.

- The exhibition images, after chapter three, were the first public manifestations of my case
- The chapter on analysis (four), is followed by my own practical working through of my psychoanalysis, in the form of a clinical diary. This piece is also an example of the three practices I discuss and enact in the case: psychoanalysis, art and writing.
- In chapter five, I hand over to experts, and after four chapters of experiments, I find the route through the seductive works, mainly photographs, of others.

The images between the chapters bring everything discussed in the text to the realm of our encounter with the works, to the psychodynamics. The subject explores an object, drawing a subjectivity out of an object, which reminds one of Blake Stimson's possible encounter between Hegel's 'Phenomenology of Spirit' and Marx's commodity fetishism, to arrive, thus, at critical thinking.³⁶⁴

Yes, 'psychodynamics'... the title of your report includes this term. Can you explain your choice?

Certainly. Psychodynamics alludes to the main intellectual territory of my case, which is located in psychoanalysis, itself a psychodynamic psychotherapy. The aim of psychodynamic psychotherapies is to resolve conflicts, dissonances, and maladaptions, treating discomfort by devising strategies for change. They believe that insight is an important part of success. The concept 'psychodynamics' is related to the psychological forces interacting between the conscious and unconscious systems. They underlie behaviour. The term comes from thermodynamics, which is related to energy systems and energy conservation. In psychodynamics, mental processes and emotions are dynamic and in flux. With the help of an analyst, the analysand brings unconscious conflicts into consciousness in therapy.

Seduction tends to be perceived as a matter of two, just as the clinical analytic relation is based on intersubjectivity. Yet, as I have explained with the help of Lacan's Schema L, there's never two without three, and, in reality, the relation has three, or even four parts, with the other (the image), and the Other (the symbolic law). In both cases, the subject and the object enter into a relation where there is a

364. Blake Stimson, 'Methodological Hospitality', *Transmission: Hospitality* [conference], Sheffield Hallam University, 1–3 July 2010. See also Blake Stimson, 'Methodological Hospitality', in Michael Corris, Jasper Joseph-Lester and Sharon Kivland (eds), *Transmission Annual: Hospitality*, London: Artwords Press, 2010, pp. 22–34.

dynamic conflict (whether conscious or unconscious) and work through it, as the dialogue presented here shows. Just like in analysis, transference governs this relationship, as seduction implies that the seducer – and I am aware that this position is changeable – knows something about the seducee. I refer you to my second chapter, where I quote Lacan saying that ‘As soon as the subject supposed to know exists somewhere ... there is transference’.³⁶⁵ My discussion of psychodynamics builds on the position of the analyst in Lacan’s *Discourse of the Analyst*, which is equivalent to that of the work of art in the context of viewing it, as I also explained in chapter two.

I was not surprised by your mention of Lacan’s *Discourse of the Analyst*, a theory I know very well – and it is good to see you can explain it too. What concerns me is your conceptualisation of a=analyst / a=art, given Vincent Dachy’s argument that a *Discourse of the Work of Art* is impossible.³⁶⁶

Yes, I am familiar with Dachy’s argument too, where he asserts that art finds inspiration in impossibility and impotency, and plays with what a discourse cannot fix, in the place where discourse is not yet constituted. For him, therefore, there is no *Discourse of the Work of Art*, there is not a unified discourse and art is not a part of any of the others – particularly the *Discourse of the Analyst* – because art operates in between discourses and inhabits all of them. If I remember correctly, he specifically questions the position of *objet petit a* in relation to art. He thinks it is important for art but does not necessarily adopt the position of the agent, or of agency (which is not a position of identification).

I am not simply presenting here a case about the work of art. I am writing about a specific encounter with the work of art, an encounter of seduction in which the work of art leads the viewer astray; that is, if we want to go back to Rex Butler’s definition, when the work of art gets the viewer to do what it wants (usually look, sometimes touch, other times more – I travelled across the world to see *Étant donnés*, out of desire and willingness), not by force or coercion, but by the exercise of her often misguided free will. Not all engagements with works of art are seductive; but when they are, they do operate like the *Discourse of the Analyst*. The object is put in the

365. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 232.

366. Vincent Dachy, *Psychoanalysis and The Creative/Performing Arts Seminars*, Institute of Germanic and Romance Studies, London, 15 October 2007, available from <http://igrs.sas.ac.uk/events/seminar/sem_psych_Arts.htm> [accessed 19.02.10].

position of the ‘supposed to know’. A *Discourse of the Work of Art* parallel to that of the Analyst may not be possible in all encounters with the work of art but it is valid when we talk about seduction.

I understand, as you said earlier, that seduction is a dynamic relationship involving forces in flux that may be unconscious, and that with the help of that relation these are brought into the consciousness of the seducee. How could you demonstrate that objects have psychodynamics?

In analysis, the transference between analyst and analysand helps to uncover the latter’s unconscious conflict. In a sense, the psychodynamics in play are those of the analysand, not the therapist (although these may also be brought about through countertransference, but are the object of another analysis). If we accept the argument that the seductive work of art occupies the same place as the analyst in the consulting room,³⁶⁷ we would have to admit that the viewer establishes a transference relationship with it that brings her unconscious conflicts into light.

According to Marx, objects, being distanced from their productive base, adopt special faculties or powers beyond their exchange-value, namely the powers that enable human relations:³⁶⁸ this is ‘commodity fetishism’, about which I have written, and this is where the psychodynamics come in. Given the ‘commerce-and-culture’ debate, works of art also enter into this category of objects as commodities.³⁶⁹ And in case you think there’s a chiasm between psychodynamics and Marx, I must point out that, in his Seminar XX, Lacan conceptualised *objet petit a* as surplus of meaning and of enjoyment,³⁷⁰ a remainder, a leftover from the introduction of the Symbolic in the Real. According to Evans, this conceptualisation is inspired in Marx’s surplus value.

367. An argument explored in chapter two and, among others, by Kivland and du Ry (eds), *In the Place of an Object, the Psychoanalysis and The Creative/Performing Arts Seminars*, part of the IGRS Psychoanalysis Network, and which took place from January to November 2007, and the conference *Vicissitudes, Histories and Destinies of Psychoanalysis* [conference], Institute for Germanic and Romance Studies, London, Thursday 17–Saturday 19 January 2008, <http://igrs.sas.ac.uk/events/conference/conf_psych_concluding1.htm> [accessed 19.02.10].

368. Marx, *Capital*, pp. 163–177.

369. See, for example, Whitely, *High Art and the High Street*, pp. 119–137, whom I mentioned in chapter one.

370. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 125. Lacan, in his *Discourse of the Master*, places *objet petit a* in the position of surplus production. Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*; Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore, on Feminine Sexuality, the Limits of Love and Knowledge, 1972–1973 (Le séminaire, livre XX: encore [1975])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Bruce Fink, New York: W. W. Norton, 1998.

Objet petit a, therefore, enters Marx's language and system; it is an object that has no use value.

And what about the question of Marxism?

Well, this is something present throughout the work, isn't it? The woman's journey across shopping arcades is firmly located within late capitalist markets and neoliberal economies. This is clear from the displays, from the lures they represent and the objects' use and exchange values – which are present in the dialogue, if not explicitly – the commodification of works of art, and the fetishism thereof. The issue of Marxism is unavoidable because of the time in which the crime takes place and the nature of it, shielded and justified by capitalism.

Lacan is intricately related to Marx through his Four Discourses, especially through the fifth, the *Discourse of Capitalism* (Fig. 18), which he did not fully develop. In the other four, the terms rotate through the positions, all coming from the Master. But the *Discourse of Capitalism* does not ensue directly from that of the Master, although it still has a very strong relationship to it, as discussed by Juliet Flower MacCanell.³⁷¹

The object-side of the equation in the Capitalist's Discourse is the same as in the Master's (S_2 in relation to a), but, on the subject's side, there is a reversal between S and S_1 . Like in the discourse of the hysteric, the barred subject is in the agent's position, and is thus removed from the possibility of a 's jouissance. The subject is moved by the mysterious signifier, the market (S_1), which is removed from a in a relation of impotence.

Capitalism is an area of research very much linked to seduction but upon which I have not been able to expand, due to issues of focus and scope of the case. Let me just say that seduction is capitalism's strategy, as is argued by Žižek in his study of its

371. She writes: 'In the master's discourse, surplus enjoyment is the mysterious source of reflected value, and metaphor is the mechanism that alchemically transforms its minus into a plus. In capitalist discourse, surplus enjoyment is an absolute value that radiates its aura without needing metaphor to amplify it. Consequently the leader is a discursive, if auratic, disavowal of the master's discourse – disavowal that its wealth originates in pulsations of lack and excess.' Juliet Flower MacCanell, 'More Thoughts for the Times on War', in *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Justin Clemens and Russell Grigg, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 195–215, p. 205. In addition, Frédéric Declercq provides a good account of the Capitalist Discourse's repercussions for the social bond I mentioned earlier ('Lacan on the Capitalist Discourse: Its Consequences for Libidinal Enjoyment and Social Bonds', *Psychoanalysis, Culture and Society*, vol. 11, issue 1, April 2006, pp. 74–83).

reversibility in the worldwide financial crisis of 2008, and *objet petit a* is its inherent limit.³⁷²

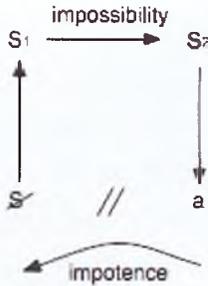


Fig. 17: The *Discourse of the Master*

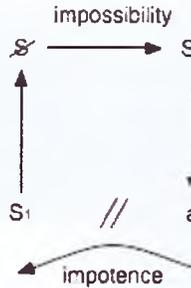


Fig. 18: The *Discourse of Capitalism*³⁷³

Yet, despite this interesting account of capitalism I think that the rationale for using psychoanalysis as an intellectual territory could be contested. Could you have used other areas of thought, for example, phenomenology?²

In essence, and in terms of the approach in particular, are they that different? In *De la Chose à l'Objet: Jacques Lacan et la Traversée de la Phénoménologie*,³⁷⁴ Bernard Baas recounts how Lacan, in order to develop his theory of the subject and desire – which he does through *objet petit a* – gives psychoanalysis a transcendental angle, aligning himself within phenomenology by expanding on ideas originating in Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Martin Heidegger's works. Baas argues that Lacan's *objet petit a* has its source in Merleau-Ponty's thoughts on the 'flesh'³⁷⁵ and his argument is

372. Slavoj Žižek, *First as Tragedy, Then as Farce*, London: Verso, 2009. See also 'Object a in Social Links', in *Jacques Lacan and the Other Side of Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Justin Clemens and Russell Grigg, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006, pp. 107–128.

373. The diagramme for the Discourse of the Master is adapted from Lacan, *The Other Side of Psychoanalysis*; the one for the Discourse of Capitalism is adapted from Aurore Grimeau-Lamorinière and Laurent Edo, *Perversion et discours capitaliste*, available from <<http://www.convergence-pays.nc/Articles/articles%20ARES/Perversion%20et%20discours%20capitaliste.doc>> [accessed 02.10.10].

374. Bernard Baas, *De la chose à l'objet: Jacques Lacan et la traversée de la phénoménologie*, Leuven: Peeters Vrin, 1998.

375. Lacan's theory of the gaze, as developed in his Seminar XI also owes to Merleau-Ponty, especially his theory of embodiment, of touching the hand that touches: 'This can only happen if my hand, while it is felt from within, is also accessible from without, itself tangible, for my other hand, for example, if it takes its place among the things it touches, is in a sense one of them, opens finally upon a tangible being of which it is also a part. Through this crisscrossing within it of the touching and the tangible, its own movements incorporate themselves in the universe that they interrogate, are recorded on the same map as it'. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible (Le visible et l'invisible [1964])*, tr. by Alphonso Lingis, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968, p. 133.

convincing insofar as it proposes a traversing of phenomenology into the clinical setting.

I could, of course, have taken a phenomenological approach, but my study would have then been different, and my journey would have turned in a different direction, prioritising certain aspects of seduction over others. Psychoanalysis has allowed me to concentrate on the transference relation, on the encounter and the psychodynamic aspects, for which phenomenology would not have been appropriate. Moreover, psychoanalysis is, first and foremost a practice, as discussed by Eric Laurent, Shoshana Felman, and Naomi Segal, among others.³⁷⁶ Not to discount phenomenology as a practice too, of course, but psychoanalysis offered me a discourse where this particular engagement with an other – an other with desire – was already framed. In any case, the research is experiential, and from that experience, an understanding is drawn. Both phenomenology and psychoanalysis, along with other disciplines, share this approach.

The status of the scene in this case is unclear. Is it not more of a *mise-en-scène*? I mean, a capitalist realist would say that it is all a fabrication ...³⁷⁷

Of course *Make Me Yours* is a *mise-en-scène*, insofar as all seduction is a *mise-en-scène*. French literary scholar Herbert Juin described seduction as:

But what does this imply? Space. A space which the game will fill, in the midst of which it will become the game of pleasure: a scene. Seduction already admits to what it is: a *mise-en-scène*.³⁷⁸

376. These three scholars, Shoshana Felman, Eric Laurent and Naomi Segal have attempted to develop a series of psychoanalytic principles. All three have agreed that these start from the fact that psychoanalysis is a practice, above and before anything else. Felman, *Jacques Lacan and the Adventure of Insight*, p. 57; Eric Laurent, 'Guiding Principles for Any Psychoanalytic Act', *General Assembly of the AMP/WAP*, Rome, 16 July 2006, available from <<http://www.lacan.com/erilaurent.html>> [accessed 28.02.10]; Naomi Segal, 'How to do Psychoanalytic Things with Words', seminar session as part of the event *Rigorous Holes: Perspectives on Psychoanalytic Theory in Art and Performance*, Chelsea College of Art and Design, London, 30 May 2007.

377. Mark Fisher, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Ropley, Hampshire: O Books, 2009. Capitalist Realism is Fisher's updated term for Frederic Jameson's 'postmodernism', taking into account the changes in political context since Jameson coined the term in the 80s, the vanquishing of modernism and the lack of externality of capitalism (pp. 7–11).

378. Herbert Juin, 'Les périls du visible', in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds), *La séduction*. Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 165–171, p. 167. My translation. The original text reads: 'Mais qu'est-ce que cela implique? Un espace. Un espace que le jeu va remplir, dans le sein duquel il deviendra le jeu du plaisir: une scène. La séduction déjà s'avoue pour ce qu'elle est: une *mise-en-scène*.'

Moreover, Kaja Silverman argues that where there is a pose (a photographic imprinting of the body, the positioning of a representational body in space, thus converting it into a *place* and delimiting the frame), there is a *mise-en-scène*.³⁷⁹ Now, the status of the works within this case are clearer. Laura U. Marks explores haptic cinema, an appropriate topic in the context of seduction, as it involves sensuality and scenes. This form of image making ‘puts the objects into question, calling on the viewer to engage in its imaginative construction. Haptic images pull the viewer close, too close to see properly’.³⁸⁰ The viewer is therefore lost in an intense relation with an other that ‘cannot be possessed’,³⁸¹ and her role – and by extension, that of the seducee in the case that occupies us – is to bring the image forth from a latent stage, to constitute it.³⁸²

I am still confused, though. The woman is clearly in distress, the event is traumatic. Yet, one does not know whether the ring spoke or not, whether it is all in her head. Is this fantasy?

This is a key question. The woman’s encounter with the ring is part of a very joyous, yet traumatic phenomenon. She is terrified by its meaning and its consequences. She is terrified when addressed to by the object, when faced with her own desire. It is precisely this enigma, converted into an overwhelming terror one cannot work through that makes an event traumatic.³⁸³ It is an experience of chaos – the order would be for the woman to continue her usual journey to work – that contradicts the subject’s beliefs, where words fail and where the subject has been let down by psychic defence mechanisms. It manifests itself by a re-experienced raw sensorial memory – evident in the repetition of the circumstances leading to the photographs.

379. Silverman, *The Threshold of the Visible World*, pp. 202–207.

380. Laura U. Marks, *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, p. 16.

381. Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2000, p. 184.

382. Marks, *Touch*, p. 13.

383. Jean Laplanche studies the child’s enigmatic relation to the Other in trauma, as well as its relation to time. Trauma for Laplanche, is related to two events: the traumatic event, which is internalised and then a second event, which makes this memory active and which constitutes the trauma, externalised. He writes of wounding or piercing as a metaphor of the trauma of seduction (in the sense Freud gave in his *neurotica* theory). See Caruth, *Interview with Jean Laplanche*, and John Fletcher and Martin Stanton (eds), *Jean Laplanche: Seduction, Translation and the Drives*, tr. by Martin Stanton, London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1992.

In Lacanian terms, it is an invasion of the Real into the Symbolic.³⁸⁴ The fall of language is present in the dialogue (the subject could not move and, at some point, could not speak), and the photo-book (the mouth open, yet silent). But trauma is not inherent to events. It does not manifest itself ‘until an event later in life supervenes, an event which by its nature resembles or confirms unconscious concepts and fantasies related to the original trauma. These secondary events in themselves constitute, as it were, a replication of the original trauma’.³⁸⁵ The finding of the object is the finding of what we lost in the past but we forgot about (the *objet petit a*).³⁸⁶ The ring is not *objet petit a*, but something in the ring is, so when the ring takes the place of the lost object, the encounter fails necessarily. A traumatic event happens in reality, not fantasy, but fantasy has a key role to play in the particular trauma of seduction.

Since the beginnings of psychoanalysis, fantasy – and the deeper ‘phantasy’ of Freud’s Standard Edition, which refers to the unconscious content of the drives – has been bound up with seduction. In a 1896 letter to his friend Wilhelm Fliess, Freud explains his discovery of instances of childhood seduction in most of the hysteria and obsessional neurosis cases he was treating, thus finding a possible causal link for the afflictions.³⁸⁷ On the 14 August 1897, however, he writes ‘I no longer believe in my *neurotica*’, describing how he had understood that the seductions recounted by his patients were fantasies.³⁸⁸ This moment is known as the abandonment of the seduction theory. As Dylan Evans argues, fantasy refers to conscious psychic content. It is an eminently visual scene in the imagination which stages an unconscious desire and in which the subject plays a part. He discusses its protective function and writes that ‘Lacan compares the fantasy scene to a frozen image on a cinema screen; just as the film may be stopped at a certain point in order to avoid showing a traumatic scene which follows, so also the fantasy scene is a defence’.³⁸⁹ This defence against trauma is a representation of the subject’s *jouissance*, but distorted in a compromise

384. Lorenzo Chiesa, ‘Lacan and Philosophy: Between Realism and Materialism’, *Jacques Lacan Today* [conference], The Psychoanalysis Unit, University College London, 8–9 May 2010.

385. Jacob A. Arlow, ‘Trauma and Pathogenesis’, in *The Seduction Theory in its Second Century: Trauma, Fantasy and Reality Today*, ed. by Michael Good, Madison, CT: International Universities Press, 2006, pp. 117–128, p. 126.

386. Alain Vanier, ‘Lacan’s Object’, *Jacques Lacan Today* [conference], The Psychoanalysis Unit, University College London, 8–9 May 2010.

387. Freud, Letter 52, *Fliess Papers*, pp. 238–239.

388. Freud, Letter 69, *Fliess Papers*, pp. 259–260.

389. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p. 60.

formation, for representing jouissance itself is part of the trauma fantasies are trying to defend against. ‘The phantasy is the support of desire’,³⁹⁰ but ‘in its fundamental use, fantasy is the means by which the subject maintains himself at the level of his vanishing desire, vanishing inasmuch as the very satisfaction of demand deprives him of his object.’³⁹¹ Fantasy creates a multitude of subject-positions, is radically intersubjective, is a narrative and it involves an impossible gaze.³⁹² In fantasy, a subject tallies with her object, and this is frightening. Fantasy, in its relation to desire, is also aporetic and paradoxical, linking the fading or eclipse of the subject to the condition of an object.³⁹³ This relation of subject and object through fantasy is the key to the link between desire (on the side of the subject) and seduction (on the side of the object), a fantasy that is evident in the screen that makes the visual encounter between subject and object possible, and the photographic camera, which renders it lasting, at least until reflection is possible. Through producing an image of the image in fantasy, its place in the symbolic structure is made manifest.³⁹⁴

So, to answer your question, yes, seduction has a link to trauma and fantasy.

Whether the ring did speak or the woman was talking to herself does not matter, as seduction still operates in both cases. Furthermore, fantasy and photography are also linked, as demonstrated by Victor Burgin, and as I showed in the analysis in chapter four.³⁹⁵

There is another psychoanalytic link, though, one you have not mentioned, but which, I think, will come out later: fetishism (and perversion). It is very evident in the photographs, don’t you think?

390. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 185. The quote continues: ‘it is not the object that is the support of desire’. In the next page, he elaborates: ‘But the object of desire, in the usual sense, is either a phantasy that is in reality the support of desire, or a lure.’

391. Jacques Lacan, ‘The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power’, in *Écrits*, pp. 489-542, p. 532.

392. Slavoj Žižek, ‘The Seven Veils of Fantasy’, in *Key Concepts of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, ed. by Dany Nobus, New York: Other Press, 1999, pp. 190-218.

393. Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 691.

394. Evans, *Introductory Dictionary*, p.61.

395. Burgin, *Photography, Phantasy, Function*. Fantasy and cinema are also related, as discussed by Sharon Willis in ‘Seductive Spaces: Private Fascinations and Public Fantasies in Popular Cinema’, in *Seduction and Theory: Readings of Gender, Representation and Rhetoric*, ed. by Dianne Hunter, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989, pp. 47-70. In this chapter, she provides a critique of classic texts on femininity and fantasy, such as Laura Mulvey’s ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’.

The detective begins to wonder who is on trial. It is part of the problem of having a crime but not a culprit, or at least not a clear one. In any case, she is not on trial; seduction would be if you could bring a crime to task. Yes, the detective is, in a way, the embodiment of the crime, as she presents the evidence and finds herself in the trial room, alone. So, perhaps, she is on trial, as she has conducted the investigation and this is also being scrutinized ...

Perhaps fetishism is important, but, for now, I do not want us to deviate too much from the method and the approach. What about other frameworks to study seduction? I can think of examples you briefly mention or allude to, such as Robert Greene's 24-step method, Khaslavsky and Shedroff's eight seductive characteristics, or the nine propositions developed by Jean-Noël Vuarnet in his study of mystics,³⁹⁶ as well as the less systematised arguments in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher's *La séduction*.³⁹⁷ Are none of these valid to study the psychodynamics of seduction through works of art?

I did consider all of the frameworks you mention and it may be useful if I show you the thinking that led me to develop my own. Indeed, Greene, Khaslavsky and Shedroff, and Vuarnet (along with others in that publication) develop systematic approaches to try to study this slippery object. Of the three, only Khaslavsky and Shedroff focus explicitly on an object,³⁹⁸ the other two concentrating on person-to-person, social and amorous contexts (Greene), and the mystic-God relation (Vuarnet). Although, of course, the seducers in Greene and Vuarnet also go through a process of objectification. What they have in common is that they develop steps for understanding what happens in those relations rather than describe them as, for example, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Diary of a Seducer* and Casanova's memoirs do, or analyse its contexts without the systematic outlook, as Baudrillard does.

396. Mystics are an interesting topic, and although I will not go much into an exploration of their encounter with God, they reveal a truth about seduction and my task. It is as Father Brown said: 'It's just because I have picked up a little about mystics that I have no use for mystagogues. Real mystics don't hide mysteries, they reveal them. They set a thing up in broad daylight, and when you've seen it it's still a mystery. But the mystagogues hide a thing in darkness and secrecy, and when you find it, it's a platitude.' Gilbert Keith Chesterton, 'The Arrow of Heaven', in *The Penguin Complete Father Brown*, London: Penguin, 1986, pp. 332–351, p. 346.

397. Greene, *Art of Seduction*; Khaslavsky and Shedroff, *Seductive Experience*; Vuarnet, *Le séducteur malgré lui*.

398. Khaslavsky and Shedroff are exponents of a field of study called 'captology' which examines computers as persuasive technology. The aim of their paper is to understand what makes an object seductive, so they can apply it to software development. The case study they chose is Philippe Starck's iconic lemon squeezer, *Juicy Salif*. I have discussed the seductive characteristics of this object, offering a more in depth analysis of Khaslavsky and Shedroff's paper in 'Juicy Salif'.

Robert Greene's 24-step method in *The Art of Seduction*³⁹⁹ comes from the field of popular psychology. It is, indeed, a manual of seduction, understood as a process, a guide whose aim is to help people to become [better] seducers. Greene's manual is considered an authority in pick-up circles⁴⁰⁰. Of course, these are much distanced from the field of artistic practice and psychoanalysis, which are those that concern this investigation. Still, pick-up ideas are eminently practical, instruction based, focused, and result oriented. They provide a counter-balance for the philosophical, psychoanalytic, and literary contexts I have described thus far, which is why I considered it in the first place.

As one of the problems I identified concerning seduction is the confusion about its workings and its definition, Greene's method helps to break the seductive encounter into component parts. It is not possible to map the self-reflexive methodology I have developed onto Greene's method. They are not comparable. While Greene wrote a manual – for seducers – to seduce, my case is concerned with developing a mechanism to study seduction, to capture and be able to look at it. Still, his 24 steps are visible in the evidence I am presenting. Greene's method evolved, much like mine, through a study of classic seducers (Casanova, Valmont, Cleopatra, Rudolph Valentino, Marilyn Monroe, and many more), by classifying them into nine seducer character types, complemented by eight anti-seducers, and eighteen victim types. This 'over-taxonomisation', if you allow me the composite word, is too general, prescriptive and reductive but a look at the system ensuing from attending to the different *modus operandi* helps elucidate why the woman in the dialogue and photo-book disappears behind the door. The technique is divided into four distinct phases. The first phase concentrates on psychological seduction by creating a need in the subject and stirring desire. The second and third phases deepen the seduction by appealing to emotions, to finish with what he identifies as the physical seduction.⁴⁰¹ All of these are embedded in the first two steps of the self-reflexive methodology. But

399. Greene, *Art of Seduction*.

400. Pick-up circles revolve around websites and publications giving advice on how to meet (seduce) people, mainly for sexual purposes. Michel Houellebecq described some of these circles in his novels, *Whatever* (*Extension du domaine de la lutte* [1997]), tr. by Paul Hammond, London: Serpent's Tail, 1999 and *Atomised* (*Les particules élémentaires* [1998]), tr. by Frank Wynne, London: Vintage, 2001. Sharon Kivland once told me a story about Lacan that fits well with some of the sordidness of pick-up circles. His daughter Sybille was looking out of the window and, at the sight of her father, she jumped with joy, a feeling that disappeared as soon as he, instead of entering the door of their house to see her, went into the next door, a *maison de passe*.

401. Greene, *Art of Seduction*, p. 380.

reflection is not present in his system, as it is all for the seducer, and the encounter itself is disregarded.

On a first mapping of Greene's steps into the dialogue and the photo-book, it is important to note that his method is not sequential; that is, seduction does not start with step one and finish with step twenty-four. Although there are some steps showing dependency on others, the technique is accumulative, with seduction happening once most steps have been completed. This table – *she fumbles with a few sheets of paper in her folder to produce Fig. 19* – details the mapping of the steps onto the dialogue and, where evident, the photo-book. Similarly, in *Le séducteur malgré lui*, Vuarnet concentrates on a type of seduction different from what is brought forward by this case. He presents nine propositions (Fig. 20), which read as generalisations from his observation and study of mystics.⁴⁰² Many of these are valid to my study, as I detail on the table. Yet, his work focuses more on the figure of the seduced (in contrast to Greene, who writes mainly for the seducer), without much elucidating what seduction is or how it takes place. The third example you mentioned, that of Khaslavsky and Shedroff, is the most interesting one to our task, as they examine an object deemed seductive, extracting characteristics that make it so. Their characteristics, along with Greene's steps and Vuarnet's propositions can also be mapped onto the dialogue and the photo-book. Some of the focus of Khaslavsky and Shedroff's work is on the seductive relation, as it takes account of the goals and

402. Vuarnet, *Le séducteur malgré lui*. The original text for the propositions in fig. 20 is in French and, at the time of writing, no official translation was available. As the translation is mine, I also offer the original text in which these nine propositions were articulated:

- 1: Étudier la seduction en un lieu apparemment paradoxal, où ce qui la manifeste est la personne séduite plus que celle du séducteur.
- 2: C'est par la personne séduite plus que par celle du séducteur, que la seduction s'effectue.
- 3: La fabrication du séducteur est particulièrement aisée *in absentia* – c'est-à-dire dans le cas de la mystique.
- 4: Le séducteur est donc nécessairement une personne plurivoque ou pluri-stylistique dans la mesure où, fabriqué par la demande, il ne peut qu'adapter son appaître à la pluralité des demandes.
- 5: Cette fabrication du séducteur par le séduit permet la fabrication d'une figure chaque fois spécifique, et proportionnelle à la force du demandeur.
- 6: Cette fabrication du séducteur par le séduit (*chaque mystique trouve son Dieu*), nous en trouvons également l'image dans un autre contexte: la fabrication du Commandeur par Don Juan.
- 7: La seduction est un pouvoir que se transmet. Ce pouvoir est une rupture d'équilibre.
- 8: Dans le monde de la Foi, Dieu, directement en tant que séducteur, ou indirectement, en tant que séduit, est «l'épouseur du genre humain».
- 9: Si le séducteur fait ses enfants par l'oreille, la mystique, sourde et muette, se suffit à elle-même et fait tout son monde avec Dieu.

values of the seduced, while looking at how the seducer object might link into those (Fig. 21). Yet, the two sides of the relation are separate, do not meet, and certainly their study does not account for what happens during seduction itself. This is where the self-reflexive methodology comes in. It looks at seduction from within the seductive relation, or, more precisely, from the position of the seduced – although there is no reason why it could not also apply to the seducer, but this is not the case here. It does so to reveal the reversible quality of seduction, empowering the seducee and making the process more understandable for her.

Greene only accounted for the seducer (indeed, the seducee is a victim in his work), Vuarnet and Khaslavsky and Shedroff's studies, although addressing the position of the seducee as an entry point towards understanding seduction, fail to propose a method with which to capture evidence that it took place and instead concentrate on the aftermath, the consequences. My proposition bridges the gap between these approaches.

DIALOGUE LINE AND PHOTO-BOOK EXAMPLES		
Phase one: Separation – stirring interest and desire		
1. Choose the right victim	2	24. <i>Weak in the Knees</i> , 28. <i>Pleading</i> , 32. <i>Approach</i>
2. Create a false sense of security – Approach indirectly	11	03. <i>Perforated Saffiano Fori Boston (Prada)</i> , 04. <i>Sistina (Vuitton)</i> , 06. <i>Armani Sculpted d'Orsay Heel</i>
3. Send mixed signals	180–181	13. <i>Looking Through (Anemone)</i>
4. Appear to be an object of desire – Create triangles	25–26	25. <i>Yield</i> , 26. <i>Arcade</i>
5. Create a need. Stir anxiety and discontent	45–49	28. <i>Pleading</i> , 29. <i>Beheaded</i> , 34. <i>Intent</i>
6. Master the art of insinuation	172	03. <i>Perforated Saffiano Fori Boston (Prada)</i> , 07. <i>Valentino</i> , 08. <i>Performing for Valentino</i>
7. Enter their spirit	93–95	39. <i>Converted into a Picture (The Slip)</i> , 40. <i>Converted into a Picture (Upholstered)</i>
8. Create temptation	52–53	21. <i>Mouth</i>
Phase two: Lead astray – creating pleasure and confusion		
9. Keep them in suspense – what comes next?	154–155	20. <i>Flesh</i> , 21. <i>Mouth</i> , 22. <i>Body</i> , 23. <i>Hand</i> , 24. <i>Weak in the Knees</i>

10. Use the demonic power of words to sow confusion	162-163	07. <i>Valentino</i> , 08. <i>Performing for Valentino</i>
11. Pay attention to detail	147-149	34. <i>Intent</i> , 30. <i>Headless II</i>
12. Poeticize your presence	157-160	34. <i>Intent</i> , 36. <i>Intent II</i>
13. Disarm through strategic weakness and vulnerability	25, 78-79	33. <i>Surrender</i> , 35. <i>Surrender II</i>
14. Confuse desire and reality – the perfect illusion	149-151	39. <i>Converted into a Picture (The Slip)</i> , 40. <i>Converted into a Picture (Upholstered)</i>
15. Isolate the victim	196-197	37. <i>A Provoking Agent</i>
Phase three: the precipice-Deepening the effect through extreme measures		
16. Prove yourself	87-90	07. <i>Valentino</i> , 08. <i>Performing for Valentino</i>
17. Effect a regression	198	31. <i>A Matter of Two</i> , 41. <i>Converted into a Picture (Double Bodies)</i>
18. Stir up the transgressive and taboo	167	23. <i>Hand</i>
19. Use spiritual lures	27-28	09. <i>Looking Up</i> , 25. <i>Yield</i> , 44. <i>Passage à l'acte</i> , 46. <i>Passage à l'acte III</i>
20. Mix pleasure with pain	120-122	33. <i>Surrender</i> , 35. <i>Surrender II</i>
Phase four: moving in for the kill		
21. Give them space to fall – the pursuer is pursued	176-177	25. <i>Yield</i> , 33. <i>Surrender</i> , 35. <i>Surrender II</i>
22. Use physical lures	158-168	21. <i>Mouth</i>
23. Master the art of the bold move	207	31. <i>A Matter of Two</i> , 07. <i>Valentino</i> , 08. <i>Performing for Valentino</i>
24. Beware the aftereffects	212-214	—
<p>Fig. 19: Identification of Robert Greene's 24-step seduction technique within the dialogue and the photo-book <i>Make Me Yours</i>.⁴⁰³</p>		

403. Source: Greene, *Art of Seduction*.

VUARNET'S PROPOSITIONS	COMMENTS ON DIALOGUE AND PHOTO-BOOK
Proposition 1: Study seduction in a place seemingly paradoxal, where what manifests it is the seduced person, more than the seducer.	This is the locus for the study of seduction in this case: the shop window, where the seduced is made manifest in front of the object.
Proposition 2: It is through the seduced more than the seducer, that seduction takes place.	The photographs make this evident, as this is the position from which the case is studied. Still, the seducer is also present.
Proposition 3: The making of the seducer is particularly easy in absentia – that is to say, in the case of mystic.	The screen allows for distance (even absence, sometimes) to happen, therefore strengthening the seduction.
Proposition 4: The seducer is, thus, necessarily a plurivocal or multi-stylistic person since, created by the demand, it cannot but adapt its apparition to the plurality of demands.	The objects shown and heard are not only plurivocal but also mysterious in their ambiguity, as Marx acknowledged.
Proposition 5: The making of the seducer by the seduced allows the making of a specific figure each time, and proportional to the strength of the one who demands.	In the dialogue, the ring is made specific; in the photographs, the encounter with the seduced make the objects unique to the subject.
Proposition 6: This making of the seducer by the seduced (<i>each mystic finds her God</i>), we also find the image in another context: the making of the Commander by Don Juan.	The religious and social seduction contexts can be expanded by the capitalist context: each subject finds her object.
Proposition 7: Seduction is a power that is transmitted. This power is a rupture of equilibrium (or balance).	This rupture of equilibrium is made evident in the balance of the images and the rhythm of the dialogue.
Proposition 8: In the world of Faith, God, directly as seducer, or indirectly, as seduced, is “the suitor of mankind”.	In the world of Capital, the object, as seducer or indirectly as seduced (as can be seen in the dialogue), is the suitor of the capitalist subject.
Proposition 9: If the seducer makes his children by the ear, the mystic, deaf and dumb, is self-sufficient and makes all her world with God.	The ring, by speaking, also makes its children by the ear; the photographs, by the eyes. These are the invocatory and the scopic drives. Through the self-reflexive methodology and like the mystics, the subject is able to reverse the situation, cancelling some of seduction's duality and seducing herself.
Fig. 20: Vuarnet's nine propositions. ⁴⁰⁴	

404. Source: Vuarnet, *Le séducteur malgré lui*.

KHASLAVSKY AND SHEDROFF'S SEDUCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS	COMMENTS ON DIALOGUE AND PHOTO-BOOK EXAMPLES
1. Entices you by diverting your attention	In the photographs and the dialogue, the subject goes out of her way to be able to look at the object.
2. Surprises you with something novel	The ring speaks and knows her. If she made it hers, who knows what more surprises might it bring?
3. Goes beyond obvious needs and expectations	In front of the images depicting handbags, the subject appears deep in thought, considering how the handbag could become more than a receptacle to carry her belongings. This also relates to the ring's promises in the dialogue.
4. Creates an instinctive emotional response	In the photographs, this is most evident in 21. <i>Mouth</i> , in particular in the quivering of the subject's mouth in front of the white shoe. In the dialogue, subject and object react emotionally, in a constant disarming of each other's position.
5. Espouses values or connects to personal goals	This is linked to the choice of object by the subject, what seduces her. Judging from the objects photographed and the ring, she values high design, and the connoisseurship, creativity and status that comes with it. This also shows in the photographs and in the fact that the ring spoke to her.
6. Makes inherent promises to fulfill these goals	From the way the objects are displayed, it is evident that, if she buys them, they will show her connoisseurship, creativity, status and knowledge of what is in fashion.
7. Leads you to discover something deeper than what you expected	The paradise of self-knowledge the ring spoke about; the thoughts the subject has in front of the handbags, her will to feel like Holly Golightly in front of Tiffany's.
8. Fulfills small promises related to your values and aspirations	This is impossible to exemplify in this case at present, as the subject and the object are not each other's yet.
<p>Fig. 21: Khaslavsky and Shedroff's eight seductive characteristics.⁴⁰⁵</p>	

405. Source: Khaslavsky and Shedroff, *Seductive Experience*.

But in this materiality of frameworks and details, we are going away from seduction itself, and it is taking us a terribly long time to get to the work of art ...

But the work of art is everywhere in my exploration! This is why the report you have in your hands begins with an account of my encounter with *Étant donnés*. Everything I have mentioned thereafter can be put in relation to that moment. I will give you a few more works, so the role of art in this case is clear. Take Ceal Floyer's *Double Act*, for instance. This is a particularly transparent example of the workings of seduction. It is composed of an image and of light. The image, moreover, depicts red velvet curtains, alluding not only to something being veiled behind it, but also to a stage. By seducing us with its light (situated, of course in darkness and therefore being made different) we are given the opportunity to seduce, to enter the space of the light, the stage. Ah, but this stage is imaginary, it is only appearance. The image is a lure, a decoy, and a screen separates us from the object of our desire, the stage.⁴⁰⁶

The works of Sophie Calle, especially those involving an encounter with an enigmatic stranger, such as *To Follow, Suite Venetienne*, or *The Detective* are also good examples.⁴⁰⁷ Calle engages with an objectified other she finds fascinating and captures this relationship, through photography and text. The psychodynamic engagement is evident in the material produced and she was, of course, an important source in the development of my methodology. She has never named what she did in these works *a methodology*, though, or any of these encounters *seductive*. Yet, both are

406. Kaja Silverman, in her study of screens and photographic practice alludes to the fact that Wilhelm Flusser, in his classic text *Towards a Philosophy of Photography*, uses the word *photograph* as a synonym of Lacan's screen. *The Threshold of the Visible World*, p. 197.

407. Other works by Sophie Calle, such as 'The Hotel' and 'The Address Book', could also have been selected as examples of seduction in which a forensic gaze and a fascination with the unknown other, or the process of engagement, are exercised. In *Double Game*, Sophie Calle describes 'To Follow': 'For months in 1979 I followed stranger on the street – for the pleasure of following them, not because they particularly interested me. I photographed them without their knowledge, took note of their movements, and finally lost sight of them and forgot them.' Sophie Calle, *Double Game*, tr. by Dany Barash and Danny Hatfield, London and New York: Violette Editions, 2007 (1999), p. 68. About 'Suite Venetienne' she writes: 'At the end of January 1981, on the streets of Paris, I followed a man whom I lost sight of a few minutes later in the crowd. That very evening, quite by chance, he was introduced to me at an opening. During the course of our conversation, he told me he was planning an imminent trip to Venice. I decided to follow him.' (p. 76). 'The Detective' is described as follows: 'In April 1981, at my request, my mother went to a detective agency. She hired them to follow me, to report my daily activities, and to provide photographic evidence of my existence.' (p. 122). In Calle's oeuvre, there is also a story of reversibility. A fan wrote to her: 'June 4, 1999. Dear Ms. Calle, I have recently been released from a long-term relationship [...] I would like to spend the remainder of my mourning/grieving period in your bed'. Calle then, de-assembled her bed and shipped it to him across the Atlantic. Like in the Sinatra story: who seduced whom? 'Journey to California', in Sophie Calle, *MAA-Tu Vae*, Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2003, pp. 197–208.

evident in the works. Let me present my first piece of evidence in this hearing, a text she displayed in her exhibition *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*, where she also showed a photograph of herself wearing Freud's coat, at the door of his London house in Maresfield Gardens (now the Freud Museum, where the exhibition took place in 1999):

I was thirty, and my father thought I had bad breath. He made an appointment for me with a doctor whom assumed was a general practitioner. Except that the man I found myself facing was a psychoanalyst. Given the hostility my father always manifested towards this profession, my surprise was total. My first words were: 'There must have been a mistake, my father is convinced I have bad breath and he sent me to a generalist.' 'Do you always do what your father tells you to do?' replied the man. I became his patient.⁴⁰⁸

Here, Calle engages with her desired object – Freud, the subject-supposed-to-know, who can help her understand – through sharing his space and objects. Her coat, its tactility, brings us back to the realm of the alienistes and their practices as described by Gaëtan Gatien de Clérambault⁴⁰⁹. She is in his house, a patient, as we know from the text. Seduced by the analyst's promise of knowledge (he asked her a very poignant question), she seduces us into a realm that, if we know anything about Calle's work, will blur the boundary between her life and her work, reality and fiction. The text shows her seduction, as demonstrated in the gap between the last two sentences, the way she gave in after that question – much in the way our subject does in Argyll Arcade. In the image, with Freud's coat and the background of his house (and, we must not forget, now a museum), she becomes the seducer. Calle follows well the first two steps of the self-reflexive methodology, recognition and capture.

408. Sophie Calle, *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*, tr. by Charles Penwarden, London and New York: Thames and Hudson, 2005, p. 43.

409. In *Passion érotique des étoffes chez la femme*, the alieniste Gaëtan Gatien de Clérambault, writes case notes on three patients accused of having a sexual fetish for fabrics, notably silk and velvet. He describes their encounter with the material, the feeling of its contact with their skin and the relation of this to the rest of their bodies. De Clérambault himself was fascinated by fabric as his photographs of North Africa, studied by Joan Copjec, show. Gaëtan Gatien de Clérambault, *Passion érotique des étoffes chez la femme* [*Archives d'anthropologie criminelle de médecine légale et de psychologie normale et pathologique*] (1908). Paris: Les Empêcheurs de Penser en Rond, 2002; Joan Copjec, 'The Sartorial Superego', in *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists*, Cambridge, MA, and London: MIT Press, 1994, pp. 65–116.

I should also mention Naia del Castillo and her objects and photographs, and Lee Friedlander's street photography, Lisette Model's self-portraiture, and her and Eugène Atget's images of cities as scenes of crimes ... Oh, and Doisneau ...

[Interrupting. Although the works of art are fascinating and the detective is engaged, something in Calle's work is troubling the jury] I cannot quite understand self-reflexivity.

Robert Samuels defines self-reflexivity as 'a mode of resistance to an individual seeking to find freedom outside of the Symbolic social order of social determinism and social commitment'.⁴¹⁰ He discusses the concept in relation to Slavoj Žižek, who theorises two possible causes for self-reflexivity: the distance between subject and language – the difference between the enunciated statement and the subject of enunciation – and the failure of the Symbolic to attain the Real. Self-reflexivity is a subjective distance from Symbolic reality, which calls for an impossible access to the Real.

If we leave the self aside for a moment, I am referring to a reflexive situation rather than a reflective one,⁴¹¹ paraphrasing Mignon Nixon, and I understand the role of the mirror-screen in the Mirror stage, not as *reflection*, but *reflexion*.⁴¹² To continue with Nixon's argument, a reflexive mode of analysis is one that facilitates the breaking of the fascination with the mirror, gives distance from one's engulfing self-image.⁴¹³ Jean Laplanche also refers to this phenomenon – especially in the analytic setting –

410. Robert Samuels, 'Lacan after Žižek: Self-Reflexivity in the Automodern Enjoyment of Psychoanalysis', *International Journal of Žižek Studies*, vol. 2, no. 4, available from <<http://zizekstudies.org/index.php/ijzs/issue/view/10>> [accessed 28.02.10].

411. Nixon, *Couch*, p. 74.

412. Nixon further argues the case for this distinction: 'By contrast, video performance, centered on the body of the performer before the camera, produces the effect of a "collapsed present" equivalent to the space-time of mirror reflection, or the patient on the couch – the very task of analysis being to convert the "fascination with the mirror," or reflective mode, into a reflexive one. "The analytic project," Krauss observes, is one in which "the patient disengages from . . . his reflected self, and through a method of reflexiveness, rediscovers the real time of his own history. He exchanges the atemporality of repetition for the temporality of change." In short, psychoanalysis is not a confessional mode, in which self-image is nurtured, but a gradual process of alienation from the sovereign self.' *Couch*, p. 70.

413. Nixon, *Couch*, p. 68. While the methodology as a whole is reflexive in the sense of Nixon, Samuels and Laplanche, the third stage of the process is reflection, which implies looking at oneself in the mirror. Thus, the task of the third stage, 'reflection', is to be able to see oneself in the situation of seduction provided by the capture, to acknowledge one's image in seduction (through identification) and to be able to look at it and examine it, risking a fascination with it – which will be broken by the capture of the reflection, that is, by the writing, which acts as a distancing device, like the couch in analysis (see note 412 above). Reflection, thus, includes an element of reflexion. The accumulation of the three stages, and the constant return to the evidence of the encounter breaks the fascination with the self-image and makes the methodology 'reflexive', as opposed to simply 'reflective'.

when he writes that ‘external alterity refers back to internal alterity’.⁴¹⁴ In the seductive relation, this external alterity is the object. Self-reflexivity also refers back to self-consciousness, and in particular to Paul Crowther’s model,⁴¹⁵ as I described in chapter two. His three-step methodology around attention, comprehension and projection, however, is more ontological than epistemological, this being the main distinction between self-reflexivity and self-consciousness.

This self-reflexive methodology, what is it for?

The main aim of the self-reflexive methodology is to produce a seducee’s self-evaluation, a self-awareness of the process of seduction. The methodology is not superfluous, it is expandable and adaptable, much like learning a dance in which the positions may still change but the steps can be anticipated. In extreme circumstances, the methodology may even help to avoid honour damage or personal injury (as in the case of Cordelia, the *Présidente de Tourvel* and the *Marquise de Merteuil*). In relation to the work of art, it will channel excessive attachment to or demands made of, or by, the work of art, providing an understanding of the psychodynamics that take place between viewer and work in a situation of seduction. But it does not mean that, thanks to the self-reflexive methodology, works of art will cease to seduce. If the methodology is followed, the seducee gains a better understanding of her position, especially of that moment when it becomes reversible and on which the end of the encounter and the outcome hinge. The seducee also gains self-sufficiency. In the words of Vuarnet, she shares with mystics the fact that ‘they say and thereby are the satisfied seducer (without a lack), and the happy seduced (without rancor or disappointment, without regret)’.⁴¹⁶ The methodology also captures data about seduction and provides an analysis of the encounter, especially through the reflection.

So, what have we learned with this methodology?

Well, in this particular case, the case of this subject and the objects she has encountered, we learn how seduction relies on resistance and on reversibility. We

⁴¹⁴ Jean Laplanche, ‘Transference: Its Provocation by the Analyst’, tr. by Luke Thurston, in *Essays on Otherness (La révolution copernicienne inachevée* [1992]), ed. by John Fletcher, London: Routledge, 1999, pp. 218–237, p. 224.

⁴¹⁵ Crowther, *Art and Embodiment*.

⁴¹⁶ My translation. The original text reads, in French: ‘elles disent et sont par là même le séducteur satisfait (sans manque), et le séduit heureux (sans rancune, ni déception, sans regrets)’. Vuarnet, *Le séducteur malgré lui*, p. 75.

know she fell for the ring because of its visual effect of scotomisation and the way it reflects light. Through the dialogue – the capture – we have evidence of this. But, above all, we learn about the encounter between the seducer-object and the seduced-subject, an area of seduction not hitherto visualised and made specific, as previous accounts focus on one or the other side of the relation.

Don't you think that this self-reflexive methodology – the recognition, the capture, the reflection – is already somewhat present in the examples of classic seduction you have given us?

Yes. [*She searches in her pockets and brings out a crumpled set of papers that look as if they had been opened and closed many times*]. Here you can see how I have thought about the methodology in relation to existing sources (this was archived in the case as Fig. 22/Exhibit 2 and contained, signalled as *, instances in which the sources' strategies matched the photographs in *Make Me Yours*, and, as ♥, instances in which the writing matched the evidence presented).⁴¹⁷

417. The artists chosen for images 5.1 to 5.23 do not represent a comprehensive list. Still, they provide evidence of the self-reflexive methodology as described in this text. My choice for their inclusion in this volume was prompted by the informal discussions I had over the *Breda* photograph (image 2.1), as I recount in chapter two. In most cases, people giving me feedback – my students, fellow researchers, my supervisors, Lorens Holm, Jean-Michel Rabaté – suggested I look at these artists, as something in my photograph made them free-associate and directed them to the images 5.1–5.23. Sometimes, it was the position of the artist, or self-portraiture; some others, the space created in the photographic plane, the city depicted, or the role of the viewer, as I describe in Fig. 22. Lee Friedlander (5.8 to 5.11), Lisette Model (5.12 to 5.15) and Robert Doisneau (5.16 and 5.17) were mentioned to me several times in the course of those conversations. Eugène Atget's images of body forms (5.18 to 5.21) were suggested to me by Jean-Michel Rabaté, during his visit to the University of Glasgow (16 to 18 October 2008), and are discussed in his book *Art and Crime*, in a chapter entitled 'Scene of the Crime. Nothing to See!' (pp. 78–110). In this chapter he makes an explicit connection between Atget's images and detection, which interested me in relation to the materials I discuss in chapters three and four. I came across Marcel Duchamp's window display (image 5.23) through researching visual links between his text on shop windows (which I quote in the conclusion) and his artwork. Ghislaine Wood, in her book *The Surreal Body* (part of the Victoria and Albert's exhibition *Surreal Things*, which focused on Surrealist design and which took place between 29 March and 22 July 2007, London, V&A Publications, 2007), dedicated a section to the shop window (pp. 56–61). Her pages feature – as well as Atget, Duchamp and Claude Cahun (images 5.18, 5.23 and 5.22) – works by Salvador Dalí and Elsa Schiaparelli, which I could also have used as visual examples.

The works of Naia del Castillo (5.1 to 5.3) represent a bridge between art and design. They also show an interesting and inspiring use of photography. Through a distancing from the object, yet a rapprochement through wearing it, they keep desire in play, much like *Make Me Yours*. The particular works I chose of Sophie Calle (5.5 to 5.7) also show links between objects, phantasy and photography, as well as between images and text (5.6) and art and psychoanalysis, as I describe in chapter two. I selected Ceal Floyer's work *Double Act* (5.4) as a counterpoint to the other examples, most of which involve photography. Her work shows the phantasy dimension of seduction through a method encompassing three-dimensional space and image, directly involving the viewer in the scene.

Works by Jo Spence, Nan Goldin, Sharon Kivland, Francesca Woodman, Claudia Guderian, Sarah Jones or Shellburne Thurber – mentioned elsewhere in this text – could also have been featured as

Footnote continues

	Recognition in object	Capture	Reflection
Baudrillard's <i>Seduction</i>	Reversibility ♥	Text style ♥	Text content
Valmont in <i>Les Liaisons Dangereuses</i>	Présidente de Tourvel as missing object	Letters to other characters ♥	Grouping of letters in book and introduction
<i>Seducer's Diary</i> (Kierkegaard's seduction, not Johannes')	Possibility of an ethical education	Johannes' diary	Diary commentary
<i>Étant donnés</i>	The beyond-the-door, the bucolic scene	The act of looking through the holes in the door	Exegesis of the encounter (potential, not within the piece – could be writing or image based) ⁴¹⁸
Naia del Castillo (5.1 to 5.3)	The stain, the strangeness in the objects, what does not make sense (the lace in the shirt, the bib, the toile pattern)	Relationship of viewer to object *	Image of wearer with object in a setting and with a particular pose
Geal Floyer's <i>Double Act</i> (5.4)	Empty stage with red curtains	Viewer enters the light stage	The experience that the stage is a slide
Sophie Calle's images of her/her work with Freud's objects (5.5 to 5.7)	The objects bring out something in her *	The act of placing the two objects side by side, wear them, re-enact them, or narrate them	The photographs or the experience of seeing both object and subject (Calle) together and the doubling effect they create
Lee Friedlander's street self-portraiture (5.8 to 5.11)	The finding of a context in which subject and environment are equally important and make the subject anonymous but give it agency (through photography)	Photographic self-portraiture *	Printing and composing the images so that the moment of recognition and the balance is maintained (centering, relationship to Kennedy's head, position of square in the image, breakage disturbing picture

images. Works by artists not mentioned anywhere in this text (by Sylvie Fleury, John Stezaker, Ilse Bing, Louise Lawler, David Lynch, Man Ray or Guy Bourdin, for example) do manifest the methodology, as well as the specific use of a screen as I describe it. There are many examples, for seduction, as Baudrillard – and I – define it, is a ruling principle, and photographers and artists have attempted (and sometimes succeeded) in capturing it. With the display of images 5.1–5.23, I want to create a visual journey through the aspects of the methodology described in the table above, a complement to my textual analysis. For this – and to show some parity with the images in other sections – editing is important.

418. Examples of image based reflection include Richard Baquié's free standing reproduction of *Étant donnés*, Penelope Haralambidou's explorations of allegory, André Raffray's two dimensional recreation and Marcel Dzama's reconstructed diorama *Even the Ghost of the Past*. Richard Baquié, *Sans titre: Étant donnés; 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage* [installation], Musée d'Art Contemporain de Lyon, 1991; Haralambidou, *The Blossoming of Perspective* and *The Stereoscopic Veil*; Bernard Blistène, *Étant donné André Raffray*, Paris: Éditions de La Différence, 2008; Michael R. Taylor, 'Legacy', in *Marcel Duchamp: Étant donnés*, New Haven, London: Yale University Press, 2009, pp. 190–227.

			plane)
Lisette Model's self-portraits (5.12 and 5.13)	Self as image in mirror (feminine subject) *	Photographic self-portraiture *	Placing of the camera in the picture plane, viewpoint of the viewer and model's gaze *
Lisette Model's reflections (5.14 and 5.15)	Mergin of inside and outside in screen and lens of the photographic camera *	Photographic image captures this impossible merging *	Focus and scale are disturbed and environments inside the shops and outside in the streets appear as one *
Robert Doisneau's window shopping photographs (5.16 and 5.17)	Observation of passers-by in relation to the provocative painting in the shop window	Photographic capture from within the shop window	Angle of the photograph, which relates the gaze of the passers-by to the object (resulting in an anthropological study of reactions)
Eugène Atget's images of Paris (5.18 to 5.21)	Objects resembling human forms in shop windows	Photographic capture from outside the shop window *	Absence of real human presence. Human-like form is shown as trapped, enclosed and framed by the space of the shop window (resulting in a study of place), with the outside clearly reflected – but not merged, as in Lisette Model's <i>Reflections</i>
Claude Cahun's photograph of a shoe shop (5.22)	Shoes and what it means to be worn *	Close up photographic capture	Close up shows the object in detail but denies context, other than the depiction of a vitrine. The ambiguity of the placing of the photographer (inside or outside) is accentuated by the fact that the shoes are photographed from behind.
Marcel Duchamp and Enrico Donati's shop window (5.23)	Books and their possibilities	Shop window experience and photograph *	Contrast between the goods sold by the shop and the mannequin (beheaded, in specific attire) and other surrealist objects.

Fig. 22: The self-reflexive methodology in relation to key sources.

It is significant that the application of the methodology in this way has helped me to identify some false clues, some red herrings. An example of this is the exhibition of paintings by François Boucher, held at the Wallace Collection between September 2004 and April 2005, entitled *Boucher: Seductive Visions*. The title was appropriate as it offered the viewer the possibility of visual seduction; yet, this only happened within the frame of the painting to the people in the scenes. *Seductive Scenes* would have been a more precise title (although less seductive). This, of course, does not mean the paintings were not seductive, it just means that the application of the methodology was more difficult due to the fact that I was removed from the seductive relation. In a way, this was a non-seductive encounter, one where there was no hailing and no

response. The title of the show is where seduction was located. It promised me something but the paintings did not deliver.

Could the results of the self-reflexive methodology not be achieved by a simple exegesis or reflection?

With only an exegesis or a reflection, there would be no specific moment of seduction to be analysed. What the self-reflexive methodology helps to bring out in the reversible confusion of the seductive encounter is the identification of the instance of seduction (the recognition, and the capture of the subject by the object) and its recording (the capture of seduction) for analysis. In a way, all the sources I mention in my report – from Baudrillard to Sinatra – either focus on the capture without reflection, or provide a reflection without focusing on the specific details of a seduction. Perhaps, out of all my sources, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and *Diary of a Seducer* offer the most complete approaches, as there is recognition, capture, and a certain level of reflection – although most of it circles around the issue of ethics and the context for seduction, instead of the seduction itself. Yet, they are didactic, not methodical, and therefore offer exemplary narratives, epitomes of seduction rather than a way to analyse what has taken place and why.

[*Forgetting that the subject and the detective are two different women*] Why did you chose photography as a method for capture?

I did not only use the photographs as examples of a capture of seduction. I also used a clinical diary and a number of writing techniques. Yet, photography is privileged as a method, I admit that. As Susan Sontag wrote, photographs are pieces of the world, more than statements about it. They relate to desire and the erotic feelings aroused by unattainability and distance. When one encounters a photograph, one encounters an object of fascination.⁴¹⁹ To photograph is to participate through active observing, she argues, ‘like sexual voyeurism, it is a way of at least tacitly, often explicitly, encouraging whatever is going on to keep on happening.’⁴²⁰ Photographs certify experience, but also resist engaging with it directly; they limit experience by converting it into an image.⁴²¹ Photography has resistance embedded in its process. Moreover, it demands exclusivity, full attention, if the powers of observation of the

419. Susan Sontag, ‘In Plato’s Cave’, in *On Photography*, London: Penguin, 1977, pp. 1–24.

420. Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 12.

421. Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 9.

photographer are to be improved. Photographs make us see, but, in that process, they demand that we surrender to its product.⁴²² It is the ambiguity of the engagement with the experience, its tyrannical demand for attention and the resistance embedded within it that make it an ideal form for capturing seduction. In fact, it operates a lot like seduction, as Baudrillard acknowledged in his analysis of Calle's and his own photographic work.⁴²³ There are other forms of visual capture, of course, some of which have also been explored in my report, but of all the ones tested, photography works best.

The photographs represent a riddle; there is a game being played – especially in the later ones –, the game of finding the subject. I play this game too, for I am seduced by my own image, in relation to these photographs [*She leafs through her copy of the evidence to find Baudrillard's reference to seduction being always a matter of self-seduction in chapter one*]. Thus, the images refer to the gaze of the one looking at the subject, their desire and the scopic drive; photography perpetuates this game *ad infinitum*.⁴²⁴ Let us look at groups of them more in detail, especially at the relation between the subject and the object. It is clear that the photographs work best when the camera performs, as reversibility is evident [*this will be later indentified as the position of the pervert*]. See for example the sections called *Converted into an Image* and *Passage à l'acte*. In the photographs of rings [*later the hysteric's position*] the subject is more intimidated by the objects, guards her distance. This is in part due to technical issues (they were taken with a medium format film camera, harder to perform with, harder to make appear in the image) but also to the stage in the seduction, quite early on, when the subject was getting to know the object and it had not yet spoken to her. But, of course, she falls for the ring and, towards the end of this section, there is an evident rapprochement, and the ring gets under the subject's skirt in *Intent II* and *Surrender II*.

The images, as you can see, are also an example of feminine street photography, in the tradition of Jo Spence, Sophie Calle, Nan Goldin, and Sharon Kivland, among

422. 'To attempt to improve one's power of observation by looking through a lens, one must renounce the attempt to achieve knowledge by means of other senses or from hearsay'. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: an Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (*Les Mots et les Choses* [1966]), tr. by Tavistock/Routledge (translator's name is not given), London and New York: Routledge, 2002, p. 145.

423. Jean Baudrillard, *For Illusion ... and Please Follow Me*.

424. See Burgin, *Looking at Photographs*.

others. Their visual strategies relate to the work I am presenting here. Jo Spence's 'Phototherapy' uses photography as therapy: the body, the ailing feminine body is always in the foreground but it is also sited in a place, sometimes expected (a bed, a hospital) sometimes unexpected (in front of a brick wall, in a street). Sophie Calle shows us, for example, hotel rooms, streets in Paris and Venice, and train journeys (see 'L'Hôtel', 'The Shadow', 'Suite Venitienne', and 'Douleur Exquise') as the locus of her desire for others, and the seduction others exert in her. Even though these places are real, they become entangled in the semi-fiction, the construction of her photographic and textual narratives and adopt this dimension. In 'The Ballad of Sexual Dependency', Nan Goldin questions femininity through its material and emotional trappings. Nightclubs, taxis, or quaint backgrounds with lace windows hold a variety of feminine subjects, from the young girl to the transgender and cross-dresser. She also appears in the images sometimes – beaten up, with a black eye – as she is part of the place she depicts. Sharon Kivland's 'Le Bonheur des femmes' reveals rarely seen fragments of the bodies of women as they fantasize in the perfume counters of department stores. The position of the feet, much like those of the woman in *Make Me Yours* has feminine agency and speaks of a place where, the subjects depicted believe, dreams come true ... [*Dreamily, coming back to herself*] So ... all four offer a study of various cities, of urban spaces, from an ethnographic and anthropologic point of view. But I am deviating, for this would be another study, probably not about seduction.

Can you tell us again why the exhibition of evidence in 2008 did not work?

I mentioned that, in order for seduction to work, it relies on a certain distance between subject and object. In the 2008 exhibition, that distance was too great and it diluted the encounter. There are a number of things I learned from the show, however: first, it allowed me to highlight fragments within the images presented, and these narrowed the distance between viewer and work (you can now experience some fragments in the photo-book, for example, numbers 35, 36 and 38). The framed images worked as seductive engagement, as I discussed in chapter three and as reported by viewers. Lastly, it was in this show, that the ring began to speak to the subject – although she did not yet hear or acknowledge it – and I cannot underestimate the importance of that. The fact that it did not work as a show does not mean that an exhibition of evidence of seduction is impossible. This is an area of further work I will get to once this specific case is closed. Does this answer your question?

Only partially, as it brings me to another question. Why choose a book as a form of presentation?

The book, in my submission, has the same status as this report. An exhibition of the photographs was considered as a possible outcome but it would have given the images a different status. It is important to know that my case is made through both and that they need to be experienced as simultaneously as possible. The exhibition would have given the jury a *décalage* in time. Besides, I did learn the problems and limitations of exhibiting seduction in 2008.

The book format is well suited for photographs. As Sontag acknowledges, photographs lose little of their essential qualities when printed in a book.⁴²⁵ There are, of course, some limitations to the format, from the sequencing and order of the images, to their relation to the edges of the frame and the time required for looking. These are not much different from the issues encountered in an exhibition and have been taken into account when considering my presentation.

What are we looking at in these images: a document, the reproduction of something else? Should we be seduced?

[*Exasperated at the return of this question, she tries to explain it again, but in a different way.*] The answer to this is simple. It is not a document or a reproduction of an event. They are not representations of an instance of seduction. You are looking at a capture of seduction, in the sense I described in chapter two. That is, through a mechanism that does not represent but embodies it, seduction is made present in the photographs.⁴²⁶ Whether you are seduced or not is not the point. We are back at the beginning of the discussion. Seduction is there, in and through the images. They are an interface between the personal and the cultural in which, like in the analytic situation, a distance is, more often than not, guarded, while at the same time there is also a falling. This provokes a quivering, a to-and-fro gesture inviting while stopping.

425. Sontag, *On Photography*, p. 4.

426. Kaja Silverman explains this phenomenon of making present through an analysis of photography and Lacan's mimicry (which he explains through the work of Roger Caillois, as I explored in chapter three). 'When [mimicry] happens, the subject does not simply hold up the imaginary photograph in front of him or her, but approximates or attempts to approximate its form'. *The Threshold of the Visible World*, p. 201. Mimicry, she explains, should be taken as a given: its agency needs to be mastered and, in photography, this is by no means easy as the imaginary, the mirror image, will always 'photograph' us before the photograph is taken. Thus, photography involves both external and internal conditions.

Like this. [*The detective gets up and uses her two hands to gesture to the jury. One hand, with her palm towards her makes a sign towards her body. At the same time, the other, palm toward the jury, motions stop.*]⁴²⁷ Like clutch control, seduction happens at a point: not too close, not too far.

There is no performance in the images, but there is a symbolic performativity. They are real instances of seduction, as they should be, since this is a study from within. In fact, when I searched the home of the subject, I also found her clinical diary. It seems she had been going to psychoanalysis for eighteen months at least, and, in her sessions, she discussed her desire in relation to objects and works of art. In a hysteric act, she tried to show these images to her analyst, but he denied the invitation. They ended her analysis in mutual agreement, so she could take the photographs, as they seemed to fulfil an analytic role, of which I think she is aware.

How do you know seduction is happening?² How does it manifest itself?

Ah, this is a good question. In the depth of the enquiry, we must not lose sight of the essential and it is perhaps time to return to Rex Butler's definition of seduction. In the encounter between subject and object described in the dialogue, the object gets what it wants from the subject by working on her free will through persuasion. She enters the shop. I did not follow her for long (I got the evidence I wanted), but she probably bought it too. The diamond ring seduced her. The photographs show that process, when seduction is not yet consummated, but in the course of happening.

There seems to be constant tension between shoes, handbags, rings, lingerie on the one hand, and works of art on the other. Why focus on art and not objects in the realm of consumption as the centre of your study?

Because art is one of the ultimate seductive engagements, as Baudrillard argues.⁴²⁸

427. Dany Nobus, enacted this quivering action, which he called 'gestural solipsism, an ambiguous suspension in front of the law' in the delivery of his paper 'Kant with Klossowski: Invitation, Visitation, and the Protreptic to Acceptance', *Transmission: Hospitality* [conference], Sheffield Hallam University, 1–3 July 2010.

428. Only if art maintains its potential for difference and opposition – that is, being art as adventure, art as negation of reality, art as redeeming illusion, art as another dimension – and it is not completely absorbed into the economic and the political, can art be seductive. Baudrillard, *Seduction*. See also Jean Baudrillard, 'Transaesthetics', in *The Transparency of Evil: Essays on Extreme Phenomena (La transparence du mal: Essai sur les phénomènes extrêmes* [1990]), tr. by James Benedict, London: Verso, 1993, pp. 14–19; and Gerry Coulter, 'Review Essay: The Conspiracy of Art (Illustrated)', *International Journal of Baudrillard Studies*, vol. 7, no. 1, January 2010, available from <http://www.ubishops.ca/baudrillardstudies/vol-7_1/v7-1-coulterrevessay.html> [accessed 28.02.10].



Fig. 23: Seduction in the art gallery (or, exhibit number four).



Fig. 24: My seduction in front of works of art (or, exhibit number five).

Objects of consumption use seduction to specific ends: marketing, advertising ... areas my investigation encountered but did not enter into. I had a strict time frame. Works of art, on the other hand, perpetuate seduction, keep it in play. It is not only the most appropriate subject of study for seduction, but it is also one of the most fitting outcomes. Yet, it is true that that in my work, there is a tension between the two areas.

I'd like to present my third piece of evidence, exhibit number three, which takes the form of three works by Spanish artist Naia del Castillo, who, between 2002 and 2004 produced a series of images and objects entitled *Sobre la Seducción (On Seduction)*, a response to Baudrillard's book.⁴²⁹ As you can see, the boundaries between art and consumption are blurred. She creates seductive objects, wearables, which could be marketed and mass-produced but are works of art. She resorts to photography to show the relation between object and subject (the wearer), and often shows both, object and image, side by side. In these works, del Castillo understands well the capturing possibilities of photography.

In the case of the evidence I am presenting, I could have stayed in the realm of objects by continuing my engagement with those jewel-like works I showed after chapter one. Those works still refer to commodities, though, and I don't think I would have gone very far with them, as I would still have had to devise a system to capture seduction in order to be able to study it. Photography offered it ready made. I also took photographs of people in front of works of art, which appeared to be seductive to them – see exhibit number four (Fig. 23), a woman looking at a *wonderful* painting by Philip Guston at the Museum of Modern Art in New York and other similar images. [*With the word 'wonderful', she unconsciously verbalises her own seduction so the jury sees that she, the woman in the images and the Guston painting are all being seduced, reversibly, and they are reminded of Lacan's words: 'at the scopie level, we are no longer at the level of demand, but of desire, of the desire of the Other'*]⁴³⁰ Yet, I found this very problematic. I had no way of knowing whether seduction was operating, as I did not have access to the viewer's free will. I could only see external signs I had learned

⁴²⁹ Images can be found in the pages following this chapter (images 5.1 to 5.3). See Naia del Castillo, *Sobre la Seducción. 2002- 2004*, available from <<http://www.naiadelcastillo.com/seducccion.html>> [accessed 04.01.10].

⁴³⁰ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 104.

to recognise: certain stillness and attentiveness, mouths open. The capture of the screen in these circumstances is complicated and I was most of the time unsuccessful. To address these problems, I photographed myself in front of works of art – see exhibit number five (Fig. 24), an image of my shadow in front of a painting, and my reflection on framed photographs at the Calouste Gulbenkian Museum in Lisbon. Yet, although I knew I was being seduced, capturing that was very difficult.

Objects of consumption, the shoes, lingerie, and rings you speak about, offered a solution to my predicament, while allowing me to extract characteristics that apply to the work of art. Through them, I was able to devise the self-reflexive methodology, the trap to capture seduction. The case is not closed, though. I fear it will be open for a long time and perhaps the next step in the investigation is to apply the self-reflexive methodology to the context of museums, galleries and other spaces in which viewers engage with works of art. Before that takes place, we still have to arrive at a sentence.

[Not taking any nonsense] Yes, but before that, we have a few more questions: feminine seduction ... what is this and why is it relevant to this case?

It refers to two things: first, to the subject of the research, a woman who studies seduction from within the relation; second, to the possible differences I have encountered with respect to gender. In the various public showings of this case I have made, this has always been mentioned.⁴³¹ It refers to the choice of object of seduction – the fourth rule – as gender is one of the defining characteristics of the individual. I must point out, though, that this has never been a study of seduction from a gender perspective so the mention of femininity within the work is almost circumstantial. I say almost because Baudrillard has hinted at a particular closeness between women and seduction.⁴³² Yet, I have not tested or specifically explored this. What I can also ascertain in relation to femininity is that a feminist position or context has not been adopted. Although this reading (along with some others) is possible, this has not been the direction taken by my work, more concerned with the

431. The public showings of the case took the form of lectures, talks and public presentations, for example 'Perversion within Seduction' at the Museum of the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York (18.02.09); 'That Obscure Object of Research' at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, Glasgow (24.01.08); 'Reflections on Seduction' at the *Architexture: Exploring Textual and Architectural Spaces* conference, University of Strathclyde (16.04.08); and 'Created to Lead Astray: Baudrillard's Seduction in Contemporary Artefacts' at the *Engaging Baudrillard* conference, Swansea University (06.09.06).

432. On page 68 of *Seduction*, he wrote: 'Thus women, being closer to this other, hidden mirror (with which they shroud their image and body) are also closer to the effects of seduction'.

epistemology of seduction than its gender politics. Seduction's relation to gender is, admittedly, an area for further work.

*[One of the people that had not spoken before, looking confused] But how can objects seduce? I would have thought that was a realm reserved only for subjects ... Is there not a process of *subjectification* of the object in the case you have presented to us?*

It is the opposite, actually. In a subject-subject situation, the seduced-subject objectifies the seducer-subject, or a part of it. Seduction belongs to the realm of objects (remember the third rule). It is true that, in my case, the diamond ring assumes anthropomorphic characteristics, such as desire, volition, or speech; but that is its strategy (as Johannes learned everything about Cordelia). The ring is the seducer. When the tables turn, and the system's roles disintegrate, there is a process of objectification of the subject. Just refer to the part where the ring describes her hand ...

In the photographs, there is a play with doubles and part of the images are out of focus. Is this the visual language of seduction?

Certainly. In the doubling up of bodies through screens, there is a reversibility, a potential failure in the system. This reversibility is particularly evident in the photo-book, where the subject shifts from a position that could be described as that of the hysteric to that of the pervert. The shift is also from seduced to seducer. The hysteric asks of the object (and the Big Other, of course)⁴³³ *what do you want from me*;⁴³⁴ the pervert, like the object at the very beginning of the dialogue, says *hey, look at me!*, enjoys displaying herself, looking at the object and being looked at by it ...⁴³⁵

433. The Big Other (or A) in Lacanian theory stands for the internalisation of the voice of law, whether that is one's parents, teachers, government, or, perhaps the police, for example. It is a concept linked to Freud's agency of the Super-ego, as described in chapter two.

434. Julia Borossa places hysteria between handicap and empowerment, the flip side of feminism and the result of patriarchal oppression, the pathological effect of patriarchy and its subversion. This is due to the ambiguity and contradiction of the hysteric's position. She writes: 'Hysterical symptoms are caused by the contradiction between two impulses: a wanting which accepts no limits, and a desire to conform to the limits imposed by society.' Julia Borossa, *Ideas in Psychoanalysis: Hysteria*, Cambridge: Icon Books, 2001, p. 41. Georges Didi-Huberman, in addition, added a performative element to the hysteric's symptoms, as well as a strong transference relation with their doctor (as we can also see in Freud's Dora). Didi-Huberman, *Invention of Hysteria*.

435. W. J. T. Mitchell asks 'What do Pictures "Really" Want?', shifting the location of desire onto images, subjectifying them, converting them into fetishes. He writes: 'and it's a real question whether, in Freud's case at least, there is any real prospect of "curing" the malady of fetishism. [...] The subjectivized object in some form or other is an incurable symptom, and [...] Marx and Freud are better treated as guides to

[Footnote continues]

[*She thinks it might be too late now to throw such a complex topic as perversion into the mix, but it is nonetheless important, as the position is evident in the photographs, so she tries to give an overview, relating it to what she has already told them*] Perversion, like neurosis (to which hysteria belongs to) and psychosis, is one of the three structures of the personality as described by Lacan.⁴³⁶ A pervert is a person who has one of the two principles of psychic functioning – the pleasure principle – more active than the other – the reality principle. Perversion is intimately related to the object and fantasy. If fantasy's equation is $S \diamond a$, that of perversion is its reversal $a \diamond S$, *objet petit a* in relation to the barred subject. Fetishism is a perversion (remember the discussion around the scale of seduction, and Freud and Marx's definitions of the term); in it the boundary of having and not having informs the object choice. A pervert knows gratification without limit. Yet, the object can only be had at a price. In perversion, the target is achieved, as the pervert believes he has found the lost object. Yet, the pervert longs for the law, wants to be found out in the staging of his transgressive desire.⁴³⁷ And even though a work of art cannot be a fetish – it does not satisfy –⁴³⁸ I am arguing that there is a certain scopic perversion in seduction. This is made evident in *Étant donnés*, in the barrier to the eyes that Duchamp built – the Spanish door – and in the strong sense of *being looked at* looking that the work brings about in the viewer. [*Digressing*] I have often wondered what would happen if I had an image of myself looking through the peepholes, a photograph of me in *Étant donnés*. The issue of distance and separation arises again, and I suspect that, perhaps, it would have been interesting for research purposes, while for seduction the missed photographic encounter is more important ... [*Bringing herself back to the topic of the discussion, the language of seduction*] But yes, seeing and being seen seeing ... Both

the understanding of this symptom, and perhaps to some transformation of it, into less pathological, damaging forms. In short, we are stuck with our magical, premodern attitudes towards objects, especially pictures, and our task is not to overcome these attitudes but to understand them'. This is my position in relation to seduction too. Mitchell, *What do Pictures "Really" Want?*, p. 72. His answer to the question in the title is, of course, to be asked that question, and also, to be looked at, and, thus, desired. That would mean that our look and their gaze would meet, and that is impossible.

436. For a good appraisal of the three structures, see Henry Bond, *Lacan at the Scene*. The key text about perversion, is, in my opinion, Octave Mannoni's 'I Know Well, but All the Same' (*Je sais bien mais quand même ...* [1968]), tr. by G. M. Goshgarian, in Molly Anne Rothenberg, Dennis Foster and Slavoj Žižek (eds), *Perversion and the Social Relation*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2003, pp. 69–92.

437. Sharon Kivland, *The Path of Perversion, Part II*, lecture at the Glasgow School of Art Friday Event, 10 November 2006.

438. It not only does not satisfy, but, according to the artist Michael Clegg, discomfort is essential to the dynamic of art. Michael Clegg, 'The Monument for Historical Change', *Transmission: Hospitality* [conference], Sheffield Hallam University, 1–3 July 2010.

Étant donnés and *The Large Glass* are as much about seeing as about not seeing. *Étant donnés* has barriers, and one never sees the face of the body, no matter how much one tries (and I did try moving around, adopting awkward positions). And then there is the scotomisation, as to experience *Étant donnés*, one stands in a very dark room and has to look into a very light room, provoking a feeling of burning in the retina. *The Large Glass* has the illusion of giving, as it is free standing and transparent. Yet, because it is freestanding and transparent, one sees oneself seeing, more than sees the work. Is this not what the subject was also experiencing in front of the objects?

The visual language of seduction is not unlike that of haptic images, as described by Laura U. Marks. For her, these images 'offer a variety of ways of knowing and representing the world',⁴³⁹ through a language that includes unclear, grainy images, close-to-the-body camera positions, changes in focus, panning across the surface of objects, under- and overexposure, decaying imagery, scratching on the emulsion, and densely textured images. In addition to the haptic visual terms, sensuous in nature and which seduction adopts and adapts for itself in the shop windows represented, the images develop a series of specific visual effects, particularly evident in the images numbered 20 to 24. First, there is the doubling, as you pointed out, both within the object and the subject. You can see this in the neck of the subject; look closer at her half open mouth, for it is also there, and in her spider-like hands, in the multiplicity of her sunglasses. Then, there are deviations from the normal scale between object and subject. Sometimes, the object engulfs the subject, encroaches on her body; some other times, the white shoe gets reduced to a miniature and it is the body which envelops it. It is a play on reversibility, again. By constantly changing positions, by this continuous flux, the system flows with a centrifugal force, ever greater. The possibility for self-destruction is there. Lastly, the blurring of the screen that keeps subject and object separate, also merges outside and inside, making it possible for the subject to have the object, and vice versa. Is she wearing an elegant upholstered skirt in 40. *Converted into a Picture (Upholstered)?*

Yes, very nice. What would happen if we put the screen down, tore it apart, shattered it, disregarded it, or it simply collapsed?

The importance of the screen cannot be underestimated.⁴⁴⁰ There is a great danger, a risk, if seducer and seducee, subject and object, are not kept separate. With no

439. Marks, *Touch*, p.1.

440. Remember Freud's *Screen Memories*, those memories, more vivid, clear and colourful than others, usually about early childhood, that the person creates purposefully as an act of displacement. They are a

screen, real or imaginary, subject and object would have each other, no transference would be possible and, therefore, there would be no reversibility – they would be one – and no resistance – there would be no need. The ‘essential dissymmetry’ of the relation needs to be maintained if seduction is to operate.⁴⁴¹ The same is true for the analytic situation, where the couch and the silence of the analyst operate as screens in many ways.⁴⁴² Tearing out the screen would equate to a *passage à l’acte*, one where there may not be a way back into the Symbolic.

[Dreamily, while she looks at the images in the photo-book intensely. One could almost say there is a hint of identification with them] Why do you think she wears sunglasses in most of the photographs?

Have you ever seen the opening scene of the film *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*?

In passing, almost unconsciously, one of them looks at her watch and realises, with horror, they have been discussing this case for far too long. They have to go elsewhere soon and they still need time to make up their minds about the crime. The end of the discussion is brought about abruptly.

Thank you. I think we have all the material we need to make a decision and give a verdict on your case of seduction.

compromise formation, and only screen memories, he concludes. Think also about the cinema screen, what would happen if it was torn down? The viewing of the film would be rendered somewhat difficult.

441. Nixon, *Couch*, p. 68.

442. Nixon, *Couch*. For a visual idea of the couch as a screen, see the photographic work of Shellburne Thurber, Claudia Guderian and Sara Jones. Shellburne Thurber, *Psychoanalytic Interiors*, exhibition at the Bloomberg Space, London, 24 July–11 September 2004, available from <<http://www.bloombergspace.com/archive/archive.html?archiveYear=2004>> [accessed 04.03.10]; Claudia Guderian, *Magic of the Couch*, exhibition at the Freud Museum, London, 11 November–12 December 2004, available from <<http://www.freud.org.uk/exhibitions/10536/magic-of-the-couch/>> [accessed 26.07.10]; Ilsa Colsell, ‘Sarah Jones, a Review of Her Exhibition at Maureen Paley in London’, *Frieze Magazine*, 07.02.08, available from <http://www.frieze.com/shows/review/sarah_jones/> [accessed 04.03.10]. For a visual example of the silence of the analyst as screen, see the film *Empathy* [film], directed by Amy Siegel, 2003, 35mm, 92 min <<http://amiesiegel.net/project/empathy>> [accessed 04.03.10].



5.1



5.2







5.5



Seated figure of Freud by Oscar Neimon, undated, Freud Museum Collection

I was thirty, and my father thought I had bad breath. He made an appointment for me with a doctor, whom he assumed was a general practitioner. However, when I arrived at his office, I immediately realized that he was a psycho-analyst. Given the hostility my father always expressed towards this profession, I was surprised. "There must be some mistake," I said. "My father is convinced I have bad breath and he sent me to a GP." The man replied: "Do you always do what your father tells you to do?" And so I became his patient.



Dr. Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) in the gardens of his London home at 20 Maresfield Gardens, courtesy the Freud Museum



Sophie Calle wearing Sigmund Freud's overcoat



















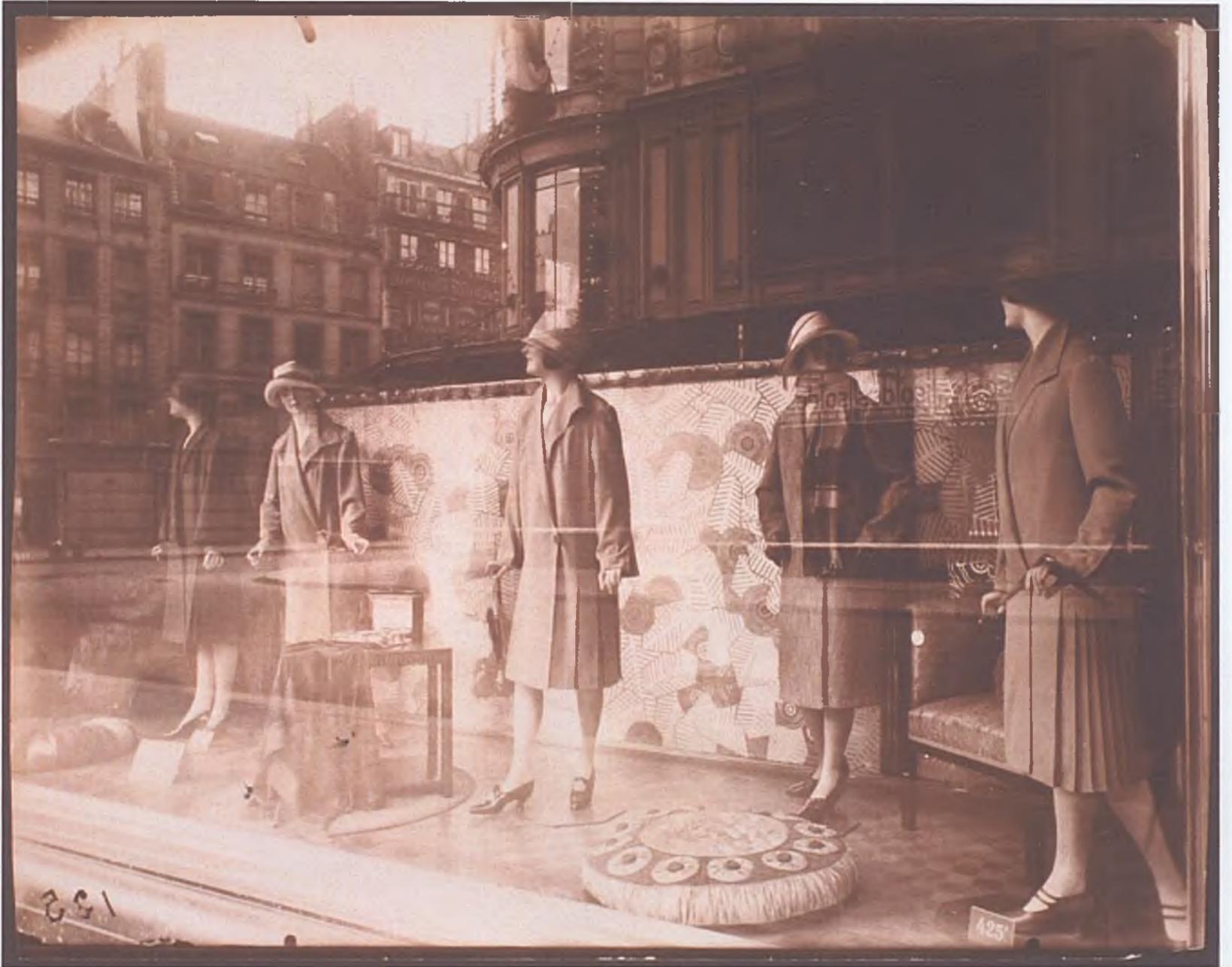
5.16



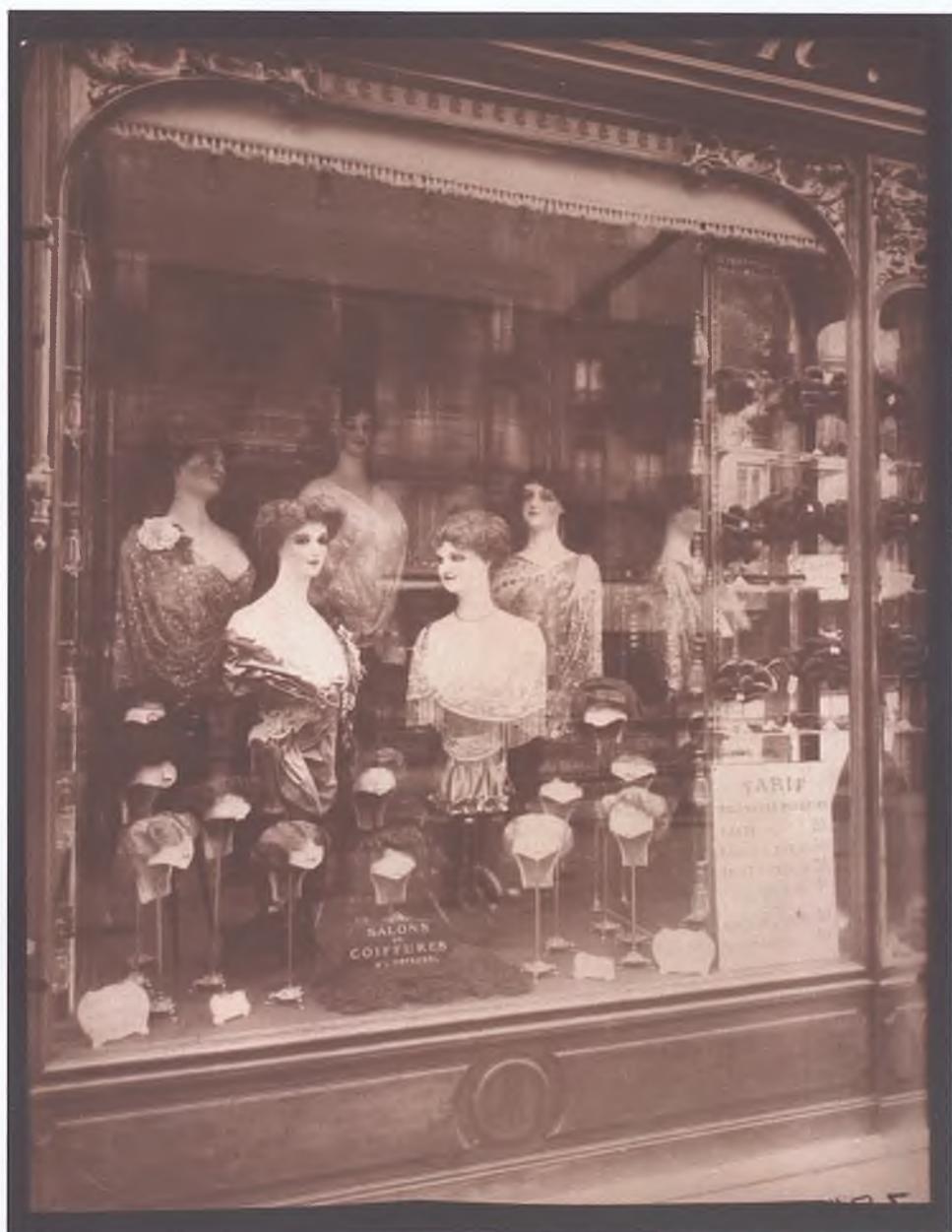
5.17





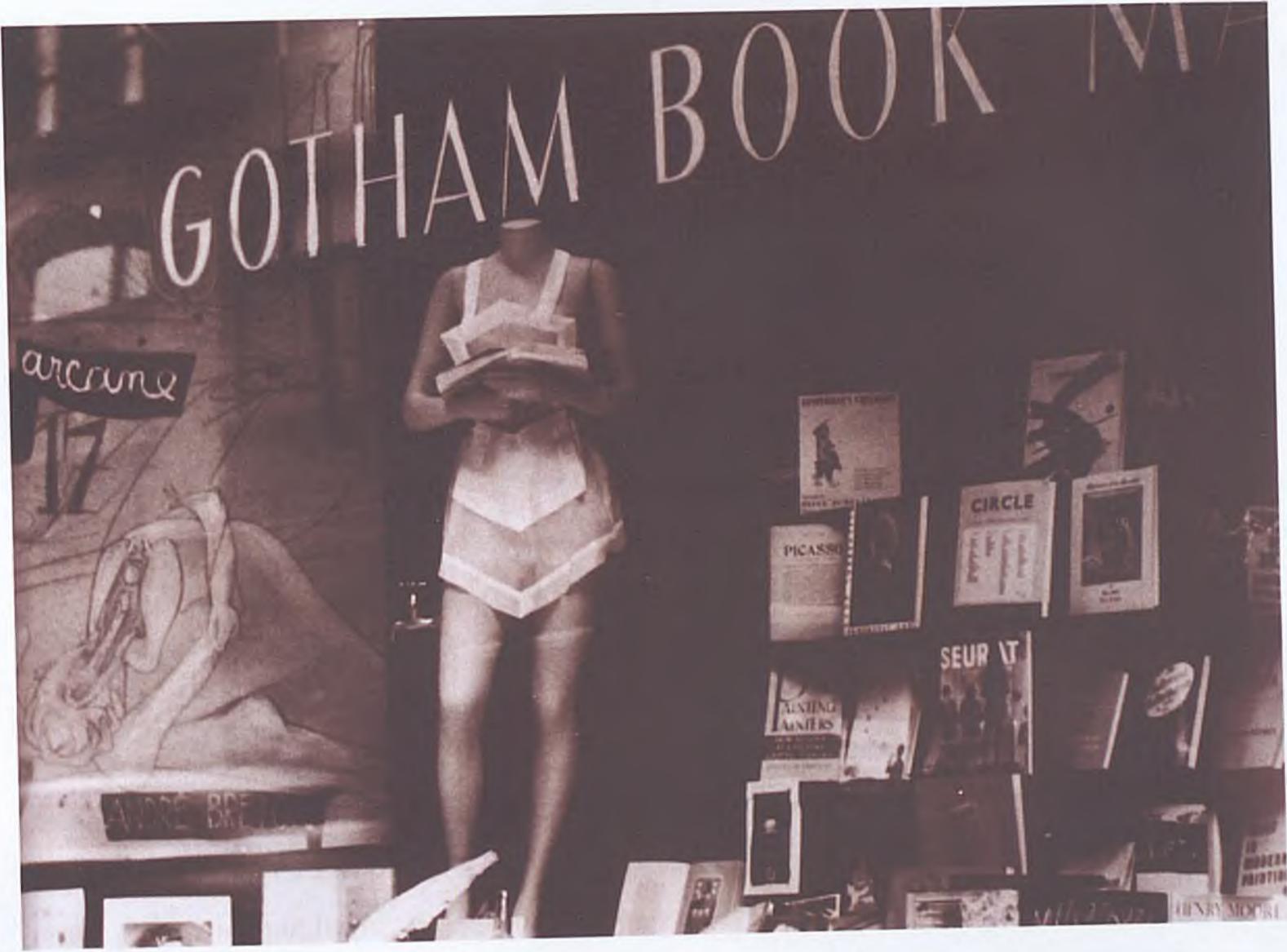


5.20





5.22



Window display for Gotham Book Mart, New York City, 1950s. The mannequin is dressed in a white swimsuit, and the background features a large mural of a reclining nude figure. The display is filled with books, including titles like 'PICASSO', 'CIRCLE', 'SEUR T', and 'HENRY MORAUX'.

CONCLUSION

THE LAST WORD

In this matter of the Moonstone the plan is, not to present reports, but to produce witnesses.⁴⁴³

Glasgow, ———ber 201—.

Dear reader,

In this, my last address to you, I invite you to put on your sunglasses and follow me to New York. We will be, once again, re-enacting the first scene of the film *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. It is the early hours of a 1961 morning and Audrey Hepburn, as Holly Golightly, steps out of a taxi with a paper cup – presumably containing coffee – and a wrapped pastry. She is dressed in a black satin evening gown designed by Hubert de Givenchy.⁴⁴⁴ Like us, she is wearing sunglasses; hers, however, cover tired eyes. She is making her way to her flat after a night out. But Holly has a fantasy, ignited by an image, which she seeks before going home. The image that seduces her is that of herself in relation to the objects displayed in the shop windows of the famous Fifth Avenue jewellers *Tiffany and Co*. She is held there, almost suspended, with the coffee and pastry in her hand, not quite able to tear her eyes away. As viewers, we are seduced by this scene of seduction and the film is not anymore about Holly's fantasies of Tiffany's but about our seduction of her being seduced. A subject converted into an object; just like the woman in the photo-book *Make Me Yours*.

Let us return from this daydream and look back, refreshing the memory of our journey, as we are nearing its conclusion. At the very beginning, seduction was identified as a four-part object of study: a principle, a process, a phenomenon, and a

443. Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, London: CRW Publishing, 2007 (1868), p. 282.

444. According to Christie's who auctioned the dress, she was wearing a 'sleeveless, floor-length gown with fitted bodice embellished at the back with distinctive cut-out décolleté, the skirt slightly gathered at the waist and slit to the thigh on one side, labelled inside on the waistband *Givenchy*; accompanied by a pair of black elbow-length gloves [made later].' Christie's, *Lot 111 / Sale 4912: Audrey Hepburn Breakfast At Tiffany's, 1961*, available from <http://www.christies.com/LotFinder/lot_details.aspx?intObjectID=4832498> [accessed 27.06.10].

practice. From the literature and materials studied, four rules were extracted. At the same time, two main problems were identified: a lack of an operational definition of seduction, and a troublesome pervasiveness. Rex Butler helped to overcome the issue of definition, but pervasiveness remained. It revealed a considerable difficulty in studying seduction, thus changing the question at the centre of this case. The approaches I examined (from Baudrillard, Casanova, and Laclos, to Sophie Calle, Sinatra, Greene, Vuarnet, and Freud) are examples of this obstacle, as their methods and the principles they outline are, in themselves, seduced but do not acknowledge its pervasive nature. What I devised to overcome this problem is the self-reflexive methodology, my contribution to knowledge. This methodology, which aims to provide a point of view on the unviewable, stems directly from my engagement in writing, psychoanalytic and artistic – mainly photographic – practices. Using this tool in instances where a particular woman experiences seductive encounters has revealed knowledge on the strategy of seduction, in particular in relation to its reversibility, its initial resistance as constitutive, its traumatic aspect, its relation to fantasy and its reliance on appearance, on the way it manifests itself. This was recounted in detail in the five previous chapters. Thus, if we return to the title of this study and to the research question, the psychodynamics of seduction, the flow of the encounter between object – work of art – and subject – viewer – has been studied, from within the seductive relation, with the help of the self-reflexive methodology. A number of concepts, not least transference, the *Discourse of the Analyst*, desire, *objet petit a*, gaze and voice, have helped me to ground the study within psychoanalysis, a relational practice with seduction at its origins. Here, in my personal address to you, I will look at the investigation as a whole, in order to resolve a few details that have remained unexamined.

Before I go any further, however, I must own up to one point related to the issue of appearance. Now that you have followed me all the way to these pages, I must confess that I have attempted to involve you, the reader, in a play of mirrors, similar to the one I found myself in. *I* am the detective, the woman, the artist, the investigator, enacting – or, shall I say, acting out – seduction, falling for it while, at the same time, making this text fall for me and, thus, seduce you. So, in this research, you, the reader, fulfill a role. This is the reason I am writing you a letter, as I could not ask but through a personal address. My writing is yet another screen where the object (me) and the subject (you) come together; and now you can understand the demand, the injunction in the title of this study. I am asking you, the reader, to make me, this

object, yours. In asking you, I am overstepping the mark, I know, for you have the concluding word on this case. You, and only you, can pick up the text where it was left at the end of chapter five.

In this particular case, it makes sense to put this very personal demand in writing, and the feminist intellectual Françoise Collin already used this strategy when she wrote '*écrire c'est entrer dans la séduction*'; to write is to enter into seduction.⁴⁴⁵ Yet, there are some writings that are more conducive to this – among others: letters, detective stories, dialogues, case expositions, witness accounts – as they address and involve the reader quite directly. These styles of writing, these modes of address, have been present throughout this thesis, in the form of references (from Patrick French's open letter, to *Lolita* – a detective story – the Marquis de Sade's dialogues, or Malcolm Ashmore's published PhD case), and in my writing itself. The writing is put in a reciprocal relation to the photographs. Roland Barthes searched for a third meaning: We already encountered this at the beginning of chapter three where I discuss the still and the fragment. Through his examination, he proposes, although not overtly, a 'third way'.⁴⁴⁶ My own efforts reconciling image and text, the visual and the auditory, the gaze and the voice, mirror his, and it is important to understand both together, not as illustrations or theorizations of each other, but as different materials weaved to make one and the same thing. W. G. Sebald attempted this in novels; reading them is a very different experience and this is effected by his unique mix of photographs and text – although the text is prevalent. Sophie Calle's

445. Françoise Collin, 'Le séducteur cache la séduction', in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds), *La séduction*, Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 189–196, p. 195. My translation.

446. Barthes distils this third meaning from other two, the obvious and the symbolic. He also calls this third meaning *obtus*, imbues it with 'theoretical individuality' (p. 53), and places it beyond the levels of communication and signification, into what he calls *signifiance* (p. 54). He writes: 'the third meaning also seems to me greater than the pure, upright, secant, legal perpendicular of the narrative, it seems to open the field of meaning totally, that is infinitely (...) [It] appears to extend outside culture, knowledge, information; analytically, it has something derisory about it: opening out into the infinity of language, it can come through as limited in the eyes of analytic reason; it belongs to the family of pun, buffoonery, useless expenditure. Indifferent to moral or aesthetic categories (the trivial, the futile, the false, the pastiche), it is on the side of the carnival.' Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, p. 55. I related it to a third way because it seems to me that, in order to obtain this third meaning, a different way of thinking – different from the obvious and the symbolic – needs to be exercised. This is what my efforts have been geared to.

Related to this is Jane Rendell's 'place between' art and architecture, where art criticism and a critical spatial practice are merged to provide a critical position, through the practices of walking and writing. This is, of course, intimately related to the practice of writing I describe here, to my walking, camera in hand, finding seduction in front of shop windows and to the forensic gaze of my detective, my critical device. Jane Rendell, *Art and Architecture. A Place Between*. London, I.B. Tauris, 2006.

exhibitions and catalogues, have been, as you know, a constant source of inspiration to this research, as have other artists working with these forms, from Sharon Kivland to Jo Spence. Given the pervasive, flowing nature of seduction and its history in art and literature, this ‘third way’ has proved to be a sophisticated and precise mechanism for its recognition, capture and reflection.

From the encounter with the diamond ring, the modes of writing displayed in this volume allow for the reader to be recognised in them. Language, and in this particular case, the written word, has also offered a framework from which to analyse the capture of seduction, as effected in the two ‘reflection’ sections in chapter four. The inclusion of the detective was essential. In addition to her seductive characteristics – detectives lead readers, sometimes astray, as in Nabokov’s *Despair* – and her investigative associations, it provided a distancing device, a forensic look into a case in which I am both the subject and the object. Becoming the centre of my own research, although I resisted it for a while – as can be seen in the works after chapter one – became absolutely necessary. I am a direct witness of seduction, a victim of it.⁴⁴⁷ Also, something more. As French writer Roger Lewinter puts it ‘*en effet, on n’est jamais tenté – séduit – que par soi*’; indeed, one is never tempted – seduced – but by oneself.⁴⁴⁸ While this approach has obvious biases (see chapter two), it is not the first time it has been used. Merleau-Ponty’s *Phenomenology of Perception*, to cite but an example of many, is a subjective account from which the philosopher extracts principles.⁴⁴⁹ To make it work in my case, a number of steps had to be taken. The instances of seduction chose me, rather than me taking a controlled approach on them (which was the failure that my first attempts at creating objects of seduction represented). The detective, a distancing-device enabling analysis, had to be given voice as a meta-reflexive entity within the whole text. Lastly, all assertions had to be verified by the evidence in the form of the photographs and the dialogue. The dialogue, by the way, was constructed in front of the photographs at the End Gallery exhibition and in front of the objects, that is, written standing up in Argyll Arcade and other shop windows, much to the disturbance of the security guards there who could not understand the relation between my wet eyes and my working pen. The

447. This is my research, and also my testimony. As Michael Clegg ascertained, however, one cannot testify without an enormous loss. Clegg, *Monument for Historical Change*.

448. Roger Lewinter, ‘La comédie magnétique’, in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds), *La séduction*, Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 11–15, p.15. My translation.

449. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

writing of the dialogue was, therefore, not a wholly personal enterprise. Even if subjective, it gives body to Marx's thought *if commodities could speak...*, and to his desire and mine. This is precisely what I want to tease out in this letter: the bigger picture in which seduction is situated and its relation to desire.

The relation between desire and its object is often portrayed as negative and aporetic; we desire what we cannot have and this structure also characterises gaze and voice, the partial objects of the drives of desire. Both are essence-less objects, areas of analytical impossibility and theoretical resistance. They have the function of interpellation, as they are related to the experiences of addressing and being addressed. The experience of being addressed is imposed from the outside and cannot be readily defended against. For that reason, voice and gaze can become invasive and threatening. The self-reflexive methodology, among other things, helps to modulate this experience, through the screen. The writings, the camera, the shop windows regulate the seductive relation and, whilst doing so, render it visible. As Belgian psychologist and anthropologist Francis Martens wrote: '*C'est ainsi que la séduction, le miroir et le masque ont aussi fonction de vérité et de dévoilement*'; it is thus that seduction, the mirror and the mask also have a function of truth and unveiling.⁴⁵⁰ Yet, as we have seen throughout this investigation, the screen is also the locus of anxiety and trauma. Duchamp knew this very well, as the words he uses to define his experience of shop windows are unequivocal: *interrogation, exigency, examination, sentence, demands, inevitable, determined, penalty, regret ...*:

The question of shop windows ...

To undergo the interrogation of shop windows ...

The exigency of the shop window ...

The shop window proof of the existence of the outside world ...

When one undergoes the examination of the shop window, one also pronounces one's own sentence. In fact, one's choice is 'round trip.'

From the demands of the shop windows, from the inevitable response to shop windows, my choice is determined. No obstinacy, ad absurdum, of hiding the coition through a glass pane with one or many objects of the shop window. The penalty consists in cutting the pane and in feeling regret as soon as possession is consummated. Q.E.D. (Neuilly, 1913)⁴⁵¹

450. Francis Martens, 'Éloge de la grimace', in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds). *La séduction*, Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 25–34, p. 29. My translation.

451. Marcel Duchamp, 'À l'Infinitif', tr. by Cleve Gray, in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp (Marchand du sel [1959])*, ed. by Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, New York: Da Capo Press, 1973, pp. 74–101, p. 74.

The reflection element of my methodology, like some methods in the clinical setting – from dream interpretation to free association – help, if the evidence is constantly returned to, to make sense of the seductive encounter. This may not be of necessary use on a day-to-day basis, in those seductions that take place when I walk to work, for example, or when I visit an art gallery in a city I have never been to. Yet, going through its process may help with those other seductions, those that stay longer than they should until they become somewhat mysterious, those that make me look for Duchamp books in second hand shops to see how *Étant donnés* has been documented. These are the seductions that, in the scale I discussed in chapter one, risk becoming pathological. The methodology is also useful, of course, for those seductions where, even though they are not recurrent, or violent, or dangerous in the sense of leading astray – compulsive buying, for example – the subject is efficiently enticed by a lure and wants to understand. The methodology helps to loosen the tight grip of seduction by showing its workings, and the relation between subject and object, through the recognition-capture-reflection steps. Yet, it does not break its spell, or drive it away.

So, for whom is this research? In first instance, the knowledge obtained can be applied by artists using photography, text or any other form acting as a screen, and who are interested in seduction and desire, and their manifestation in visual and written forms. It will appeal to viewers – hysterics and obsessional neurotics – seduced by specific works of art. The methodology and findings also have a wider appeal for anyone wanting to understand how to negotiate their own seduction in neoliberal economies. Lastly, some aspects of the self-reflexive methodology may have applications in fields where the visual and the textual act as a screen between a subject and an object (marketing and advertising, for example), but I write this with a word of caution, as the overall aim of the methodology is precisely to empower the viewer, thus lessening the effect of the seduction of advertisements.

The research has produced a number of findings, discussed in the previous chapters. Yet, I want to highlight here the role of resistance and reversibility in relation to seduction and, particularly, to the self-reflexive methodology. The discovery of the part resistance and reversibility play in the practice of seduction was somewhat surprising, although the psychoanalytic texts I consulted highlight the importance of resistance in the clinical setting, and Baudrillard is categorical about reversibility. Yet,

these were not clear until I had the opportunity to experience them – dare I say embody them – by studying seduction from within the seductive relation. Resistance was most evident during the recognition phase of the methodology and it was most unexpected because of the positiveness it came with. Seduction was happening, yet, I did not recognize it as such and, thus, did not give it any importance. It was only when I began photographic capture as a matter of course that I realized I had been seduced, unaware, just like the *Présidente de Tourvel* and *Cornelia* had been when they said ‘no’ but carried on their engagement with their suitors. Michèle Polak Cornillot defines resistance as ‘something that stands in the way of the progress of analytic work during treatment (...) the psychic force that the patient opposes to the bringing into consciousness of certain unpleasurable representations during treatment: the psychic force developed to maintain repression’.⁴⁵² The resistance here was that of acknowledging what was happening. The self-reflexive methodology, just like transference in the analytic setting, allowed the identification and recognition of this resistance. Reversibility’s importance became clear during the sustained use of the methodology, especially in the capture and reflection phases. The transformation of the agency of the seducee and the change in her role to that of seducer enabled the clear visualization of the self-destructive tendency of seduction – especially through the photographs. In reversibility, it is not the seducer or the seducee that are destroyed, or seduction itself, but *that particular seduction*. And this, I found, is inherent to any seduction system, as seen in all the sources I consulted and in the work in these two volumes – both in the writing and the images, which contain visual and textual examples of resistance and reversibility. So, the lesson learned about these two aspects of seduction is that both resistance and reversibility are inevitable, and while nothing will stop the latter, any researcher wanting to study seduction needs to be very aware of the former, overcompensating for it.

There are three areas I want to highlight as conclusions to this study. These conclusions are separate from the findings – the role of resistance, the reversibility of the encounter, the relationship to trauma, fantasy and appearance – and my contribution to knowledge – the methodology. The conclusions place the study in its contemporary cultural context and represent generic thoughts on the seduction of

452. Michèle Polak Cornillot, ‘Resistance’, in Alain de Mijolla (ed.), *International Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*, Gale Cengage, 2005, available from < <http://www.enotes.com/psychoanalysis-encyclopedia/resistance> > [accessed 06.03.11].

works of art. The conclusions are related to three areas: engagement, dialectics, and enchantment.

The politics of engagement has been a thread throughout this work, from the very first encounter with Duchamp's *Étant donnés*. Moreover, photography as a 'concrete encounter', to quote W. J. T. Mitchell, and a critical tool, has allowed me to take position in relation to the capitalist object, the work of art and its contexts, and my own desire, allowing for a personal political intervention, and agency.⁴⁵³ This is in itself, a situated act in photography, through a placement of the subject, the viewer, the object and the camera in a specific relation, a social bond.

This leads to a second contextualisation in the domain of dialectics. I want to introduce a disclaimer here, as dialectics has not been the object of my study and I would not want to claim a contribution to this field. This is also true for my earlier mention of politics. Here, I simply want to place seduction within a mode of relation acknowledging the struggle of opposite forces, of conflict and contradiction, and the negotiation of differences through a dialogue enabling their interchange.⁴⁵⁴ While binary opposites are static, dialectics are dynamic as they enable a transformation. Bearing the contradictions and conflicts in a dialectical engagement, staying with them and allowing for the dialogue – literally – to effect a transformation is what this research aims. The journey has certainly been true for myself.

The engagement with the work of art and the dialectic of seduction ensue in a third conclusion, perhaps the most social and cultural of all. Freud is often seen as a disenchanter, a consequence of the trauma that the enchantment period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century effected in him.⁴⁵⁵ Desire is obscure, and so

453. W. J. T. Mitchell wrote: 'The "working through" of ekphrasis and the other, then, is more like a triangular relationship than a binary one; its social structure cannot be grasped fully as a phenomenological encounter of subject and object, but must be pictured as a *menage a trois* in which the relations of self and other, text and image, are triply inscribed. If ekphrasis typically expresses a desire for a visual object (whether to possess or praise), it is also typically an offering of this expression as a gift to the reader.' 'Ekphrasis and the Other', in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994, pp. 151–182, p. 164. See also Damian Sutton and Ken Neil, 'The Photographic Act: Encounter, Event, Configuration Network' panel, 2010 College Arts Association Annual Conference, Chicago, 10–13 February, available from <www.collegeart.org/pdf/2010CallforParticipation.pdf> [accessed 27.06.10].

454. The genealogy of dialectics falls outside the remit of this study. Yet, a link can be made between Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's classic *thesis + antithesis = synthesis* and Karl Marx.

455. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Seminar at the Faculty of Arts*, University of Glasgow, 08 June 2010.

is our relation to ourselves. While I would not want to claim that the period of disenchantment is over, I would like to propose seduction – and especially a knowing seduction of works of art – as a way of finding a re-enchantment within disenchantment.⁴⁵⁶ And, as with dialectics, I would also like to propose an engagement with it in which desire, while aporetic, is not negative, but transformative. Of course, conflict and trauma remain a part of it, inseparable from seduction and desire. But remember the pleasure of the woman in the dialogue, the pleasure in the flow of desire through the scopie and the invocatory drives, the pleasure of her *having* – as in holding, or possessing – through engaging and understanding, rather than purchasing.⁴⁵⁷ She did purchase in the end, that is true, and this is when she lost the pleasure the relation had brought to her and her desire moved elsewhere, taking seduction with it. Desire is always in motion, especially in consumption, so, an alternative to buying, another way of having that keeps desire in play, is a positive outcome. The self-reflexive methodology should provide courage and confidence to the subject to stand her own ground within seduction.

There are immediate areas for further research in relation to seduction. These are areas I have encountered in this journey but which posed too big a problem to engage with in a cursory manner, and thus fell outside of the scope of what I could do. They relate to the issue of gender, and seduction in the art gallery and its dissemination and display in visual form.

Gender, in its relation to seduction, remains troubling. In this submission, I began to show the individual power of contemporary feminine fantasies and their performativity, as understood by psychoanalysis; that is, a psychic organisation and dramatisation, usually in visual form, in which the subject has a part to play. The diamond ring, the shoes, and all the other objects in the shop windows fulfill psychic desires. Fantasies enable the subject to sustain her desire and, therefore, herself. The images of the woman – me – and the object – the object of my desire – represent an identification with an image of the self. An image related to the Lacanian imaginary, but also with symbolic coordinates. It is this fantasy that gives the images power. They

456. Todd McGowan points to the end of dissatisfaction and the emerging society on enjoyment. This enjoyment, however, is the injunction on the super-ego, an imperative. McGowan, *End of Dissatisfaction*.

457. Without wanting to open a can of worms in these last pages, I would venture to say that the engagement I propose through seduction is not consumption, as desire is not used up and no purchase is made. Remember the quiver, the gestural solipsism of my detective, who copied *Dany Nobus*.

also show the contingency and artificiality of femininity, the feminine as a pure void, and in which I cannot identify with any of my features, for, in the words of Kirsten Campbell, 'there is no true feminine behind the masquerade', the feminine is already a masquerade, an imaginary mask hiding the void of the subject but which enables her to sustain her desire and, therefore, herself.⁴⁵⁸ What are the seduction fantasies of femininity and of masculinity are questions that remain, and for which the self-reflexive methodology can become a useful tool. In my note 144, I give an indication for possible starting points for a study of gender, sexualisation and seduction.⁴⁵⁹ As I mention in chapter one, merging psychoanalysis and femininity is problematic. In fact, most of the texts on seduction I have mentioned here are written by males, and yet, from Baudrillard to Sibony, they speak of femininity. I have tried to address this with accounts from Parveen Adams, Bice Benvenuto, Joan Copjec, Dianne Hunter, Sharon Kivland, Mignon Nixon, Jane Rendell, Kaja Silverman and others. Work by female scholars on feminine fantasies in relation to seduction can attend to this imbalance and, perhaps, contribute a different voice to the debate.

More could be explored of the displays of seduction, specifically in relation to the work of art in exhibition, but also on the other side of the shop window. *Étant donné*s and *Breakfast at Tiffany's* are both good examples of successful attempts at creating seductive displays. My visits to these, and others, and my own engagement in constructing shows – in particular *A Case of Seduction*, as I mentioned in chapter three, but also others – point to the fact that context (what surrounds the object, the environment, the situation), lighting, and the positioning of the object in relation to the viewer play an essential part in the process of leading astray.⁴⁶⁰ Although I was not explicitly writing about displays, I discussed some issues around positioning through Lacan's schema of the inverted bouquet in my chapters. The psychoanalyst Antoine Vergote, in his study on divinity and the devil, points to the importance of light in the

458. Kirsten Campbell, 'The New Sexual Contract: Lacan, Feminism, and the Making of Contemporary Subjectivity', *Jacques Lacan Today* [conference], The Psychoanalysis Unit, University College London, 8–9 May 2010.

459. Part four of Dianne Hunter's edited collection *Seduction and Theory: Readings of Gender, Representation and Rhetoric* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989, pp. 193–240) explores masculine and feminine constructions in the works of Jacques Lacan and Baudrillard, as they relate to seduction. This is also a good, if broader, starting point for the study of seduction and gender.

460. Tate Modern's *Surrealism: Desire Unbound* and Manolo Blahnik's exhibition at the Design Museum in London are also examples that helped to highlight the importance of lighting, context and positioning for the display of seduction. Jennifer Mundy (ed.), *Surrealism: Desire Unbound*, London: Tate Publishing, 2001; Blahnik, *Manolo Blahnik*.

play of seduction: 'This contrariness of presence – absence, obscure light, provokes the impatience of desire and the seducer finds a space in it for the game of its disguises'.⁴⁶¹ The study of displays of seduction should, in turn, help to explore seduction in the gallery, as I attempted, but not quite succeeded, in figs. 22 and 23.

You may remember the woman in the Arcade and her conversation with the ring, where the jewel promises her something. Quoting Vergote has reminded me of another part of his text where he explores exchange, promises and what the seducer and the seducee give away in the relation. He writes:

The collusion between the desires of the subject and the seducer means that the gift offered becomes binding and that the seduced subject submits to the will of the seducer. What this diabolical disguise hides deep, is that in the last-instance the gift is the gift of nothing. For the seducing devil does not give himself. It possesses. It does not enter into a system of exchange, it does not give but certain things in exchange for the total gift of the seduced subject himself.⁴⁶²

Seduction might not have given me all in this pursuit we have been having with each other. Yet, I am confident that what it has been forced to trade with me in exchange for my seduction – parts of its mode of working – is valuable knowledge, all the more useful thanks to the self-reflexive methodology.

One last theme I would like to mention briefly, before I leave you (and my object), is the auto-seduction of the word itself. To name it is to conjure it up, but there is always something that remains un-writeable, un-photographable, something beyond symbolization when speaking of seduction. This is because of its pervasiveness, and our own involvement in it. As Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher write, '*le concept*

461. My translation. The original text reads: 'Cette contrariété de la présence – absence, de lumière obscure, provoque l'impatience du désir et le séducteur y trouve l'espace pour le jeu de ses déguisements.' Antoine Vergote, 'Charmes divins et déguisements diaboliques', in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds), *La séduction*. Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 77–84, p. 78.

462. My translation. In French: 'La collusion entre les desirs du sujet et le séducteur fait que le don offert devient contraignant et que le sujet séduit se soumet à la volonté du séducteur. Ce que le déguisement diabolique cache au fond, c'est qu'en dernière instance le don est don de rien. Car le diable séducteur ne se donne pas lui-même. Il possède. Il n'entre pas dans un système d'échange, mais il ne donne que certaines choses en échange pour le don total du sujet séduit lui-même.' Vergote, *Charmes divins*, p. 80.

ici y laisserai de ses plumes, [...] la séduction ainsi aurait le dernier mot?; the concept would leave here some of its feathers, [...] seduction would thus have the last word.⁴⁶³

Yours, sincerely so,

Laura Jonsin

463. Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds), 'Préface', in *La séduction*, Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 7–10, p. 7. My translation.

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Fig. 2 Marcel Duchamp's *Étant donnés* (behind the Spanish door) at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, as experienced by the author.

Fig. 3 Frank Sinatra arrested for seduction (photograph, Sheriff's Office, Bergen County, New Jersey, 1938). Right, enlargement of suspect identification card – shown beneath mug shot on left image. Source: Great Modern Pictures [image], *Sinatra arrested for seduction*, 1938, available from <<http://www.greatmodernpictures.com/pjazz1a.htm>> [accessed 26.01.08].

Fig. 4 Qualitative comparison between seduction and love, adapted from 'the evil genie of passion'. Source: Jean Baudrillard, *Fatal Strategies (Les Strategies Fatales* [1983]), tr. by Philip Beitchman and W. G. J. Nieslichowski, London: Pluto Press, 1999, pp. 99–110.

Fig. 5 Seduction as principle, phenomenon, process, practice.

Fig. 6 Seducing object and desiring subject graph.

Fig. 7 The scale of seduction.

Fig. 8 Structure of the Four Discourses (Adapted from Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse, 1969–1970* [1991]), ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Russell Grigg, New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

Fig. 9 *The Discourse of the Analyst* (Adapted from Jacques Lacan, *The*

Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse, 1969–1970 [1991]), ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Russell Grigg, New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

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- Fig. 10 Concept cloud of informal responses to the Breda photograph.
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- Fig. 11 Jacques Lacan's Schema I. Source: Jacques Lacan, *Seminar II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955 (Le séminaire, livre II: Le moi dans la théorie de Freud et dans la technique de la psychanalyse 1954–1955 [1978])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Sylvana Tomaselli, London: W. W. Norton, 1991, p. 109.
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- Fig. 12 Schema of my particular approach to methods within the self-reflexive methodology.
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- Fig. 13 The line and the light. Source: Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse [1973])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Alan Sheridan, New York: W.W. Norton, 1981, p. 91.
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- Fig. 14 Experiment of the Inverted Bouquet. Source: Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book I: Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953–1954 (Le séminaire I: Les écrits techniques de Freud [1975])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by John Forrester, New York: W.W. Norton, 1991, p. 78.
-
- Fig. 15 What is a picture? The functioning of the scopic register. Source: Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis (Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XI: Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse [1973])*, ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Alan Sheridan, New York: W.W. Norton, 1981, p. 85.
-
- Fig. 16 The self-reflexive methodology.

Fig. 17 The *Discourse of the Master*. (Adapted from Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis* (*Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XVII: L'envers de la psychanalyse, 1969–1970* [1991]), ed. by Jacques-Alain Miller, tr. by Russell Grigg, New York: W.W. Norton, 2007.

Fig. 18 The *Discourse of Capitalism*. (Adapted from Aurore Grimeau-Lamorinière and Laurent Edo, *Perversion et discours capitaliste*. available from <<http://www.convergence-pays.nc/Articles/articles%20ARES/Perversion%20et%20discours%20capitaliste.doc>> [accessed 02.10.10])

Fig. 19 Identification of Robert Greene's 24-step seduction technique within the dialogue and the photo-book *Make Me Yours*. Source: Robert Greene, *The Art of Seduction*, London: Profile Books, 2004.

Fig. 20 Vuarnet's nine propositions. Source: Jean Noël Vuarnet, 'Le séducteur malgré lui', in Maurice Olender and Jacques Sojcher (eds), *La séduction*, Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1980, pp. 65–76.

Fig. 21 Khaslavsky and Shedroff's eight seductive characteristics. Source: Julie Khaslavsky and Nathan Shedroff, 'Understanding the Seductive Experience', *Communications of the ACM*, 42 (5), 1999, pp. 45–49, available from:
<http://captology.stanford.edu/Key_Concepts/Papers/CACMseduction.pdf> [accessed 04.09.09]

Fig. 22 The self-reflexive methodology in relation to key sources.

Fig. 23 Seduction in the art gallery, (or, exhibit number four).

Fig. 24 My seduction in front of works of art (or, exhibit number five).

APPENDIX

THE IMAGES BETWEEN THE CHAPTERS

Laura González is the author of all the works, unless otherwise indicated immediately before the title.

- 1.1 *Untitled*. Two clay objects. 2.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm. 2005.

- 1.2 *Dolls and Villains*. Clay, gloss, sewing pin. 2.5 x 2.5 x 2.5 cm., 2006.

- 1.3 *Bijoux #4 (engage and conunit)*. Pin cushion, sewing pins. Variable dimensions, 2006.

- 1.4 *Bijoux #5*. Paper, sewing pins. 2.5 x 3 x 5 cm. approx., 2006.

- 1.5 *Bijoux #6*. Clay, sewing pins. 2.5 x 3 x 5 cm. approx., 2006.

- 1.6 *Fuck Dance Fuck*. Three braclet, diamante letters. Variable dimensions, 2007.

- 1.7 *Misrecognition (Split Flip series)*. Looped, animated photographs. Variable duration. 2006. Screened in *As We Speak*, Experimental Film screening event as part of 2010 Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, Stereo, Glasgow, 28 April 2010.

- 1.8 *Flip (Split Flip series)*. Looped, animated photographs. Variable duration. 2006.

- 1.9 *Split Flip (Split Flip series)*. Looped, animated photographs. Variable duration. 2006. Screened in *As We Speak*, Experimental Film screening event as part of 2010 Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, Stereo, Glasgow, 28 April 2010.

- 2.1 *Breda*. Inkjet print on gloss. Variable measurements, 2007.

- 3.1 Map of the two floors of the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*. End Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University, 19–25 May 2008.

- 3.2 Gallery view of the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*. End Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University, 19–25 May 2008; *Agent Provocateur*, with *Beaheaded*

- (lower floor) and *Arcade* (upper floor) in the background.
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- 3.3 Gallery view of the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*. End Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University, 19–25 May 2008: *Beheaded* and *A Case of Seduction (Approach)* in the background.
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- 3.4 Gallery view of the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*. End Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University, 19–25 May 2008: *A Matter of Two* and *A Case of Seduction (Surrender)* in the background.
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- 3.5 Gallery view of the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*. End Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University, 19–25 May 2008: *A Case of Seduction (Approach, Statement of Intent, Surrender)* and *Headless*, to the far right.
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- 3.6 Gallery view of the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*. End Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University, 19–25 May 2008: Upper Floor View.
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- 3.7 Gallery view of the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*. End Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University, 19–25 May 2008: *Arcade* and viewer.
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- 3.8 Gallery view of the exhibition *A Case of Seduction*. End Gallery, Sheffield Hallam University, 19–25 May 2008: *Arcade*.
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- 4.1 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, title page, 148 x 210 mm. approx., 2008–2009.
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- 4.2 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, sample contents page, 148 x 210 mm. approx., 2008–2009.
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- 4.3 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, sample entry page, 148 x 210 mm. approx., 2008–2009.
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- 4.4 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, sample invoice page, 148 x 210 mm. approx., 2008–2009.
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- 4.5 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, sample index page, 148 x 210 mm. approx., 2008–2009.
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- 4.6 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.

- 4.7 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.
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- 4.8 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.
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- 4.9 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.
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- 4.10 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.
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- 4.11 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.
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- 4.12 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.
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- 4.13 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.
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- 4.14 *Objet-Supposé-Savoir*, clinical diary, out of the book page, variable dimensions, 2008–2009.
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- 5.1 Naia del Castillo, *Seducer (Seducer)*, Shirt and *Seducer (Seducer)*, Luxachrome, 100x100 cm., 2002. Source: Naia del Castillo, *Sobre la Seducción. 2002–2004*, available from <<http://www.naiadelcastillo.com/seducccion.html>> [accessed 04.01.10].
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- 5.2 Naia del Castillo, *S.T Seducción (S.T Seduction)*, Luxachrome, 100x100 cm., 2002. Source: Naia del Castillo, *Sobre la Seducción. 2002–2004*, available from <<http://www.naiadelcastillo.com/seducccion.html>> [accessed 04.01.10].
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- 5.3 Naia del Castillo, *Seducción (Seduction)*, Luxachrome, 76x100 cm., 2002. Source: Naia del Castillo, *Sobre la Seducción. 2002–2004*, available from <<http://www.naiadelcastillo.com/seducccion.html>> [accessed 04.01.10].
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- 5.4 Ceal Floyer, *Double Act*, Photographic gobo, gobo holder and theatre lamp, dimensions variable, 2006. Source: Lisson Gallery, *Ceal Floyer, Works*,

available from <<http://www.lissongallery.com/#/artists/ceal-floyer/works/>> [accessed 22.07.10].

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- 5.5 Sophie Calle wearing Freud's coat in front of 20 Maresfield Gardens, Freud's London House and now the Freud Museum. Source: Sophie Calle, *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*, tr. by Charles Penwarden, London and New York: Thames and Hudson 2005, p. 14.
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- 5.6 Sophie Calle's *Bad Breath*. Source: Sophie Calle, *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*, tr. by Charles Penwarden, London and New York: Thames and Hudson 2005, pp. 42-43.
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- 5.7 Sigmund Freud and Sophie Calle wearing Freud's coat. Source: Sophie Calle, *Appointment with Sigmund Freud*, tr. by Charles Penwarden, London and New York: Thames and Hudson 2005, pp. 2-3.
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- 5.8 Lee Friedlander, *New Orleans, Louisiana*, 1968, gelatin silver print, 17.8 x 27.4 cms. Source: Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), *The Collection: Lee Friedlander*, available from <http://www.moma.org/collection/browse_results.php?criteria=O%3AAD%3AE%3A2002&page_number=82&template_id=1&sort_order=1> [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.9 Lee Friedlander, *Colorado, 1967*, 17.2 x 24.8 cms. Source: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, available from: <<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/1993.360>> [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.10 Lee Friedlander, *New York City, 1968*. Source: Art Icono, *Lee Friedlander*, available from <<http://phomul.canalblog.com/archives/p345-5.html>> [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.11 Lee Friedlander, *Denver, Colorado, 1998*. Source: Fraenkel Gallery, *Artists: Lee Friedlander*, available from <http://www.fraenkelgallery.com/artists/lee-friedlander/1990s-2000s/photos-pi_21.html> [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.12 Lisette Model, *Self Portrait, 55 Manhattan*, 1940s. Source: Cybermuse, *Lisette Model*, available from: <http://cybermuse.gallery.ca/cybermuse/showcases/model/index_e.jsp>

[accessed 23.07.10].

- 5.13 Lisette Model, *Self portrait window reflection, Fifth Ave., NYC*, 1960s. Source: Cybermuse, *Lisette Model*, available from: http://cybermuse.gallery.ca/cybermuse/showcases/model/index_e.jsp [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.14 Lisette Model, *Reflection with hand*, 1939–45, gelatin silver photograph, 48.3x39.5 cms. Source: Cara Phillips, *Ground Glass: Women Photographers—Part One*, available from <http://caraphillips.wordpress.com/2008/02/18/women-photographers-part-one/> [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.15 Lisette Model. *Reflections, NYC, Fifth Avenue*, 1945, Silver print, 33x27 cms. Source: Artnet, *Lisette Model – Reflections, NYC, Fifth Avenue*, available from: <http://www.artnet.com/artwork/425511825/424187413/lisette-model-reflections-nyc-fifth-avenue.html> [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.16 Robert Doisneau, *Sidelong glance*, 1948. Source: Masters of Photography, *Robert Doisneau*, available from http://www.masters-of-photography.com/D/doisneau/doisneau_sidelong_glance.html [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.17 Robert Doisneau, *La Dame Indignée (The Indignant Woman)*, 1948. Source: University of Kansas, Spencer Museum of Art, *La Dame Indignée (The Indignant Woman)*, available from <http://empweb.nhn.ku.edu/eMuseumPlus?service=ExternalInterface&module=collection&objectId=15100&viewType=detailView> [accessed 25.11.10].
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- 5.18 Eugène Atget, *Boulevard de Strasbourg (Corsets)*, 1912, gelatin silver print, the Museum of Modern Art, New York. Source: Ghislaine Wood, *The Surreal Body*, London, V&A Publications, 2007, p. 56.
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- 5.19 Eugène Atget, *Avenue de l'Observatoire*, 1926, silver printing, 18x22.4 cms. Source: Georges Eastman House, *Eugène Atget*, available from http://www.flickr.com/photos/george_castman_house/sets/72157621011255003/ [accessed 23.07.10].
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- 5.20 Eugène Atget, *Bon Marché*, 1926–27, silver printing-out paper print, 17.8x22.9 cms. Source: Georges Eastman House, *Eugène Atget*, available from

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/george_castman_house/sets/72157621011255003/> [accessed 23.07.10].

5.21 Eugène Atget, *Coiffeur, Bd. de Strasbourg*, 1912, silver printing, 22.7x17.6 cms. Source: Georges Eastman House, *Eugène Atget*, available from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/george_castman_house/sets/72157621011255003/> [accessed 23.07.10].

5.22 Claude Cahun, *Shop Window with Shoes*, gelatin silver print, c. 1936, Musée National d'Art Moderne de la ville de Paris. Source: Ghislaine Wood, *The Surreal Body*, London, V&A Publications, 2007, p. 58.

5.23 Marcel Duchamp and Enrico Donati, *Shop Window, Gotham Book Mart (Lazy Hardware)*, 1945, Philadelphia Museum of Art. Source: Ghislaine Wood, *The Surreal Body*, London, V&A Publications, 2007, p. 57.

Colophon

This thesis is the companion of the photo-book *Make Me Yours*.

The original source for this thesis was created in Word and output as a PDF file. The diagrammes in the thesis were created using *Omnigraffle*. The photographs were enhanced (for levels, brightness and contrast) and processed using *Adobe Photoshop*. The layout design and graphics were carried out by the author with the help of Neil Scott.

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