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Title:

Positionings, Policies and Practices in the UK's current higher education sector in the context of neo-liberalism: an exploration of the subject positions of the female learning support assistant, as they practise their art and craft in the everyday.

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PhD in Education, Transformation and Lifelong Learning

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Writing forms a passageway between two shores (Cixous, 1993a: 3)



Diana, Overflow, 2016, 12.0" x 16.0", oil on canvas

Abstract

In the UK, 2019, neoliberalism's collision with austerity is often the landscape in which education is situated. This is the context for a small cohort of women learning support assistants (LSAs) working at a UK university. Considered in this context are the subject positions and practices that overlap and intersect with the policies that shape higher education and disability. This unique milieu has produced a complex layering of shifting subject positionings for all in education, most notably in this research it is that of the LSA as artist-educator-practitioner and the resilient learner. In order to make sense of the multiple threads I weave together, I use the concepts developed by Foucault and Cixous. In a Foucauldian framework, I analyse discourse and how power/knowledges operate in the LSAs' landscape. From a close reading of Cixous's conceptualisation of the *écriture féminine*, I suggest that there are spaces outside of discourse facilitating transformations.

The methodologies used are situated in an auto/ethnographical and auto/biographical approach, where I take up the subject position of the creative-feminine-bricoleur. As the bricoleur, the data collected from interviews and craft-artwork piece together a collage that curates a collective of shared experiences. Their practices and knowledge production, embodied in their (art)work, might otherwise have been lost as they make their exits from the academy. Therefore, this thesis makes a significant contribution to the limited knowledge produced and goes some way towards understanding the work of the LSA in this particular space and time. It is a story that documents the LSAs' abilities to transgress and resist their positions of marginalisation over a twelve-year period before being made redundant. Accordingly, I celebrate our subjectivities as LSAs, artist-educators, and in this political act of writing, I hope to the right the social injustices that sought to oppress women's place in the artworld and education.

Declaration and Word Count

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own. Word count (exclusive of appendices, list of reference and bibliography): 83,093 words

Dedication

To: my Mother, Doreen Violet Gee, a constant source of encouragement and inspiration.

Acknowledgements

Over the past four years I have received support and encouragement from a great number of individuals, most notably was Professor Sue Jackson without whom I should not have ventured into the academy to begin this PhD. Whilst I studied for my MSc, she saw and nurtured my potential, ability and confidence. On Sue's retirement Dr Kerry Harman became my supervisor, with Dr Elizabeth Houlst. Their support has made the process of completing this study a positive experience. They encouraged the autobiographical element of the thesis and a voice, my voice, that could be heard in the text. In addition, I should like to thank my participants; we were able to draw upon the strength of each other in collective community as we faced a very anxious time. Other colleagues and friends were Sarah Thompson, Carol Hatfield and my sister Sharon Greenslade, who spent many hours proofreading and listening to me talk about my research. Lastly, a special thanks to my husband Steven Hayward and my children Emma and Daniel who took on extra chores to assist with this process, so that I could manage working, whilst undertaking this thesis.

Contents

Abstract.....	3
Declaration and Word Count	4
Dedication	5
Acknowledgements.....	6
List of Illustrations.....	8
Chapter 1: Introduction: The Exits, Les Sorties.....	10
The Landscape: Student-LSA, Our Sorties: A Twelve-year History of the Past.....	19
Rationale: Why this Landscape; Why this Tale from the LSAs' Creative Toolbox?.....	27
Sharing the Space of the Epistemological Positions of Privilege	35
Boundaries and Borders in Crafting the Landscape.....	41
Landscaping the Chapters.....	44
Chapter 2: Crafting a Methodology: The Bricoleur's Methods, Theories and Practices	48
Foucault's Toolbox, Methods, Techniques and Processes	56
The Contours of the Écriture Feminine.....	64
Synthesising the Tools of the 'Feminine' Bricoleur.....	70
Chapter 3: A Review: Positionings, Policies and Practices of the LSAs' Landscapes	85
The Cartography of LSAs in the Territory of Policy and the Funding Landscape.....	87
The Discursive Construction of the 'Good' LSA: Language and Landscape	96
Resistances: Crooked Contours in the Landscape of the 'Good' LSA	104
Chapter 4: Tales from the Toolbox: Practices in the Everyday	118
My Tale from the Toolbox: A Conversation with the Self and 'Others'	122
Tales of the Creative Other: The Texts in the Spaces of the Écriture Feminine	135
The Spaces of the LSA: Researcher, Knowledge (Re)Producer	154
The Territories of the Transgressors.....	171
Chapter 5: Reflections from the Landscape, The Beginnings, Les Debuts.....	189
Positionings, Policies and Practices of Arts, Crafts and Educational Spaces	191
My Space: A Small Contoured Contribution to the Landscape.....	197
Cixous's Contribution.....	199
The 'Feminine' Bricoleur in the Wider Landscape: my Transformation	201
Chapter 6: The Exhibition.....	203
Bibliography	207
Appendices:.....	222
Appendix 1: Ethics Form	222
Appendix 2: Interview Transcripts	240

List of Illustrations

Figure 1: Julie Heffernan, <i>Self Portrait as Tender Mercenary</i> , 2006, oil on canvas, 231 x 173 cm, private collection	51
Figure 2: Diana, <i>Self-Portrait</i> , 2014, pencil and paper, 25 x 29 cm, private collection.....	82
Figure 3: Beverley Hayward, <i>Mocking the Master Narrative: The Masquerade</i> , 2015-19, tapestry and mixed media, 30 x 40 cm, private collection	83
Figure 4: Diana, <i>Plato's Atlantis</i> , 2016, acrylic on canvas, 12 x 16 inches, private collection ..	120
Figure 5: Diana, <i>Darkness of Grace</i> , 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches, private collection....	121
Figure 6: Dali, <i>Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)</i> , 1936, oil on canvas, 100 x 99 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art	131
Figure 7: Diana, <i>Tree of Truth</i> , 2016, oil on canvas 51 x 77 cm, private collection	138
Figure 8: Nikki, 2012, <i>Organic Form: Letting Go</i> , 61 x 20 cm, acrylic on canvas, private collection	139
Figure 9: Georgiana Houghton, <i>A detail from Glory Be to God, 5th December 1864</i> , water colour and gouache on board, and pen and ink inscription on verso, Victorian Spiritualist/ Union, Melbourne, Australia	140
Figure 10: Diana, <i>Beyond Time and Space</i> , 2016, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, private collection.....	142
Figure 11 a, b, c, d: Prue, (2007). <i>Preparation processes and Thought Blanket</i> , mixed media large installation: mixed media with multiple elements, private collection	144
Figure 12: Leonardo da Vinci, <i>A large detail of the body and shoulder of the Angel Gabriel from Virgin of the Rocks</i> 1491-9, poster of exhibition at the National Gallery, London	146
Figure 13: Herbert Draper, 1898, <i>The Lamination of Icarus</i> , oil on canvas, 183 x 155.5 cm, Tate Britain.....	147
Figure 14: Millais, <i>Mariana</i> , 1851, oil on mahogany, 597 x 495 mm, Tate Britain	148

Figure 15: Piero del Pollaiuolo, <i>Apollo and Daphne</i> , probably 1470-80, oil on wood, 29.5 x 20 cm, National Gallery, London.....	150
Figure 16: Botticelli, <i>Primavera</i> , 1482, tempera on panel, 202 x 314 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence	151
Figure 17 a,b,c,d,e: Beverley Hayward, 2016, <i>Studios and Art Spaces in the Homes of the Participants</i> , Digital photography	162
Figure 18: Eve, 2018, <i>Empty Nest</i> , wool blanket, private collection	166
Figure 19: Eve, 2007-18 <i>Vessels</i> , mixed media, private collection	168
Figure 20: Diana, 2016. <i>The Self in the Space of the University: Molecular Structures: we grow</i> , pen and ink with acrylics, 29 x 21 cm, private collection	183
Figure 21a, b, c: Mary, (2015). <i>Multicultural illustrated character for children's book</i> , sketch 1. Amended multicultural illustrated character for children's book, sketch 2, final sketch 3.....	186
Figure 22: <i>Illustration</i> by Jeremy Floyd for the 2016, Notre Dame Shakespeare, Festival's Professional Company, production of "The Tempest."	188

But first it must be said that in spite of the enormity of the repression that has kept them in the "dark"- that dark which people have been trying to make them accept as their attribute ... Women's imaginary is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing: their stream of phantasms is incredible (Cixous, 1976: 876).

Chapter 1: Introduction: The Exits, Les Sorties¹

In this thesis I explore the positionings, policies and practices in a specific time and space, where neoliberalism has collided with austerity. The context has produced a unique milieu, and I document the stories of our subjective experiences working as learning support assistances (LSAs), from the time we started in 2007 to the summer of 2019.² In 2017, over one hundred learning support workers were made redundant at a UK university; this was the context of our exits. However, our stories began over ten years before, as many of the LSAs were recruited from the student body of artists at this particular university. These are the stories told.

As I plot the cartography of our journeys, I am recording a story of the present times, in a non-linear format, where I start with our ending as LSAs. In order to support the navigation of the spaces in and outside the educational landscape, I called upon the support of Foucault and Cixous; they helped me to make sense of the complexities of our stories. It is my aim to write a partial, yet significant and celebratory story of these women LSAs and 'artists as educators' (Clover, 2010) before they are forgotten and dispersed. I realised that there were many layers to our stories on completion of my Master's in Gender, Sexuality and Society in 2014, and just a year later we were told that redundancy was on the horizon. This ignited the motivation to

¹ During the writing process I drew heavily upon the work of Cixous and her text, *Sorties* (1975/1986). I use the word, 'sorties' interchangeably with the English meaning of the term, exit/s.

² The LSA is the term given to all the woman participating in this study. It is the term used in FE and HE for those usually supporting particular students with a learning difference and or disability. However often in the literature, the title is used interchangeably with that of the teaching assistant (TA) and or that of the classroom assistant (CA): the latter two roles are usually referred to when the staff are employed to support the teacher and the whole class in compulsory education. In the literature other terms of reference are: learning support worker (LSW); and teaching and learning support assistant (TLSA). In the context of this study I refer to the LSAs' subject position as the educational practitioner.

Where I use the collective pronouns, we and our, I am including myself in the cohort, as both a participant and on occasions where I take up the subject position as an LSA.

document our stories before it was too late. Therefore, I set about the navigation of the spaces in the perilous landscape that is higher education to write this account.

In this terrain, I write a social (his)tory of the present, what it is like to work in higher education in this LSA role, as policies intersect with practice and produce a multiplicity of subject positionings. I collage our stories in a layering of texts, where I engage in a dialogue with my participant LSAs and those in the literature. This produced a narrative detailing my own and the LSAs' experiences as support workers, students and artists. I document: an analysis of recent policy that has or has not had an impact on how we did our jobs; our conversations with each other; the recent artwork produced by us; and the curation of our exhibition. In the documentation of our exits from the academy, my hope is that our creativity as artists is brought into the light through this process and its impact thereafter. For at the time of the women's forced exit from The University they will make their debut as artists; they will appear from the 'dark' in the presentation of their own exhibition, held in the summer of 2020 at a local venue (Cixous, 1976: 876).³

The purpose of this project was to chart our 'passage' from exits and endings to beginnings and debuts, as we move from student, LSA to 'artist as educator' and artist-exhibitor (Clover, 2010). In our exits-sorties from The University during the summers of 2017 and mine in 2019, we are/were 'newly born' (Cixous, 1976: 876; 1977: 41; 1975/1986 and 1993a: 3). Yet, that birth was not easy, as we struggled into a world where neoliberalism was the current episteme. On the surface it appears that a forceful hold kept the women and me suppressed, as practitioners, both artists and LSA-educators. Once hidden in the 'dark', the writing of our stories-genealogies facilitates a celebratory story of our ability to negate this 'attribute', as eloquently expressed by Cixous in the text that opens this thesis (Cixous, 1976: 876). It is as Prue, an interviewee (2017: 2.10), explains: 'it [her artwork] was like the only way I felt I could materialise this voice'.

³ The University is the pseudonym used for the institution in which the participants were situated. The 'academy' is a generic term used to refer to all HE institutions. It is not to be confused with the secondary school institutions that are known as academies. All the participants were given pseudonyms to ensure a degree of anonymity. The University is the main research site in terms of the context within which the participants consider their work as educational practitioners. Therefore, the anonymising process was imperative to ensure that they were protected, as some of the situations they discussed were sensitive. They were resisting their marginalised positions and were resilient to the neoliberal agenda in The University.

In this, a rich tapestry of our landscape, I stitch together all the features that are important in a particular time and place. My methodology is threaded within a Foucauldian and Cixousian theoretical framework, discussed in Chapter Two. Chapter Three layers the stories of the support workers found in the literature with the policies in practice, followed by an account of our positions of resistance. I then proceed with our stories, told from the data collected, mainly the artwork that we created to suggest that we are knowledge (re)producers. I understand that often our lives are a tangle of intersected threads and in my reflections, Chapter Five, I revisit those multiple threads, and rather than unravelling and unpicking those strands, I suggest they are all part of an additive process that makes up our lives. One such strand that has added to the richness of this story is the exhibition that I have curated to bring our stories from the margins into the mainstream; this is documented in Chapter Six.⁴ To further add to the complexity of this dense fabric I have woven the context of the present with threads from past experiences as learners in compulsory education and women returnees.

My contribution is this unique auto-biographical weaving of our life stories as we worked as LSAs at a local university. The milieu has been shaped by a prolonged and established silencing of some women, specifically female artists; however, this small study disrupts these practices by voicing their stories. It is a space in which speech and practices of art, craft and education can be seen and heard (Cixous, 1993a: 3). As the women take up the subject positionings of LSA, educational practitioner and artist, I suggest that there are spaces outside of discourse that facilitate creativity, freedom, agency and transformation. Yet, in the UK's current higher education sector, the influences of policies upon their practices are significant, as those practices both constrain and enable. Those policies upon which this study is landscaped are situated within disability and widening participation agendas, and by implication inclusion. This study considers that the norms of the women's reproductive labour that contributes to maintaining this contemporary neoliberal higher education system, is a space often in which the knowledges and skills of LSAs are not recognised and, for the most part, remain invisible. This is considered by Clover (2013: 15): 'women along with other marginalised individuals have seen their experiences, their knowledge and their skills under-valued and /or totally ignored'.

I acknowledge the value of our work in writing this account, as we practise our craft in the everyday. Being in this 'privileged' position of ethnographer-storyteller, I was able to address the everyday experiences of this cohort of women LSAs before they were 'displaced', made

⁴ I describe the content of each chapter at the end of this section: Landscaping the Chapters.

redundant (Gilbert, 1986: xviii). This displacement was set in a context of an aggressive neoliberal landscape that is driving Government policy; the women whose tales I tell, now are absent from The University (BIS 2016, 2010; ECU, 2017; DfE, 2017; HEFCE, 2015a, b). This is because the current Government has implemented policies and practices to cut the funding for the LSA role in higher education; now the onus is placed solely with all universities to make up the shortfall due to these funding cuts. With this in mind, the situation at this University was time sensitive, for during the write up of this thesis the LSAs made their 'exits' (*Sorties*) (Cixous, 1975/1986). Many resigned during the process of this study, including six of my participants, and the rest had their employment terminated. As I write this thesis, in the here and now, this 'slice of history' illustrates the consequences of neoliberalism's collision with austerity, and in that collision the impact has shaped the contours of the landscape (Foucault, 1972: 191)⁵. The implications of the marketisation of education stretches further than the small space of the LSA in one university. The funding cuts apply to HE in general, and arguably anyone working in previously state-funded education.

In order to explore this complex and challenging terrain a Foucauldian consideration of language, practice and power/knowledge is applied through a feminist-'feminine' lens.⁶ By dipping into Foucault's vast 'toolbox', I selected the tools of discourse analysis and genealogy

⁵ In this context of neoliberalism, austerity and Brexit, the cuts to the landscape appear more acute and brutal. Competition in the market is complex, but the main drivers are for the top universities to recruit the 'best', most 'able' students, and for the students-'customers', they desire to have a 'good' degree/education. The impact of a neoliberal milieu may not have been as severe if the austerity measures were not in place. It ensures the reproduction of those norms that perpetuate the upper echelons of the social and economic hierarchies. Harvey (2005, 19) states that neoliberalism is '[a] political project to re-establish the conditions for capital accumulation and to restore the power of economic elites'. He continues: 'neoliberalism was from the very beginning an endeavour to restore class power to the richest strata in the population' (Harvey 2005, 28). By aligning education to a market discourse, it propagates the reproductive nature of education, where the upper classes can buy the best 'product'. It is in this episteme 'of political economic practices that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong private property rights, free markets, and free trade' (Harvey, 2005: 2). As a result, those groups in the current landscape that are unable to perform in a market economy are hit hardest when funding cuts are made by the managers in the academies. One such group is the disability department in higher education, which is 'managing' the consequences of the depth of the cuts. These cuts are felt in the layers of the landscape, so that change is seen by the absence of this group of women, and most likely a drop in students with disabilities. The marketisation of education is fully explored in Chapter 3.

⁶ In the context of this study, the terms Feminist, feminine and 'feminine' have nuanced differences: Feminist is used in a traditional sense to establish equality and the rights of women in all elements of society; again the feminine is defined as having the traditional socially constructed qualities associated with what it means to be a woman; and 'feminine' is the Cixousian meaning that is constructed within the *écriture féminine*. In this paired association, *écriture* - feminine, the term feminine does not have quotation marks, but when used on its own, but still in a Cixousian sense, and in order to separate the term from the gendered constructed meaning, I am writing, 'feminine'. This is fully explored in the body of the thesis.

(Foucault, 1974: 523-4). Firstly, these Foucauldian tools were used, with Helen Cixous (1975/1986) taking the baton from Foucault, for I felt that I needed more than what Foucault could offer to explore the creative spaces and transformations of the women. So, it was the tool of the *écriture féminine*, that is writing the feminine, to which I turned; the application of which is discussed in Chapter Two. I deemed it necessary to use the two approaches, which are visualised in the geographical metaphor of the land-seascape. This decision was made in order to make use of a Foucauldian toolbox, to 'landscape' the women's positions and practices in discourses and illuminate the power and knowledges in play. But I argue that as creative-'feminine' artists-writers, there are moments when we are transcending the limits and boundaries of discourses. There are spaces and times that cannot be explained in the structuring and layering of the landscape-(discourse). Cixous explains: the 'feminine practice of writing is and will remain impossible to define, theorize, code and enclose because it does and will always take place beyond and outside of the phallogocentric conceptual system' (Cixous, 1976: 883). She suggests that in writing in the 'feminine', we are not bound by the rules of a masculine neoliberal 'history' that enforces the repetition of the 'Selfsame' 'masters' of the 'Empire' and a Eurocentric worldview. (1986: 79).⁷ These 'feminine' spaces and times are visualised as fluid, changing, transformative, a type of seascape. However, I am not suggesting that this is a metaphor that is mutually exclusive in a binary structure of the separation of land and sea, but rather, that they exist together. Thus, the metaphor of land and sea is used in tandem.⁸

Therefore, Cixous's *écriture féminine* was a tool that could not be ignored. It was a way in which to explore the transformation of the women and me, in spaces that cannot be explained in language and practice. There are those theorists, in this project, most notably Foucault, to whom discourse is a position in which we are all situated; we are always in discourse. Indeed, this was a position that I considered until I fully analysed the data of the participants and my own moments of creativity. There are times I argue, that are not contextualised, but formed in the space of the *écriture féminine*. This is a theme that runs throughout the project and culminates in the last chapter. Rather we are positioned outside, othered in a space that cannot be explained in discourse. It is the space of myth-mystic, the *écriture féminine*. For

⁷ The use of the terms phallogocentric and Eurocentric are fully explored latterly in the chapter, part 3, the Rationale. It is in the context of an art history milieu. In brief, it pertains to the privileging of a gendered masculine discourse that is centred on a Western, European worldview. It is historicised into the Empire and colonialism.

⁸ I feel this is aptly visualised in the image I have used to open this thesis by Diana, entitled *Overflow*; the elements-colours are merging in the space, layered and overlapping; they are not separated as they bleed into each other.

writing-creating the feminine is to undo discourse, that is, as we create our texts in the 'feminine', here the rules and order of the game are flouted. These transgressions, refusals and resistances are explored in Chapter Three, part 3: Resistances: Crooked Contours in the Landscape of the 'Good' LSA. In my own refusal to comply to the rigidity of the academic writing discourse, I also draw upon fictional texts, my own and the participants' poetry, and my own stories and experiences are woven into the study.⁹

By choosing these tools, synthesised with an ethnographical approach, our tales are illuminated, often in a creative expression of the arts, although verbal expression is drawn upon. In 'craft[ing]' together theory, practice and method (Brinkmann, 2012), those tales explore the power and knowledges and the subject positions the women LSAs perform and take up in post compulsory education. Their stories are expressions of their practices of the arts and crafts in spaces of the everyday. In the words of Helen Cixous our stories, our 'language does not contain, it carries; it does not hold back; it makes possible' (1976: 889). In the creation of our 'texts' these possibilities, transformations and reinventions are illustrated in this study, as I practise my craft of ethnography, as the (re)searcher-artist-historian.¹⁰ By drawing upon mixed methods our stories are narrated and thereby received, visualised and imagined by the reader. Mills (1959: 224) urges the researcher to craft his/her own method and theory, and in doing so, 'let theory and method again become part of the practice of craft'. Therefore, in dipping into Foucault's toolbox, along with Cixous's conceptualisation of *écriture féminine*, I combined theory with the qualitative techniques of interviews and the use of artefacts. As Brinkmann (2012: 7) states:

Qualitative researchers should think of themselves as craftspersons who engage creatively with the materials and should not be rigid methodologists who mechanically follow pre-defined steps. The theories and analytical approaches that are presented are therefore seen as tools for the craftsperson.

⁹ My own anecdotes are woven in the fabric of this text, usually as footnotes and then my own personal story opens the analysis, Chapter 4: Tales from the Toolbox: Art Practices in the Everyday.

¹⁰ To define the use of text in this thesis, it is taken to mean the production and use of texts in the broadest sense. In a traditional meaning texts are objects, such as books and poetry, for this study the term includes, textiles, paintings and other products of art and craft and the texts produced from the transcriptions of the interviews. Due to the 'feminine'-feminist gendered context of my project-text, it is situated in a narrative that explores the women's production, their work, as a text (Cixous, 1976: 877). However, in the thesis the text-object is not explored in a psychoanalytical context, although many psychoanalysts consider the object as essential to their research, for example object relations theory. I acknowledge the immense contribution that many theorists have made in this area, but I do not have the capacity to explore this in detail in my thesis. I might have explored the participants' feelings, emotions and desires in depth in the interviews, and the intersection with the internalised social orders and the conscious self (Merrill & West, 2009:70). However, I considered that the investigation leant towards the production of the subject in a geosocial context, where creativity is situated in the spaces of myth and mysticism. This is explored in the next chapter.

Accordingly, my approach was to be 'creative', innovative, intuitive and 'collaborative' (Clover, 2007). As an artist and craftsperson, I decided to use what was to hand. Accordingly, with all the participants identifying with the subject position of artist, craftsperson, and or 'creative', I took my 'fortuitous' position in the LSAs' landscape to explore their (meaning)-making (Parker, 2007: 790; Clover, 2010).¹¹ The participants were given the choice of what I might document, that is, what artworks and/ or objects they wished to display and narrate, which I recorded and photographed in their choice of landscape. I interviewed eight participants, using a semi-narrative, storytelling approach with the inclusion of an autobiographical element of my own story, craft and artwork. These methods were selected to elicit tales of their artwork, from their own individual creative toolbox to write a story of their experiences, events and emotions. As West (2016: 38) suggests:

Auto/biographical narrative research, like psychotherapy, offers an alternative to this [the scientific, objective approach] by engaging with people and the semantics of their experience with the meanings they themselves give to events: experiences of distress and their significance and of hope born of new ways of seeing.

I was intrigued to discover their 'ways of seeing' their motivations and inspirations for taking up multiple subject positions, particularly the shaping of the LSA, creative, artist and practitioner (West, 2016; Berger, 1972). To explore their art and creativity, I drew upon Cixous's use of the *écriture féminine*. Although Cixous concentrates on the field of literature, I am using the concept of *écriture féminine* in the broadest sense to include all media and arts and craft activities.¹² In this way, the women create a 'text' (Cixous, 1976: 877), that once would have been repressed in the history of art that privileges the canon that is situated in the discourse of European, white male (Chadwick, 2003; Cherry, & Pollock, 1984; Greer, 2001; Pollock, 1988, 2003; Weltage, 1993; Mulvey, 1975/2009). Cixous calls women to:

¹¹ Creative is a term used by some of the participants in their interviews; this is defined by them as a position that is an artist or craftsperson. In the context of this study the artist and craftsperson are used interchangeably, as is the producer of craft and art. There are no hierarchical distinctions between the two, although where possible I have used the terms that the participants favour in telling their stories.

¹² The inclusive practice of using all media is in the vein in which Cixous intended. Often her theory is contextualised to highlight women's repression, yet she does not marginalise men from her concept of *écriture féminine*. In fact she cites the likes of Joyce and Shakespeare as the most prolific writers of *écriture féminine*. She considers that, '[t]here are metamorphoses of all kinds and genders here. Writing runs them through the other world, which is the world of writing' (Cixous, 1993a: 129). In this way there is a bisexuality to her conceptualisation of the *écriture féminine*. For it is not to define the *écriture féminine* in essentialist binaries, rather it is a technique to imagine the process of writing to facilitate a playful, non-authoritative approach to creating a text. 'While arguing that it is easier for women to adopt such a 'feminine' approach to writing, Cixous does not see *écriture féminine* as the sole domain of women. Wary of the connotations of 'masculine' and 'feminine', Cixous re-situates her theory within non-gender-specific 'libidinal economies'' (Blythe, and Sellers, 2004: 15). This is discussed further in the next chapter.

Write your self. Your body must be heard. Only then will the im-mense resources of the unconscious spring forth. Our naphtha will spread, throughout the world, without dollars-black or gold -nonassessed values that will change the rules of the old game (Cixous, 1976: 880).¹³

Thus, in the spirit of Cixous, the women too reject master(y), patriarchy and neoliberalism.¹⁴ In order to step outside of these discourses of limitation, we venture into the physical spaces of the homes, and to the mystic-mythological space of the creative-écriture 'feminine' (Cixous, 1975/1986). This I did to seascape their creative experiences, where the creative processes reside in spaces outside the discourses in which we are positioned. Facilitated is the ability to transform and in the release of the écriture feminine, our (s)texts go a small way to right the injustices in the (art)world.¹⁵ Therefore, Cixous gives the researcher-artist-writer an optimistic and inspirational hope for cultural and social transformation. Cixous provides the mythological 'spaces' to facilitate change. Here in this space the women are 'free', they can 'let go' as voiced by the participants in their interviews. Cixous states that 'writing is precisely *the very possibility of change*, the space that can serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social and cultural structures' (Cixous, 1976:879).

Those mystical moments of creativity appeared to take place in their homes. I did not intentionally make this separation of binaried space, of public-private, feminine-masculine, but

¹³ During this project the unconscious is taken as the unmediated 'creative spaces' that exist outside of discourse. Dunn (1998) suggests this is how Cixous considers the unconscious; it is 'The place that writes', to create new textual knowledges. It is the space that desires the Imaginary, meditation and play, the écriture feminine.

¹⁴ In the context of this study, the term 'master' has associations in both language and practice that have been defined in discourses that set up the white, middle and upper-class, male in a position that (re)produces the subject of 'master' (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-160). It is a term that embodies both male authority in general and the mastery of a skill, specifically art practices; hence the term 'Old Masters' (Parker and Pollock 1981). Taking the his-story of art as a discourse, the normative subject positioning is that of the gendered genius. This particular discourse had a profound and lasting impact upon me. In the spaces of education, specifically art education and the family, the many spaces in which I resided as a child, I was familiar with the term. My father was often titled 'the master of the house'. As children we were reminded that he was the head of the house and as such his Word was Law. It was the 'Law of the Father', and should that law be broken, punishment was exercised (Lacan 1977). The situation at secondary school was not that different; those in authority were male and titled Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster. In this master-pupil relationship, if we did not self-regulate in the flow of disciplinary knowledge, corporal punishment was administered. Ironically, the space in which the practise of punishing the 'bad' student was where mass was said by the priest. Accordingly, hierarchies of power/knowledges were at play in school in both the practices and the spaces and this continued into my experiences of higher education. The term was imprinted in my mind as I studied for a degree in Art History; all those teaching the modules were white men, and much of what was presented in the books were from the European traditions. One of the set texts was entitled: 'The Changing Status of the Artist'; it explained the history of the masters in the workshops/studios and the masters of the art workers' guilds. This discourse that others and excludes women's oeuvre is disturbed in this study, as much of the art embodies a narrative of inclusion and collaboration (Clover, 2010).

¹⁵ Cixous's conceptualisation of the 'text-sext' has been aligned to a feminine collective, (text-sext)-'sect'. In this way the creativity of the women is text-ualised into the spaces of the mystical, mythological and is intuitive of communal and shared spaces, a type of sect (Joy et al, 2002).

it was here, in the home that the women took me, to a seascape that was outside The University.¹⁶ It is here that their ability to transform became apparent, as they expressed this as being in those unconscious, mystical and mythological spaces of creativity. Yet, as our exits-sorties came closer, it was to the public spaces that we sought to showcase our 'collective story' (Clover and Stalker, 2007: 11). When I began this process, I neither had the expectation of curating an exhibition, nor entering their homes-studio spaces, I saw my ethnographic practice as being positioned in the academy. However, the seascape of transformation seemed to be positioned out, to the 'side', outside the academy (Cixous, 1986:69).

These spaces of the feminine-'feminine' allowed me to craft a collection of data that was neither 'mechanical' nor 'rigid' (Clements, 2002 in Joy et al, 2002). The process was fluid, organic, it flowed back and forth as I researched and wrote our stories (Pollock, 1988; Brinkmann, 2012: 7). At times, writing the 'feminine' was challenging in exposing my vulnerability as a writer-artist, but the one constant was my ability to feel the tangibility and materiality of our art. Photo-elicitation was used to support this process, where I not only documented the objects, but their creative spaces in which the LSAs work as artists and what they decided was relevant (Rose, 2007; Mannay, 2010: 98; Pink 2009; Lincoln: 2012).¹⁷ In these private creative spaces, I hoped that the women would feel 'at home' with the process; although much of what was told, that is their tales, were of the workspaces in The University. With this in mind, our story could be solely focused on negative impact of the policy changes in funding for disability, and rightly so, yet the stories told are celebrations of the women's abilities to push against such power and knowledge hierarchies. In doing so they resist those educational practices and policies that appear to marginalise them in the academy and create spaces in which transformations and transitions are made possible. This is not to diminish the very challenging and uncomfortable positions in which we found ourselves, for this is also an account of the invasive effect of policy, but equally, as Foucault argues, it is a tale of how they can be resisted.

¹⁶ The home is a complex space for the female LSA; it is both a space of isolation and oppression but at other times a space of refuge, sanctuary and creativity. These layers of complexity are explored throughout this thesis, particularly in the latter part of Chapter Two.

¹⁷ Still, the women are passing on their 'texts' and directing me to online platforms to showcase their visual media, which I have included, as part of the data collection process. This then facilitated the artworks they chose for our exhibition.

The Landscape: Student-LSA, Our Sorties: A Twelve-year History of the Past

In understanding the landscape of the LSA, it is imperative to comprehend that their position exists because of the symbiotic relationship of the LSA to the students that have the disability label, in a higher education context. Without the disabled student, the LSA would be superfluous to requirements, or so it would seem. In mapping their landscape to disability and widening participation in higher education, it is necessary to view this landscape in the wider context of neoliberalism. The Government has instigated practices that shore up a neoliberal agenda to facilitate the learning and employment of both the able and the disabled body. In the placement of the LSA body in that binary, reproductive labour supports their relationship. In part, Government practices and policies that focus on widening participation, disability and higher education, generally have influenced the LSAs' landscape in the academy, their careers and teaching and learning choices.

For many women, the role of support is an excellent way to gain employment for their experiences of caring in the home. However, a major difference to the positioning of the LSA in the literature was the atypical recruitment pattern for The University LSA. All the women have more than a passing interest in art and craft, and the desire to become an artist or work in the creative industries, which appeared to have facilitated the employment of the learning support role. Nearly two-thirds of the participants in this study were, in recent years, mature students following The University's widening participation programme. As students the LSA cohort for this study had at least two of the 'protected characteristics' (Equality Act 2010). Some came from Access courses, mitigating the necessity for the entry requirement of GCSEs for the degree course. Thereby, it opened up the academy to those mature women, which then led to the LSA role. Many, as former students of The University, are practising artists and, those whom I understood not to be employed directly from the University's student body, had attended art college from school and one was a watercolourist. In this way, widening participation was successful and an example of where the reproductive norms of the academy were extended to permit entry.

There is a parallel when this structure is considered in relation to the student/s supported by the LSAs, for many of the students do not meet the entry requirements.¹⁸ When this is the case, entry should be considered ethically, even more so now, for prior to the funding changes the LSA's focus was on all those in need rather than those that were labelled; funding was

¹⁸ At the time of writing the entry requirements for FE was 5 GCSE passes including maths and English; although often this was not adhered to.

forthcoming and support was spread equally and democratically.¹⁹ Furthermore, with widening participation positioned alongside alternative assessments and reasonable adjustments, competency standards need to be considered (ECU, 2015). With competition for students becoming more aggressive it is imperative to have an ethical recruitment process for students, all students, whether disability is a factor or not.

Previously, in higher education the employment pathway for the LSA was to be allocated to those students with disabilities. In categorising the students in this way, they are given the (dis)abled label and often they are meeting all the criteria for widening participation (Foucault, 1970). Although the discourse of disability in higher education appears to be promoted and centred in the social model, where inclusive practices are encouraged, still it is very much embedded in the deficit, medical model (Parker, 2007). Currently, the disability landscape for higher educational institutions is extremely complex where there may be a mixture of support on offer. However, where the universities have not been quick to embed inclusion, the labelled pathology of disability is required to access funding from the Government for study skills support. Yet, LSA provision is no longer considered to be a requirement, and in a neoliberal agenda they can be 'discarded', disposed of, got rid of (Clover, 2013, 1; Butler, 2011). Butler explains the consequences of neoliberalism:

One of the things that neoliberalism does is, it relies on flexible workforces who are hired and fired at will and who are basically disposable labor. You can use them. You can get rid of them. They have no rights; they have no security. Their lives and well-being are made and unmade at the whim of those who are exercising the calculus. So, instead of looking at the institution and objecting to that kind of organization, people just go, "I'm a failure"; "I'm not working hard enough"; or, "I'm not as smart as the next person (Butler, 2008).

Butler suggests, that 'bodies' in fact do 'matter' (Butler, 1993), whether abled or disabled we all need 'help', support and 'assistance', as we go about our daily lives; 'interdependence' is fundamental, negating individualism (Butler, 2011). This approach of 'interdependence' was possible prior to the current economic and political situation with the effects of austerity measures and the flux and uncertainties around Brexit. Pre-austerity, the funding for disabled students in higher education was more plentiful. This supported the widening participation agenda that is at the centre of past and current government policy on HE. For example, in 2006, the policy changes made by the Labour Government aimed to increase widening participation. The 2006 Act was the precursor to the 2010 Equality Act, which initiated a recruitment drive in all academies for support workers. The Act stated that the providers of

¹⁹ I coordinated the support allocation with my Line Manager, ensuring that all students were supported whether officially labelled or not.

education have to make 'reasonable adjustments', for students with disabilities and learning differences. The institutions were required to provide support to ensure that education is accessible. Prior to this, New Labour's drive in 2002 to increase access to higher education with a 50% target by 2010 promoted learning and employment opportunities (HEFCE, 2002). With widening participation gaining momentum, once students are accessing higher education it is important to meet the challenges of a diverse cohort and ensure they are supported (HEFCE, 2002).

This had a major impact upon the participants, where six of the eight moved from student of a creative university to LSA. 2007 was the time at which I applied to The University, in response to an advertisement in the local paper, to take up the position of Dyslexia Tutor. At the time, in 2007, all the LSA participants were employed by The University, approximately twenty-two. There was one exception who joined later; although she, like most of the other participants, was selected from the student body at the point at which she finished her degree. This realisation was made on completion of my MSc. I interviewed three participants, two of whom were practising artists, and this ignited my curiosity; were all the LSAs at The University artists, and how did this dovetail with the LSA role? The data suggested that the women LSAs were recruited for their experience as artists and not for their experiences as LSAs (Hayward, 2014). This was still the case, to the point at which The University decided not to be a provider of support for the Disability Student's Allowance in 2015. This was the commencement of the funding changes, and when some universities decided to extend their support and retain their staff.

Prior to the changes, funding for disability in HE was not part of the academy's direct responsibility. If the student did not apply for the funding for the Disability Student's Allowance, then often provision was not forthcoming. Recommendations were made as part of the student's needs assessment that is conducted during the process to access support. However, if LSA provision is recommended then an agency worker may be engaged. This is what makes the monitoring and sourcing of data and statistics difficult, as there is no centralised data on the cohort of LSAs and due to the changing landscape, the Government funding for the LSA role was phased out completely. Any new recruitment is via agencies. As I began writing this thesis, the department was managing on a skeleton staff of eight LSAs

across both further and higher education²⁰: on completion there are none in HE and in FE agency staff are recruited, but that process is proving extremely challenging. For those that are employed, both at The University and in most other post-compulsory provision, and in some compulsory institutions, the staff are on sessional zero-hour contracts; they are paid by the hour when the student attends. If the LSA's allocated student/s is sick, leaves or fails, she is then without employment. Therefore, with a lack of job security, the space to foster the autonomy of the student is put at risk, as is the teaching assistants and LSAs' own ability to become 'educators' not assistants, helpers, mums or friends (Veck, 2009: 53).

Yet, in the LSA positioning as former students, they have not been recruited in what appears to be a seamless transition from the space of the home to the academy, as the stance put forth by Williams, (2001: 109), Puwar (2004) and Gatrell, (2008:174). This is the position considered in much of the literature discussed in Chapter Three, where the recruitment pool has been labelled as the 'mum's army' (Stevens 2013). In all but one case, the LSA participants have a degree or qualification in an art specialism, but most do not have a qualification in teaching or learning support and some do not have level 2 maths or English. This recruitment source from Access or HE to employment at The University is not the norm.²¹ In other institutions in which I have worked this has not been the case and in compulsory education it is not a possibility, although women are frequently sourced as employees from the parents of the students. This unusual positioning at The University has facilitated a readily available recruitment source from student to LSA, where widening participation has played a part in this atypical situation (Hayward, 2014).²²

However, the gendered and ageist nature of the recruitment of the role by management is made apparent once these taken-for-granted assumptions are 'problematized' (Foucault, 1978). Where were the young and/ or male LSAs? For in the eleven years in which we have been employed, only two LSAs from the cohort of twenty-two were under forty and without

²⁰ For the purpose of adhering to anonymity I am situating the LSAs in a department, the 'Disability Department'; I am aware that this is no longer a label used, but it aptly fits the purpose for this thesis.

²¹ At the time that we were employed in 2007, The University saw the role of the LSA as requiring an art specialism. This was an 'essential' quality and caring qualities were an unspoken 'essential' too. In 2007 GCSE retakes were not offered to the students and so those qualifications were overlooked if they were not in the LSAs 'portfolio'.

²² Throughout this study I have consistently and regularly sourced job specifications to assess the situation to determine the continuance of this unusual landscape for the LSAs. I have tracked the contractual status of the cohort in terms of pay, hours and type of contract which is comparable with other institutions. This formed the basis of my MSc, where I sourced data from job specifications of comparable universities.

children. One of whom was the daughter of a manager, and only three were men, two of whom were part-time carers. In this way, the men too are gendered by proxy; they were feminised into a gendered essentialist discourse, in much the same way as the participants. The women were employed to play the 'games of truth', in a complex subject positioning of performing art and educational practises, in the 'rules' of a feminised gendered discourse (Foucault, 1978). All the women had a home and family to care for during our employ at The University and therefore the positioning was favourable; yet these truths of the gendered nature of the role are so embedded that for much of the time, they are obscured.

Were they employed for their knowledge of the creative arts, or their legacy of care in the home? It seems 'telling' and indeed this is part of the tale told. On completing their degree in the creative arts, they were employed by The University as support workers not as artists-practitioners, the job for which they had trained, and thus they were marginalised as women artists. By employing the women as LSAs, it has confirmed the 'truth' of the essentialised binary that women are positioned in 'a legacy of care', the traditional role for which they/we were all 'qualified' (Hayward, 2014). I am not saying that there are no women artists, or women artists that are teaching in the academies, but for this cohort we found ourselves 'suspended' as artists (Foucault, (1972: 25). We were ladies-in-waiting; waiting for the right time to transition, transform.

Dyer (1996) ignited my initial interest in this, a gendered topic, specifically the context of transition and transformation; I came across her article, 'Where Do We Go From Here? Issues in the Professional Development of Learning Support Assistants', whilst I was studying for my MSc in Gender, Sexuality and Society. I read:

What I am suggesting is that, for men, the role of LSA is, or appears to be, a transitional role, between either completing an undergraduate degree, or a previous career outside teaching, and moving into an IT course. Of course, there were also women applicants who had undertaken a similar role, and their reasons would be similar to those of the men. Nonetheless, the fact remains that for some women, the choice of career as an LSA remains one of a committed location, whereas for some men, it seems to fulfil a transitional role. It may be that a deeper examination of gender differences here may be fruitful (Dyer, 1996: 192).

I was motivated to consider whether this reproductive labour of a gendered subject positioning of the LSA was still as Dyer suggested, some twenty years previously. Are we 'committed' to this 'location' or are transformations possible? Transformations and reinventions often thwart with fear, are explored, whether moving out of the academy or moving in. The LSAs' landscape at The University, in which these atypical positionings were played out, were within the context of the changes in the funding; firstly, to be recruited in,

and then to be exited out. It was beyond our control; so, no more were we ladies awaiting. In moving in as students, the process of returning to the academy is challenging for some, and this is eloquently identified by Burke and Jackson (2007:196) as 'an uncertain process of exploration, deconstruction, refashioning and interrogation ... usually involv[ing] moments of discomfort and uncertainty, even pain, as taken-for-granted assumptions get challenged, questioned and contested'. The subject positioning that often is taken up is described by hooks (1994), as that of the interloper. Nevertheless, at its best this is an example of widening participation working and it makes for a more diverse cohort in post compulsory education; it supports access for those groups that are underrepresented (Burke & Hayton, 2011).

Thus, having been through the widening participation programme the LSAs and I are aware of its impact and complexities. It was in the academies' interests to ensure retention, attainment and success, which may facilitate unethical practices to ensure their own need for re-tension. On a micro level, should the pupil not reach the lofty standards of the masters, they are punished. Previously, punishment in schools was a form of 'spectacle', where 'ability', or the lack thereof, was gazed upon and measured with physical consequences. (Foucault, 1975/1991:76; Ball, 2013: 51). This measured 'deficit', that is the gap in learning, is filled with extra study skills sessions and research workshops by the support worker. In the facilitation of negating a disability, the LSAs' routine of the everyday was what appeared to be in the practice of disciplinary power/knowledges. They regulated the bodies in space and time and, accordingly, surveillance was part of that disciplinary practice. The situation was extremely political as the LSA's role was tied to funding and the highly controversial debate around 'bums on seats', retention and the marketisation of HE (BIS: The Browne Report, 2010; Higher Education and Research Bill of 2017). In order to increase recruitment and sustain the marketisation of academies, it is imperative to tap into under-represented parts of the market, for example the disabled and the working classes (Archer, 2007: 642). Foucault argues that, 'competition is not a natural fact which emerges spontaneously from human social intercourse, as a result of human nature, but must be engineered by the state' (Foucault, in Olssen, 2006: 218). Indeed, it is the Government that is using this discourse of productivity, work-readiness and employability to facilitate competition between universities.

In this neoliberal context, once recruited there was almost a silent expectation, of self-regulation, to progress 'their' student from FE to HE (Foucault, 1975/1991). This was compounded by the unusual structural dynamic of The University. The students are not encouraged to seek anything other than internal progression, that is to progress from FE to

study for a degree at The University. It ensures retention and a readily available funding stream. Accordingly, it might be argued that the students' opportunities and indeed their creativity is being stifled by an 'oven-ready' ethos, that promotes The University's remit to only offer FE students the career pathway to HE at the University. To make this a very attractive option, a bursary was given to each student. The careers department is under instruction to actively promote The University and no other avenues after FE, such as employment, apprenticeships, self-employment and degrees external to The University. Although, after HE, the onus is on employability to mitigate the impact of a low score in the survey for Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) and the National Student Survey (NSS). For The University, the data collected for the 'Graduate Prospects' category is quite low (The Complete University Guide, 2017). Ironically, in a university offering courses only in the 'creative' arts, it seems that the value of 'intellectual rigour, critical thinking and creativity' have been negated in the desire to promote employability in a neoliberal agenda (Burke & Hayton, 2011: 18). Students are not consulted but pushed onto the neoliberal conveyor belt of 'mass' produced students-customers-employees. Some were on the FE courses because it was the choice of least 'resistance'; "Oh do art; it's easy". This, they were told by secondary school teachers, with limited careers advice/experience.

This neoliberal agenda is overt and deliberately extends to 'include' students with learning differences and disabilities. The research and analysis of the policies relating to disability in higher education is reviewed in Chapter Three. In brief, with the stance primarily being the marketisation of education, the onus is placed upon assessing access, success and retention for those students for whom widening participation applies (BIS 2016; ECU, 2017; DfE, 2017; HEFCE, 2015a, b). In the 21st century, education is considered as 'an economic investment with the goal of developing human capital or better workers to promote economic growth' (HEFCE, 2015b). However, the landscape is not level, it is as Barr (2008), Archer (2007) and Ball (2013) suggest, widening participation is a way in which the knowledge hierarchies of the privileged master can continue, as data used to market the excellence of top universities segregates the privileged social groups.

Paradoxically, in this marketisation of education, the women were being paid to take up the role of support worker, but simultaneously they had undertaken many degrees for 'free'. For example, the experiences and practices of the everyday for the LSA was the act of supporting a student, sometimes more than one. Usually the support was with their studies, the 'academic' part of the course, and often it took place in the library, or notetaking in the studio.

Occasionally, it may have involved facilitating a learning experience of a new creative practice. During this 'disciplined' process, over the decade that we have been employed at The University, I have observed that some of the LSAs have been positioned in three or four different degree disciplines, where it is usual to see the student through their entire course. They are positioned as non-fee paying 'students' in classes in which they are facilitating the learning for others. With a diverse cohort to support in a variety of disciplines, the LSAs' positionings are as 'learners' in a quasi-formal approach, encompassing knowledges of a theoretical, art history context as well as learning new processes, techniques and methods. In effect, the women were indirectly gaining many degrees. Therefore, in this division of practice that places the LSA on the margins, these spaces of routine, habit and the 'mundane' of the everyday, allows an artistic subjectivity to develop to inform their practices as LSAs (Felski, 2000). It is as Clover (2010) suggests, 'artist as educator'. They can cultivate their art and creativity, as it is practised in and outside the workplace. This complex production of subject positions is analysed in Chapter Four. Now I turn to discuss my own positionings in this process, as well as my motivations, passion and interests for this study.

Rationale: Why this Landscape; Why this Tale from the LSAs' Creative Toolbox?

In taking up the subject position of ethnographer-artist-historian, I am narrating the tales of the women LSAs. For this process I took note of Foucault's instruction. He urges authors to write of what is of interest to them (Sawicki, 1991). Foucault (1988a: 156) is conscious of the familiarity with which he writes, and an autobiographical awareness is recognised in his genealogies:

Whenever I have tried to carry out a piece of theoretical work it has been on the basis of my own experience, always in relation to processes that I saw taking place around me. It is because I thought I could recognize in the things I saw, in the institutions with which I dealt, in my relations with others, cracks, silent shocks, malfunctionings ... that I undertook a particular piece of work, a few fragments of autobiography (Foucault, 1988a: 156).

Like Foucault, I recognised elements of my participants' stories and a kinship with them that stimulated the narration of my own story that is made part of Chapter Four. Although Foucault's oeuvre does not have an overt and explicit personal narrative, his approach facilitated the commencement of my genealogical journey. I ventured to the land-seascapes that the women inhabit to discover the tales that narrate their 'lived world', as well as my own (Kvale 1996: 19-20). In the practise of a Foucauldian methodology, I explore the discourses in which power and knowledges flow to produce subjects-objects. Autoethnographical research is a symbiotic process where the macro cultural and social elements feed into the micro experiences of the researcher and vice versa. Ellis and Bochner, (2000: 739 in Marvasti, 2004: 58) eloquently describe this interaction:

Autoethnography is an autobiographical genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural. Back and forth autoethnographers gaze, first through an ethnographic wide-angle lens, focusing outward on social and cultural aspects of their personal experience; then, they look inward exposing a vulnerable self ... (Ellis and Bochner, 2000: 739 in Marvasti, 2004: 58).

In order to connect the personal and individual with the social, political and cultural, I drew upon Cixous's approach of her integration of the personal autobiographical context. There was a place in the research process where I left Foucault behind to fly with Cixous to spaces outside of discourse. In the application of a Foucauldian approach that explores the wider social milieu of discourses and the more personal *écriture féminine*, my methodology facilitates an exploration of integrating the macro and micro. With this in mind, I am using Foucault's techniques with the help of Cixous's auto-biographical 'feminine' approach. In doing so, as the research data accumulated, it became apparent that the women and I share many biographical and social similarities. There are intersections of being constructed as mature working-class women, some with a disability, and all of us came late to a career in education. The similarities extend to the LSA role being a second or third career for all, after taking up the subject position of student at The University. As mature students, the women returners came late to

study for a degree in the creative arts. My curiosity was ignited: why was this the case? Why those choices of employment in the system and institution of education and topics of study at The University?

My motivations stem from a realisation of familiarity as many authors feel drawn to subjects with which they have a familiarity (Mannay, 2010). Thus, it was more than a passing interest or a site of convenience (Anderson, 2002). In the research and writing process, it became a way of knowing the self and 'others'; it facilitated 'access to knowledge' (Skeggs, 2004:14). It is for me as Richardson (in Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 967) states: 'Writing stories are not about people and cultures "out there" – ethnographic subject (or objects). Rather, they are about us – our workspaces, disciplines, friends, and family'. It was a space in which to legitimise the subject-object (Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 967), allowing the space to move through a 'passage', to facilitate a shared safe space of 'resilience-vulnerability' (Cixous, 1993a: 3; Hout, 2012). This was for both the researched and the researcher – I searched into my own past experiences, memories and stories. However, like Richardson (in Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 966-7), I realised there was something missing: 'but missing from the research story, I came to realise, were the personal biographical experiences that led me to author such a story' (ibid.). I resisted the autobiographical element to this story; I thought it lacked academic rigour. Yet, in order to make sense of my own knowledge production and that of 'others' in this study-story, I needed to position myself in the past experiences of compulsory and post-compulsory education. I landscape my own learning cartography, as the poor-bad-good student, the interloper and resilient learner (hooks, 1994), and how that positioning ultimately shaped my subjectivity as a teacher-tutor and ethical practitioner and artist. Foucault (1978:14) encourages the storyteller to use the autobiographical tool to explore: 'to what extent the exercise of thinking one's own history can free thought from what it thinks silently and to allow it to think otherwise'.

During this research(ing), I realised that the social variables we share have marginalised us in the systems. Like Foucault's connectivity to his genealogies, I am not separated from the forming subjectivities of the participants as I am part of this process. He states that, 'Each of my works is a part of my own biography. For one or another reason I had the occasion to feel and live those things' (Foucault, 1982b in Martin et al, 1988: 9-15). My choice of the conceptual framework, that is writing a (his)story, a story of the 'écriture féminine' is rooted in the nostalgia, memories, events and spaces of my childhood, for 'his-stories' were so much a part of my stories. My 'education' was tightly contoured in a landscape of moralising and

bettering a poor working-class child.²³ My interest in discourse analysis and Foucault's toolbox have their origins in a desire to delve into a historical detection to reveal the subjectivities of a cohort of women that have informed, inspired and influenced my own becoming as a practitioner of art/craft and education.

As a child, I tentatively was aware that *The Order of Things* (1970/2003) seemed skewed; to me the landscape in which I found myself was distorted.²⁴ I did not know why I was low down the power hierarchies in terms of gender, class and disability; I just knew that I was (Foucault, 1970/2003). I was 'ordered' in systems and spaces in ways that positioned me on the borders (Foucault, 1970/2003). I took for granted that this was the way of the world, and as working class, female and (dis)abled, I would not be attending a university. With a learning difference, I found that, historically, I was categorised as 'special', 'disabled' in the educational system. Then the policy makers decided I had a 'difficulty' and now I have a 'difference'.²⁵ Yet, as the landscape remains the same, the labels, and funding cartography changes.²⁶ But of course, I/we still have a (dis)ability in this system. For, in order to perform in the medical-deficit model, a label is required to claim disabled student allowance and, once in employment, access to work funding.²⁷ I am arguing against a discourse of disability, but it is the

²³ On the rare occasion that my father took the family out for the day, he thought it would be a good idea to take us to an old country house, castle, estate. As teenagers we were neither amused, nor entertained; my sister and I preferred to 'worship' at the 'altar' of the high street not the 'altar' of roped off rooms in a huge house that had no relevance to our cultural context (Benjamin, 1935). The old paintings and objects 'demanded' our adulation; but this 'fashion' was outmoded and 'the commodity fetish' in the forefront in our mind was pop music, not musty old objects. To get home in time to tape-record the top forty on the radio was overwhelming, addictive even. However, this experience facilitated the production of the subject position of art historian that has remained; for I find the detection, the digging into the stories of art history and social history fascinating. Yet my father's intentions were contextualised into a working-class context of 'betterment'. He understood the importance of cultural capital and how education can facilitate social mobility (Bourdieu, 1985).

²⁴ Foucault's notion of how certain bodies are ordered in systems is fully explored in the next chapter.

²⁵ Neurodiversity is the current label for students with learning disabilities-differences-difficulties. It is used for those individuals that are neurodivergent. It is argued that we are all neurologically diverse; yet this being the case, why it is the current label, being used only for those students with learning disabilities? Still, 'special' is the preferred label in compulsory schooling. Special educational needs (SEN) is the category that identifies those 'special' pupils and the SENCO manages that exclusionary ordering practice.

²⁶ In the context of this study, those women that self-identify in any of the social categories, were each asked how they wished to be labelled/ordered. I am classified in 'the order of things', as disabled in the institution of education (Foucault, 1970). However, whether classified or ordered as disabled, it is a complex positioning and often the participants and I do not feel disabled. In those situations, I have used the term (dis)abled to problematise the discourse and the label. Accordingly, I label myself as disabled and bracket off the (dis). I think that if I had not developed self-help strategies I still would be disabled in the system of the academy. This is explored in detail in Chapter Three, part 1, The Cartography of LSAs in the Territory of Policy and the Funding Landscape.

²⁷ The practice of inclusive pedagogy should negate the medical model, some examples of which are discussed in Chapter Three and Four.

framework/system in which we are performing, that has positioned me/us as disabled. This highlights the nuances considered by Foucault in relation to power and knowledge. We have different subject positions available to us, for over half of the participants, including myself, are labelled as such and it is this, as well as the gendered familiarity with the cohort, that drew me to this field of research and the able-bodied discourse that supports neoliberalism.

These realisations were presented when I completed my MSc in 2014. It explored the extent to which the gendered legacy of care resides in contemporary 'spaces of femininity', with specific reference to the LSA role (Pollock, 1988). The expansion upon the MSc investigation is that the PhD explores beyond the traditional gendered spaces and the caring (m)othering performance of the LSAs. Instead the complex inter-relationships of policy, practices, power and knowledges are analysed, in the shaping of the LSAs' subjectivities. Historically, the LSA is portrayed as an embodiment of the norms within the medical model of the 'carer' of the (dis)abled student, bound in a gendered narrative of the 'docile' body; this is explored in the latter part of Chapter Three (Foucault, 1975/1991). Therefore, this study explores the discourses that situate the LSA in a position where the power and knowledges allow for compliance within the discourses of disability and patriarchy. But as well as compliance, disruptions to these discourses are presented in the latter part of Chapter Three and Chapter Four. As Foucault (1972: 25) suggests: established discourses,

must be held in suspense. They must not be rejected definitively, of course, but the tranquillity with which they are accepted must be disturbed; we must show that they do not come about of themselves, but are always the result of a construction the rules of which must be known, and the justifications of which must be scrutinised (Foucault, 1972: 25).

This is what makes the use of discourse analysis on disability, widening participation and the literature written on the LSAs so poignant, as policies and practices enable subjectivities to be shaped by the power, knowledges and 'truths' of the discourses. For example, in the 1970s-80s the educational practices and policies at this time positioned many women including the participants and me outside the academy and in the main, as Foucault points out, this positioning was being quietly accepted²⁸. However, whilst sometime later this essentialist gendered discourse positioned me as a 'stay-at-home' mum with no higher education, I was

²⁸ None of my participants studied for a degree in the arts from school, although they were practising artists. As artists we were marginalised from the academy, as school leavers. There were some examples of women artists in England at this time, but they were few and far between; for example, Mary Kelly, Margaret Harrison and Rose English. For some of the participants and me, English female artists of influence were not recognised by us until the YBAs and The Sensations exhibition brought fame to a small number of female artists, Tracey Emin, Rachael, Whiteread, Sarah Lucas, and others.

able to 'disturb' and resist this 'tranquillity', by using the space of the home to study with the Open University, even with a disability (Foucault, 1972: 25).

Accordingly, in 2001 I tentatively began my career in education with a short course on how to teach basic study skills in a 1:1 setting. On the course a student was allocated to me and I was trained in how to deliver a programme of study skills that was tailored to the student's vocational specialism. The emphasis was placed on teaching an individualised programme to support inclusion. The course was heavily advertised in the local newspaper and every week for about two months I thought about whether I should apply. Because the course was free, I thought it would be a great way to see if I would enjoy teaching, without this having a major financial impact. After I completed the course, they asked me to join the institution as a sessional support worker, as the institution had not been quick to react to the implications of the policies around the Disability Act 1995, Part IV SENDA 2001 amendments. This had a major impact upon the college, as the needs for the intake for that academic year were not realised and they had neither employed sufficient LSAs nor 1:1 study skills tutors. During this time, there was a shortage of teachers and a huge advertising campaign was being conducted to encourage post-graduates to apply. This I did and gained my teaching qualification. Therefore, nearly twenty years ago, as a newly qualified teacher I was positioned in the space, of part-time LSA, whilst being employed as a lecturer. In much of my career and in my education, I seemed to be situated in liminal spaces.

For many years in compulsory education, I was marginalised in the landscape, as were the LSAs and the students we supported. Often students with disabilities, and by association those that support them, are positioned as objects to be categorised, labelled and normalised (Foucault, 1970/2003). The power/knowledge hierarchies in the academy privilege the able body to produce a subject that conforms to the social norms of the academy. So embedded is the requirement of the body to perform in the neoliberal system that every effort is made to produce the individualised worker. Accordingly, the truths of this discourse often are not questioned by staff and or students. The reproduction of educational norms is that which the masters in the academy preserve to ensure the continuation of the power hierarchies. This is defined within the field of education, (Ball, 2013: 62) and that which Pollock (2003: xxvii) describes in an art historical milieu. She argues that the normative socially constructed subject is that which is positioned within the 'power politics of Eurocentric, phallogocentric, heteronormative universalization'. The masters are the professors/academics that are

positioned in the space of the 'ivory tower', where practice has divided the spaces to position them high up to guard the power/knowledge hierarchies (Jackson 2004).

This is a comparable positioning to the majority of LSAs in The University, on the margins as educators of art, whilst performing the LSA role. So, at this time, I too was employed from the student body and positioned on the margins, the borders, of the profession for which I had trained. Here, in this transitional space, policy was dividing practice, my own teaching practices were negated for the need to perform the LSA role. This was a situation that was initiated by the Government and policies of the day to promote widening participation. Until 2004, I performed the LSA role in combination with limited lecturing duties and so I am aware of some of the issues of being employed as an LSA. This instigated an interest in these spaces and places in which the intersubjectivities of the LSAs are shaped and influenced by power and knowledge hierarchies at play in the academy that contextualises the women's positionings. These spaces have been contentious at times and uncomfortable and dangerous (West, 2016; Green, 2012). Green, (2012: 211) states that,

During crisis, one moves from being a "subject" to being an "agent". One realises that "following the rules" will not do it: one must respond with action or behaviour that addresses the crisis. Only later will one be able to systematically work out the new meanings that were implicit in that existential move.

That terrain of crisis opened up the fissures, the 'passages' in our seascapes, to facilitate acts of transgression. This is discussed in Chapter Four, where through the 'dark' passage we are born onto an-'other' 'shore' (Cixous, 1993a: 3).

Now, having performed a variety of lecturing and supervisory roles, I realise that my own choices, which led me to this current juncture in my career, were partly policy-driven, as were the LSA roles. Therefore, being employed in education in various subject positions, teacher, lecturer, tutor, Additional Learning Support Coordinator, Dyslexia Adviser, and indeed LSA since 2001, I am situated in some of the spaces the women inhabit; I am in a convenient position to conduct the study. In this positioning, I am able to explore their social, cultural and relational experiences of spaces and practices, as well as my own (Massey, 1994). Particularly, I am interested in how the women perceive their realities, as they take-up various positions. It is an exciting opportunity to explore this under researched topic. Furthermore, the use of their work as artists is a unique format in which to present their realities, for the LSA as artist is not a position explored. There is limited academic research in this area and rarer still on the impact of social policy changes on disability, that explores the effects upon the workers in the field. The effects of the implementation of policy changes embedded in a neoliberal milieu are

implicit, so what research there is, puts forth a stance that is almost wholly from a detrimental viewpoint. The themes are from the position of lack: lack of training and development; lack of resources and facilities; and lack of contractual security, which are explored in Chapter Three: part two. This is not to underplay the dire working conditions, on the contrary, it is to reveal the positions of resilience, transgression and transformation, despite them. Conversely, I wished to take a different stance and to fill a gap in the research to illustrate the resistances and transformations in the spaces. This includes the power and knowledges they (re)produce and the subject position of creative transformation they take up in a space of myth and the mystical, situated outside and above discourse where imagination, stimulation and collective creativity are possible (Cixous, 1986: 887).

This is the stance taken by Cixous (1976); she too writes about the injustices in society.²⁹ Cixous specifically encourages women in the writing of their own histories, and in this process, transformation is possible:

Woman must write her self: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from bodies - for the same reasons, by the same law, with the same fatal goal. Woman must put herself into the text - as into the world and history - by her own movement (Cixous, 1976: 875).

As the 'writer', I am supporting the creation of the co-construction of the women's stories; being in this position and space together, the 'truths' of their experiences are excavated as a new story of knowledge is produced. This, a feminine-'feminine' story, illustrates the women's experiences in their 'texts'-(sexts-sect); in this way the LSA is writing, creating 'her self' in the artworks (Cixous, 1976: 875). With this in mind, the choice of methods with which to write this story began with reflecting upon the traces of *The Order of Things* (Foucault, 1970). Therefore, I considered the women's position as artists and educators in the academy, that is

²⁹ As contemporaries and equals, Foucault and Cixous are both interested in social reform. They exchanged their thoughts in a collection of letters about prison reform, a topic that was explored in detail by Foucault (1975/1991). Cixous and Foucault, with others, in 1970 formed the Group Information Prisons (GIP). They collaborated in protest against the conditions in French prisons and insisted upon a radical change in the justice system. Foucault states that 'our attack is centred of course on what surrounds us right here and now, that is to say, the system, if you will, justice-police in the way it maintains, extends, perpetuates, all the moral, social and judicial limitations in our society (Foucault in Elden, 2017: 129). Cixous and Foucault became friends and colleagues before joining GIP, as Foucault took a position at the university at Vincennes. They shared a need to work to eradicate injustices in society. The admiration and love Cixous had for Foucault is palpable in the Chapter in her book entitled 'Passion Michel Foucault' (Cixous, 2011: 241-7). She described the tears she shed at his death: 'I know those tears well. They are the ones that carry off my soul each time the being that most violently tears apart my heart appears on the stage of the world'. She continues by explaining their relationship: 'I acted a great deal with Michel Foucault, I played with him, seriously played at the theatre of life. We were characters and spectators in a play the exceeded us (ibid).

how they were ordered, placed (Greer, 2001; Parker and Pollock 1981; and Chadwick, 2003). Historically the orders are contextualised into an ontology of European patriarchy that privileges the knowledge and power hierarchy of the masters, that is the masters of art, history; Hopper (2015: 18) eloquently states that:

Even though there are, and always have been, female artists, and some are celebrated as the equals of 'masters' in their own lifetime, they have been repeatedly marginalised and/or omitted from important text books and dictionaries of art. Without published recognition, over time, such artists become invisible and their achievements and status forgotten.

Unfortunately, as Cherry and Pollock, stated in 1984, many exhibitions 'present us with the spectacle of white masculine history, a glorious parade of the cultural activities and imperialism of white bourgeois men' (481–482). Still in the 21st century, 'the white male, as the guardian of western art history, continues to place the woman artist within the outer margins of cultural experience' (Hopper, 2015:51). In this way, the female artist and crafts-woman is habitually regarded as 'other' and 'ordered' by gender and often by class (Foucault, 1970). In a small way, it is my aim to tip the balance by writing a celebratory, although incomplete, history of these women artists and educators before they too, are disregarded and 'dis-placed' to new spaces and different positionings (Gilbert, 1986). Interestingly, though, in the foreword to Cixous's text, *The Newly Born Woman*, Gilbert (1986: xviii) points out that, 'We must be displaced to be re-placed ... We must fly away to be regenerated'. This study is a small space, in which to document the women's flight from the academy into regenerations, transformations and a way in which to display, to exhibit their arts, crafts and practices. Their exhibition is crafted and curated in the final chapter, Chapter Six, The Exhibition, and reference to their work is drawn upon in the analysis, Chapter Four, before our own exhibition takes place in 2020. However, before the abundance of their creativity can be presented it is necessary to explore the context of the LSAs' and my own current positionings in the shared spaces of the research process.

Sharing the Space of the Epistemological Positions of Privilege

In drawing upon an ethnographic approach, as an active participant, I am immersed in some of the women's everyday experiences. Accordingly, this study aims to 'privilege' those experiences, emotions and lives of the women participants. By using ethnography, as defined by Bloor, (2001), Richardson (in Denzin and Lincoln 2005), Denzin and Lincoln (2005; 2008), Hill (2009), Ball (2013) and autoethnography as defined by Bridgens (2007) and Hertz, (1997: xi-xii in Denzin and Lincoln 2005), the focus is placed upon the detailed observations of some of the social and cultural practices, and our interactions and interdependence. In this study, which is very much a co-construction, I am able to facilitate the writing of their story. I draw upon their texts, their voices and creativity, to craft a partial picture of the women's practices. Those practices of most interest are the LSA as educator and artist, in The University, and 'at work' in the home, all of which relate to their everyday. Although the thesis explores these shared subject positions, those explorations consider the diversity in which the individual women experience how they are shaped as artists and educational practitioners in spaces of transformation. Their multiple and perceived realities are presented as stories and visualisations from their 'diverse' and vast creative toolbox (Clover, 2010); they are narratives that warrant examination in order to explore a gendered feminised-'feminine' ontology.³⁰

In sharing their space, in the workplace and in their homes, they have given me partial access to their everyday. In this way I am a subject positioned in *their* land-seascape that allows for a sharing of space. Yet, I am in an epistemological position of privilege, as the PhD researcher, because I practise my craft as the ethnographer observing and engaging with the participants. As I take up this position, I am aware of the tension in a gaze that does objectify the participants, but in this, a 'surveillance' of their practises as artists and educators, I hope that my 'feminine' methodology facilitates agency, as artists showcasing their productivity (Foucault, 1975/1991). In the development of this agency, in both the location of where I collected the data and how it was collected, I hoped that my 'gaze' in the research practises was not marginalising the participants. Thus, it was to their homes that I considered the most appropriate spaces to foster a 'feminised' co-creation in order to celebrate the shapings of the LSAs' artistic practises and positionings.

In these shared physical spaces, our realities are multi-layered and overlapping, as meaning is produced in a diversity of the participants' perceptions. Knowledge is produced from the

³⁰ My use of the 'feminine' is fully explored in the next chapter.

women's frame of reference, where I play the part of the craftsperson who is crafting together the pieces of their stories. In this context, the subjectivity of the bricoleur is produced³¹, as I use the methodological tools of visual culture to collage the experiences of my participants.³² In the context of taking up the position of the bricoleur I am aware that this was a term considered by Levi Strauss. In 1962, he first formulated the concept of bricolage, in *The Savage Mind*. I acknowledge Strauss's contribution to the methodological position of the bricoleur as well as the limitations of his conceptualisation. Furthermore, I combine this position with that of Cixous's conceptualisation of the 'feminine' to take up the subject position of the 'feminine' bricoleur. This is fully explored in Chapter Two. Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define the bricoleur and suggest that there are five different categories of the bricoleur as researcher; those types are the interpretive, methodological, theoretical, political and the narrative. I consider that the 'feminine' bricoleur embraces aspects of all these categories, and more. This, too, is discussed in the next chapter. Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 502) consider that 'The material practices of qualitative inquiry turn the researcher into a methodological (and epistemological) bricoleur'. Embedded in a cross-disciplinary approach of the 'work' of women, in their production as artists and educators, I felt that it was essential to draw upon the riches found in a mixed methodology of an ethnographic qualitative framework. Accordingly, rather than an over-reliance upon a singular traditional method, such as interviews (Atkinson & Coffey, 2002; Delamont, 2012), a more diverse and mixed approach was crafted, as in the vein of Pink (2009), Lincoln (2012), Merrill and West (2009) and Orsini-Jones (2010) and others.

³¹ Subjectivity is taken to mean the differing experiences/acts, feelings and thoughts of the individual. Subjectivity is both externally and internally moulded by forces, motivations and expectations; thereby as the positioning of the individual is fluid and multiple, so too are the formations of his/her subjectivities. Accordingly, those subjectivities are open to change, as they move from space to space, experiencing the intersecting relationships with others. Those forces and influences with which they become in contact, affect action or inaction.

³² In 1962 Lévi-Strauss's theorising of bricolage was initially conceptualised as a metaphor to describe how mythology operates, gathering the traces of historical cultural formats and re-hashing them in new arrangements. I see his conceptualisation as a type of postmodern intertextuality although he is working in a binaried structuralised approach. In this way Lévi-Strauss argues that myths are pre-existing, suggesting that all stories are a retelling of prior narratives. According to Lévi-Strauss, the bricoleur is located in the space of mythical thinking; he improvises by recycling materials and practices that were to hand in order to solve new problems (Lévi-Strauss, 1962: 21). As a result, Levi-Strauss sets up a binary where the bricoleur's appropriated thought and mythological stories are opposed to the creative original and scientific thinking of the engineer, 'l'homme de l'art'. Only the engineer is able to produce new knowledge that is universal. This is privileged, constructed in the 'masculine' conventions of structure, logic, neutrality, claims to truth, objectivity. However, the binaried nature of this conceptualisation is not practical; both positions overlap, where the practises of each category feed into each other. Derrida (1966) and Foucault (1972) disrupted this structuralist binary of original new truths to be discovered and constructed, as they consider that we are all situated in discourse for language and practice is part of the past that is our 'genealogy'. In a Cixousian conceptualisation of the creative-artist, I suggest that there are times that we are outside of discourse and this is explored further in Chapter Two.

The aesthetic experiences and art practices of the women were a serendipitous opportunity that I was able to make the primary part of the data collecting process, as a narrative that focused on their practices as artists (Brinkmann, 2012). I crafted their narratives from a variety of media and thereby situated myself as the bricoleur. That is, to understand my own position, the researcher as 'an artist, a quilt maker, a skilled craftsperson, a maker of montages and collages. The interpretive bricoleur can interview, observe, study material culture, think within and beyond visual methods, write poetry or fiction, write autoethnography, construct narratives' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008: 681).³³ As an ethnographical bricoleur my toolbox is filled with the methods, the tools to be used. One such tool was collaging the artworks produced by the LSAs. This visual culture narrates a different lens for understanding the experiences of the LSAs; according a degree of agency. For the body of work, they have provided allows an unprepared, an almost stream of (un)conscious, type of storytelling; there is limited direction from me as the interviewer. The artworks are used to explore the multiple subject positions and how those subject positions are shaped in and outside of discourse. I am not using a structured set of questions, instead the women are employing the contexts in which the narratives and form of the 'texts' were created. In turn, this has given me the opportunity to explore their lives through the pieces.

By crafting these methods as a bricolage, it facilitated an analysis of the discourses that supported patriarchy, the medical model of disability and neoliberalism (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Ball, 2013; Parker, 2007; Butler, 2008 and 2011). But the power running through, in and around those discourses enables as well as constrains the body. Foucault's theories and the application of an historical genealogical methodology supports the conceptualisation that 'sees' the subject positions they take up to be fluctuating, as do the discourses in which they are positioned. Although Foucault considers that the subject is produced in discourses, I suggest that there are times when discourse/s are suspended so that the 'voleur' might hover in land-seascapes above man's construction of those discourses (Cixous, 1975: 887).³⁴ Cixous, (1975: 887) by punning on the French 'voleur', to steal and to fly, she likens women to robbers and birds: 'They (illes) go by, fly the coop, take pleasure in jumbling the order of space, in disorienting it, in changing around the furniture, dislocating things and values, breaking them

³³ In the context of this project, material cultures are those objects, spaces and buildings that define a particular group in a society. The group is the women LSAs and the objects are their sexts-texts and the spaces are their homes, studios and The University.

³⁴ The consideration of Cixous's conceptualisation of the voleur and my application to this study is fully explored in the next chapter.

all up, emptying structures, and turning propriety upside down' (Cixous, 1975: 887). Thus, to fly above and outside of this normalised construction of language and practice enables the reader to see new narratives that disturb the norms of gendered discourse.

My disturbance of those discourses extends to the boundaries between participants and researcher, that are not fixed but fluid, shifting in the diverse and changing spaces (Behar, 1996). In this opportunistic space, as an ethnographical indigenous, native researcher, I recognised the movement of power as productive plays that may be enacted, enabling the participants to perform an active part (Foucault, 1975/1991: 194).³⁵ In this research process, I do have overlapping insider-outsider positions, as I am 'experience near' (Anderson, 2002: 23). Thus, I am a native in their spaces as a former mature student of the creative arts and an educational practitioner. Although a native, I consider my position as a naïve native, for I am no longer an LSA in The University. Yet a partially shared epistemological position makes for relatable and collective experiences.

Our stories are facilitated due to my ease of access as the researcher. 'Trust' and 'respect' have developed and become part of our everyday working practices (West, 2016); I have experienced the intersubjectivity of working together, in the LSA role and as a manager. These complex positions have facilitated spaces to be reflexive of my own practices in the spaces of the home, The University and as a research student of Birkbeck College. To a degree my differences in positionality limits familiarity with the participants. I am an outsider coming into their homes and I consider myself a 'foreigner' in their landscape. Their story is not my story and my story is not their story. That said, in the research process our spaces overlapped as did our subjectivities - we communicated as artists and educators; I oscillated in the spaces as in(out)sider. This has enabled me to craft my practices as researcher, artist and educator, forming the subject of the ethical practitioner (West, 2016). During this process I had the space

³⁵ This encouragement of a co-constructed text is very important to me as a researcher and where I can I have extended this shared space. I presented a summarised paper of this research at the SCUTREA conference July 2018, where I actively encouraged my participants to attend. Then, I was able to include the active voice of Eve in the presentation process. She presented with me, although she did not want to share the physical space at the front of the room. I also presented their work in a lecture I gave for the MSc in Education, Globalisation and change, December 2018 on Transformation and Reproduction. Latterly, I took part in the three-minute presentation of my research and once more made their work the focus.

to think at length about how we are constructed as subjects, being interdependent in the spaces (Butler 2011).³⁶

Once again Foucault's diverse and extensive toolbox is called upon to explore the idea of the ethical subject along with thought, criticism and transformation, which is something he develops. Foucault suggests that 'thought' is a means to reflect upon our experiences and actions and the contextualisation of those actions, that is, how we act and react. He argues: 'Thought is freedom in relation to what one does, the motion by which one detaches oneself from it, establishes it as an object, and reflects upon it' (1984:388). Danaher et al (2010: 44) puts this rather succinctly, 'for Foucault, thought is what provides us with the tools for ethical behaviour'. During this project I have taken the position of the ethical subject, as the researcher, and in supporting, coaching and mentoring the LSAs as they have gone through the redundancy process. As educators in the current landscape at The University there were often tensions in taking up the subject position of the ethical practitioner, as this positioning is juxtaposed against the need to produce a student body, that is work ready in a neoliberal agenda, as advocated by HEFCE (2015b: Section 45 & 99).

These tensions are compounded in that they 'know', as the student artist and then the LSA practitioner, that some of the practices in the marketisation of education are not ethical. In The University there is often a huge divide between the theory we were 'taught', that is to see the local narratives and to embrace the marginalised, and the practices of neoliberalism. We have all either taken part in an access course, or a degree programme, that followed a contextual studies lecture series, critiquing the grand and meta-narratives of the modern period. Then this was reinforced in the everyday as LSAs, for we routinely support the students in those same lessons. The postmodern programme encourages a sceptical approach to authority and the systems and structures that seemed fixed, those very systematic institutions in which the LSA subjectivity is formed. The modules look to explore postmodern and poststructuralist theorists, the likes of whom include Jean-François Lyotard, Michel Foucault, Roland Barthes and Judith Butler, to name but a few. In this context, the student artist and then LSA practitioner is 'taught' to see power and knowledge that can enable the subject to take up unexpected positions in unfamiliar spaces. For twelve years, the lecture programmes

³⁶ This reflexive process was facilitated further, as I completed the Senior Fellow for the Higher Education Academy (SFHEA) at the same time as writing this thesis. The portfolio reflected upon the landscape of the LSA and my position as mentor, coach and change agent. I focused upon the support we gave to each other through the changing landscape and, for some, a forced transition.

at The University have not changed and, as LSAs, they have facilitated this postmodern discourse that emphasises the inclusion of 'othered' minority groups and the questioning of taken for granted truths. In this positioning, they facilitate knowledge that often needs to be 'translated' and explained to the students they support. Mansfield (2000: 184) considers the definition of postmodernism that includes the narratives that are local, hidden and marginalised: 'Hierarchical principles of meaning, truth, essence and identity are thus seen as unfixed, incomplete and contradictory'.

This exploration considers the discourses of power and knowledges and 'truths' in fluid, changing and 'contradictory' ways, as the women take up certain subject positions (ibid). I write 'a history of the present', problematising a landscape that has been shaped by a continued and embedded marginalisation of women practitioners (Foucault, 1975/1991). By understanding power and knowledge as connected, the women are able to disrupt the practices that divide. Their power and knowledges are voiced in their stories, their truths make way for a space in which their art and craft has value. Accordingly, Foucault considers that truth is influenced by power and knowledge, but it is necessary to investigate the history of certain truths that change and develop over time in order to understand how the subject is formed in language and practices. In rejecting power as possessed, it makes way for the idea that power and knowledge produce objects and subjects. In this way, attention is drawn to the value of the LSAs' knowledges in the shared spaces. Often the 'truth' of how we see the world and our place within it is not obvious. Thus, in visualising power and knowledge in a Foucauldian conceptualisation, I am not wholly privileging my epistemological position. Therefore, 'privilege' is a complex intersection of positions that are produced, as I draw upon the realities of the participants' power and knowledges and 'truths', to present their stories. Yet, in turning to the oeuvre of Cixous, I am able to consider the women's experiences outside the logic of the machine of patriarchy and neoliberalism to explore the women's creativity, including my own artwork and text[iles]. I consider the notion of Cixous's (1975/1986) *écriture féminine* to investigate their texts in spaces that we share in The University.

Boundaries and Borders in Crafting the Landscape

In my consideration of shared spaces, as previously discussed, I collage the women's knowledges to write this text and to move in the spaces in which to observe their practices. For example, being 'researcher near' in a geosocial context, partially my subjectivity is formed as the bricoleur.³⁷ In addition to being geographically near, we share many of the same social circumstances: I, too, have been employed as an LSA; however, the LSAs and students are aware that my position is that of a tutor 'performing' the LSA role (Butler, 1999). Thus, we are 'bound' in this landscape, where our subjectivity as the researcher and the researched are shaped in a complexity of positionings; those positions are multi-faceted.

For example, for me to enter the research process there were points of access, but simultaneously there were boundaries and borders between me as the researcher and the LSAs as those being researched. In a limited way, I have contributed to the shaping of the LSA subjectivity: for many years I co-ordinated the cohort. This included 'regulating' them in the spaces and in their performance (Foucault, 1975/1991). I assisted in managing their support allocation and how the role was to be performed in compliance with quality frameworks. Although I am no longer co-ordinating a team, I am aware that there is a legacy of a disciplinary power hierarchy as I step into the research landscape (Foucault, 1975/1991). In the research process, I do have an authoritative 'gaze' upon the LSA as 'object' (Foucault, 1975/1991), but I feel that on occasions I/we have been able to step outside the disciplinary power hierarchies of education. We have ignored the 'machine' to shape a subjectivity outside that of the managerial – LSA binary roles embedded in the discourses (Cixous, 1986). This has been facilitated in my positioning as the bricoleur, where I have drawn upon the knowledges produced for the most part in the spaces in the home, which I had the privilege and opportunity to enter.

In the wider research context other spaces and places were considered from the outset of this study, in terms of boundaries and borders. Initially, my research was to explore the LSAs' subject positionings across a range of comparable universities. However, the landscape was a terrain that was almost unnavigable; the gatekeepers to the academies proved a major barrier and I found it extremely problematic to locate the relevant authority figure to gain access to the cohort.³⁸ Whilst trying to gain access it became apparent that, although I was researching

³⁷ The conceptualisation of the bricoleur is fully explored in Chapter Two.

³⁸ I attempted to contact the managers of the disability departments in the various institutions, about six institutions in all. I was passed around to various departments to try to find the 'gatekeepers'. The

comparable universities for courses offered, they were not recruiting the LSAs in the same way as The University. Some were using agencies and the rest I contacted were employing their LSAs for their expertise in learning support, literacy and numeracy and not for their proficiency in the creative arts. None of the universities that I contacted were recruiting from a pool of former students. The desired criteria for other universities specialising in the creative arts were teaching support qualifications or a degree in psychology.

Therefore, with the barrier of access to other universities, and the realisation that the cohort of participants at The University were unique for having a degree in the creative arts, I took the decision to focus solely upon the cohort from the university in which I work. At the same time as attempting to gain access to other universities, I was recruiting my participants to interview from The University. From this experience, I became aware that, in order to obtain a depth rather than a breadth of the LSAs' experiences, I did not need as many participants as I originally anticipated. Blaxter et al (1996:61) consider that "depth" rather than "breadth" is the norm in qualitative research and will bring to the fore 'smaller numbers of instances or examples which are seen as being interesting or illuminating'.

Beginning with the pilot, I made the decision to direct the participants' narratives to their artworks. This method supported a different way of knowing; the relaxed atmosphere, along with the showcasing of the objects, elicited a free-flowing ease of 'conversation', much like many of the impromptu discussions we once had in a space to commune, a staffroom. In some of the interviews the objects facilitated the space to verbalise, in a way that reminded me of a type of automatic narrative, in the vein of the automatic writing of the Surrealist movement. This proved to be overwhelming in terms of the data collected. This situation prompted a limitation in the subject positions that I could explore, although they do overlap and inform one another. Chosen were the LSA-educator and artist, as they were the two that seem to situate the women in spaces of transition, transgression and transformation. However, other subjects that were produced included that of: traveller, for pleasure; carer; chef, one of whom was trained in cordon bleu; hostess; diet and fitness enthusiasts, including, yoga, aqua-fit, swimming, running, dog walking; gardener, landscaper and interior designer; and many others. Due to time constraints I was not able to consider many of the subjectivities shaped in their

people I contacted all said they would pass my details on. I followed this up with emails and more phone calls, but I found that I was waiting a long time for responses, weeks in fact. However, I did have many conversations with support and admin staff at the other universities and this is how I found out that The University was unique in the way they were recruiting from the student body.

land-seascapes. Also, issues of time and meeting deadlines were an aspect for the participants; they were reluctant to create new pieces for my study. Initially this was my aim; however, they had an abundance of artwork, and using the ethnographer's toolbox, I decided to photograph the work they made, as well as their studio spaces in their homes. I considered that it should be beneficial to the study to document their spaces in which they create their artworks, mainly as a visual reference for my research. I considered that the spaces, free from the tension and anxiety of The University, facilitated an atmosphere of trust and openness. However, the spaces were far more complex, and power hierarchies were at play that problematised my position. Nevertheless, I hoped that their spaces in the home limited the power and knowledge hierarchies found in the academy. These complexities in the shaping of the researcher subjectivity and the spaces in which the research was conducted are considered latterly in the next chapter.

Landscaping the Chapters

The thesis is landscaped into six chapters. In Chapter Two, I situate my own subject position as the bricoleur in the crafting of my methodology to explore the theoretical and methodological approach used in this study. I collage the theories and practices of Foucault and Cixous in a type of magpie approach, of 'stealing' the methods to suit the study and 'flying' above and beyond the norms of language and academic writing to create a 'text' of new knowledges (Cixous, 1975/1986: 88). In 'stealing' Cixous's method, that is the conceptualisation of the *écriture féminine*, I adopt the persona of the 'voleur'. Thus, in order to construct this text, that is a partial story of the women, I take up the subject position of this 'ethnographical [voleur] bricoleur' in the vein of Denzin and Lincoln (2008). I explain how I crafted my research practices using both Foucault's toolbox and the theorised practice of *écriture féminine* in order to write 'a history arranged the way tale-telling women tell it' (Cixous, 1975/1986: 6).

In using ethnography, synthesised within a poststructuralist context, I collage the data collected from the layered and intersecting subjectivities of the women to explore the participants' land-seascapes. Those land-seascapes are multifaceted, comprising of overlapping complex positionings, but what do these interrelationships look like? As I explore them using Foucault's 'gadgets' of discourse analysis, I write a genealogy of the LSAs, I am interested to understand how and why they take up subject positionings and the power and knowledges they (re)produce. However, Foucault's toolbox can only take me so far and so I turn to Cixous's conceptualisation of the *écriture féminine*. This I did to support the notion that the voleur can use her method to produce sexts-'texts' in spaces of creativity and thereby situate the body outside of discourse. Indeed, I too feel that in the creative acts of expression in my craft/artworks and the crafting of this piece-'passage', I am located beyond discourses, and thereby transgress the gendered hierarchical practices in which I am often situated.³⁹ This is explored further in the section, The Contours of the *Écriture Feminine*. I end the chapter by synthesising the tools of the bricoleur to visualise the landscape; this consists of examining my use of narrative interviews, the use of material cultures and the venturing into the homes of the participants.

In the production of the policy and literature found in Chapter Three, I draw upon Foucault's toolbox and his conceptualisation of writing 'a history of the past' to write a history of their

³⁹ In defining the transgressor, I am drawing upon Cixous's use of the term (1975/1986: 3-39). In the context of her theoretical conceptualisation, as a woman creating a text, in the *écriture féminine*, I am stepping across, going beyond the accepted social norms of logocentricism. By contravening the rules and/ or overstepping the boundaries, I transgress. This take-up of the subject positioning of transgressor is revisited in the following chapters, specifically Chapter Four, part 3.

present (Foucault, 1975/1991). This is to consider the subject positions and practices that overlap and intersect with the policies that shape education in England today. Of interest is the context of the changing landscape of disability-inclusion, widening participation and those support workers and students that are located in the neoliberal episteme. In order to comprehend the roots of this genealogical landscape, a literature and policy review was conducted on the shaping of the LSAs' subjectivities and the policy and funding changes in higher education. I 'read with and against the texts' that were considered in these reviews (Hill, 2009:320) to explore how policy might shape practices and produce certain subjects. Rabinow (1984: 8) states that, '[e]ssentially "dividing practices" are modes of manipulation that combine the mediation of a science (or pseudo-science) and the practice of exclusion – usually in a spatial sense, but always in a social one'. As policies of disability or, rather, the management and implementation of those policies, seem to divide the LSAs' practices, the women appear marginalised in the system, unable to voice their power-knowledges as educators-practitioners. But explored, too, are those subjects that are produced (Foucault, 1982a), which negate exclusion both in and outside the academy. Before exploring the resistances, I deconstruct the discursive positioning of the good woman/mother and the poor student found in the literature of the past twenty years. The chapter continues by exploring the literature, specifically the narratives of Nicola and Nancy from the journal article, 'Pond Life that 'Know Their Place' (Watson et al, 2013).

Although my thesis is most closely aligned with this article, compared to the rest of the literature, the article does not go far enough in analysing the resistances to the discursive constructed positioning of the LSAs that the authors name as 'Pond Life'. Furthermore, the thesis's focus is not the self-identified constructions that are presented in this text and in much of the other literature. Watson et al (2013: 112-3) label these subjectivities as 'being the mother' and the 'poor student'. In using discourse analysis, knowledges are identified: disciplinary knowledges that order bodies, and thereby marginalise those that are not able to comply with the norms of the able body; and other knowledges that have been subjugated, hidden, and considered worth-less in the academy. Rather, the chapter celebrates the production of the body that is 'abled' by power and knowledges to resist the discursive positionings facilitating opportunities in which to transition and/ or transgress. To engage in a dialogue with the authors of the literature, I decided to include the voices of my own participants. The norms of conventional academic writing would have been to wait to include this in the next chapter where I analysis the data. In a flouting of convention, I move against

this authoritative stance, and intersect the voices of my participants with those in the literature (Richardson, 1997). I believe this adds to the richness of the story.

Chapter Four continues with celebratory tales of transgression, transition, reinvention and transformation. I analysis the data collected to collage the tales from the participants' toolbox to make visible their practices of art and craft in the everyday. In a textual curation of their artwork, I begin by landscaping my own tale of early experiences of art, craft and education and then as a practitioner in the academy. I expose my vulnerabilities as a working-class child with a learning difference in a system that disabled my body. I continue the chapter with verbal and visual narratives of the women's creative tales, where I consider that the women's positions are formed as a product of power and knowledges that discipline and regulate, as well as disrupt and disturb. I suggest that the productiveness of power and knowledges enables as well as constrains. Therefore, those knowledges are multi-layered and multifaceted, including subjugated knowledges that problematise the discourses of neoliberalism, disability and phallogocentrism. This is expressed in their work as practitioners of art and education: included is the establishment of communities of ethical practice, of caring for each other, and learning from one another and their students. These practices of art and learning and teaching in the everyday, reveals the production of subject positionings, the LSA, researcher, former student of the academy, lifelong learner, transgressor and knowledge (re)producer⁴⁰. Yet the uptake of those subject positions is individualised and diverse, as is the practice of their craft both in the field of education and the arts. The department was fortunate to be able to encourage learning in a way that was not wholly syllabus and assessment led; being part of the support services, there is less emphasis placed upon targets and attainment. This is explored in the last part of the chapter as transgressive experiences are considered. The chapter explores sensitive issues due to the policy changes, but simultaneously the research suggests that rather than being a land-seascape of negativity, redundancy has made space for the women to pursue opportunities outside the academy and the aforementioned discourses.

In Chapter Five, my reflections upon this process suggest new stories and knowledges are produced because of these experiences, which are contextualised into a weaving of the positionings, policies and practices. Their stories are embodied in the artworks presented

⁴⁰ In the context of this study the knowledge (re)producer is defined as a subject position that is taken up by the women in and outside the academy. I have written the term in this way '(re)producer', as often in the academy the LSA is positioned and seen as reproducing knowledge, that is disciplinary, but at times they transgress that reproduction to create their own knowledges which is explored in Chapter Four. Knowledges are reproduced and produced that overlap and intersect.

through art and other media, as a type of Cixousian *écriture féminine*. All the women identify as artists, and so the decision was made to use their work to reveal how their practice as LSAs, artists and other subject positions, together with how their experiences of power and knowledges, inform their artwork. I/we have produced a new creative knowledge. Their appearance from the darkness is *débuté* in Chapter Six, to be taken into the physical space of a gallery, as the artist-outcast, upon our *Sorties*; so rather than concluding this ‘text’, I ‘end’ the thesis with our beginnings into the creative land-seascape (Cixous, 1977/1991: 41). Prior to this debut, I consider my own contribution to the research on this marginalised group of mature women in arts education, as I draw upon a Foucauldian theoretical framework, whilst writing in the ‘feminine’. This I do in order to shed some light upon their stories, to suggest that their experiences in The University, have transformed their lives to facilitate the artist, ‘creative’, tutor, LSA-educator, ‘resilient learner’ and the transgressor (Hoult, 2012). In this textual production of writing the feminine I, too, take up the subject position of transgressor, as the ‘feminine bricoleur’⁴¹. This I do by resisting various ‘authority moves’ as usually found in academic writing and research, as now discussed in Chapter Two (Richardson, 1997).

⁴¹ This is a pairing of terms I have created. It is fully explored in the next chapter. However, to introduce the reader to this conceptualisation. In brief, I am not defining the ‘feminine’ as biologically determined and separated from a practice that men cannot perform. It is situated in the context in which Cixous considered; both men and women can take up the man-tel of the ‘feminine’. Similarly, I do not wish to conceptualise the bricoleur as the male binary, as opposed to the female ‘bricoleuse’. Interestingly, in the very limited literature written on the bricoleur it is situated in a critique of the gendered use of the term, urging the researcher who is female to use the term bricoleuse. I am not interested in the gendered semantics as researched by Wheeler (2015). By linking the ‘feminine’ and the masculine bricoleur together, I am cancelling out the binary opposition and creating a gender-neutral practice – the ‘feminine’ bricoleur. No authors have conceptualised the terms in the way in which I am using them. The closest is the association of feminism with the bricoleur, as conceptualised by Miles, (1995), Vanner (2015), and Handforth and Taylor, (2016). The latter authors wrote an article entitled, ‘Doing Academic Writing Differently: A Feminist Bricolage’ that takes into account being a women researcher and practitioner. Essentially, they do practise the feminine, explaining that the research should be ‘accountable’, aware of the discourses and relational positionings of the research encounter, where difference is an issue to be discussed, all of which should be reflexive. However, the authors (2016: 627) discuss their research as a ‘feminist attempt to do academic writing differently’, not as the bisexual Cixousian spirit of inclusion, experimentation and play.

A bricoleur challenges the traditional principle that researchers should remain neutral observants in a research context. Rather than idolizing the perceived ability of detached neutrality, bricoleurs engage the political dimension of inquiry (Rogers, 2012: 7).

Chapter 2: Crafting a Methodology: The Bricoleur's Methods, Theories and Practices

In considering my methodology and practices of ethnography, I decided to craft a synthesis of theories: in the spirit of a Cixousian application, I 'stole' as the voleur would and appropriated the practice of Cixous's *écriture féminine*. My practice of the 'feminine' is aligned to a Cixousian conceptualisation as outlined at the beginning of the introduction in the footnotes, and it is fully explored in the section, *The Contours of the Écriture Feminine*. It is the ways in which I practise my craft as the 'feminine' bricoleur: I 'robbed' as the voleur-magpie would from Foucault's toolbox, using the tools of discourse analysis and genealogy. I used a quasi-structured approach in analysing discourses to write my story-genealogy. However, by writing in the spirit of Cixous's *écriture féminine*, I hoped to facilitate a creative flexible approach, to mix it up, collage it together, outside, on the margins of a Foucauldian discourse analysis.

To a degree this negates the rigidity and logic of a logocentric structure of writing often found in the academy (Rogers, 2012). Thus, in a style that accords openness and experimentation, I tentatively disturb what Cixous considers to be the masculine structure of logocentricism, and so produce a new, different 'body' of work. Gilbert (1986: xvii) makes this point when she argues that 'the pen/penis has been the privileged marker that was thought to leave the most significant traces on the apparent vacancy of nature, the blank spaces that had to be filled to "make" history'. Those authors that are reproducing his-story in the style most often found in academia, fulfil the 'Law of the Father' and the discourses of patriarchy and the economies of the privileged. In doing so, writing that follows this structure reproduces the same old repetitive, monotonous context. In the words of Cixous: 'We are still living under the Empire of the Selfsame. The same masters dominate history from the beginning, inscribing on it the marks of their appropriating economy: history as a story of phallogocentrism, hasn't moved except to repeat itself' (1986: 79). So instead of reproducing a materiality of the masters' Selfsame-ness, I seek to create my own story of *écriture féminine*: Cixous considers that writing in this way can shape a subjectivity that challenges the 'machinery's functioning' (1986: 65). And in this way, I write what West (2016) suggests is a 'good story'.

Accordingly, in the writing process it is a space in which the author 'is not obliged to reproduce the system' (Cixous, 1986: 65). It is a place of play, creativity, transformation. *Écriture féminine* is a tool that encourages flight to see different realities. This is done by exploring the women's own *écriture féminine*, the creation of their own materiality in the 'texts' they have made in a variety of their own mark and meaning-making that seeks to fly from the Selfsame. Cixous explains:

Flying is woman's gesture-flying in language and making it fly. We have all learned the art of flying and its numerous techniques; for centuries we've been able to possess anything only by flying; we've lived in flight, stealing away, finding, when desired, narrow passageways, hidden crossovers (Cixous, 1986: 887).

My method does seek to 'fly' from languages and practices that attempt to ignore women's stories in discourses that marginalise them (Cixous, 1986). In this marginalisation, women's stories are not valued and so it is no accident that Cixous challenges the formalised structure of that gendered discourse. She plays with this masculinised language; she disturbs and subverts it and in doing so she suggests that in this flight from patriarchy, in this transcendence of discourse, produced is a body of work that is boundaryless; they are texts that are creating a seascape that is Pre-Oedipal in nature⁴². In this mythological space of 'passage(s)', the wom(b)en's bodies make their way to new 'shores' (Cixous, 1993a: 3-58). The texts are open, *Overflow[ing]* (2016), with creativity and imagination. 'Conceived' in that time and space before language, is the Imaginary; in this mythological space of creativity is where the Real resides, a type of non-language, emotive, intuitive, non-verbal, communicative of feeling. It is these places outside of language where the space of the unconscious releases an energised conceptualisation of creativity (Dunn, 1998). In this, the space of the Real that is the maternal, a Cixousian imagination of space sees the separation of the (male) child from the (m)other, leaving the maternal body free from the pollution of phallogocentrism's discourse in their seascapes. This suggests that the maternal-'feminised' body cannot be represented in language-discourse, as it is situated in the spaces outside of the Symbolic Order. It is in those moments of the Imaginary, not anchored in the landscape of the Symbolic that are dreamlike and meditative, not directly influenced by discourse, that transformation is made possible.

This space situated outside of discourse is visualised in *Self Portrait as Tender Mercenary* (2006) by Julie Heffernan, figure 1. In her depiction of *Tender Mercenary*, an oxymoron, she

⁴² As subjectivities that are shaped in the relationality, interdependence and collaboration, they embrace pre-Oedipalisation, which negates individualism, neo-liberalism and masculinised discourses. Freud considered that in order to avoid pathologies in the psyche of the child, (s)he needs to move from the space of the mother, which is pre-language, pre-symbolic order into society and culture, the Symbolic Order.

subverts the discourse of Catholicism and the Biblical narratives of Noah and the Tower of Babel. Her play on God's 'tender mercies' illustrates that man's greed and avarice brings about war and destruction, political injustices and social inequalities. But equally the title may be a reference to bid, to tender for funding. As well as an artist, Heffernan is an academic, and in that position, she is familiar with the complexities and challenges of applying for funding in the USA higher education system. Thus, it is only by turning our backs upon the accumulation of conspicuous consumption and the machinery and systems of the master that transformations can occur (Cixous, 1976: 879). We observe Heffernan's transformation as she harnesses the power/knowledge of Nature, positioned in a space that is not of language, as civilization (Babel's Tower) is left in her wake. However, in the spirit of a Cixousian reading, Heffernan's creativity is to be found in her ability to both fly above language, to literally tower above phallogocentrism, and to 'steal', play and experiment with language (Cixous, 1977/1991). Might *Tender Mercenary*, have reference to the tender mercy of Mary, the mother of God? The inter-text-uality of the painting gives rise to a multiplicity in how the s-text could be read. Her Weltlandschaften (world-landscapes) are born from the Imaginary. Like the surrealists of the past, 'her compositions are drawn from the peculiar, nonsensical narratives of her dreams', a type of 'image streaming' (Knudsen, 2019).



Figure 1: Julie Heffernan, *Self Portrait as Tender Mercenary*, 2006, oil on canvas, 231 x 173 cm, private collection

In my own space of the Imaginary was the place in which my own subjectivity was shaped outside of logic as the bird, the magpie, flying stealing as the bricoleur, improviser, using what was to hand, in the environment and the materials found. In this mythological position of 'lack', lacking structure, reason and the Order of the Symbolic, the propensity for creativity is crafted in the spaces and gaps, 'the passages' (Cixous. 1976). Left in these gaps is the means to craft a seascape, to fill it up with our stories. In stealing as the voleur it suggests a deficit but, as the magpie accumulate objects, so do I. Those objects-to-hand that I employed to construct this study were the women's artwork and their narratives as artists and educational practitioners. In the same way in which Foucault suggests that the historian might work with a mixture of tools from his toolbox, I have used the same process. By drawing together the diverse array of 'texts' from the participants as the bricoleur, the researcher, I have collaged their stories. In addition to this, I have drawn upon fragments of fiction and literary sources to extend the dialogue between myself, as the reader and writer, and the narratives of my participants. Reading is a form of the *écriture féminine*, and some texts stay with us, inform us as writers, and facilitate transformative acts (Cixous, 1993a: 21-22). Those texts with which I have formed a dialogue, over many years, have been invaluable resources. They include: *Educating Rita* (1983), *Landscape for a Good Woman* (1986), *Hard Times* (1854) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927).⁴³ The same is true of my relationship with specific images, particularly paintings, some of which I have referenced in Chapter Four.

⁴³ Cixous suggests that value can be given to literature in the same way that a researcher can draw upon theory and academic writing to support the exploration of the topic. Often as I am writing I refer back to texts that temporarily hold my thoughts and consciousness. *Return of the Native* (1878) was a text studied for A Level in English literature. I was a 'good' student in the lower 6th, but as my grades got increasingly worse, due to my learning disability I found the process challenging. However, I was asked to do a character analysis, and I chose Eustacia Vye, the flawed heroine who dreams of escape in *Return of the Native* (1878). My teacher told me it was the best essay I had written, as I 'obviously had a strange affinity with the character'. At the time I did not know what he meant until I watched *Educating Rita* (1983) and realised that I was seeking a means to escape my gendered working-class suppression, as was Eustacia Vye and Rita. The play/film, *Educating Rita* was for me so inspiring that I actually thought that if Rita could do it, so could I. At the time there were so many Open University adverts on the TV I did apply and the first text we were given to read was *Hard Times* (1854). I related to the reproductive nature of education that I had as a child and hoped that my experiences at the Open University would not be as they were in the text. The last two texts are more current: *Landscape for a Good Woman* (1986) was a set text on my MSc in Gender and Society. I felt the vulnerability-resilience of the characters in the book and related to the subjectivities that were being shaped in the mother-daughter dynamic. *To the Lighthouse* (1927) is a book that partly inspired this study to illustrate as Woolf did, that in fact women can paint and write and be creative. Latterly, as I was editing and redrafting the thesis, I found that I can express this process in poetry, and I wrote the poem that opens the next section.

In mixing these methods and media, new knowledges are produced and visualised. '[B]ricoleurs move beyond the blinders of particular disciplines and peer through a conceptual window to a new world of research and knowledge production' (Kincheloe, 2001: 679-92). Interestingly, Tobin and Kincheloe (2006: 106) come to the same consideration that the qualitative research process can be supplemented with a bricoleurian approach within a Foucauldian framework: they suggest that:

Relationality, multiplicity and complexity are unfolding through the connectivity by the bricoleur of the interviewee's responses, the personal cannot be lost to the abstractness of academic discourse and so forth. This is a situation where the bricoleur turns to another tool to keep the personal vibrantly present. ... Furthermore, a bricoleur might use the 'tools' of Foucault's archaeological genealogy and critical discourse analysis to get the job done. Granted this pulling in of a new tool from the theoretical and mythological bricolage adds to the complexity of knowledge and interpretation of the initial interviews but also adds new knowledge and insights to the research study that might be overlooked or erased (Tobin and Kincheloe, 2006: 106).

Yet I am reminded that my own practice cannot stray too far from the confines of the 'guardians' of the academy (Jackson, 2004), as after all I am required to comply with the rules of the game; certain standards and criteria are needed in order to undertake and conform to a PhD study (Foucault, 1975/1991). I cannot 'fly' too far or too high from the 'ivory towers of the guardians' (Jackson, 2004). Thus, there is a tension in this process as the knowledge and power in the academy has enabled this study to develop in an open and fluid way, and yet I am constrained in a self-regulatory procedure of compliance. That said, to mitigate this disciplinary power and knowledge hierarchies, I have resisted some of the power moves of academic writing (Merrill and West, 2009: 48). One of which was to include an autobiographical element to expose my own vulnerability to the processes in the academy, the application of which is discussed at the end of this chapter. Thus, although I am located in a self-regulatory position in patriarchy's discourse, I have agency to use this space to work through and resist educational policies and practices that confine.

With much consideration, I hope that the methodology crafted does 'justice' to explore the subject positionings of this small group of female LSAs that worked in a post-compulsory setting (Foucault, 1971/2006). In this way, I believe it is possible to imagine a 'feminine' encounter between myself as the researcher and the women as the subjects. As West (2016: 38) suggested, the researched need to be 'listened to' and 'taken seriously'. I sought to write their stories to celebrate their experiences, not to appropriate those experiences as the master or the expert but, as the writer of the 'feminine', to appreciate stories of the 'other' to bring them out from the 'dark' (Cixous, 1976: 876). Cixous suggests how this might be achieved:

You don't seek to master. To demonstrate, explain, grasp. And then to lock away in a strongbox. To pocket a part of the riches of the world. But rather to transmit: to make things loved by making them known. You, in your turn, want to affect, you want to wake the dead, you want to remind people that they once wept for love, and trembled with desires, and that they were then very close to the life that they claim they've been seeking while constantly moving further away ever since. (Cixous, 1977/1991: 57).

I feel that it is possible to disturb the power and knowledge hierarchies that dominate those about whom we write, those who do the writing and how we write academic writing. This, the way we write, is considered towards the end of this chapter where I use the ethos of Cixous's *écriture féminine* to problematise some of the academic writing techniques used in the academy. I have encountered tensions being situated in the academy, whilst creating a text in the spirit of writing the feminine.⁴⁴ At times the process has not been easy, it has been as Cixous, contemplates: 'writing is working; being worked; questioned (in) the between (letting oneself be questioned)' (1975/1986: 86). At the start of the process I was trying to comply with the conventions of academic writing. The structure was very prescriptive; I thought the requirements of academia required a comprehensive literature review followed by a chapter on the methodologies supported by a triangulated 'pseudo-science' of explaining bias, validation and reliability. After a time, I became aware that this was not going to be part of my research process; it was not working. I was trying to paint between the lines, to fit into a structure that was (dis)abling (Ferguson, 2018). On questioning this process, I was able to let go of the logocentric structures, so that theory and practice feed into one another. My methodology was and is symbiotically linked to my theoretical choices; upon this realisation, the process became less problematic.

Therefore, the phallogocentric discourse that sought to divide the 'feminine' practices and encounters into spaces of marginalisation is negated in the creative flow of the writing-making process and the production of 'texts'. Thus, I draw upon Foucault and Cixous's conceptual and methodological 'toolbox'. Each author's toolbox is crammed with an abundance of choice comprising of a multiplicity of methods, techniques and processes, some of which are applied to this study. In selecting to use a Foucauldian framework through a feminist-'feminine' lens, I examine their stories' materiality, that is the events, speech, practises and objects. This tracing of history is set in the context of exploring the power and knowledges in the landscapes of the LSAs' work spaces; accordingly, in Foucauldian terms the techniques and processes to be used,

⁴⁴ For example, my practice and that of the LSAs is situated in an ethos of an ethical 'feminine' practitioner; we tried to mitigate some of the overt neoliberal practices at The University. As practitioners who advocate ethical access and fully support widening participation, we see that some students are encouraged to start a degree that they will not complete at that time in their lives. In these instances, we have supported an 'easy' access from The University.

are 'the gadgets' of discourse analysis and genealogy. Therefore, the chapter begins by exploring Foucault's toolbox of gadgets: Foucault said of his oeuvre that:

I would like my books to be a kind of tool-box which others can rummage through to find a tool which they can use however they wish in their own area ... I would like the little volume that I want to write on disciplinary systems to be useful to an educator, a warden, a magistrate, a conscientious objector. I don't write for an audience, I write for users, not readers' (Foucault, 1974: 523-4).

Hill (2009: 309) promotes the use of Foucault's tools, suggesting that in the selection of mixed ethnographical methods, combined with Foucauldian 'post-modernist theoretical tools', it facilitates 'different ways of seeing'. Therefore, to understand the LSAs land-seascape, data was sourced from: interviews; poetry and artworks the women created; objects they selected to discuss; and photographs I took of their studio spaces and homes. The diversity of how they wanted their stories told is expressed through the participants' own choices of how they wish to be presented. With this in mind, I drew upon the LSAs' own production of visual culture to reveal their socially constructed 'realities'. So, along with their own artworks and interviews I also encouraged other forms of expression and have used some of the poetry we wrote for the process. The objects/artworks were drawn upon as a means to stimulate a type of narrative enquiry in loosely semi-structured interviews. The narratives continued and developed from the initial discussion of their artwork/objects, in the form of follow-up emails and informal discussions. Some of these discussions took place in everyday spaces such as my office where we would have a coffee or chat on the sofas outside the toilets; we did not have a staffroom. In this way I was able to see how the women perform the role of LSA in the reproduction of their practices of arts, crafts and education in the studios and classrooms. In this (re)production, their material objects are expressions of subjective experiences, everyday conversations and the narration of their stories.

Search for what is good and strong
and beautiful in your society and
elaborate from there. Push outward.
Always create from what you already
have. Then you will know what to do
(Foucault, 1984 in Raskin, 1984: 18)

Foucault's Toolbox, Methods, Techniques and Processes

As a 'user' of Foucault's vast 'tool-box', I employed the tool of discourse analysis to understand how power and knowledges were working in the landscape of the women, thereby producing the subject positions therein. The LSA subjectivity is shaped within this landscape and the tool of genealogy is used to explore its construction in higher education, along with other overlapping subjectivities that are shaped in discourse. These tools of discourse analysis and genealogy are explored in depth in this part of the chapter. They are applied in the next to analyse the discourses found in the policies and practices of disability and widening participation in higher education. However, first I draw attention to the ways in which I adapt Foucault's application of archaeology, categorisation, power/knowledge and genealogy. I then briefly explore how other authors have used a Foucauldian toolbox.

To follow in the footsteps of Foucault, I too began my research using the tool of archaeology, which is a technique that is of relevance to the historian; however, like Foucault, I found it has its limitations as it errs on the side of the theoretical, conceptual and historical. O'Farrell (2005:64) states that 'archaeology deals with the neutral theoretical systems of knowledge'. Foucault developed this technique of archaeology that explores systems and rules, mainly in *Madness and Civilization* (1965), *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1972) and *The Birth of the Clinic* (1973) and, as Nicholls (2009:37) suggests, this method can be used in practise by 'using a wide range of texts, spread over a broad horizon, made up of different textual materials, from a diversity of sources', such as Ian Marsh's (2010) work on suicide. I archived my own systems of knowledge, by drawing upon many diverse forms of texts: policies, literature, images, interviews and reflections. In this way, and like Foucault, I did not make hierarchical distinctions between 'texts', but collapsed the authoritative values given to certain forms of knowledge production.

His interest in is in 'excavating for 'rules of formation', that is a conceptual archaeological dig into the archives (Rowan and Shore, 2009: 63). Foucault gave an interesting and pertinent historical example of the ways in which the approach of archaeology is used in *The Order of Things* (1970/2003). He cites an extract that may have been taken from an ancient Chinese

encyclopaedia, *Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge*. Foucault uses a listing of the categorising of animals to illustrate the rules governing taxonomy in a particular cultural and social context. To the 21st century western scholar it may seem that way of ordering is random, even ridiculous. However, Foucault suggests that in this story of the culture of the Other, it illuminates upon the possibilities of how far the boundaries of our own knowledges can be pushed.

This book [*The Order of Things*] first arose out of a passage in Borges, out of the laughter that shattered, as I read the passage, all the familiar landmarks of my thought - our thought, the thought that bears the stamp of our age and our geography - breaking up all the ordered surfaces and all the planes with which we are accustomed to tame the wild profusion of existing things, and continuing long afterwards to disturb and threaten with collapse our age-old distinction between the Same and the Other. This passage quotes a 'certain Chinese encyclopedia' in which it is written that 'animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) et cetera, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies'. In the wonderment of this taxonomy, the thing we apprehend in one great leap, the thing that, by means of the fable, is demonstrated as the exotic charm of another system of thought, is the limitation of our own, the stark impossibility of thinking that (Foucault, 1970/2003: xvi).

Foucault's use of the archaeological tool encourages the writer of history to challenge the norms of how we see the world. In the context of this study, it is used in the processes of writing history at the level of an archaeological excavation, that is the positionings in The University that 'order' the women participants. Whilst the archaeological tool facilitates the historian's dig into the 'archives', it is the tool of genealogy that is of most use, as it 'deals with power and real practical struggles' (O'Farrell, 2005:64). In the next chapter I explore the rules and regulations, the 'games', 'in institutions by which the truth is produced' (Danaher et al, 2000: xi). Therefore, the rules of the discourse are revealed that establish the discursive practices and relations (Foucault, 1972:49).

Discursive relations ... offer it [the discourse] objects of which it can speak, or rather ... they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them, etc. These relations characterise not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice (Foucault, 1972:49).

Although this study does explore the systems in which 'truths' are established and perpetuated, they are neither neutral nor theoretical; instead they are very much embedded in the realities of the lives of the participants that work in higher education in a neoliberal and political context. By uncovering, analysing and understanding past discursive formations, that is the positionings, processes and practices 'a history of the present' is written (Foucault, 1975/1991). Genealogy goes further by contextualising this knowledge into power relations. Therefore, to politicise his work, he used a genealogical approach to ultimately understand the

ways in which power and knowledge construct subject formations. At the end of his investigations he was motivated to explore the production of the subject.

It is to a Foucauldian consideration of power and knowledge upon which this study draws to understand the construction of the subject in discourses. Furthermore, Ball (2013: 6) states that, 'both genealogists and ethnographers are fascinated by the minutiae of everyday life and the ways in which the sinews of power are embedded in the mundane practices, social relationships and the haphazard and contingent nature of practices'. Foucault does not focus on the 'speaking subject' as such, that is what is said, rather of interest to him is the conditions in which the 'speaking subject' operates. That is the conditions in which the discourse restricts and enables speaking, writing and thinking.⁴⁵ My toolkit is used to explore both that which is said by the participants in the interviews, email correspondence and everyday conversation we had and that which is not, or cannot be said. In this way discourse forms inclusive and exclusive discursive practices, as well as the production of the subject, that is the process of subjectification. The contexts in which the discourses operate are analysed, that is, 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' (Foucault, 1972: 49).

Therefore, it is not the traditional understanding of power as possessed in a top down approach that supports 'truths' that are absolute, but of interest is the notion that power is inextricably linked and tied to knowledge. Whilst power constrains in these discourses, power also enables. It 'reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (Foucault, 1980:30). Power and knowledge are intertwined, so that knowledge gives credence to discourses and the practices and languages affecting the flow of power. In this way power and knowledge are linked to produce truths, objects and subjects. Foucault explains the complexities of the power/knowledge relationship:

Perhaps, too, we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended and that knowledge can develop only outside its injunctions, its demands and its interests. Perhaps we should abandon the belief that power makes mad and that, by the same token, the renunciation of power is one of the conditions of knowledge. We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These 'power-knowledge relations' are to be analyzed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental

⁴⁵ This is explored latterly in this section.

implications of power-knowledge and their historical transformations. In short, it is not the activity of the subject of knowledge that produces a corpus of knowledge, useful or resistant to power, but powerknowledge, the processes and struggles that traverse it and of which it is made up, that determines the forms and possible domains of knowledge (Foucault, 1975/1991: 27-28).

Bodies of knowledge and power relations are inseparable; they are indicative of one another, being symbiotically linked. Still, in the 21st century, those hierarchies of knowledge that are most valued are those which are usually institutionally produced in Western academies, both in terms of who and what is being (re)produced. In education, promoted by successive UK governments, the emphasis is on STEM subjects, rather than the arts; a legacy from the Enlightenment for progress and innovation and currently a pathway to the job market and social mobility. Thus, in defining what is 'worthy' of knowledge production, it is what the masters consider those knowledges to be deemed of value in society. Thus, certain hierarchies of knowledge hold more status and prestige than others. As a result, a perpetuation of both the knowledge and those exercising knowledges is often desired and so reproduced by those in the academy.⁴⁶

As a result, the perpetuation of the flow of certain knowledges is often desired and so reproduced by those high in the academy's power hierarchy; however, if power/knowledge is constructed and (re)produced, it can be redirected, resisted and challenged, and so power is relational; it is not a thing to be possessed (Foucault, in Faubion, 2000a). Accordingly, the tools of archaeology, genealogy, and discourse analysis, in an ethnographic approach, make visible the intricacies, complexities, contradictions, and tensions that are present, as the women take up a multiplicity of subject positions in the power/knowledge hierarchies. However, this study mainly draws upon a genealogical application, as power/knowledge is a major element that intersects the political and cultural landscapes of the LSAs in multiple and diverse ways. These

⁴⁶ One notable example of the way in which the dominance of the master is reproduced in pedagogy and the curriculum was evident at the Bauhaus. The manifesto, written by the Masters of the Bauhaus in Germany in 1919, seems to suggest a cultural shift that advocated a democratic approach. On reading the Bauhaus Manifesto, penned by Walter Gropius, one might assume an inclusive innovate approach to education was in the making. Strict entry requirements were relaxed to open access to those that were other than the norm: 'any person of good repute, without regard to age or sex, whose previous education is deemed adequate by the Council Masters, will be admitted, as far as space permits' (Gropius, 1919). The ethos of equality in age, gender and class was taken further in the disintegration of disciplines where art and craft were merged so it appeared that the knowledge/power hierarchies were being disrupted. However, contradictions were at play and when a large number of women gained access within the criteria set by the 'Masters', the women were relegated to the 'Women's Department', specifically the 'Weaving Workshop' (Weltage, 1993). This then (re)positioned the boundaries between art and craft as the women were placed in the crafts of needlework, and as entry was not free, class was an issue too. So, on the surface equality seems to be attainable but the situation is one example of reproductive knowledge/power at play within the academy and the creative arts.

tools are used to analyse the events, emotions and experiences of their everyday in the academy. By engaging in a mixed methodology of crafting together a collage/montage of narratives, I am able to add to the 'truths' and problematise the shaping of the artist and educator in The University (Mansfield, 2000). This was to make visible the landscape of the LSA, which has for the most part remained cloaked in a gendered, classed discourse that has produced the discursive formation of the disciplined good woman, as discussed in the literature in Chapter Three. By using a genealogical approach this position is problematised, for often the good woman is a mythologically produced object, found on the archaeological surface. By looking deeper into the genealogical landscape other subjectivities are shaped and discussed latterly in Chapter Three. In the words of Foucault, 'you will notice that there is more to explain than you thought; there are crooked contours that you haven't spotted' (Foucault in Davidson 1997: 156).

In this way, Foucault wanted his methods and approaches to be 'of service' to the researcher so that they, too, might use them to see the landscape differently. For, just as subject positions overlap, so too do discourses. These are revealed in the analysis, to add to those fields, such as criminology and psychology, as previously identified by Foucault. He states that, 'If one or two of these 'gadgets' of approach or method that I've tried to employ with psychiatry, the penal system or natural history can be of service to you, then I shall be delighted'. He continues to suggest that the researcher might adapt his 'tools or use others' (Foucault, 1980: 65). With this in mind, I have adapted the tools to be applied to the fields of education, specifically policy, disability and the employment of the women LSAs in a neoliberal milieu. In this way the thesis fills a space in the limited literature on the landscape of the LSA, as I 'write' to celebrate their creativity in their artworks and life experiences; I am doing as Foucault instructed.

This is done in much the same vein as Parker and Pollock's (1981/2003) methodology, where they 'had to become archaeologists, seeking for lost and efface traces, using a less disappeared history of women in literature to guide' them. It is our responsibility as historians, sociologists and artists to study the archives:

for all that the many voices of those who make art might tell us about the histories, the situations and the perspectives of the plurality that is the human condition. We, who look at ourselves and our histories through the prism of artistic representations and practices, need to know the whole array of stories, in their difference, complexity, and varied modes of creativity (Pollock and Parker, 1981/2003: xxvi).

I, too, went digging into the archaeology and genealogy of the women's past and, as stated previously, a literature and policy review were conducted to trace 'how human beings, [the LSAs] are made subjects' (Foucault, 1982b: 208). The literature on the LSA in any context is

limited and thus there were no *Old Mistresses* (1981) to be found anywhere, that is no record of the LSA as artist, so the decision was made to explore the policies that indirectly traces the positionings of the LSAs in language and practice. Rosika Parker and Griselda Pollock wrote, *Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology*, in 1981 where they identified that ‘there is not a female equivalent to the reverential “Old Master”’ (Parker and Pollock, 1981: 114). The language and practice of art history ‘privilege[s] the named creative individual and certain forms of art over all other expressions of creativity’ (ibid). The ‘discipline’ ‘punishes’ women by exclusion (Foucault, 1975/1991), as the ‘denigration of women by historians is concealed behind a rigidly constructed view of art history’ (Parker and Pollock: 1981: 7).⁴⁷ I am not saying that there are no LSA artists, but they are hidden in the ‘dark’ (Cixous, 1986: 876). However, power/knowledge hierarchies are at play, that position objects-subjects in the system; Foucault expounds upon this in *On Human Nature* (1971/2006: 41), urging us to reveal the injustices hidden within. He (1971/2006: 41) states that:

The real political task in a society such as ours is to criticize the workings of institutions that appear to be both neutral and independent, to criticize and attack them in such a manner that the political violence that has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that one can fight against them.

However, Foucault urges the researcher not to study his motivations and his interests, instead we are to write our own genealogies: do not ‘spend energy talking about him and, instead, do what he was doing’ (Sawicki, 1991: 15 in Ball 2013: 1). Indeed, many authors have employed a diversity of Foucauldian tools to uncover events and discursive formations that are identified in fields of power/knowledges and games of truth. A prevalence is to be found in the fields of: business management; health (Nicholls, 2009; Nettleson, 1992), nursing and psy-sciences /studies (Marsh, 2016; Rose, 1997); and education. Of note to this study are the applications of

⁴⁷ As an aside, I was excited to see that an exhibition was running at Manchester Art Gallery featuring seventy pieces of Black and Asian artists in 2018. The exhibition is entitled, *Speech Acts: Reflection-Imagination-Repetition*. It is apparent that as I write this thesis, it is an overt example of where the master is still reproducing the Same, by marginalising the Other (Foucault, 1970/2003: xvi). Just as all the work of these artists have been buried in archives and storage, so it was no surprise that the exhibition was barely advertised. I had not seen it publicised at all anywhere, and only became aware of it by accident. Looking for something interesting to watch on BBC Iplayer I came across *Whoever Heard of a Black Artist? Britain’s Hidden Art History* (BBC Four). I immediately looked up the details and was disappointed that the exhibition was in Manchester; why not the Tate Modern? Maybe for the same reason all the pieces have been in storage for many years, as practices divide and marginalise. The artists were working predominantly in the North of England and it is a celebration of this geocultural context; however, to take the exhibition on tour would have been an excellent way in which to illuminate the work of ‘Others’. Nima Poovaya-Smith senior curator of Cartwright Hall makes a pertinent statement in the BBC film: “If these works are not captured in public collections there’s going to be a serious distortion of history’. The work by these artists of colour are a reminder that there are many stories yet to be told. It illustrates how narratives are erased, but at the same time there can be elements of their stories that can be traced to negate what Sonia Boyce describes as “a mass systemic amnesia” in the art world (BBC Four, 2018).

a Foucauldian framework in the field of education, particularly the books by: Andres Fejes and Katherine Nicoll's (2008), *Foucault and Lifelong Learning: Governing the Subject*; Marie Tamboukou's text, entitled *Women, Education and the Self: A Foucauldian Perspective*; and *Foucault, Power, and Education* (2013) by Stephen Ball.

These texts are a small example of the ways in which current authors bring together a body of work, written on an aspect of education by employing Foucault's methods. Taking the tools from his toolbox, the authors adapted them to suit the needs of their study. Fejes and Nicoll (2008) give a comprehensive overview of lifelong learning and how it both supports a neoliberalist discourse in the production of subjects that serve the government's agenda of the productive worker, whilst at the same time narrating 'alterative 'tales'' (Fejes and Nicoll, 2008: x). One such tale suggests that lifelong learning is an 'emancipatory project based on egalitarian politics and social justice' (Olssen, 2006: 213). Ball (2013) investigates Foucault's methods in a genealogical application to deconstruct the policies in education. Particularly, of interest to this study was his focus on disability. Similarly, Tamboukou's focus is in the field of education, although she explores a gendered narrative of women's education in Victorian times. Using a feminist lens, she takes the tool of genealogy to write a history of women educators by analysing their autobiographical texts.

Although Foucault neither refers to the individual struggles of women nor to the direct speech of the subject, his theories support an educational context aligned to a neoliberal episteme.⁴⁸ He suggests that he is writing from his own experience and so is contextualised into taking up the challenges that are relevant in his, the writer's, own milieu. Foucault was the subject of a certain context, that of the Modern period; he was the product of a classical, Modern and privileged education (Rowan and Shore, 2009: 60). On reflection, it seems his own Othered position in society and culture determined his own archaeology and genealogy contexts of exploration. Rowan and Shore (2009) suggest that, had Foucault not experienced the Othered position of being a homosexual, he may not have focused on the systems and spaces of the prison, asylum, nor the power/knowledges in the *History of Sexuality* (1978). He illustrated how everyday social practices actively work to produce subjects that are othered, and eloquently considers this when discussing his sexuality:

In my personal life, it happened that after the awakening of my sexuality, I felt excluded, not really rejected, but belonging to the shadows of society. All the same, it is a distressing problem

⁴⁸ However, I have applied his theories to my own context and that of my participants, which is explored in the next two chapters by making reference to our experiences through the visual language and aesthetics embodied in the texts they have produced.

when you discover it for yourself. Very quickly, it was transformed into a kind of psychiatric threat: if you are not like everybody else, then you are abnormal, you are sick (Foucault cited in O'Farrell 2005: 20).

In Foucault's oeuvre he included histories of people that were constructed as 'abnormal', and possible 'enemies' of society. In this social construction, the juxtaposed production of the norms is emphasised. Those intersecting norms, Ball (2013: 62) suggests, are 'able-bodiedness, masculinity, heterosexuality, and whiteness'. Within Foucault's own gendered context of being positioned in the academy at a time in which homosexuality was illegal, he was simultaneously taking up subject positions in the spaces of the same and spaces of the Other (Macey, 1994: 30). At this time the gendered 'sick' subject was hidden and thereby the norm for a master of the academy was preserved. In every other way, it seems he was producing normative subject positions and, thereby, he was seen to be the authoritative academic maker of meaning not the bearer of meanings (Mulvey, 1975).

For Cixous, agency and autonomy are found in and through language, but more significantly above and outside of discourse, so that women, too, are their own creators of meaning and not the bearers of meaning in discourses that were not of their making (Mulvey, 1975). Cixous considers women's narratives and creative energy are a force to celebrate, flowing, fluid and transforming. In order to analyse this, it is necessary to add other conceptual tools to my toolbox, that is Cixous's use of the *écriture féminine*. Thus, one such way to disrupt the power/knowledge hierarchies and the mastery discourse is through women writing, creating their own (s)texts and narrative, including my own. Although both Foucault and Cixous urge the author to write about injustices, I feel that Cixous's call is more pronounced, more overt in her context of writing about women as practitioners of the *écriture féminine*. Unlike Foucault, Cixous's oeuvre is embedded in the struggles that women face. She offers the writer a way to overcome the objectification and commodification of women by her methodological practise of the *écriture féminine*. In the practise of the *écriture féminine*, I realised that those creative times and spaces are not positioned in the 'logic' of a Foucauldian conceptualisation of language and practice that is the discourse of the time. Therefore, in order to explore those moments and events outside the 'structure' of discourse, I held onto the coattails of Cixous, as she flew to the magical spaces of the Imaginary, myth and mystical, and so it is to Cixous that I now turn.

A feminine text cannot fail to be more than subversive. It is volcanic; as it is written it brings about an upheaval of the old property crust, carrier of masculine investments; there's no other way. There's no room for her if she's not a he. If she's a her-she, it's in order to smash everything, to shatter the framework of institutions, to blow up the law, to break up the "truth" with laughter (Cixous, 1976: 888).

The Contours of the *Écriture Feminine*

Cixous puts forth the possibility that by women writing, creating their own (s)texts, artwork, tex(tiles) etc, they are no longer kept in the 'dark' (Cixous, 1975/1986: 876). In breaking those bonds of 'masculine investments', by not reproducing the power/knowledges of the grand/master narratives and canons, a new sea-scape is shaped (Cixous, 1976: 888). In this escape of 'mastery', *A Newly Born Woman* is created (Cixous, 1986). Just as Foucault urges us to write genealogies, Cixous urges women to write their own (his)tory, even when it may seem that space is restricted and controlled, and speech is regulated. Crawford, suggests that (2006:42) '[f]or women to refuse mastery, they must write a new history, a woman's history'.

This is the aim of the thesis, to write a new story, to make visible a new genealogy of women practitioners and in Chapter Four I explore women's agency in the practice of their craft as LSAs and artists. They take up subject positions, often performing acts of transgression disturbing the discourse of mastery, neoliberalism and disciplinary power/knowledge hierarchies. In this territory of the transgressor they transform so that value is found in space, speech and practices, which is other than that of their expected norms. In this current landscape policy may divide practice, but it does not stop practice, for a diversity of material cultures is produced by practitioners both in the arts and education. Cixous illuminates upon this in 'The Laugh of the Medusa', specifically in the quotation I use to open this thesis: 'Women's imaginary is inexhaustible, like music, painting, writing: their stream of phantasms is incredible' (1976: 876). The creative energy of women and the work they produce is not bound in the (con)text of the master. Cixous (1976: 887) argues that women do not need:

to appropriate their [man's] instruments, their concepts, their places, or to begrudge them their position of mastery. Just because there's a risk of identification doesn't mean that we'll succumb. Let's leave it to the worriers, to masculine anxiety and its obsession with how to dominate the way things work – knowing "how it works" in order to "make it work." For us the point is not to take possession in order to internalize or manipulate, but rather to dash through and to "fly" (Cixous, 1976: 887).

In flight, as writers of the 'feminine', in an ethnographical context we need to take heed of what is being said and not 'translate', interpret, infer and imply what we think is 'hidden' in the texts. Instead it is important to be mindful of the stories as they are told to the researcher, not

as we think we hear them. Yet, as researchers, it is all that we can do to foster a 'feminine' encounter, in the vein that West (2016) suggests. Even in this 'feminine' therapeutic connectivity of intersubjectivities, there is a recognition that a degree of 'violence' is present in the process of interpretation (Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 967, MacLure, 2012). Foucault (in Faubion, 2000b: 275), too, realised the issues with knowledge production and interpretation: 'as a 'passive' process, 'it can only be seized, and violently, an already-present interpretation, which it must overthrow, upset, shatter with the blows of a hammer'. However, if we do not attempt to write, the 'Other' is lost in appropriation. Cixous (1977/1991: 66) eloquently explains this:

In these violent and lazy times, in which we do not live what we live, we are read, we are forcibly lived, far from our essential lives, we lose the gift, we no longer hear what things still want to tell us, we translate, we translate, everything is translation and reduction, there is almost nothing left of the sea but word without water: for we have also translated the words, we have emptied them of their speech, dried, reduced, and embalmed them, and they can no longer recall to us the way they used to rise up from the things as the burst of their essential laughter, when, out of joy, they called each other, they rejoiced in their fragrance-name; and "sea," "sea" smelled of seaweed, sounded salt, and we tasted the infinite loved one, we licked the stranger, the salt of her word on our lips (Cixous, 1977/1991: 66).

Deeply embedded in my production of the subject as the 21st century student researcher, traditionally schooled in a system of education that is often focused on the application of learning to facilitate employment, I felt there was a requirement to 'invest' in the 'mastery' of academia (Cixous, 1975/1986). Cixous (1976:879) vehemently argues against this position: she says that 'male writing ... has been run by a ... political, typically masculine – economy; that is this locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated'. She aligns this 'phallogocentrism' with the 'capitalist machine' and neoliberalism (1976:879). Currently, Mannay and Morgan (2015: 172) recognise that the student researcher's epistemic cognition may be a symptom 'of the wider high-speed, drive-by research climate that has begun to filter into their educational experience'. On reflection, I think that the pending redundancy was weighing heavily on my mind and I felt under pressure as I made the decision to undertake the PhD. This was just before the grip of neoliberalism took hold of the funding for disability in higher education. However, in applying Foucault's conceptualisation of discourse analysis and understanding the regimes of truth, that is the rules and systems of how academia operates, I became aware that I was habitually engrained in my phallogocentric education (Cixous, 1976:879). At the beginning of this study, the masculine form of writing was the style which I felt I needed to follow to get the 'job' done. I was entrenched in the landscape of

mastery and neoliberalism. My voice was silenced in the use of the third-person and deferring to the voice of the masters (Cixous, 1976; 1975/1986; Hoult, 2012).⁴⁹

Furthermore, in attempting to triangulate my research, I was pertaining to an objective and neutral position and, as discussed previously, I have an involvement and interest in this research that is subjective and personal. In following a less structured, indeed a post-structural approach, as Richardson (in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 962) explains:

it frees us from trying to write a single text in which everything is said at once to everyone. Nurturing our own voices releases the conscious hold of “science writing” on our consciousness as well as the arrogance it fosters in our psyche; writing is validated as a method of knowing.

From the commencement of my BA in 1993, I was expected to use this formal, academic, masculine approach; this was reminiscent of the scene in *Educating Rita*, (1983) where Rita’s quasi-‘feminine’ writing in the colloquial, anecdotal, vernacular, emotional, intuitive and creative was discarded by her. She screwed up her writing in a paper ball and threw it in the bin. Ironically, I have metaphorically unscrewed that paper ball and returned to the ‘feminine’. But this was not easy. I tentatively dipped my toe into the ‘salty waters’ of the Other-‘feminine’ approach during the writing of my MSc, but for the most part I could not ‘let go’ to write the ‘feminine’ (Cixous, 1977/1991: 66). I took my taken-for-granted truths, that academic writing was the only and correct way of writing.

But, in the words of Cixous, eventually I ‘blew it up’. In doing so, I returned to a type of pre-Oedipal state, before the Law of the Father structured and defined my writing into the linear logic of the academy. This was a difficult process; for many years I have been studying and teaching in the academy and still, for the most part, I am forced to teach academic masculine writing. I now realise that this was why I was finding the process so contentious and

⁴⁹ I am not including my supervisors in the master(y) discourse and writing the masculine in the academy; on the contrary, they encouraged the autobiographical element of the thesis and a voice that could be heard in the text that hitherto had been honed to deference and a neutral position. They encouraged a new way of knowing.

An example of this in my own practice was supporting a student with dyslexia, a medical condition and mental health issues; s/he had experienced some challenging and upsetting issues over the previous few months, caused by the stress of the ‘logic’ and prescriptive nature of a masculinised academic writing structure. The dissertation unit was causing much concern and exacerbating the medical condition along with the dyslexia. This was because the instructions for the dissertation unit changed three times. First, the students were briefed in the summer that it would be a certain word count with three chapters. When returning in the autumn term it was reduced by two thousand words with two chapters and then half way through it was changed again back to three chapters. The student was finding it challenging to cope with so many changes and conflicting information. I was supporting this ‘structured’ process, but extra DSA funded hours were needed as more support was required to accommodate the fluctuations and the need for so many redrafts, amendments and editing. A ‘feminised’ approach would have a facilitated a more considered, less stressful encounter between tutor and subject-object.

problematic. I needed to be freed from the 'guardians', the protectors of academic writing that were influencing a research methodology of pseudo-scientific approaches that were reminiscent of the conventions of masculine, Western, post-Enlightenment. Using 'scientific' methods such as triangulation in a study that was focused on subjective emotions and feelings was highlighting tensions between the approach and the research outcomes.⁵⁰

For example, if the research was conducted again, the same circumstances could not be repeated; subjects would interact differently; time and space cannot be replicated, reproduced. In this way it is useful to consider the research process as multifaceted in the vein of Richardson (Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 963). Instead of forcing validity and reliability in the way that would be the norm for a scientific study, I questioned this process in the light of Richardson's conceptualisation of the research methodology as a form of crystallisation (Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln, 2005: 963). Therefore, the technique of *écriture féminine* is a way to bring out of the 'dark' the messy, complex seascape of the production of the subjectivities of the participants. Harman (2012) suggests that '[i]f subjectivity is understood as being produced discursively, then the 'who we can be' (Weedon, 1987) is opened up to continuous redefinition'. In this way, I am able to redefine my own research position. So, I opened myself up to a new way of thinking and writing, and in doing so I redefined my position in the research process to become the 'feminine' bricoleur. As the bricoleur, I was able to collage their texts to express their stories, for all the women are active practitioners of art and craft; thus, an ideal medium in which to communicate their experiences. As the 'feminine', I am using it as a technique in the writing process, and as a way to conduct the ethnographical approach to data collection. Blythe and Sellers, (2004: 15) explain this:

⁵⁰ This project is ethnographically focused as I interviewed the participants in their homes with follow up communications and observations. As well as this I have experience of interviewing staff and students in other spaces for many research projects, that I conducted, where I then coded and analysed the data to make recommendations. The MEd was particularly 'scientific' and to let go of this masculinised approach was uncomfortable. The dissertation included an action research project that I completed for my MEd in Equality and Diversity. I implemented a peerled paired reading method over a five-month period. Topping (1995), the founder of this method suggested that students should be paired by reading ability: speed, comprehension, processing and accuracy. I embedded the process into all the programmes on which I was teaching. This research project shifted my whole approach to pedagogy and the curricula; I was sceptical of the concept of how well this reading methodology would work with students that had failed their GCSE many times. However, I was able to incorporate my research, scholarship and professional practice in a teaching and supported learning environment. Yet, on reflection, had I included a mixed method, such as a qualitative element I would have understood the students' journey to better support them in the classroom. However, I was completely entrenched in this 'masculine' encounter promoted by the supervisor of the research module.

At the heart of *écriture féminine* lies the desire to set up a non-acquisitional space – a space where the self can explore and experience the non-self (the ‘other’) in mutual respect, harmony and love. A ‘feminine’ approach to the other is generous and giving, it avoids the (‘masculine’) impulse to appropriate or annihilate the other’s difference, allowing the other to remain as ‘other’ (Blythe & Sellers, 2004: 15).

Many authors have written on the othering of oppressed minorities, most notably Edward Said in his famous 1978 text, *Orientalism*. Following in his footsteps many postcolonial feminist writers, such as Mohanty (1988), Spivak (1988) and many more have expanded upon his research. Others, Finlay (2002), Hertz (1996) and Manning (2016), have not only investigated the positions and spaces of those on the margins, but problematised their own positionality within the discourse. Hence, in bringing this issue to the fore, I am able to recognise the complexities of past interactions of our working positions. I am no longer managing the LSAs; however, in this way the aim was to facilitate the negation of these mastery social constructions and encourage an encounter that was compassionate to the needs of the participants:

To allow a thing to enter in its strangeness, light from the soul has to be put into each look, and the exterior light mixed with the interior light. An invisible aura forms around beings who are looked at well. Seeing before vision, seeing to see and see, before the eyes ‘narrative. This is not sorcery. It’s the science of the other! An art in itself; and all the ways of letting all the beings with their different strangeness enter our proximity are regions that ask to be approached, each with an appropriate patience (Cixous, 1977/1991:66).

I place myself in the mythological space of seeing the ‘light’, to be ‘patient’ in bringing into view the ‘strangeness’ of the ‘other’, as I break my own boundaries of having perpetuated the writing tradition of the masculine. As the transgressor, once entrenched in mastery, I am breaking the bounds of academic writing in the use of *écriture féminine*. In this way of writing, that which was new to me, now neither silent nor invisible, I create ‘a newly born’ story. Light is shone upon expanding and alternative positions, spaces, texts and speech, which are explored in the women’s materiality and creativity. Thus, visualised in their arts and crafts are transformations as well as teaching, learning and practices in the everyday. In mixing and collaging the resources in the spaces of the ethnographic-bricoleur, with Foucault’s theoretical concepts of writing stories and Cixous’ use of the ‘*écriture féminine*’, the narrative land-seascapes of the participants’ everyday lives are materialised, brought forth, given birth to. It is as Cixous states:

It is by writing, from and toward women, and by taking up the challenge of speech which has been governed by the phallus, that women will confirm women in a place other than that which is reserved in and by the symbolic, that is, in a place other than silence. Women should break out of the snare of silence. They shouldn’t be coned into accepting a domain which is the margin or the harem (Cixous, 1976: 881).

In a research space that encouraged a Cixousian exploration of the process as fluid, overlapping, overflowing, metaphorically synonymous with the ocean, water, etc., I facilitated a space of the 'feminine'. This was to explore the gushing, loquacious 'noisiness' of the women's voices and production of their oeuvre, where they disrupt the silences imposed upon them by the Selfsame (Cixous, 1975/1986: 79). Thereby, in the words of Cixous, I could 'lick the stranger,' and sense 'the salt of her word on [my] lips' (Cixous, 1977/1991: 66). This I did by slowing down the research process and enjoying the art-craft of writing in the 'feminine', as the bricoleur and the poet.

The Magpie in Flight

In the distance the sparkles beckon,
Oh, Magpie you cannot resist,
Soaring above the banal, the mundane,
The twinkles, the sparkles persist.

In this task, do not rest.
Robbing and stealing to fill the nest,
The shine, the glitter is piled high,
And upon your hoard,
Is the sun's radiant kiss.

In abundance, sparkling and dripping,
Dancing in the light,
Pearls and diamonds are on display,
So very bright.
Oh, what a reward for your relentless flight!
(Hayward, 2019)

Synthesising the Tools of the 'Feminine' Bricoleur

Before the writing commenced, I considered the methodological approach that should best support the focus of this study, that is the practise of their art, and artist as educator-LSA, in spaces of the everyday. The use of Foucault's theoretical toolbox facilitates the exploration of the subject positionings of the LSAs in The University. In writing a genealogy, which explores how the subject is produced, I initially considered that the use of the interview as a qualitative technique would be the obvious choice. Although, the verbal expressions of the practices of the women artists and educators were extremely important, I soon decided that in a 'feminine' encounter, I could conduct the interview in a different way. In a non-acquisitional approach, I sought to move beyond objectifying the LSAs (Cixous, 1977/1991: 66; West, 2016) by resisting the disciplinary power/knowledge hierarchical subject positions that is often produced in the researcher/subject (object) relationship (Foucault, 1982a).

Oakley (1981:31) highlights the power/knowledge tensions that have been historicised in what might be a contentious position taken up by the interviewer; she argues that the qualitative methodology of the interview is a masculine presentation of power. A critique of this stance is due to having an ontology aligned to the masculine position of the early ethnographer that may have appropriated and colonised the Other. However, as the subjects are produced in the language and practice of the researcher/researched relationship (Foucault, 1980), a more 'feminised' subjectivity may be shaped in the process to foster a sensitivity on the part of the researcher to those researched (Cixous, 1975; Oakley, 1981). The shaping of my feminised subjectivity is to be able to create a space to facilitate the telling of stories. I take on the role of what West (2016: 36) suggests is the 'sympathetic other' ... in a 'supportive relationship all of

which requires an imaginative emphatic, reflexive engagement on the researcher's part'. Bloor, (2001: 392) explains the complexities of this relationship: '[a]ll encounters between researchers and researched are species of social relationships ... in the case of ethnographic research the relationship in question may well embrace fondness and regard'. Thus, it is to understand the production of the 'feminine' researcher and the researched as subjects in a relationship that embodied negotiated decisions. One of those decisions was to conduct the interviews in the home, discussed at the close of this chapter.

The responses of the participants may be affected by the presence of the researcher in all forms of data collection; in the words of Gubrium and Holstein, (2001: 811) 'the interview has been perceived as an artificial enactment'. However, the authors continue by suggesting that it too is 'a site for collaboration (ibid). Interviews are an important way in which to source data, allowing for 'flexibility' and 'adaptability,' producing a wealth of data (Bell, 2005: 157). Those shared experiences are as a result of the subjective nature of qualitative research, a story that cannot be whole. The interviewer's construction of the interviewee's narrative is fragmented and incomplete. In a co-creation, only a partial narrative will be presented. The 'whole' story cannot be told, only a constructed part of the narrative (Clifford, 1986, Pink 2007: 10; Finlay, 2002: 211; Gough: 2003: 31). As the researcher, I am aware that I am reconstructing, or as Finlay (2002) aptly suggests, (co)-constructing their narratives, and in that construction, I cannot negate my own positionality and subjectivity (Walford, 2007: 6; Blaxter et al 1996: 84, Behar, 1996: 29). The same may be said of another researcher exploring the topic, the contexts are different, as will be the co-construction. Yet, this study is not to showcase the mastery of the researcher, but to interject into the limited literature the positions of the LSAs in contemporary education and society. By illuminating their practises as artists-practitioners-educators, their voices and visual cultures are presented. Therefore, I do not make truth claims but hope that this use of the 'feminine' is a way in which to open up stories that were hidden and may soon be forgotten if the participants are not heard (West, 2016; Richardson, 2005; MacLure, 2011).

But as the researcher, what does it mean for the 'interacting individuals' to be 'heard' (Denzin, 1989)? Who exactly is doing the speaking, the participant or the author of the study and, accordingly, to whom is the voice speaking? Foucault suggests that these issues can be addressed in the analysis of discourse, as it highlights those practices in which the subject is constrained and/ or enabled to speak. Consideration is needed around how the researcher/researched relationship is conducted, and 'voiced', in a way that illuminates their

reality. It is the result of using the appropriately chosen methodologies, that include interviews which enables the author-researcher to quote from the LSAs (Burton et al 2008). Coolican (1990:236) argues that it is directly using the raw data that allows the author to 'tell it like it is'. He considers that '[v]ery often comments just stick with us to perfectly encapsulate people's position, on some issue or stance in life, which they appear to hold.' In this way the participants' narratives, both collectively and individually, afford the research a relatability that connects with the reader and negates the author's masculine position and need to 'speak' for the women (Skeggs 1994).

The process is not quite so simple, as the researcher I have the choice of what to select, what quotes do I desire to include, and then by implication what am I excluding? Hertz, (1997: xi-xii in Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 1) aptly problematizes this issue, stating that:

voice is a struggle to figure out how to present the author's self while simultaneously writing and representing the respondents' accounts and representing their selves. Voice has multiple dimensions. First, there is the voice of the author. Second, there is the presentation of the voices of one's respondents within the text. A third dimension appears when the self is the subject of the inquiry.

In the multiplicity of voices, it is paramount to let the women 'speak for themselves', to take the narratives of the women from the 'dark' into the light (Cixous, 1975/1986: 876). Cixous's theoretical conceptualisation does not privilege any one voice; all are important; we all have something to say. As the interviewer listens, s/he may be alerted to particular themes by the consistent recall of particular places, events and occurrences during the interviews, repetition of words, terms and phrases, interruptions, display of emotions and expressions, such as enthusiasm and hesitations and the way people speak. And for this illumination, their voices are only part of the process of their story-telling. The telling is made apparent in the materiality of their stories. As in the vein of Denzin and Lincoln's (2008) maker of collages, I bring together the pieces, so that the placing together of the art, craftwork and narrative interviews communicate their stories. This is neither to exclude other stories nor to frame their practices in this one study. The collage of their experiences can take many forms that are pasted together, as expressed in the objects and 'texts'. Accordingly, embedded in this bricolage of research practices and techniques, the 'feminine' bricoleur's subjectivity is shaped and I take up this subject position to explore the women's subjective experiences.

As my research subjectivity is formed in the 'feminine', the use of which has been discussed in the research process, it is a technique that seeks to negate authoritative moves (Hoult 2012; Cixous, 1976). Foremost, I use it as a methodological practice, but it errs on the side of a theoretical philosophy. It is a way in which to both conceptualise practice as well as conducting

the practises, but it is difficult to landscape into a specific space. This, I believe, is what Cixous intended; she explains: '[a]t the present time, *defining* a 'feminine' practice of writing is impossible with an impossibility that will continue; for this practice will never be able to be theorized, enclosed, coded, which does not mean it does not exist' (92). She says that it does not operate in the theoretical landscape. The same might be said of the bricoleur, as s/he is land-seascaped in improvisation, serendipity, inventiveness, by using an organic creative process in the construction of the geosocial artistic landscapes. The practice of the 'feminine' and the bricoleur is difficult to pin down and indeed that is the aim: it is to be experienced in practice and therefore individualised in the organic nature of the research project.

In my linking of the two positionings, 'feminine'-bricoleur, the two, in my application are conjoined and in that paired process I have created an original theoretical conceptualisation. Thus, there is a synergy between the conceptualisation of the 'feminine' and the bricoleur; their land-seascapes collide, sharing an ethos of openness, experimentation, uncertainty, eclecticism, fluidity, unboundedness. Roberts (2018: 2) explains that to understand the complexities of landscapes in which the experiences and emotions of the subjects are the focus 'requires access to a correspondingly 'undisciplined' set of methods and toolkit. One way of approaching this is through recourse to ideas of bricolage and the researcher-as-bricoleur'. In using a mixture of media in the artworks to craft the women's stories, it allows the bricoleur to gather a collective collaboration. I am not suggesting that I am appropriating their stories, their myths, as their stories were 'gifted' to me with 'love' and enthusiasm, knowing that I would bring into the 'light' that which was once in the 'dark' (Cixous, 1976: 876). Agency is found in this approach that facilitates choice, participation and creative expression. In the practice of the 'feminine' the creative bricoleur transforms the materials, collected into something new, a new body of creative knowledge, not a regurgitation of the same myths.

For Foucault, these new knowledges are known as subjugated knowledges. They are the 'series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naive knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity' (Foucault, 1980: 82). Therefore, the knowledges constructed and disseminated in educational institutions are knowledges that are privileged. Conversely, the subjugated knowledges are those that are not privileged, which are produced by the 'psychiatrized, the patient ... the delinquent' (Foucault, 1980: 82). Kincheloe (2004: 48) suggests that bricoleurs are 'dedicated to questioning and learning from the

excluded'; in the vein of Foucault they are interested in revealing those subjugated knowledges that are often suppressed in the power/knowledge hierarchies found in the academy. The 'bric(v)oleur' facilitates knowledge production in the practices of transforming the media and allows for the subject to be viewed differently in s-texts that are crafted by the researcher and the researched (Cixous, 1975: 887)⁵¹. This engenders a closeness to the objects produced, the texts created by the researched as well as texts created by the researcher. In this way the bric(v)oleur interjects the personal auto-biographical, by putting something of the self into the writing-research experience. For example, I had the opportunity of collecting over one hundred photographs of the pieces that the women and I created. I now have traces of our materiality, stories of past productions as the artist, to write a history of their present (Foucault, 1975/1991).

As a criticism of bricolage, it may be considered a lazy methodology in that using what is to hand is part of the practice. But in using what is handy, that which is in the milieu of the participants, the practice is inclusive; it concentrates on the everyday activities of the participants. By combining the bricoleur with the *écriture féminine*, creative practice can move outside of discourse, language and pre-existing myths, stories and texts. It is not about 'forever' being in the space of the perpetuated myth of the 'SelfSame' (Cixous, 1975/1986: 79). Being outside of language and the Symbolic Order negates that which privileges the masters' power/knowledges of history, that is contextualised into an ontology of European patriarchy that marginalises women (Pollock, 1988; Brinkmann, 2012:7). Cixous (1975/1986) urges those that practise the 'feminine' to fly from the confinement and frustrations of the masculine, and in my alignment of the bricoleur with the 'feminine', I am able to do this.

Cixous (1975/1986:69) considers this gendered position as women are: 'pushed to the side of History and change, nullified, kept out of the way, on the edge of the stage, on the kitchen side, the bedside'. Yet it was to the 'kitchen side' and 'the bedside' that I went to document the creation of their texts and visualise their creative spaces (Cixous, 1975/1986:69). To this end, the 'history' I am writing brings to the fore the tales from the toolbox of a small cohort of women, including my own story. Therefore, by choosing these tools, synthesised with an autoethnographical approach, our tales are collaged into a genealogy located in the workspace and home-space. The co-construction of narrative interviews, together with their art and craft works and poetry, form a collage from the data collected. Therefore, in 'craft[ing]' together the

⁵¹ From this point, when applying the 'feminine' to the research process of the bricoleur, I will use the term bric(v)oleur

theories, practises and methods, those tales explore a celebratory positioning, and although our exit from the university was imminent, it was a space of transformation and positivity. Knowing for two years that this exit was part of our landscape, it allowed me to develop as a researcher; I knew that I had deadlines, but I had enough time to conduct the research, especially making their homes the focus. For, if need be, I would continue the process after the redundancy had taken effect.

Thus, I was able to progress in the field, as an ethnographic approach can facilitate a slower study where 'polymorphous clusters of correlations' might be revealed, different from those categories held as the 'truths' of the discourses (Foucault, 1975/1991: 199). Furthermore, in this considered approach elements of serendipitous bricolage can be fully explored and make for interesting findings. For example, a serendipitous event, such as a change of research venue for the interviews resulted in an analysis of the creativity of the LSAs in their homes. This, the home, is an aspect upon which this thesis expands, as a deliberate part of the research process. The change of space from my office in an educational institution, to the women's homes, enabled the *écriture féminine* to develop. The study developed in an experimental, organic way, where the fortuitous nature of the change of landscape allowed for the women's experiences of their art and craft to be taken to a new space (Pollock, 2003; Mannay and Morgan, 2015; Lincoln, 2012). West (2016: 4) suggests that in taking into consideration the circumstances of the Other, 'good enough space' is created. In this way 'more open and exploratory forms of storytelling' are made available (West 2016: 16). Accordingly, instead of the one or two items that they would have brought into my office, I was given the most amazing, wonderful and abundant selection of artworks that were entirely chosen by the participants. This exploration into their artwork in their own space made for an enthusiastic and energetic dialogue with the Other (Formenti and West, 2018).

However, the relationship between the LSAs and I, entering their homes, highlighted a tension between the method of a co-construction and their creativity. The home, often seen as a sanctuary, safe and private (hooks, 1990; Lincoln, 2012), is not easily accessible, and in opening up this space it may have led some of the women to take on the traditional subject position of housewife/home-maker; they tidied up before I arrived (Connell, 2009; Williams, 2001; Puwar, 2004; Gatrell, 2008; de Beauvoir, 1949; Oakley, 1976). This brings to mind West's (2016: 35) consideration of the 'unconscious process of wanting to please or appease in the telling of

their stories'.⁵² Often the home is a space essentialised in the discourse of 'angel in the house' (Ruskin, 1865: 89); for patriarchy's prevailing dominance is made apparent in a type of 'panoptical' surveillance, that led some of the women to self-regulate (Foucault, 1975/1991). My being in the space may have initiated the operation of the discourse that is deeply embedded in the production of the subject-object. In the event that I may have othered the women, leading to a self-chastised punishment for not being 'good enough', the women as angels in the house may have presented to me, the researcher, a façade (Foucault, 1975/1991; Ruskin, 1865: 89). Their homes did appear 'natural' not contrived, and once there, I was given the 'space' to explore their landscapes as a place of refuge and creativity (hooks, 1990).

Although the home has been a complex space of contradictions and contention, as well as a place of oppression, it is a safe space in which a creative subjectivity can be developed. It was as Woolf suggested in 1929: *A Room of One's Own* is a necessity. To explore a 'feminine' creativity, a space to think and to be agentic is essential. This may be a physical space and/ or a space of myth and/ or the mystical; it is a retreat to a creative space that need not be oppressive, constraining or marginalising. This is predicated upon the historicised gendered context of the inhabitants of the home and how women were positioned at a particular time. For example, many First and Second Wave Feminists, such as Simone de Beauvoir, Ann Oakley, Carolyn Steedman, Betty Friedman and others have written about the home as a space of oppression. Indeed, this is a position put forward by the participants and myself in the analysis of our stories but, equally, I argue that the home is a site of creativity and therefore a resistance to the norms of an essentialist gendered positioning, considered in Chapter Four.

In a Cixousian (1975: 887) consideration of this context, there was a 'jumbling' of 'the order of space'; I felt that I had 'disoriented' the spaces and places of things by positioning myself in their habitus. However, by 'dislocating' the hierarchies of 'things and values, breaking them all up', a 'feminine' encounter was facilitated (ibid). In this way a non-acquisitional space of resistance to their marginalisation was created as I took up the subject position of the bric(v)oleur. This subject production enabled me to negate the LSAs' objectification as the power relations were levelled. Choices were given as to what objects were presented as well as the space in which the interviews were conducted: the lounge, kitchen, studio. The PhD has

⁵² I was extremely mindful of this, as I found out after I completed my MSc, that during the interview process the participants were telephoning each other afterwards 'to make sure they got the right answers'. This issue was a conscious aspect when I made the decision to use their artwork as the basis of the story telling process, as it was a way to mitigate some of the need to please, with pre-constructed answers.

made 'space' upon which to reflect; the home is a complex landscape in which the subject positions of the women were explored and discussed in the analysis. Photographs that I took of their creativity in their studios (their homes, specifically the bedroom and the lounge) show how the home is employed by its inhabitants. Whilst I was there, I was able to facilitate a space that was given for speech, a 'feminine' integration of knowledge production between the participants and I. The women revealed sensitive and emotional experiences, the likes of which could not have been replicated in my office; this is discussed in Chapter Four.

Participant observation allows for a comprehensive examination of the lives of the women. It allows the researcher 'to see things as those involved see things' (Denscombe 1998: 69). By drawing upon the women's experiences in the spaces where the subjectivities of artist and educational practitioner overlapped, it revealed how the LSA role facilitates creative transformations. Burton et al (2008: 17) suggest that observation 'enables researchers, as far as possible, to share the same experiences as the subjects, to understand better why they act in the way they do'. This research methodology 'presents detail, context, emotion and the webs of social relationships that join persons to one another. ... It inserts history into experience. ... In thick description, the voices, feelings, actions and meanings of interacting individuals are heard' (Denzin, 1989: 83). The ethnographical approach of the bric(v)oleur facilitated the show-casing of the women's talents, skills and lifelong learning in the spaces of the home and workplaces, to reveal their creative subjectivities. Mannay and Morgan (2015: 168) consider the choice of research technique/s to be used in the employment of 'best practice', where less emphasis should be placed on the 'technique', and in agreement with Lincoln (2012), they suggest that the research process need not be limited in the application of research methods, approaches and techniques. Accordingly, 'a family of research tools' may be drawn upon to fulfil the research criteria (Manny and Morgan 2015). What methods best suit the enquiry will depend upon the nature of the study (Blaxter et al, 1996: 80-1). To continue with the metaphor, it is about choosing the right tools for the job. The study should therefore define the method, not the other way around.

I was conscious of and reflective upon this process as I was mindful of the authoritative hierarchical discourse embedded in my past position as their manager/supervisor; I was the Additional Learning Support Co-ordinator and, for some aspects of their employment, I was performing aspects of being their Line Manager. I conducted observations which formed part of the appraisal and CPD process for the LSAs. The past alignment of this process to their training and development was a particular worry, specifically as it connected so closely with

the Ofsted inspections. To remove this connection to disciplinary power hierarchies, I considered that a change in spatial setting, to that of the comfort of their own homes, would lessen this association. Denzin and Lincoln (2005: 1) state that '[s]adly, qualitative research, in many if not all of its forms (observation, participation, interviewing, ethnography), serves as a metaphor for colonial knowledge, for power, and for truth'. The observations of the women in the managerial/staff binary context were reminiscent of the authority and power exercised in the fieldwork and literature of the Other. The 'knowledgeable' ethnographer embedded in the superiority of 'colonialist anthropologies' was a position I was conscious to avoid (Finlay, 2002: 211). Therefore, in venturing to 'the kitchen side, the bedside', the sites of their studios, it was a way in which to mitigate their marginalisation as artists (Cixous, 1986:69). Hooks explains the importance of space and the home as a safe place and site of political resistance to marginalisation. In her consideration of the home, it problematises the discourse of the first and second wave feminists that saw this 'space of femininity' (Pollock, 2003), as a site of oppression. Hooks a third wave feminists, explains:

Throughout our history, African-Americans have recognized the subversive value of homeplace, of having access to private space where we do not directly encounter white racist aggression. ... domestic space has been a crucial site for organizing, for forming political solidarity. Homeplace has been a site of resistance (hooks, 1990: 47).

Therefore, the intersection of interviews, visual objects/artworks and observations of the women in the spaces puts into practice what Marcus (1998) defines as 'multi-site ethnography'. This is the tracing of the experiences of the cohort of women as they navigate and negotiate the spaces in which they live, learn and work. In locating the part-time LSAs in their landscapes of space and place, it was considered that the contexts of resistance, transformation and/ or reproduction would be best made apparent in the choice of mixed methodologies. Yet a mixed qualitative methodology of bricolage is not the approach for all researchers. For example, Sara Delamont (2012) is wholly committed to ethnographic research, although it is only in the practice of observational fieldwork. This is her method of choice: 'I have no faith in any other method, any other form of data. If I cannot observe it, I do not want to do research on it, and I can never understand anyone who wants to use any other method' (Delamont, 2012, in Denzin, 2013: 57). She takes this stance further by critiquing the value of other techniques: 'the enthusiasm many qualitative researchers have for interviewing leaves me cold: what people do seems so much more important than anything they can, or do, say' (Delamont, 2012, in Denzin, 2012: 57).

Nevertheless, we are more than just what we do: the voicing of our thoughts and feelings are paramount in defining the multiple subjectivities that are made apparent in the spaces of

interest in this study. The localities in which transformation may be revealed and/ or possible oppressions made apparent is explored in the intersecting and complex cultural constructions of their lived experiences, lifelong learning and the development of their becoming the artist and educational practitioner in speech (language) as well as practice. Speaking for me, and indeed the participants, has been challenging, emotional and problematic. It cannot be dismissed, as Delamont suggests; it is an important part of my research methodology and is analysed in Chapter Four. Furthermore, Lutz (1993: 108) considers ethnography as more than observational fieldwork, the method employed by Sara Delamont. Instead many techniques can be drawn upon, including '[p]articipant observation, interview, mapping and charting, interaction analysis, ... etc.' (Lutz 1993: 108). By selecting a qualitative methodology, relationships, connections and themes are presented, as a rich depth of meaning can be teased out using a mixed ethnographical approach.

As I practised my craft as the bric(v)oleur, I had encounters with Others, that stirred memories of my own experiences as a student, educator and artist, some very similar to the participants and others very different. But always there was 'a desire to keep conversation[s] going' (Bochner, 2013, 53). At the start of the process, I felt an unease around the technique of autoethnographical methods. It has grown in popularity in recent years, with journals on qualitative research frequently featuring articles on autoethnography, such as the *Qualitative Inquiry*, *Qualitative Research*, and many more. Delamont (2007) argues that autoethnographical practices are not a methodology of merit, they lack the rigors of analysis and ethics, and instead of focusing on 'the powerless to whom we should be directing our sociological gaze', they confirm the positions of the powerful (Delamont, 2007 in ERSC, 2007: 2). However, Bridgens (2007 in ERSC, 2007: 4) directly challenges Delamont stating that, [t]his attitude discourages researchers from recognising their motivations, thoughts, and feelings as integral to their research'. It was a way in which to shape my subjectivity as the 'feminine' bric(v)oleur, being open, flexible, creative and vulnerable, to collage the stories of our lives.

In this way, it was similar to the approach taken by Clover (2007), and how she documents a mixed ethnographical methodology in which the researcher and the researched were immersed in the process. Her quilting project, *Sexual exploitation has no borders*, was community based; it wove the stories of women who were sexually exploited and abused. Clover (2004, ii) states that the exhibition of the quilt was a means to highlight the women's work as 'stimulants of imagination, spirit and dialogue, catalysts for personal, social, and environmental transformation, tools of justice, empowerment, and emancipation, and

channels of energy, challenge and resistance'. Like my own project, it resulted in an exhibition to disseminate a new body of knowledge to illustrate the rich tapestry that is woven together in a creative display of craft-artwork. It is a text[ile] that gives an account of the women's individual experiences.

I am suggesting that this flexible collaborative approach enables an understanding of a levelling of the power/knowledge landscape. I did discuss this process with the LSAs, most notably with Una in the pilot. We both considered the spaces in which to conduct the interviews. Her interview happened to be in the summer holidays and accordingly The University was operating on a skeleton staff with limited or no catering. As we decided to carry out the interview over lunch, this was not an appropriate space. Initially, I suggested going out, but we soon realised that in order for the artist-participants to showcase their work the most appropriate space was the home, as this was where they practised their art and where most of the artworks were situated. That said, choice was always given in the arrangements; this facilitated an encounter that allowed for trust in the process and trust in me as the interviewer. It did elicit a positioning that allowed me to put aside my authoritative legacy that might have surfaced should we have been in The University. One interesting occurrence was that the two participants, whose employment pathway was not from the student body, did not want to be interviewed in their homes. Instead, one was conducted in my office and one in a restaurant and neither brought their own artwork, but brought other examples of material and visual cultures of significance. Although they were both artists, they were employed for their LSA specialism. This correlation was made latterly in the project; I did not explore this connection with the two LSAs, that is, their choice of interview space and choice of objects, as this was not a longitudinal study.

Thus, some places and spaces are preferred over others; choices are made and communications, (mis)interpretation may be lost in cultural 'translation' (Cixous, 1977/1991: 66). Accordingly, the stories, including my own, are supported by the use of photo-elicitation during the interviews to support the crafting of the research process. Encouraging a 'feminine' encounter, the participants chose what I photographed and documented. Some decided that their photographs were of a quality that was better than mine and so their imagery was used. Thus, this form of data collection has power plays in the processes and it is for the researcher to manage the performance to ensure a 'practice' that is 'feminine'. Many authors, Rose (2007) Mannay (2010; 2013) Marvasti (2004) Mannay and Morgan (2015) and Pink (2009), advocate the use of visual materials. Visual techniques 'can move beyond the repertoire of

preconceived understandings of place and space' (Mannay, 2010). For example, Lincoln (2012), in her analysis of private spaces of teenagers' bedrooms, considers the spaces were brought "to life', visually as well as orally' as a 'representation of their identities, interests and cultures' (Lincoln, 2012: 58).

By inviting the women to express their subjectivities in the context of a creative 'feminine aesthetic' (Clover, 2010), we take up the position as image-makers. Our intentions as meaning-makers are more important than the analytical assumptions I could have brought to bear upon the subject-object. This decision to avoid over translation, analysis and interpretation was made after much deliberation, as I am from the art historical traditions of a post-modern context in which the intentions of the maker is negated in a Barthesian notion that, *The Author is Dead* (1977). In this social framework, the intentions of the author/maker are considered not to be as important as the multifaceted interpretations of those reading the piece, after the maker is 'dead'.

For example, when Diana created figure 2 for my MSc, I asked her to make a piece as a representation of the self, but I did not ask for *her* 'tale from her toolbox'. Instead I took a type of master narrative approach and interpreted the image with no direction from her, the artist. Reflecting upon my own practice, I think this was a method in which I was 'disciplined'. It was from a postmodern reading of art that emphasises the 'death of the author'-creator (Barthes, 1977). Negating the intentions of the author/maker, it positioned me as the 'expert', master (Cixous, 1976: 887). This is where the paradox lies in a postmodern reading, the 'genius' of the maker-master is put aside but, in doing so, the voice of the artist is lost, to be replaced with my voice, the interpreter, art critic, master-art historian. However, in this study I sought to write and 'read' in the 'feminine' co-creation of their stories. Therefore, my artwork, figure 3, is considered in a dialogue, a continuum with Diana's paintings and all the other artworks-objects; our conversations are an example of how art is a medium through which the spaces of the *écriture* feminine are expressed as well as discourse, experiences and events. They are a way in which to illustrate different ways of knowing and understanding.



Figure 2: Diana, Self-Portrait, 2014, pencil and paper, 25 x 29 cm, private collection



Figure 3: Beverley Hayward, *Mocking the Master Narrative: The Masquerade*, 2015-19, tapestry and mixed media, 30 x 40 cm, private collection

The visual cultures, that is, art and craft work and photography, illustrate the creative practices of the women, which are considered as part of the analysis, Chapter Four. The intentions of each individual practitioner differ, as a result the medium and the formal elements used within each piece give rise to difference. So, although 'the brief' given to the women was the same, all were invited to talk about their work as practitioners, the response was varied in form and context. It was a way in which their creative productivity, intellectual inspirations and motivations were visualised in a very open and diverse format. The images have a 'major social significance in the articulation of meanings about the world', their world and position within it (Pollock, 1988: 7). Thus, by employing material cultures and forms of creative writing, the norms of academic discourse may be disrupted to produce a diverse body of data to be employed in the analysis. Gough (2003:31) elucidates upon the merits of '(... some devices from art and literature to deconstruct our analysis), and – temporarily at least – settling for a version of analysis ... we think makes a valid theoretical and or political point'.

I have studied the objectivizing of the subject in what I shall call "dividing practices." The subject is either divided inside himself or divided from others. This process objectivizes him. Examples are the mad and the sane, the sick and the healthy, the criminals and the "good boys." Finally, I have sought to study ... the way a human being turns himself into a subject (Foucault, 1982a: 777-8).

Chapter 3: A Review: Positionings, Policies and Practices of the LSAs' Landscapes

In order to explore the political, social and cultural landscape of the LSAs, I intersected the writing of a Foucauldian genealogy with the tool of ethnography. I situate myself as the 'feminine' bricoleur to collect a range of primary data. A literature and policy review contribute to this multidisciplinary approach. Both reviews were deemed necessary in my methodological bricolage due to the limited literature written on the cohort. What literature there is mainly references compulsory education and, peripherally, FE and adult education: none of the texts available explore HE. Accordingly, I begin the process by examining the wider context of social policies and the political landscape in which the LSAs are situated. I set the scene by analysing the policies in which inclusion and disability are embedded and, by implication, the LSAs.

The LSAs at The University are supporting those students with learning differences and disabilities; they are not classroom assistants nor teaching assistants and accordingly they are neither supporting the teacher/tutor nor the whole class. Therefore, disability is very much a contour in the landscape of the LSA, as are other strands found in the policies and literature written on the LSA, which includes the gendering of the role, the marginalisation of the women as students, challenges around formal lifelong learning experiences and the impact of a neoliberal agenda. In writing this chapter, I am mindful that the LSA participants are the focus and rationale for this thesis and therefore it seems pivotal to begin by exploring the landscape of the LSA in policy and legislation, as currently this has (re)positioned the participants and influenced their practice as LSAs and artists. Therefore, the positionings and practices of: the participants; those women in the literature; and by implication, the students they support, are considered in light of the policies that are embedded in the educational systems. They are implemented by senior managers in the academies due to the changes to the Disabled Students' Allowance. Along with the policy review, I drew upon the limited literature available

to explore the discourses of 'mastery', neoliberalism and the pathologising of (dis)ability in the LSA landscape (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-146).

In this context, the purpose of using the tool of genealogy is to trace: the power/knowledge hierarchies in the spaces of the academy; The University's organisation and categorisation; and how the (dis)abled students and LSAs take up those multiple subject positionings. Often the women are marginalised physically in the spaces of the academy and, psychologically, as women artists and educational practitioners. But resistances are there, in and outside the academy. In doing so, 'a history of the present' is constructed in the analysis chapter but, firstly, 'a history of the past' is considered by analysing the discourses in the policies and the literature written about the LSAs of the last twenty years (Foucault, 1975/1991). Found in this literature are the discursive positionings, processes and practises of the constructions of the 'interloper' (hooks, 1994), poor student and good woman narrative (Watson et al, 2013; Veck, 2009; Barkham, 2008; and Constable, 2013). This partial narrative was constructed as a consequence of failing in the compulsory schooling system and being gendered as an LSA in a legacy of care and m/othering (Hayward, 2014). All of which are discussed in depth in this chapter, part 3: The Discursive Construction of the 'Good' LSA: Language and Landscape.

In an overlapping of subjectivities, these discursive constructions intersect with resistance and transgression. Positioned in language and landscape, they are considered within a diversity of institutions across the sector, mainly compulsory education. Thus, in making visible these discursive subject formations, the other positions that are made apparent disrupt the academy's 'games of truth', making for stories that are celebratory and optimistic (Foucault, 1988b). These subject positions come from other discourses that are in circulation, for, as Foucault suggests power/knowledge enables as well as disables:

We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production (Foucault 1975/1991:194).

With this in mind, those policies and government agendas inclusive of a post compulsory context of most significance to this study, are those that produce the creative subject as well as the marginalised object-subject. The policies include those on widening participation/access, inclusion and disability. For example, the Equality and Diversity Policies of 2006 and 2010 are poignant, for many of the criteria apply to both the participants and their students. Furthermore, many of the participants fall into the widening participation categories, as do all the students they support and this is discussed later in the chapter.

Probably it's insufficient to say that behind the governments, behind the apparatus of the State, there is the dominant class; one must locate the point of activity, the places and forms in which its domination is exercised. And because this domination is not simply the expression in political terms of economic exploitation, it is its instrument and, to a large extent, the condition which makes it possible; the suppression of the one is achieved through the exhaustive discernment of the other (Foucault, 1971/2006: 41).

The Cartography of LSAs in the Territory of Policy and the Funding Landscape

The cartography of the LSA is considered in this chapter; beginning briefly with an archeological application, I have partially historicised the discourse on disability to the 1970's, specifically the Warnock Report (1978). This was the first text in which the disabled body was positioned in mainstream schools. This is the juncture at which the disabled body is symbiotically linked to the LSA and here the LSA's discursive formation is a way in which objectification takes place. It is a type of regulatory gaze, in which the LSAs are disciplined to make up the deficit, that is thought to be required by the experts in order to facilitate the production of the 'able-bodied' student. Ball (2013) conducts a deeper dig into the archives, starting with the 1850s, where there was no distinction between the disabled and the mentally unwell. The discourse is overtly scientific, both medical and psychological. Here the acts reference terms that denote a deficit in learning, mental health and or moral standards. The acts and reports use terms such as: 'idiot', 'imbeciles', 'feeble-minded', 'moral imbecile', 'backward child' (Idiots Act 1886; Mental Deficiency Act 1913 and Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act 1899). The scientific discourse, in which the acts are situated, was most likely contextualised into the new science of psychology and the emerging medical pathologies of the time (Freud, 1905/2011). Although the language of today's discourse is not so overt, it is still situated in a medical discourse.

This is an example of how discourse has produced a 'truth', by being aligned to a hierarchy of knowledge that has accorded a status of scientificity. Foucault states that, 'I tried to explore scientific discourse ... from the point of view of the rules that come into play in the very existence of such discourse', so that at the time of its production the medical foundations brought into being an acceptance, giving it 'value and practical application as scientific

discourse' (Foucault, 1970/2003: xiv). When these acts, policies, that is, so called 'truths' were written, the rules of the discourse objectified the (dis)abled body. Ball (2013: 52) states that:

Increasingly, schooling was infused by a psychology fixated with the individual and the individual difference, both normalising and pathologization, and realised within a set of assessing, diagnostic, prognostic and normative practices. The emergency of the modern individual is seen here as the object of both political and scientific concern.

Foucault (1970/2003: 43-44) considers those norms in terms of how practices can be a way in which inclusion and exclusion are represented in the spatial positionings; he states that, 'I think we still describe the way in which power is exercised over the mad, criminals, deviants, children, and the poor in these terms ... mechanisms and effects of exclusion, disqualifications, exile, rejection, deprivation, refusal, and incomprehension'. Foucault explored those systems and institutions that divided practice, to observe how they segregate or normalise. One way in which to normalise is by legislating the desired practice into policy. This then gives the practices credence and legitimacy. As a society, we have moved on from the segregation of the 19th and first half of the 20th century, where those with disabilities and learning differences were marginalised from those considered the norm. The objective of legislation after the 1950s was to replace segregated institutions for services that were of the community, that is 'community care' (Mental Health Act 1959). This would facilitate an inclusive ethos for all members in our society, thereby negating the exclusion of those medicalised-objectified individuals, who were marginalised into the borders of the general population. Today, disability is no longer quite so geographically placed on the margins, but often the staff in the disability departments are hidden away, exiled to the margins of the academy, in a space that is not directly accessible; the staff and the students are 'outcasts on the inside' (Bourdieu and Champagne, 1999: 422). Policy then segregates practice that in name is inclusive, as the student is attached and categorised within the special educational needs department. This is a practice that is physically dividing, as the (dis)abled body is placed in spaces other than that where the normalised student body is located. The students may feel emotionally detached, as they are disconnected from their peers.

Frequently, educational policies and practices intersect, as the same language is used to normalise. For example, much of the widening participation criteria intersects with the 'protected characteristics' as referred to in the Equality Act 2010. These consist of: 'age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation' (Equality Act, 2010). Many of which apply to the participants, not only as formal mature students, in The University with a disability, but as learning support workers, supporting students with learning differences, mental health issues

and disabilities. HEFCE (2015a) states that 'The Student Opportunity' allocation of funding is the main way in which HEFCE supports widening participation. However, funding to support this is not always resourced into inclusive practices, once the students are recruited. Previously, those students with disabilities that required an LSA must have the (dis)abled label to access the funding. They fulfil widening participation categories and the protected characteristics.

This funding recognises the additional costs of recruiting and supporting students in three main areas:

- students from disadvantaged backgrounds
- students with disabilities
- work to retain students who may be less likely to continue their studies (HEFCE 2015a).

In The University, the category and the label of disability that relates to the students that the LSAs support now has a gap in provision, yet to be filled. Paradoxically, the cuts made to support the learning needs of the disabled student puts at risk the very mechanisms required to produce the 'able' student and ultimately the 'able' worker. Some students with a disability will not be able to succeed without support. Therefore, the cuts negate the very ethos that it is promoting, that is, widening participation, lifelong learning and social mobility. Thus, once again the funding cuts practised by the senior managers in the academies may negate the aims of the policies to widen participation to those students with disabilities. The cuts are driving practices, and now very much dividing practice, to marginalise the support worker from the academy altogether. This marginalisation may extend to the disabled student, the implications are yet to be seen. 2017/18 was the last academic year in which the institutions that decided not to be a provider were still able to claim the student's disability allowance for an LSA.⁵³ The funding implications are huge for HE providers; before, support would pay for itself with the disability student's allowance and local authority funding and a large amount would be 'left over' for the universities.

Now it seems that there is a 'cost' in the normalisation of the disabled student that produces a tension in the policies between widening participation and disability. When the financial cost to the Government was too high to support the funding of disability provision, the burden has

⁵³ The Disability Student's Allowance funding stream has completely cut Bands 1 and 2: the LSA in HE is band 2, and in FE only students with a full educational health care plan (EHCP) can have support from an LSA. The funding for FE and HE is separate, as FE is funded via the local authorities where evidence of having a disability is stipulated on the student's EHCP. In this landscape, the funding for support staff has stayed constant, although recently the requests by parents for an EHCP has increased hugely. In an FE context, the institution is required to meet the cost of support to £6,000. Above this sum, the local authority covers the costs, which often includes LSA provision. Now the provision will be sourced from an outside provider, and will only be for those students that have a history of LSA support evidenced on their EHCP.

shifted to the institutional provider. This may reduce widening participation, if students do not feel supported at a particular university, they will go elsewhere. As they say, (the student), the 'customer is king'. This is the stance made apparent in the policies reviewed on disability for HE. One piece of research that was produced by HEFCE (2015b), entitled 'Delivering opportunities for students and maximising their success: Evidence for policy and practice 2015-2020', assessed the access, success and retention of those students for whom widening participation applied. The students are not considered in terms of their holistic wellbeing, but instead they are considered as economic units, as commodities in the market to be measured in order to maximise profits. The report states that 'The review of provision and support for disabled students ... finds no systematic analysis of effectiveness, and suggests that institutions would benefit from a clear logic model to measure impact through inputs, outputs and outcomes' (2015b: 10, Section 52).

Frequently, the 'effective' learning for some disabled students is not a measurable output. For example, a student with autism might be supported by an LSA to be able to sit in a large studio with eighty other students and then possibly engage in active learning. I am not sure how a system will measure that effect of social interaction in a large stressful space. Even when a student might 'fail' their academic course, this does not mean they have failed in life skills. With the increased marketisation of HE, and the severe DSA funding cuts, often inclusivity has not been embedded in the courses, and where student services were once frequently called upon to act as a translator or mediator between the tutor and the student, this may not be taking place. Accordingly, it is hoped that the student's possible, and/ or early, exit is mitigated, as the academics try to facilitate ways of inclusive practices to fill 'the deficit'.

Thus, it seems that the LSAs' subjugated, but often hidden knowledges are now completely marginalised.⁵⁴ These knowledges were once of value as former students and themselves having extensive life experiences of disability. If, as support workers and tutors/lecturers, we are seeking a pedagogy of inclusion, one in which equality is sought in meaningful practices, many of the roles in the disability department should not be needed. Inclusion at its best negates marginalisation. However, this landscape has yet to be realised, which makes the exclusion of the LSAs premature, for still, in many classes, handouts are not available, recording the lectures is not permitted and PowerPoints are not uploaded. HEFCE (2017:

⁵⁴ This is explored in detail in Chapter Four, specifically part 2: The Spaces of the Researcher: Knowledge (Re)Producer, with reference to participant LSAs.

Section 30) suggests that inclusive practices such as these activities are ‘simple actions to effect change’.

If these practices are so ‘simple’ to implement, then why are universities not complying? I believe from my observations in the academy that often the support staff are making up the ‘deficit’ in some areas where inclusivity is absent and this presents power/knowledge hierarchies at play. Some tutors do not have a teaching qualification and are not confident being recorded, technicians are being used to take classes and again are not qualified to teach; lecturers are under a great deal of pressure and often are preparing classes at the last minute. However, there are pockets of good practice, many examples of which are found in the recent paper produced by the Equality Challenge Unit (2017). Should inclusive practice be embedded in the course, there would be no need to declare a disability, as the ‘alternative’ assessments to the ‘norm’ would already be in place. The need to be pathologised, labelled, categorised and objectified by the disability department is mitigated by inclusive practices (Foucault, 1970/2003). In this ‘utopian’ landscape, then the LSA would be redundant.

However, with basic inclusive practices not being implemented by some universities, there is recourse for litigation. For, frequently used language in the policies are terms such as ‘competency standards’ and ‘reasonable adjustments’, which opens up the pathologising discourse of the disabled body to be able to litigate for their human rights. The Equality Act 2010 ‘puts a general duty’ upon HEFCE, now the Office for Students, for higher and further education institutions, to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity between people who do and do not share a protected characteristic
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not share a protected characteristic.

In the legal frameworks there is a promotion of the social model, inclusion and shared spaces (HEFCE, 2015b: Section 117); yet there are tensions between this discourse and that of an aggressive marketing for students and the ability for some institutions to support them. Competition in the market model and trying to align neoliberalism with altruism, care and wellbeing is a landscape that is bumpy at best; examples of which are discussed latterly in this chapter. In this shift to a marketised model of education, legislation is called upon when the student-customer does not feel that they have been treated fairly. When compounded with a

disability, students are forming subjectivities that enable them to litigate.⁵⁵ However, the 'unit'-object with a learning difference and or disability, in many of the Government's policies, still is pathologised in a body that is (dis)abled. In this way the expectation is that the student with support mitigates the likelihood of failure. However, currently, non-measurable 'outputs' are not often considered in some academies' 'order of things' (Foucault, 1970/2003). Accordingly, education is bound in an episteme of neoliberalism, where the acquisition of knowledge is valued for employment purposes and increased social mobility (Ball, 2013; Sen, 1999; Olssen, 2006).

'Educational discourses around the world often refer to human capital, lifelong learning for improving job skills, and economic development' (Spring 2009: 3). This is the discourse that Theresa May advocated in her acceptance speech; she promised that the 'talents', that is the human capital of the 'citizen' will accord opportunities (May, 2016). The rhetoric moves between her insistence on social justice and playing down the economic and financial agenda. She tries to level the power relations between those at the top of the power/knowledge hierarchies by emphasising the 'talents' we all have whether 'poor', 'black', 'working class' and or 'women', promising a more equal and fair society. Yet, as I write this, those of 'privilege' are still the 'winners' in a landscape which the state engineered, in what Foucault considers as biopower (Foucault, 1978). Those at the 'top' of the power/knowledge hierarchies have the ability to compete for the best opportunities, including places at elite universities, whilst those at the 'bottom' find it extremely challenging when their priorities are to try to manage to survive, paying for food, rent and utilities. May's use of the human capital discourse hides the state's squeezing of taxes from the poor, whilst keeping the markets satisfied.

However, with competition driving up the fees, and to mitigate the economic impact of this upon student participation, OFFA was set up in 2004 to ensure fee increases introduced in 2006/07, 'did not deter people from entering higher education for financial reasons' (OFFA, 2014). As an independent public body, its aim was to make sure 'universities and colleges were explicitly committed to increasing participation in higher education among under-represented groups' (OFFA 2014). The elite universities that are research focused accept those students

⁵⁵ For example, a student won a lawsuit against Canterbury Christ Church, who denied him wheelchair access at his graduation ceremony. Craig Potter was not able to access the stage during the ceremony held at Canterbury Cathedral, as a ramp was not provided. He was not treated equally and was awarded £4,000 in damages (BBC, 2007). More recently, Sophie Spector, in 2015, felt she was discriminated against and victimised whilst attending Oxford University. This was due to learning differences and mental health issues (Turner and Mintz, 2015).

that are often from good socio-economic backgrounds, while the opposite is the case for the post-1992 establishments (Burke & Hayton, 2001: 12). In a system that favours marketisation, these less prestigious universities, what Archer (2007) categorises as 'bronze', try to reposition the institution as an elitist university. This is the paradox in which widening participation and inclusion sits and, by implication, disability; for as universities compete for students, those institutions that are not a top choice find that entry requirements are ignored in order to fill the courses. This perpetuates a landscape that reproduces the master's own position, as a tiered system is in place, so that the academies in the top tiers are less likely to extend their borders to those students meeting the widening participation criteria.

In this way widening participation facilitates a neoliberal agenda, supporting a work-ready cohort by promoting access for all; it appears to democratise education. However, it is far more complex than just offering it up as an approach to increase social mobility and social injustice; it is a way to categorise the pathologies of the student in a deficit discourse to mitigate the likelihood of early exit from the academy (Archer, 2007; Berglund, in Fejes & Nicoll, 2008: 138; Foucault, 1975/1991). It positions the student as having deficit(s) but, with the disability students' allowance being cut, the students are required to manage their (dis)abilities effectively so that learning requires increased self-governance (Fejes & Nicoll, 2008: 93). The onus is placed upon the individual student, not a collective of help and support, and by proxy the individual teacher/LSA (Butler, 2011). Thus, 'the technologies of self-regulation in a neoliberal agenda ... shift responsibility from the state to the individual' (Walkerdine, 2003: 239). However, currently in many institutions, inclusive practice is not a priority and for some students with learning differences and disabilities, self-regulation in this landscape is not a subject position that can be 'mastered' and so they cannot succeed; they fall by the wayside.

Conversely, the Higher Education Research Bill (2017) acknowledges that, 'students from the most advantaged backgrounds are still around six times more likely to go to the most selective universities than those from disadvantaged backgrounds'. Yet, paradoxically, the Bill seems to be doing little to counteract this, as the emphasis is so embedded in forcing the potential student to take up the subject position of consumer. In the summary of the Bill, it states that it 'will deliver greater competition and choice that will promote social mobility, boost productivity in the economy and ensure students and taxpayers receive value for money from their investment in higher education, while safeguarding institutional autonomy and academic freedom' (2017). In this landscape there are certainly tensions in the application of the widening participation agenda, which includes social mobility, social justice and the production

of the good, governed, citizen-worker. Thus, the good disciplined student is shaped to take up the subject position of a productive citizen, and the good LSA is self-regulated to facilitate this transition, or so it might seem in a discourse of promoting a human capital model (Spring, 2009; Sen, 1999).

With an increase in competition between the universities for students, some institutions have produced an inferior 'product'. Often in the creative industries and generally in HE, institutional relations of power are bound in this system advocating competition; it is a way to construct knowledge and the subject in an overt neo-liberal agenda, planned by the state. Increasingly students are taking up the subject position of consumer, which extends to the provision of students with learning differences and disabilities. This landscape is reinforced in the HE Bill (2017) by easing access for new universities to 'set up shop', whereby they can validate their own degrees with, as yet, no cap on fees or size of the cohort. So, it seems that power has been decentralised and in some ways it has, as more control has devolved through deregulation. However, the language is focused on a neoliberal agenda and if the universities are not competitive in meeting the teaching excellence framework (TEF) then the Office for Students has the authority to penalise the academy. This 'discipline' can be to the point of de-registering those universities that are performing poorly and intervene if there is a safeguarding issue (Foucault, 1975/1991).

It seems that in a Foucauldian discourse analysis 'institutional autonomy and academic freedom' are the 'reward' for those universities that can perform competitively in the marketplace. In order to overcome some of the issues around competing for students, many universities look to other sources to gain revenue. One way to compete is to tap into a global market, where the fees are often four times that of a home student. In order to mitigate issues with immigration, campuses are set up in the home country of the targeted student cohort (HEFCE, 2016: Section 2, 7, 11). This can mitigate visa problems as 100,000 non-EU students in the last three years had their visas denied. Charlie Peters (2017) of the *Telegraph*, summed up the situation: 'The new bill will do nothing to solve any of these problems, but it will give new regulatory power to Whitehall, where many of our international education woes come from'. Universities may draw upon the global economy where still the master exercises knowledge hierarchies. Globalisation, competition and the market model were the overt focus in the policy paper: Higher education: success as a knowledge economy (2016: Section 8). It states: 'We want a globally competitive market that supports diversity, where anyone who demonstrates they have the potential to offer excellent teaching and clears our high-quality

bar can compete on a level playing field' (HEFCE, 2016: Section 8). This statement is placed early on in the paper, Section 8, where it sums up the overlapping discourses that embed neoliberalism. Interestingly, this paragraph uses a sports analogy; again, it is about winning in the market, being competitive but absent in this language and practice is the care, wellbeing and the holistic welfare of the student (West, 2016).

(Re)positioned in this new global setting, the changes are not to foster the cultures of the Indigenous peoples, but to infiltrate the spaces with Western hierarchies of knowledge. Tutors are seconded to the satellite universities to recreate the power hierarchies of Eurocentricism, including the curricula and pedagogies (Spring 2009: 5). Western cultures are dominant and reproduced as the educational norms of the new academies. This approach will entice those able to afford the fees, and so the 'mastery' is to once more 'colonise' the Eastern landscape and appropriate wealth from the Indigenous populations (Cixous 1976; De Lissovoy, 2010; Spivak, 1988; Liasidou, 2012 and Mohanty, 1988). In agreement, Olssen et al (2004: 6) consider that: 'Cultural globalisation involves the expanse of western ... culture to all corners of the globe, promoting particular values that are supportive of consumerism and capital accumulation'. It seems like a centred positioning in the vein of the old missionaries sent out from the church or the 'sovereign power' (Foucault, 1978, 122). In times past, it was the norm to 'teach' the ways of the white Christian male and have those knowledges replicated in the institutions.

With this shift to a market mentality, not only are the academies sourcing out student services to the cheaper options, they are extending their market position in order to be a viable competitor, and providers are venturing into a globalised market. By attracting a new target market, the universities are sourcing what potentially could be a huge revenue stream as well as infiltrating the 'Indigenous' countries with Western cultural 'truths'. To facilitate expansion, cuts are required and what is easier than to 'dispose' of than a large workforce on a zero-hour contract, as referred to by Butler in her critique of neoliberalism discussed in the introduction (Butler, 2008; 2011).

I successfully gained my Certificate in Learning Support and felt rather like the scarecrow from the *Wizard of Oz*. That piece of paper meant that I did have a brain! (Chris Nicolas, LSA, in O'Brian and Garner 2001: 36)

The Discursive Construction of the 'Good' LSA: Language and Landscape

Although there is evidence of resistance presented in the literature and discussed in the next section Resistances: Crooked Contours in the landscape of the LSA, the discursive discourse that is overwhelmingly presented is that of the 'good wife/mother', who is caring and dutiful. In this way it appears that the LSA is the 'helper', 'carer', 'mum'. Dyer (1996: 192) argues that 'for some women, the choice of career as an LSA remains one of a committed location, whereas for some men, it seems to fulfil a transitional role'. The literature suggests that the LSA role is a calling to care and or help, in much the same vein as nursing, teaching, social work etc. The LSA role is an extension of the good woman/'angel in the house' construction (Ruskin, 1851). This is the position that is put forth in the majority of the literature written on the formation of the LSA's subjectivity in the space and system of education (Barkham, 2008; Roffey-Barentsen, 2011; McLachlan, & Davis, 2013; Watson, et al., 2013; Robson, & Bailey, 2009; and O'Brien & Garner, 2001). In much of the literature, the majority of LSAs self-identify with the caring positioning; it seems like a seamless transference of skills from childcare in the home to that which is required in the workspace. This social construction of nurture and care has been 'naturalized through repetition into the status of "habit" which determines women are the primary care-givers' (Roseneil and Seymour, 1999:2 in Colley et al 2003:17) and therefore, this 'natural' legacy of care supports the formation of the subjectivity of the LSA presented in the literature as a rewarding role. In this location, the main role of the LSA is to literally 'open access' to those students with disabilities and neuro-diversity.

In the literature the women appeared to be the objects of which the experts speak; they were not the authors of their own stories and in some instances, they are objectified in the literature. They are commodified to be deployed as a resource in the overriding neoliberal marketisation of education (Burnham, 2011; Roffey-Barentsen, 2011; Veck, 2009). In the appearance of compliance, it seemed that the LSAs were following the neoliberalist reproductive structure to see the students through the disciplines of education such as passing exams, essay writing, note-taking and the other study skills. In defining what is 'worthy' of knowledge production, it is that which the 'masters', or as Jackson (2004) suggests the 'guardians', consider to be those knowledges deemed of value in society and the institutions of education. In this space, under the surface, the LSA is objectified in the overriding disciplined

power/knowledge hierarchies. This neoliberal episteme positioned the participant LSAs to become the object of a forced redundancy. Visualised on the archaeological surface, as Butler suggested, they are a 'resource' for whom disposal is easy. This position of being valued less than others may explain the scarcity of literature on the context of the LSAs, in HE.

Yet, Dyer's (1996: 187) small but fundamental piece of research into this 'invaluable, although apparently invisible group of professionals', is significant. She made specific reference to the CPD of support staff in primary schools. The women were interviewed while studying for the Certificate of Learning Support. At the same time, Skeggs (1997) was another author to focus on a group of women that were studying a care course. She took an ethnographical approach to a lengthy study that took many years to complete. She suggests that class and gender are embedded in a discourse of the 'respectable' woman. More recently, Barkham (2008) and Roffey-Barentsen (2011), explored support roles; however, their focus was on compulsory education. Barkham (2008: 852) calls on managers of teaching teams to value all those involved in the profession to listen and see the selfless dedication of teaching assistants: 'No longer should they be 'invisible' or 'silent''. Roffey-Barentsen (2011) urges the researcher to explore a professional career structure, with accredited qualifications for the teaching assistants, with the discussion centred on progression routes available to them. Their research includes the subjectivity of teaching assistants, as they undertake NVQ Levels two and three, for Supporting Teaching and Learning in Schools.

The literature, scarce though it is, draws upon the women's experiences but it is limited to the formation of the LSA subject positioning and no other intersectionality. However, the sources are considered, as they directly reference the LSAs' take up of this subject positioning in one of the oldest cultural systems. It is a concern that the research on the LSA in post compulsory education is so rare. Published and available material written by the LSA is scarcer still; absent in its entirety it seems. This was revealed after extensive exploration, particularly in locating the voice of the LSA in research they themselves had produced. Accordingly, those writing and researching are not the LSAs but, rather, members of the establishment, the institutions and systems in which the LSA is positioned. The authors, then, are those that make up the academy of which I am a part. Thus, it seems that in academic literature, the voice of the LSA is but a whisper, only included in the journals of the few, and as participants/interviewees, not as the authors. For this reason, the voice of the LSA is referenced from O'Brien and Garner (2001), the only book written on the conditions of the teaching assistant, classroom assistant and LSA in compulsory education. The whole book is predominantly concentrated on the voices of the

women. O'Brian and Garner (2001:144) put pen to paper in order to record the *Untold Stories* of the LSAs and their work, where the authors consider that 'regrettably LSAs are still regarded, and shamefully treated, as second-class citizens'. For the most part, the interviewees' responses consider much the same issues as the aforementioned journal articles. Chris Nicolas (in O'Brian and Garner 2001: 36) eloquently explains her situation:

So much is expected of us ... We are trained to contribute to extended work in both literacy and numeracy – all structured teaching approaches and input at a fraction of the cost of a teacher ... The instability of the hours can be worrying ... even if you have a job things become uncertain for you when a child with a statement moves to another school (Nicolas in O'Brian and Garner 2001: 36).

They are constructed low down in the academy's power/knowledge hierarchy, below that of the masters/academic staff (Foucault, 1975/1991). This includes salary, job security, contractual agreements, spaces of work and training, mainly elements that drive a neo-liberal agenda. The extent to which these women are resisting the discursive constructions and discourse therein is limited in the available literature. This may be due to the research interests of those writing the journal articles and the areas on which they have focused. Furthermore, the authors do not look to explore the rich and diverse subjectivities that are other than that of the LSA and the spaces that they inhabit outside of the academy.

This is, therefore, the point at which this study departs, as I am looking to discover the multiple and overlapping subjectivities that are made visible in the material cultures produced, as my participants have created their own (s)texts. It may be that the LSAs in the literature are artists too; they may have unusual hobbies and interests but this is not discussed. With this in mind, it seemed that the almost silenced position of the LSA is juxtaposed against those in 'authority' that write about them. Here the power/knowledge of the academics is made apparent, as it is positioned alongside the 'lack' of formal education and training of those about whom they write. This is evidenced in the vast array of books and types of manuals detailing how to be 'good' at their jobs. For example, in the how-to handbooks, the discourse is situated in the ways in which the LSA might 'improve' by up-skilling and gaining a formal qualification (Fejes & Nicoll, 2008: 94). Again, it is in the context of the lack of status and 'professionalism' (Robson & Bailey, 2009). Watson et al (2013: 105) acknowledge this discourse and pose the question: 'If a TLSA [teaching and learning support assistant] is "good" what does this mean?' The discourse is further embedded and reinforced against the stereotypical masculine job roles, where the literature on how to be 'good' is conspicuously absent. Where are the books on how to be a 'brilliant' police officer, fire fighter, lawyer, train driver? In these gendered masculine roles, there were training and development books; the language was matter-of-fact, instructive and direct, mainly concentrating on how to perform the roles, not emotive and essentialist. The

discourse of training and development presents as a lack, but whereas those performing the masculine job roles may lack in technical and factual knowledge, the women's LSA role is lacking in feminine 'essentialist' characteristics, not technical skills.

Conversely, there is a plethora of literature on how to be an LSA, not just an LSA, but brilliant, outstanding, excellent etc. They are in the form of handbooks and guides, many of which are written for compulsory education and are aimed at classroom and teaching assistants, such as *Brilliant Teaching Assistant: What You Need to Know to be a Truly Outstanding Teaching Assistant* (Burnham, 2011). At its worst the literature derides and oppresses the subject, the role and their perceived lack of ability and knowledge. This 'lack' is described by Constable (2013) as the teaching assistants having 'the least responsibility in the institution' which she highlights in a picture-based pocketbook. The illustrations give the reader the feeling that the text is written for a child. From analysis of the discourse, it is situated in the language of the 'good woman', that is, training the LSA to make them an 'effective', 'good', resource to be 'used' to the advantage of the system. Thus, at best it seems that agency is limited, and often considered in the negative aspects of how they can be better, implying they are therefore not 'good enough'. Their knowledge production is not privileged in the hierarchies of the academy, even though they are employed precisely for prior experience of m/othering, where their knowledge production in that context is 'good enough' (West, 2016).

Thus, the literature on the LSA is indicative of the little regard in which they are held in the academy and the status accorded therein. It stresses the ways in which the system could make them 'better'. In Roffey-Barentsen's (2011: 125) research, an interviewee, Brenda, commented on this: 'Remember talking about status earlier? That's when you know you haven't got any. You do your job and it is appreciated by everyone but not officially. It's like a punch in the face'. Carole Rose's story (in O'Brian and Garner 2001: 77) supports this value-less positioning: 'if you expressed your view about how the children learn or what they were learning some teachers might think, 'what do you know – you are only a welfare assistant''. She continues by considering how her voice was an expression of knowledges that were not privileged: 'It was as if it wasn't part of your job to comment on what happened in the classroom' (Carole Rose in O'Brian and Garner 2001: 77).

Furthermore, Simpson's (2010) project, whilst investigating the training needs of learning support staff, specific to post compulsory education, considered this positioning. In agreement, McLachlan & Davis, (2013), writing on the 'development' of LSAs in FE, state that,

[t]heir 'professional identity' is overlooked as 'the lack of opportunities for education and development suggests that this occupational group are not held in high esteem by society and the learners they support are not valued'. This mirroring of 'lack' is evident within the othered deficit discourse in which the students with learning differences and disabilities are themselves placed within the symbiotic relationship of 'the most vulnerable' ... 'supported by the least qualified' (Watson et al 2011: 100-102, Veck, 2009). Yet, the assumption is that the LSA bridges the deficit to reproduce 'the Good Student, the able, efficient, obedient, industrious student, the student who 'fits in'' (Veck 2009: 43). S/he is the student that supports the government's drive to produce the obedient worker (Foucault, 1975/1991).

In facilitating this process, the LSA is fulfilling the objectives of the role as set out in the Warnock Report (1978; 274): 'the help of an ancillary worker is often crucial to the effective placement of an individual child with a disability or disorder in an ordinary class'. Warnock wrote the report forty years ago and made the same observations then, that the literature is still highlighting today: support workers are recruited for their caring qualities as parents. Warnock (1978: 274), in the report, indirectly references that there is a certain paradox at play. For the women, being parents, recruited from the 'mum's army' (Stevens, 2013), are already experienced to do the job. This is the point made in the text by Veck (2009) and many of those authors mentioned previously, Dyer (1996), Barkham (2008) and Skeggs (1997). If the women are 'qualified' by having the experience of being a parent, then one must question why most of the literature is on the cohort's lack of ability to perform the job role and the need for professional status and qualifications. Furthermore, why are so many of the women indicating to the researchers in the studies that they need 'professional development' and 'appropriate training'?

Research by Cable and Goodliff (2011) shows that some vocational training may support the development of the professionalisation of the role. This thereby negates naturalisation, for if the role was natural, essential and innate, then training would be obsolete and unnecessary. Skeggs (1997: 39) reiterates this contradiction, as the women in her study enter the academy to 'pursue caring courses because they have knowledge of caring, yet the courses train them for what they already know'. This contradiction of knowing, but not knowing, or not knowing enough is played out in the performances of those LSAs already in the system. It is a way to objectify the women, to discipline and order them in the spaces (Foucault 1975/1991). Once there, whether trained, qualified or experienced, the situation is challenging, difficult, and often performed on the margins. They balance the boundaries of educator/teacher with

assistant/support worker, slipping in and out of the spaces and roles. It is this positioning in a complex landscape that places the experiences of the LSA as subjugated knowledges, worthless than that of their colleagues (Foucault, 1980: 82). This makes the job problematic, due to power/knowledge hierarchies that constructs the positions of the women's knowledge low down the hierarchy of the academy. This is the point made by Debbie, in Roffey-Barentsen's (2011: 125) study: 'I felt a bit annoyed but also sad. ... I'm good enough to take responsibility for that group, planning the sessions, but when it comes to the formal bits, they [teachers] almost don't want to know'. This is a similar situation to Karen Simpson's experiences as she tells her story to O'Brian and Gardner (2001: 30):

Some supply teachers are very good but as an LSA your experience of supply teachers means that you can meet some that are not so good and some that do not earn their money at all. If you have worked with a supply teacher who has not prepared any work, or has made no effort during the day, it makes you feel like saying that the LSAs should run the class if the teacher is ill. Why? They know the children, they know the routines and they can help the day to run successfully and smoothly. When you consider what it costs a school to have a supply teacher for the day, good LSAs running the classroom makes more sense than employing a supply teacher who does not work hard enough. It can be a nightmare.

Watson et al (2013: 106) indirectly considers this subject-object positioning by suggesting that the teachers resisted the position of the LSAs as professionals, as the term may 'undermine teachers who already have a professional qualification'. This is similar to the situation described by Karen Simpson in the passage above, for in allowing the LSA to take the class, rather than a supply teacher, this should disrupt the order of things (Foucault, 1975/1991). In having a parity of positioning, the LSA is no longer defined in the structured established system as below that of the teachers. Furthermore, the research reviewed takes the stance that a form of in-house training and/ or qualifying the cohort would make for a less dissatisfied group. For they are recruited for their experience of parenting, but then told and shown that which qualified them for the job relegates them to below that of the 'mastery' makers of knowledge (Cixous, 1976). This positioning is illustrated by Constable (2013), where the teaching assistant has the whole institution piled upon her back: she is depicted as being at the bottom of the pile in a top down hierarchical structure. The intention of the author is to show the 'reality' of the role in a positive approach: yet, it reinforces the women's lack of status and positioning. Therefore, it maybe that professionalisation will alleviate situations such as those examples given in this part of the chapter, such as Debbie's discourse of 'good enough', but not that good (Debbie, in Roffey-Barentsen, 2011: 125).

Much of the literature suggests that what is required to 'improve' their positioning is training and qualifying the hundreds of thousands of support staff in all levels at all institutions. Quicke (2003: 73 in Veck, 2009: 42) argues that LSAs are performing the role of a teacher and thereby

they should be trained as such, but in doing so a 'recruitment problem' will be created. Some of the women themselves resist this transitional positioning. Karen Simpson states that:

Lots of teachers say to me 'Why don't you train to be a teacher?' But I don't want to be a teacher. When they say that to me it makes me feel that I'm undervalued in what I do. And if I train to be a teacher, who is going to do what I do? (Simpson, in O'Brien and Garner 2001: 129).

Similarly, Julie Pester said that:

One thing I do know is that I would not want to go on and train to be a teacher. I feel I am a good LSA. But the pressures of teaching would be too great for me. At the moment I feel fulfilled in my role as an LSA as well as my role as a mum and a wife. I think this would change significantly if I went on to train as a teacher (Pester, in O'Brien and Garner 2001: 101).

Accordingly, for some, trepidation is felt when stepping into the system of education, which is apparent in the literature written about the LSAs, as widening participation is a complex positioning where care and consideration of the individual is important in the process. Bell hooks considers this in the context of poor and working-class African Americans, who are 'not really belonging', they are 'interlopers' (hooks, 1994: 5). Her resourceful text, *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) suggests that when the space between succeeding in education is so far removed from the subjectivity that permits a happy home environment, conflict and tension is created. The gap between the two positions is too great and the subjectivity of the successful student is 'outside' their reach (hooks, 1994). Some of the LSAs O'Brien and Garner (2001) wrote about regretting their career decision-making, that was rooted in low expectations and the interloper positioning. Christine's story elaborates upon this, when she says that, 'I wanted to teach but at seventeen a lack of confidence or belief in myself held me back' (Nicholas in O'Brien & Garner 2001:35). Towards the end of her story she continues:

I suppose part of me still wants to be a teacher, and each time I go on a different course I realise that I could have done so. That makes me sad. At 44 I feel that it is too late to be anything more than I am (Nicholas in O'Brien & Garner 2001:35).

This was a similar situation to Lin's story:

I suppose, when I look back, I should have entered the teaching profession on leaving school. I always enjoyed my school life, both at primary and grammar school. But I left after taking and passing 8 GCSE 'O' Levels and entered the Civil Service, a job I also greatly enjoyed, in time, I married and had my own children and always took an interest in their education, becoming involved whenever I could. Luckily for me, my children's schools always welcomed parental involvement and I found I was greatly enjoying my taste of school life from the 'other side'. So when the head of my son's junior school told me that a general assistant's job for 6 hours a week was coming up, I was only too pleased to apply. (Lin Dyer, in O'Brien & Garner 2001: 83).

Furthermore Watson et al (2008: 101) makes an interesting observation about the difficulties of training such a diverse cohort: 'How such fragmentation of roles can possibly support holistic personal development, career trajectories, and portability of qualifications is questionable'. Are they so fragmented that a comprehensive training programme could not be

created? What about the situation in other professions, such as the teachers with whom they work? Teachers work across many subject specialisms in a mixture of age groups, yet they can access a professional qualification to support their practice. On reflection, however, it is not a position that is an economic priority for those in a position of privilege in the power/knowledge hierarchy. Funding the professionalisation of the cohort would be extremely costly. Furthermore, in agreement with Skeggs (1997), why should the women train for a job they can already do? It is the discourse in which they are embedded that needs to shift to value the knowledge the women bring to the institutions. In this context of having 'natural' mothering qualities, the women's job is not considered as 'work'. For example, Louise Fenlon (quoted in O'Brien & Garner 2001:12), historicises this socialisation of the role:

[m]y mother has been a big influence upon me. ... She is a loving, caring and strong person. She made me feel safe and she was always supportive. I would like to think that I show some of her qualities the way I do my job.

It is an extension of mothering reproductive labour. It is embedded in the language pertaining to the essentialism of woman, where caring is still, it seems, innately 'natural'. Words and phrases such as 'support', 'pastoral', 'patience', 'ability to stay calm', 'strength of character' 'good listener' are laid down as the LSA's mantra in job advertisements and interestingly it is these qualities that are the first element to be presented in the introduction to the *Teaching Assistant's Pocketbook* (Constable, 2013). For if women can work for 'free' in the home/private sphere, so this discourse of valueless labour is transferred to the workplace that aligns itself to feminised employment (Miller, 2011: 101). Nevertheless, it is (was) a way in which women can put their skills to 'good' use when they might otherwise be unemployed (Skeggs, 1997: 62). Consequently, there are power/knowledge hierarchies that are privileged in the academy and society (Foucault, 1975/1991). The norms of the women's reproductive labour align them to the essentialist m/othering discourse. This is further accentuated by the gendered ordering of the LSAs at The University in an artistic milieu of below that of the 'master'. Yet, despite this the next section explores the other positions open to them in the form of resistances.

The role of LSA is complicated. As well as teachers, pupils have perceptions of what your role is. ... and this particular pupil said to me 'Karen you are just a helper aren't you? Nicki is the teacher.' I was quite taken aback and explained to the child, 'I am a Learning Support Assistant and I work alongside Nicki. Nicki is the teacher but I am involved with teaching and learning too' (Stanton, in O'Brien and Garner 2001: 101).

Resistances: Crooked Contours in the Landscape of the 'Good' LSA

In the current landscape, many support workers will be seeking employment; whilst, in the two-year redundancy process, the severe funding cuts impacted upon the marginalisation of those in Student Services in the academies. Initially morale was affected at The University due to this marginalisation but, in the words of Foucault (1978: 95), 'Where there is power, there is resistance and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power'. This situation at The University shaped the women's subjectivities in spaces of resistance that were formed to challenge disciplinary power/knowledge hierarchies. This depiction of change and transformation is embodied in the women's oeuvre, where it is visualised and verbalised in the analysis explored in the next chapter: Tales from the Creative Toolbox. Although an exploration of the LSAs' materiality in art/craft is not possible in the available literature, narratives which resist that positioning of the 'good woman' are discussed and into which are weaved the stories of the participants from The University.

The previous part of the chapter explored how the women take up the discursive position of the 'good', in what has been constructed as a *Landscape* in which a *Good Woman* is positioned (Steedman, 1986). In the words of Karen Stanton, an interviewee participant from O'Brien and Garner's, *Untold Stories*: 'it is not just a job. ... You need to be a certain type of person' (2001: 25). Often in the literature, that type of person appears fixed in an essentialist, natural way of caring, nurturing. This is a self-identification that is further reinforced as there is limited literature that situates the LSAs in ways that are 'other' than this discursive construction. Yet, Stanton finds the verbalisation of that label by one of the children she supports as upsetting. This she considers in the quotation above, where an element of resistance is presented. Other examples of resistance are explored here, and in the next chapter, along with the resilient lifelong learner, the transgressor and the transformer. Yet, for the most part, the women in the literature do seem to be in a 'committed location' (Dyer, 1996) where the norms of reproductive maternal labour facilitate a neoliberal education system. This was why I

considered it necessary to intersect the voices of my participants with those found in the academic literature. For to engage directly in a dialogue with the positions presented in the literature, reveals alternative subject positionings to the essentialist norms.

Barkham (2008: 846) goes so far as to say that, '[t]eaching assistants deliberately surrender their positions and power, privileging that of the learner *and* the teacher'. The relationship has been described as 'a marriage' that of 'a wife' anticipating and fulfilling her partner's needs (2008: 847). This may appear to be a relationship that is compliant and complicit; however, the narrative is far more complex and multifaceted, where there are disruptions and subversions. Thus, in applying Foucault's lens it makes visible multiple subjectivities that disrupt a perceived 'landscape' of 'the good woman' construction.⁵⁶ In the positioning of the LSAs in the academy and The University, resistances are presented. It is not a relationship that wholly subordinates the LSA in this feminised part of the binary, gendered, essentialist discourse, against the masculinised role of the teacher/lecturer/master. Revealed are multiple constructed positionings of the subject, that resist the disciplinary power/knowledge hierarchies that objectify them. Foucault (1978: 101) acknowledges this:

We must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby a discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. Discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it but it also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (Foucault 1978: 101).

As Foucault suggests the landscape is complex: boundaries between the layered subjectivities collide and/ or merge. Yet, by exploring the women in their role in the workplace, as LSAs on the margins, many subjectivities emerge: m/other, teacher/educator, facilitator. Here in these spaces, pockets of resistance are presented, which are revealed by the authors in the literature reviewed. On the whole, the literature presents a critique to a patriarchal indoctrination of gender stereotypes where the majority of authors are using a feminist framework to evaluate that positioning. Resistance is evident in the vein that Foucault considers; their 'silence and

⁵⁶ A comparison can be drawn with Steedman's novel, where the title *Landscape for a Good Woman* (1986) was partly appropriated for use in this thesis as it suggests a discursive positioning of the good wife, mother. However, in this autobiographical account by Steedman, her mother is far from what the social construction of the 'good' woman is perceived to be. As a working-class woman, she longs for a life of conspicuous consumption, aspiring to a social positioning that is further up the hierarchy. This lack of social mobility she blames on her m/othering positioning. Yet, her mother subverts this position in her love of dance and the joy this accords. This is a theme, also evident in the narrative of *Educating Rita*: she is shown to actively subvert the discursive position of the good woman, as she refuses to be the good wife/mother. She pretends to her husband that she wants a child, but secretly she is taking the contraceptive pill that is hidden under the floorboards. Instead she is actively taking up the position of student/learner in a landscape that positions her as a socially mobile subject. Here *Educating Rita* led to a socially mobile positioning. Thus, resistance can present as diverse acts, overt as well as covert.

secrecy' fosters challenges to the linear systems in the academy of power/knowledge hierarchies (Foucault, 1978: 101). The women in the literature express a sense of agency; although in the literature, presentation of this is sparse. For example, although Nancy 'knew her place' in the 'pond', she chose not to speak out in the space of the classroom:

As an assistant it's very important not to be critical and to support the teacher. I know my place. But I do know when things are not quite right. I wouldn't dream of saying anything, but sometimes they do go wrong, I'm aware of it. But I wouldn't dream of telling the teacher that' (Watson et al 2013: 105).

In this production of a subjectivity that is shaped in a space that interacts with the students, but remains 'mute' and often devoid of action in the surrounding space, it seems that the LSA is not able to speak up. This was the point made by Una (participant). She said that she sat with the 'needy student' and only moved once in three hours (Una, notes). She was not able to be active, to voice an opinion; the space is not democratic, the master is controlling, performing a subjectivity that determines knowledge reproduction. Una said, 'as a sort of learning environment, I didn't think it was particularly successful really because it was ... you know, working on a sheet and then just going through the answers' (Una, 2017: 22.00). Una explains that she took on the role of the tutor in order to support her student but she did not voice her concerns to the teacher:

I don't think she really explained it very well either. So quite often I was explaining the things to them and they kind of went 'Oh!' cause they just hadn't had it explained in a straight forward way to them, you know. And then it just sort of clicked. But I thought that's not really my job, that should be her job to be teaching them these different methods for different things (Una, 2017: 22.28).

Here both Nancy, in the literature, and Una (participant) hold their tongues in a silent resistance that occurs in the everyday practises within the classroom. For, 'resistances are usually not large and dramatic acts; they are often subtle and implicit and take place in everyday routine practices', which, by their very nature, are not obvious or significant. (Burke and Jackson, 2007: 200). Those incidental habitual acts produce their own subjugated knowledges in the women's everyday practises and activities (Easthope and McGowan, 2004: 145). However, Nancy could only hold her tongue for so long and she challenged the discursive constructed position: she became a teacher. Reference is made in the article to this change in position: Nancy, 'who, while a teacher now, has experienced being a TLSA (teaching and learning support assistant)' (Watson et al 2013: 105). Yet her transition is skimmed over; it is made a caveat to her interview where it is suggested that she was positioned as: '(1) *pond life*, (2) trouble maker, (3) deserving equality and parity and not *pond life*, and (4) protected and valued member of staff' (Watson et al 2013: 105). Other significant resistances that were mentioned in the analysis of the 'Pond Life' were made by Julia and Nicola. Julia stood up to

'teachers who treated her in demeaning ways, ... she was contributing anything less to the classroom than the teacher' (Watson et al 2013: 109).

Another resistance mentioned in the article is from a teaching and learning support assistant who took up the subject positioning as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant. This was after expressing a desire to increase her status, having once aspired to be a PE teacher (Watson et al 2013: 110). Lastly, they say of Nicola that she was unusual as she revealed 'so many, often conflicting, but coherently managed positions and she epitomises a category in the data we described as being 'other occupations' (ibid). But what are these positions and occupations? Rather disappointingly they fail to mention or analyse them. Furthermore, neither in this text, nor in any of the others, do they give consideration to the participants' subjectivities formed outside the institutions. Should the authors have focused on the positionings of the LSAs, specifically the 'trouble maker' construction, it would have made for a more informed study.

Conversely, the 'trouble maker' was a subjectivity that was clearly shaped in The University. The shaping of this subject became increasingly evident as our *Sorties* came closer. For example, Martha described how she had a very heated and quite aggressive confrontation with her Line Manager about a student who was not able to cope with the demands of the course on which s/he had been accepted. The course leader had accepted the student onto the course without meeting the competency requirements and then internally progressed them suggesting s/he study a degree programme⁵⁷. This frequently happens to meet key performance indicators, but the impact of failing is neither considered ethically nor managed appropriately, although for Martha it was important to support her student during this process. She articulated the tension between her own ethical position of trying to facilitate a 'feminine' encounter, in the vein of West (2016), and the expectations of the job around retention in a neoliberal episteme:

A couple of times I have had outright rows with tutors and managers over people going onto courses, ... but they didn't care and the Line Manager said that it all just comes down to money. I was quite upset about it for ages, and quite upset with my Line Manager. I just felt totally unsupported and I was going in there to say what I felt. (Interviewee, Martha, 2017: 34.58).

She continues:

⁵⁷It is not uncommon to accept students onto level 3 courses with no GCSEs. In such examples there may be a consideration around widening participation, disability, and in an art context, their portfolio may be very strong. This might warrant acceptance onto a BTEC level 3 course. However, in most examples here many of the women and I are discussing students that do not have any qualifications at all; they have not sat any exams. They are from SEN schools where it is cheaper for the local authority to send them to FE rather than retain them in a more suitable environment. This is compounded by The University not offering level 1 or 2 programmes and having the enticement of the funding matrix.

I love my job but the situation at the moment is dire isn't it? 'Cause they've (management) just punched and pushed and pushed. I've had so many issues.... having a tutor, not having a tutor, having a technician not having a technician, not having enough computers, not having enough of this. The students that need continuity the most, have well, and then there is the feeding into the course [degree], where they will have no support at all. Paul will go ballistic when he gets this lot who will apply. So there are at least 3 or 4 students that had support, that do not have any at all now (Interviewee: Martha, 2017, 29.10).

In agreement Nikki articulates the same concerns:

If I think that IP [internal progression] is not really right for them and they are not going to cope, I would just be honest with them. ... if they're struggling so badly, ... I think that I'm just torturing them. You know I think it [art] should be fun (Interviewee, Nikki, 2017: 42.58).

Furthermore, Mia explains the effects of a neoliberal agenda that advocates retention at all 'costs' upon her and the student she was supporting: 'You know there were something with that student that got to me, they were very upsetting, 'cause she was being made to do things that were making her unhappy' (Interviewee, Mia, 2017: 16.57). I, too, have experienced similar situations and took an ethical stance with an autistic student who broke down in the office. The situation was similar to the one discussed previously. The student was completely distraught, saying s/he could not cope, as everyone had lied to get them to stay on at The University. S/he said the only person who had told the truth was the LSA, but s/he did not listen, as everyone else told him/her to do a degree. I said that s/he should do what s/he considered to be the best choice and not feel pressured by others. S/he thanked me and told me to thank the LSA. S/he walked out of The University and did not return.

Thus, the women 'know' that education is embedded in neoliberalism, following an agenda that negates the needs and desires of some staff and students; yet oppressive landscapes can be resisted. Thus, spaces of resilience and resistance are produced in neoliberalism's episteme, as the women, on conceptualising the power/knowledges from their studies as students, realise that there were other ways to be. For while the 'reality' of their existence prior to entering the academy was for the most part in acceptance of 'sovereignty' and a neoliberal discourse, a shift in thinking was made apparent as time went on (Foucault, 1978, 122). As my own confidence grew to resist my marginalised position, so did my participants'. There are many examples I could explore, however, the one that most resonates with me is my interaction with an Asperger's student and their LSA to facilitate a 'feminine' encounter. In collaboration with this student, we spent time to explore a dissertation topic that facilitated a way in which the student could combine a passion for trains with the lengthy writing task. I feel that the support worker and I instigated a 'feminine' encounter between the learner and us, as the practitioners. Rather than dismissing the inspired choice of subject, as the tutor did,

because it did not fulfil the criteria of an art-based topic, we used our expertise of being artist-craftspersons to combine their passion with Modernism's industrialisation and development of the railways. To ensure a relevance to the his-story of art, I suggested that the dissertation might use Turner and Monet's contribution to the study of the coming of the railways and Seurat's *The Bathers* and *The Grande Jatte* to illustrate the social impact of Industrialisation. His/her enthusiasm was palpable and he/she was so motivated that he/she arranged for the LSA to accompany him/her to the National Gallery to view the paintings in situ. In facilitating the learning of the student, the job is about negotiation, play, experimentation and 'fun' (Interviewee, Nikki, 2017: 42.58). It is as West (2016:14) suggests:

Teaching is (or ought to be) an experience of mutual recognition, remembering that it has the potential to undermine selfhood and development. But it can create the conditions in which we can exist in the world more openly and spontaneously, despite anxieties, and feel seen and valued, however precariously. A self can simply be, and move to claim space for play and experiment unselfconsciously.

Bates and Bowman (2015) make this point, suggesting that 'skills support' makes for 'border straddling'. This is the norm of the role for the academic study skills tutors with whom the authors identify, but the LSA is not a tutor and so often what they do is invisible. Their voice is not heard in the classroom by the whole cohort, only the students they assist. Located with their students they partly take on that subjectivity, and what is usual for students so it is for the LSAs: for these are the norms of the space and the performance. Yet, with the 'exits' of the LSAs and our redundancy (Cixous, 1975/1986), this 'performance' is '(dis)re-placed' (Gilbert (1986: xviii). Now, the LSAs, study skills tutors and learning mentors are not employed by the agencies for their 'mastery' of the arts (Cixous, 1976: 887). Accordingly, it is challenging for agency staff; they may not be able to negotiate an ease of access in terms of the academic contexts of the students' assignments, as Martha acknowledges: 'I can't cover for people that are meant to be doing the job and if there are too many students that are leaving then they might look at why. But then they might think that they can't keep their students and close it [The University] down' (Interviewee: Martha: 30.30). Then their experience and knowledges are lost. This situation is explored by Prue, discussing Diana's value, 'You know you are like, really knowledgeable ... the place is just losing, losing all these incredible people' (Prue, Interviewee: 2017: 18.17). So, in these examples the considerations of space, place, and speech are tightly bound by those in authority in the systems. In a space of perceived lack, a subjectivity of resistance is shaped to produce the teacher-tutor-educator. Yet, in the take up of certain positions, the subject-object oscillates.

I, too, felt a certain sense of lack as this subjectivity was one that was (re)produced in the last two years, when I took on the 'performance' of the LSA role to support GCSE maths and English classes (Butler, 1999). This was because some of the LSAs were not confident in their own maths ability and supporting the poor quality of teaching. Accordingly, I thought it would be a way to bring in an autoethnographical aspect to the study. Like the LSAs in the literature, I understood how access can be restricted by the "guardians' towers' of power/knowledge hierarchies; for I once was the poor, yet disciplined, student, humiliated in the maths lessons (Jackson 2004). I had to stand behind my desk after every lesson and repeat: "I am thick: I will be lucky to get ungraded". My position was such that I never spoke in that lesson, never put my hand up. The reproductive knowledges were clearly in production and my education was very much in the vein of rote, reproductive, boring, uninspiring knowledge acquisition. I remember as a mature student, the first text I was given to read and study, was Dicken's novel of 1854, *Hard Times*. As soon as I read the opening sentence, I thought that my own compulsory education was not that far removed from Victorian times - nothing had really changed; I hoped that, as a student returning to education, I was not being limited to the regurgitation of facts. This, the opening of the book, still echoes with me:

NOW, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up my own children, and this is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, sir!" (Gradgrind, in Dickens, 1854/1993: 3)

The learning and teaching context of HE was not so prescriptive as compulsory education; yet, I felt a stranger in the landscape. I oscillated between the tentative taking up of the subject within the Open University's widening participation programme and the reversion to the 'truth' of objectification and not being good enough. The possibility of becoming a student-artist was not a subject position that I could easily visualise and was discussed at length in the interviews by the participants, for as 'poor' working class female students the landscape was contoured with obstacles. These challenges and difficulties in becoming the subject are explored in Woolf's text, *To the Light House* (1927). The words in Woolf's text kept coming back to me as I transcribed the speech of the women. Woolf's character Lily Briscoe performs, for a time at least, the role patriarchy has prescribed for her. Woolf, through the characterisation of Tansley, continuously repeats that women 'can't paint', 'can't write' can't create':

and she heard some voices saying she couldn't paint, saying she couldn't create, as if she were caught up in one of those habitual currents which after a certain time forms of experience in the mind, so that one repeats words without being aware any longer who originally spoke them. ... Can't paint, Can't write. ... Charles Tansley used to say that, she remembered, women can't paint, can't write (Woolf, 1927: 119).

Though Lily Briscoe's passivity is perceived as the reality at the beginning of the narrative, when juxtaposed against the gendered normativity of Mr and Mrs Ramsey, there is an anticipation of what might become of Lily should she oppose the rigidity of her situation. In Woolf's consistent repetition of 'can't', the reader is anticipating the challenges to phallogocentrism. Once positioned in a landscape of language and culture that is dis-abling, the possibilities of a future full of creativity is 'Imagined', above and beyond (Cixous, 1975/1986: 97). Thus, the shaping of Lily's subjectivity as the artist is embodied in the conception of her 'vision', at the end of the story and in the finished painted canvas; her 'attempt at something' (Woolf, 1927: 154). The materiality of Lily's take-up of the subject position of the artist, a woman of creativity, is mirrored in Woolf's stream of consciousness style of writing. A type of *écriture féminine* is practised in Woolf's style of writing and materialised in the 'text' produced by Lily; her expression of creative transformation.

Woolf's very act of writing in this way, too, is a critique of the conventions of the linear sequential norms of the 'monolithic system' (Moi, 1985: 11). Accordingly, Woolf's approach is 'feminine' in conception, in the linguistic technique of stream of consciousness used to challenge the Symbolic Order and subvert the power/knowledge hierarchies of the time. Her use of this technique is employed to narrate the characters' subjectivities; layered and complex, she conveys the interdependence, fluid and shifting nature of the ability to take up and reject certain subject positions. Moreover, in Woolf's approach of the *écriture féminine*, she doubly negates the discourse of 'lack', that is, 'women can't paint, can't write' (Woolf, 1927: 119), for Woolf herself is writing and creates a narrative that 'Imagines' that in fact women can and do (Cixous, 1975/1986: 97). In doing so she steps into the space of the original, innovative, avant garde 'Modern' writer; in this space Woolf presupposes the *écriture féminine* of Helen Cixous. She acknowledges that the 'habitual currents' and repetitions that socially constructs the subject can be washed away (Woolf, 1927: 119). Discourse is undone; it can be stepped over, broken up, robbed, as the subject of the 'voleur' is shaped and formed in this text (Cixous, 1975: 887). The characterisation of the voleur is found in Woolf's creation of Lily Briscoe and equally so in the participant's (s)-texts.

However, this is so far removed from the spaces in which the LSA is positioned. In a prescriptive, tick box, worksheet assessment process, the shaping of a creative subjectivity was lost in the reproduction of the GCSE classes. Therefore, it was not without some reservations that I entered the space of the LSA, once again. My own reservations were not so different from the LSAs': I had concerns about the quality of teaching, as I did not want to 'torture' the

students (Interviewee, Nikki, 2017: 42.58). They did not want to be in this space and, yet again, facilitate another failure (Joseph, quoted in Ball 1990: 62). I, too, questioned my own maths ability, not having taught maths for ten years, but the English lessons were the most concerning. Thus, I found myself in an art studio; feeling slightly disorientated in this unexpected space, I felt regulated to sit next to the teacher at the table. Engulfed in the ephemera of lessons past, surrounded by easels and equipment, there was an uncanniness about the situation as the teacher was holding a beanbag in the shape of a frog. Just beginning a lesson on descriptive creative writing, the tutor said that the purpose of the lesson was to describe what was in their pockets to the beanbag frog, Jeremy Fisher. The situation was surreal and, though I knew it was not as it should be, like Nancy, the TLSA, Nikki, Martha and Una (the participants), I did not speak. I was reproducing the norms of the habitus. The whole experience was disturbing and uncomfortable, as the power/knowledges were established to repress the voice of the learner and LSA. I acknowledge that an element of 'control' is required in the space of the classroom but to hold speech in a space of 'privilege' was worrying. My subjectivity as a tutor and manager was suspended in that time and space, and I was reminded by the tutor conducting the lesson that, if the students required 'help', they would ask me and I could sit and wait.

This landscape seemed rather disconcerting to me as I was reminded of Helen Cixous's (1975/86) quotation in her text *Sorties* that connects the body with the frustrations of not being able to speak, but even in the space of silence there is space for resistance. Here she states that, '[f]or a long time, still, ... she has answered the harassment, the familial conjugal venture of domestication, the repeated attempts to castrate her. Woman who has run her tongue ten thousand times seven around her mouth before not speaking' (Cixous, 1975/1986: 95). She encourages Woman to take the Law of the Father, the Symbolic Order and the language in which it is contextualised and 'blow it up' by writing their bodies. The irony of the situation was such that this experience of the English lessons was so far from creativity. In a creative writing lesson, the seascape of the *écriture féminine* was entirely absent, as neoliberalism met phallogocentrism.

In an act of resistance, I, in collaboration with Eve, put on an exam prep lesson that we team-taught, in a democratic approach of shared knowledge/power production. We taught a small group of students from that lesson in our lunch break, who expressed a desire to gain this qualification, and indeed they did. Had I perpetuated the ineffectuality in the classroom, I should have been reproducing the 'same' failure as before. Consequently, when the tutor

verbalised the subjectivity of helper in the lesson and, as I was labelled in front of the students as a 'helper', I did not fully take up the position in a stance similar to Una (participant) and Nancy. Yet, it may be argued that I was still perpetuating that same reproductive knowledge, devoid of creativity for, in this situation, we did 'teach to the test' but discreetly, in secret, without the 'master' knowing.

Roseneil and Seymour (1999:2 quoted in Colley et al 2003:17) consider the barriers to the production of certain subjectivities and the worth placed upon specific identities: '[a]ll identities are not equally available to all of us, and all identities are not equally culturally valued. Identities are fundamentally enmeshed in relations of power.' Jackson et al (2011:243) consider the complexities of choice as 'never just an individual process but comes about through the networks of intimacy and interpersonal ties between family and friends, and never in isolation from gender, social class or 'race''. This is indicated by the decisions made by the participants, who were influenced by those in the academy and their parents. With this in mind, often certain members of society have limited choices that influence the decisions made, as those decisions are ensconced within systems that support the power/knowledge hierarchies of the games of truth. For, as Foucault considers, power is not presented to be top down, but situated everywhere:

The condition of possibility of power... should not be sought in the primary existence of a central point, in a unique space of sovereignty whence would radiate derivative and descendent forms; it is the moving base of relations of force that incessantly induce, by their inequality, states of power, but always local and unstable (Foucault, 1978, 122).

Accordingly, the LSAs' space is one of opportunity to encourage those supported to pursue their creativity and artistic potential, often in alternative spaces to the academy. As a site of resistance, the LSAs are in a position to disturb the academic formula of producing students to seek employment in neoliberalist structures. They are not complying with the agenda of persuading and cajoling the students to internally progress from FE to HE and thus adhering to 'bums on seats' and the marketisation of education. Instead, they are considering the expectations and potential of their students in an ethical and holistic way. The University further supports the bulwarks of a capitalist system in giving the students a monetary incentive to enter the academy from FE to HE. However, the LSAs are looking to the students' holistic development and providing them with choice and agency to become other than that which the academy deems appropriate. The journeys into some artistic spaces outside the academy are not the conventional pathways to employment and do not support The University's agenda. This support, not wholly aligning with a neo-liberalist agenda, would have put their own jobs at risk. If enough students did not progress from FE to HE then the courses would cease to run

and the LSA role would be redundant. This philanthropic and altruistic stance is the embodiment of past experiences that negated their own opportunities to pursue a creative and artistic education in compulsory and post-compulsory education. Diana eloquently makes this point when she explains that,

I am a learning support assistant because I think that when I was young I was not encouraged to do my art; I was told by my parents that 'Oh it's too competitive, or you're not that good.' ... so I found it a lot later in life. I think that's why I wanted to go and help people who find themselves in the art arena. To encourage them to sort of have ownership of that (Interviewee: Diana, 2016: 29.30).

This is the stance taken by the other participants, who revealed that their journey on the path of creativity was denied to them as students some thirty years ago. Denied an artistic space in the academy by the 'masters', the women were othered into service industries. Moira (Interviewee, 2017 4.28) said that her school was 'crap': 'in those days there was no careers, just left us on our own so I went to night school, and did shorthand and typing, ... so bored'. She did a variety of service and caring roles. Choice was appropriated by those already situated in a position of dominance in the academy; accordingly, established conventions in the systems were adhered to. For example, Una was told that art was not an option as it did not fit in with the rest of her timetable that promoted the acquisition of a hierarchical orthodoxy of subject specialisms. Because she opted to study for two languages that determined that she had to study three. I, too, found this was the case; art was not even an option at A Level for me. For Eve, too, there was limited choice and little agency, due to gendered socialisations and the cultural value placed on certain subjectivities. Accordingly, she started a linguistic degree with art history but did not complete, as this was not what she really wanted to do:

I remember that there was a table with leaflets. I really wanted to go to art school, but all the leaflets were pretty gendered really, as being at a convent. ... I do remember having a big row with the parents., 'cause although I liked the building, (of the university) ... by the time I'd got to that age I wanted to go to art school and the nuns had said that she is capable of more than that – make her go and do something else, and she can draw in her spare time (Interviewee: Eve, 2016: 44.09).

The one LSA that did attend art college, after compulsory education, found that the spaces were physically divided; those privileged knowledges of the arts were valued above the craft courses: Mia said,

well I was a visual merchandiser, window dressing, I went to college. But it was down the bottom. You go through the main entrance, but it was down the bottom. On the bottom floor, where you went in for the students for trades. You still went into the uni, but I did meet some art people, went to all the fashion shows and ate in their canteen and that (Interviewee, Mia, 2017: 7.15).

Therefore, although the participants, and some of the women in the literature, are able to navigate the spaces by moving from positions of belonging to becoming the student in

an/other space, the conflict is sometimes irreconcilable. Yet the construction of the student/learner, whether 'good', 'poor' or resistant, is a fluid process; hence the production of the mature woman returnee, where it may be a struggle, vying between positions of resisting the privileged knowledges and or confirming them. To progress/succeed in the academy, a position of self-regulation often is required, becoming the 'disciplined' student (Foucault, 1975/1991).⁵⁸ But why bad/poor? Surely as Eve, Nicola and Nancy are able to transgress their own borders of the LSA role, by taking on a formal lifelong learning subject position, they are not the 'poor student'. In this transition it is suggested that they are aware of the power/knowledge hierarchies at play, so rather than being the 'poor student', I suggest that they are the 'resilient' ones (Hoult, 2012). By drawing upon the work of Hoult (2012) to problematise this discourse of the 'poor student', it need not be read negatively. Instead they have taken up the subject position of the 'resilient learner', as have many of the participants in the study.

This is discussed in the next chapter, that analyses the construction from the data collected. To a degree the 'resilient learner' is alluded to in the literature, as some of the women LSAs discuss their negative schooling experiences, which fostered the LSA role (Hoult 2012). However, their resilience as learners is not an aspect upon which the authors in the literature focus, instead it is the 'poor student' and the discursive construction of 'being a mother'-LSA (Watson et al, 2013). In the other articles sourced, it is the LSA's dire working conditions that are the authors' main concern, much of which is not celebratory or positive. The problem with a narrow focus that highlights negative aspects of the position is that it hides other subject positionings and other practices. They are not recognised or acknowledged, which is a major issue with the literature, as it continues to 'fix' the women in a deficit discourse. Should an alternative representation be explored the perceived deficit is negated in celebratory stories that are transformative and or transgressive. That said, Watson et al (2013: 105) touched upon one woman's desire to transition from LSA to become a teacher and another who left the study to retrain.

⁵⁸ In my context, I had to move between multiple subjectivities that was very similar to what bell hooks describes. I had to perform to my mother who was from a working-class background, living on a council estate, and my father who left school at fifteen to become a cabin boy in the navy on condition of a magistrate's order, both of whom had learning differences and disabilities. Sometimes it felt as though I was stepping into a foreign landscape, that was paradoxically once my home. It was as hooks (1994) suggests, a challenge to straddle the cultures in which I became located. My own experiences of fulfilling the criteria of widening participation, gives one example of how policy categorises students from a vulnerable landscape into an equally exposed and labelled 'othered' space. Yet, I was 'able' to 'Border Straddle' (Bates and Bowman, 2015).

In taking on study commitments, the women have (re)positioned themselves in the system, as the nomad (Braidotti, 2002), the outcast (Bourdieu and Champagne, 1999: 422; Cixous 1976, 875-893). In our transformation we/they are cast adrift in a sea of change (Cixous 1977/1991: 66; Shakespeare, 1610/2011). Braidotti (2002: 119) considers that in becoming, subjectivity is a fluid process of repositioning and relocating: 'The different stages or levels of becoming trace an itinerary that consists in erasing and recomposing the former boundaries between self and others'. For 'what sustains the entire process of becoming-subject is the will to know, the desire to say, the desire to speak' (Braidotti, 2002: 22). Thus, Braidotti (2002: 22) in suggesting that, '[t]he subject is a process, made of constant shifts and negotiations between different levels of power and desire' allows for transformation. Nancy, in her relocation, has subverted the 'truth' of an essentialist role and labelled categorisation. She is not duped by the epistemological assumptions that organise the systems and classifications privileging the phallogocentric way of the world (Foucault, (1970/2003). However, by viewing the land-seascape differently, this discursive construction of those placed in the territory of the 'poor' learner may be seen as a site of resistance. No longer entirely self-regulated in a coercive system of control, these women applied their power/knowledges to the situation and to continue the metaphor, they have stepped up and stepped out of the pond (Foucault, 1975/1991). In this sea-change, out of the stagnant water of 'the pond' they have transformed, as have the participants.

The women, as lifelong learners, have forming subjectivities that are multi-layered. As mature students and practitioners of The University these positionings have facilitated the participation in informal, non-formal and incidental lifelong learning (Jackson 2009). Indeed, this positioning of supporting students, constructs their own learning as an everyday experience; it is habitual, a performance in their daily routines, making for a simultaneous and symbiotic layering of teaching and learning. Often it is these experiences that have informed the visual material cultures that they have presented for this study.⁵⁹ This is not the usual landscape in compulsory education, as often the teaching and learning in the classroom is at a level at which the classroom assistant, teaching assistant and or LSA is already familiar; they are usually reproducing the curriculum at the key stages required. Conversely, the LSA participants take that knowledge that is productive and makes visible an embodiment of

⁵⁹ In my own experiences as an LSA, at the start of my teaching career, I exercised my knowledge production, for just in the first term my 'incidental' learning included PhotoShop; modelling and casting using Modroc; weaving willow canes; block printing and many more. These practises have informed my own creative oeuvre.

resistance, transition, transgression and/ or reproduction in their artwork, discussed in the next chapter. This genealogical approach of tracing the roots of the experiences of the women in the landscape, and the creation of the *écriture féminine*, made for interesting findings. The unearthing of the art and creative element of the role was such an inspiring and motivating element; it was a context that could not be ignored; it features in all their tales and became the main focus of the interviews and data collection.

The Salty Kiss of Cixous on my Psyche

In this vast and expansive ocean,
Filled with the salt of the water,
Whence the écriture feminine is conceived,
I write my own story.

In this expansive, liquidation of the space,
The dawn breaks in the place of the Real,
Bursting with the crimson sparks of the Imaginary.
I felt the lips of Cixous on my psyche.

In this landed salty-seascape,
It is where the sea embraces the sky;
A place in which the strangers' stories
Are celebratory.

It is here that I feel their kisses upon my psyche.
(Hayward, 2018)

Chapter 4: Tales from the Toolbox: Practices in the Everyday

In the previous chapter, the landscape of the literature mapped the LSA, teaching assistant and classroom assistant to a discursive discourse that, for the most part, highlights their negative positioning in terms of working conditions and the formation of the good woman, poor student. This position was self-identified by some of the women in the literature and some of the participants, but where possible, alternative positionings were explored, specifically acts of resistance. The literature does not present the LSAs as craftspeople, artists, or 'creatives', which is a point of departure for this project. Their experiences and practises as artists are a fundamental element upon which this study is constructed and conceived. I identified that the three women I interviewed for my MSc were artists working in The University. In conducting my research for my MSc, I stumbled upon this creative artistic 'contour' in the land-seascape (Foucault in Davidson 1997: 156). With this in mind, that is, the women taking up the subject position of the artist, the opportunity to analyse their artwork was presented. This process has supported and informed this chapter, as I explored the (s)texts-materials that I collected for this study and the intersection of the subject positionings of the women and myself, as we practise our art-craft in the complex land-seascapes that currently have been shaped by the unique overlapping of neoliberalism and austerity in higher education.

As the women discuss their material cultures, they simultaneously reference the systems and discourses in which they are positioned, as well as their experiences, practices and spaces of their everyday. For example, in one abstract painting, Diana references the ancient civilization of *Plato's Atlantis* (2016), figure 4, to explain the social divisions of the past that still she feels

are resonating in today's hierarchical society. Then, in another painting, she expresses a loving relationship with her daughter in the use of iconography and the subversion of the mythologising traditions of the gendered divisions of women, figure 5, *Darkness of Grace* (2016). Explored are the subject positions of the artist-craftsperson-creative and the discourses that work to produce those subject positions in tandem with creativity, that is often formed outside of discourse in the space in which the *écriture féminine* can flourish. In this way there is a symbiotic relationship in the oeuvre of the women, as they are referencing their experiences of their day-to-day in their art practises, often immersed in the spaces of myth and mystery. This then 'dis/rupts the mastery discourse'. They are not performing the 'traditional' role of the artist/genius in the studio/workshop: there are no illusions of aggrandisement, genius and the 'Old Masters' discourse (Crawford, 2006: 42; Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-146). Art is practiced in the everyday, as the women supported the cohort of students and made their own pieces in those spaces or at home; it is an activity that democratises the 'mastery' of art (Cixous, 1976: 887). Much of the contexts and subjects in the artworks are situated in a 'feminised' narrative (Clover, 2010), visualising the importance of: relationships and mothering; inclusion of the marginalised; community and collective practises of caring; and 'identity' and 'the self' (Interviewees: Mary, Diana, Eve and Una). The women's abundance and diversity of creativity is explored further in this chapter.



Figure 4: Diana, Plato's Atlantis, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 12 x 16 inches, private collection



Figure 5: *Diana, Darkness of Grace*, 2016, oil on canvas, 24 x 24 inches, private collection

Thus, in the act of taking up the subject position of the artist in creating the ‘feminine’, we, the artists, can contest the norms of expected behaviours, and the object becomes the subject. In their transformation, the materiality of the culture they create embodies change (Butler, 1999; Braidotti, 2002). For ‘[i]n positing what we, ourselves, would like to be, we challenge *ourselves*, and each other with the necessary interplay of the real, the mundane and restrictive, and the *ideal*, the carefully imagined and even tentatively utopian’ (Hall, 2004: 130). In the ability to see what might be, even in the trauma and challenges of a forced redundancy, we ‘fly’ in the face of the oppression of neoliberalism. These ‘imaginary’ spaces and formations of the subject of the artist is visualised in this chapter, as I narrate their tales (Cixous, 1975/1986: 97).

Every woman has known the torment of getting up to speak. Her heart racing, at times entirely lost for words, ground and language slipping away - that's how daring a feat, how great a transgression it is for a woman to speak - even just open her mouth - in public. A double distress, for even if she transgresses, her words fall almost always upon the deaf male ear, which hears in language only that which speaks in the masculine (Cixous, 1976: 880).

[My Tale from the Toolbox: A Conversation with the Self and 'Others'](#)

Being situated in a post-compulsory landscape, as the impact of neoliberalism's stranglehold upon the marketisation of education takes hold, we still are able to 'speak' (Cixous, 1976: 880). By neither speaking in the 'masculine', nor to a discourse that promotes the adverse effects of neoliberalism, we can have meaningful conversations about our practices as artists and educators (ibid). In this complexity of spaces and, in a landscape that marginalises us, we have opportunities to converse in the 'feminine'. At times, the landscape was challenging and my story is one in which the narratives illustrate past and present consequences of policies; those that divide practices, as well as how those dividing policies facilitate communities of shared practices in the arts and education (Clover and Stalker, 2007: 11). Interestingly, in reflecting upon my own positioning in the academy, I realised that on commencement of my own undergraduate degree I was 'embraced' by the government's widening participation programme. I fell into five of the nine protected categories and I fulfilled all three of HEFCE's widening participation criteria.

Our stories are tales of inclusion as well as exclusion; yet as the ethos of widening participation coveted my 'student body', I could not speak. Nonetheless, I hope that in this small study my voice and that of the women is heard and out from the 'dark' we emerge (Cixous, 1976: 876). Our practices as artist and educators have united us and we have resisted the marginalisation in The University. My/our story demonstrates how practices within compulsory and post compulsory education interact with particular political contours to landscape subjectivities that present both opportunities and limitations. These dividing practices segregate and exclude and, thereby, other those bodies that are different, whilst simultaneously normalising certain bodies in culture and language (Foucault, 1970/2003: 43-44). But these divisions create collectives and spaces of opportunity and supportive environments to facilitate a land-

seascape that enables transformation in the creation of a Cixousian conception of the écriture feminine; it is a space of transformation.

Produced in this land-seascape are differing subject positions: the student, poor/bad/ (dis)abled and or resilient; LSA, teacher, lecturer, tutor and mentor; wife, partner, mother, daughter; and artist, craftsperson and creative. As all the women are makers of art/craft it was interesting to see how their work embodies these subject positions, the regimes and games of truth and resistances and power/knowledge hierarchies (Foucault, 1988b; 1975/1991). My artwork, entitled *Mocking the Master Narrative: The Masquerade* (2015-18), figure 3, is drawn upon in this part of the analysis to explore, to a small degree, challenges to the discursive constructions of the good woman, but mainly the poor, 'not very good' student narrative (Una, 2017: 33.15). This was identified in the literature reviewed in the previous chapter, and I reflect upon this in my own past experiences to write a 'genealogy' of the present. The conversations are embedded in the current cultural context of the time that I am writing, where we are directly experiencing the institutional causation of neoliberalism intersecting with austerity. Yet, as our stories illustrate, resistances and transgressions intersect the narratives, so that at differing intervals in our lives, transformations occur and develop. Accordingly, we are able to shape our bodies to exercise agency and produce power/knowledges that are different to that which is valued by the 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1988b).

As I am writing this in 2019, we have been discarded in the current neoliberal episteme. The marginalisation of the LSAs has been taken to the ultimate conclusion, termination of the post. Paradoxically if, as support workers and tutors/lecturers, we are seeking a pedagogy of inclusion, one in which equality was sought in meaningful learning and teaching technologies, it would make the support role obsolete by good practices. Inclusivity should be practised in such ways that support the needs of all; 'reasonable adjustments' and access arrangements should be a thing of the past. However, this ideal has yet to be realised in many institutions and I do feel that this change has been rapid and not considered fully in terms of ethical recruitment of students and the care(ful) exit of staff. This landscape has made for interesting positionings of resistances; self-regulation was sporadically 'suspended' in this climate where redundancy was looming heavily on the horizon for two years; neoliberalism was disrupted, in a resistance to those managers pushing this agenda (Foucault, 1975/1991: 27-28). This made for a counter discourse of highly ethical practices in a community that has developed,

constructed to support those doing the supporting. In this 'feminine' landscape we were ethical, inclusive and respectful of one another.

Once again, in dipping into Foucault's toolbox, the notion of the ethical self is explored in what we think, say and do; it supported a transformation (1988c). We, in the very act of participating in this study, have thought about this process that Foucault discusses. Many of the participants implied, and some actively said, that it had been cathartic in both the voicing of their narratives and in creating tales of material culture from their toolbox. In thinking about our experiences, actions and emotions, it was a process of reflection and in that contextualisation an ethical subject is produced. Allowing space to think and talk about what we wanted to do with our lives, it was also a space to voice our anxieties, hopes and dreams. However, in the current economic climate, it was challenging to be ethical in The University. There was a conflict between retaining the student to keep our jobs, whilst considering the student's well-being; but knowing we were soon to be unemployed we had no reason to be 'disciplined' in the neoliberal episteme (Foucault, 1975/1991). Therefore, the subject positions that were increasingly presented were that of the ethical practitioner, as the women transgressed the borders of the 'good' LSA subject position. There was a tension between the positions of the good LSA and the ethical educator. For, often, being the 'good' LSA means over stepping the boundaries of support to ensure attainment and retention, which then keeps the 'business' of the academy in existence.

In the small transgressive disruptions, they were aware of the power/knowledge hierarchies at play. I narrate this in the chapters as my story, as do the women in their own stories, which are voiced/visualised in the interviews and their art-craft. In an active critique the women reflect upon the events, emotions, experiences that are the subjectivities 'that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognise ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying' (Foucault, 1984 in Rabinow, 1984:46). In this way, thought and criticism are tools to facilitate transformation. Whilst the process is often strewn with setbacks, anxiety and doubt, this makes for a crafting of a subject that is different. In that difference, belief in what Foucault conceptualises as the 'games of truth' are disrupted, subverted and problematised (Foucault, 1988b).

During the early days of my education, I believed in those games and regimes of truth issued from those residing in the institutions in which I wished to inhabit. I believed the 'mastery' narrative (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-160), where these taken-for-granted narratives of 'truth(s)'

divided bodies, my body and many others in this study, from those who were the established masters. I consciously believed this was the way of the world: I 'knew' no better, although intuitively it felt wrong. Thus, in order to hold us, the women and I 'fixed' in our gender and social milieu, the participants, Diana, Eve, Nikki, Una, Mary and I were persuaded by the 'masters' in the academy that entry into that space would be a mistake: we would not be welcome (Interviewees, Diana, Eve, Nikki and Mary)⁶⁰. With this 'truth' of a gendered class narrative, the unspoken rules of the game were at play. The women did consider university, but the choice of an art subject was problematic, and most did not meet the entry requirements. For example, coming from a comprehensive 6th form in the 1980s, the norm for a student such as me, was to enter university for the purpose of employability, which should easily facilitate a career pathway. Therefore, only those students studying subjects such as law or medicine went on to HE.

With this in mind, in the context of Thatcherite Britain and positioned as a working-class woman, a humanities degree was not considered of any worth, either culturally nor financially. My parents said they were not going to support me should I have made the decision to apply. As Burke and Hayton (2011: 18) suggest, the humanities were, and still are to an extent, the realm of the middle classes. Yet, in this capitalist climate of individualism, I resisted this discourse and some years later gained a degree, and indeed, a BA in Humanities with Art History. In subverting this neoliberal and classed discourse, I was to become the first in my family to gain a degree and, in this context, it was not a privileged 'knowledge'. Often, I was asked by members of my family what I was going to do with it. By 'do' they meant what job I would be able to secure. They did not understand the 'value' of this qualification, as a means to: increase self-esteem; fulfil my love of learning; be immersed in a library, where the feel and touch of books was enticing; and the value of social interaction with other students.

Accordingly, this journey into the academy was not easy for most of the women and me. The power/knowledges reproduced in the context of the 1980s was a position in which I was not considered to be a privileged player; entry was restricted. Consequently, although the majority of the women in this study did enter the academy, it was as mature students in a space of the local or the convenience of distance learning. Now, the neoliberal episteme has evolved to

⁶⁰ The narrative of neoliberalism intersected with gender and class is explored in the next part of this chapter, as the voices of the women are drawn upon to understand how we were excluded from the academy. This exclusion then allowed the academy to continue with the reproductive context of education.

open up access to those that once were not able to take advantage of a limited widening participation agenda (Burke and Hayton, 2011; Barr, 2008). In the latter part of the 20th century, the pervasive nature with which neoliberalism has been embedded in society has resulted in many universities and colleges competing for students. Some have no choice but to accept all students that apply: widening participation is at its height almost by default (Liasidou 2012; Archer 2007; Parker 2007; Reay 2004; Reay et al 2010; Burke and Hayton, 2011). This may not be to encourage a democracy of education, but to secure the institution's very survival.

Widening participation was in its infancy when we were seeking entry into HE. Still, the dividing practices were at play, for although I was one such student who took advantage of the widening of access in the 1990s like many of the other participants, that access was severely limited. They/I did not meet the entry requirements for a conventional university place. The subjectivity of not good enough, failure and the interloper, weighed heavily as I took up the subject position of the poor student. Even before I entered the academy, the words of one of the academy's gatekeepers, my English/careers teacher perpetuated the discourse of division in much the same vein as Woolf's gendered discourse of 'can't'. Gender and class were marked on my body, placing me low down the power/knowledge hierarchy: "No Beverley, it's not worth you going to uni to be an auctioneer, for two reasons, one of which you can rectify, the other you're stuck with". Naturally I asked him what these two obstacles were. He stated that for my cockney accent I could go to elocution lessons but, being a woman I could not change. Diana's experience was much the same:

I wanted to do art but I was told that I had to do computer studies, so I was never allowed to pursue it to college er, because ... there was a culture I think at the time that there was no money in art, there's no money in that to do a job. So I ended up pursuing, although I didn't go all the way in the caring profession (Interviewee, Diana, 2017: 0.65).

Yet, we were not deterred. We did work in banking, finance and retail for a few years, but we/I was so bored; we/I could not go on like this. We were resilient in our resolve, in our positionings of becoming mature students, in a widening participating context.

I needed adult conversation that stimulated my mind that had turned to 'mush' since looking after children. I was fortunate to find the door of the academy wide open at the Open University. I felt from the outset that it was a place of equality and emancipation. I sought the space as a social and cultural experience, as a way to meet others, for being a stay-at-home mum was, for me, an isolating, oppressive experience. I used the emancipatory space at the

Open University as a way to have meaningful conversations and to communicate with others, to be part of a supported community. It really was an emotional experience, though I often felt that I did not fit in. I was a fraud. Being told I was thick and stupid at school for years was not so easily erased from my mind. Still, today, the Open University advocates an 'Access for All' ethos (Open University, 2017). Yet from the time I graduated in 2000 the fees have increased by 505%. With this in mind it is debatable just how far the institution is able to fully support those students in financial hardship. One difference is that I had to fund my own tuition fees: the OU facilitated this with an interest-bearing loan, which is still an option. At that time the fees were not too much of a burden and the direct debit was paid from my 'housekeeping'. Now the OU student can fund their fees via SFE and then payment is taken from their salary. Should this have been the case, knowing there was a huge debt to recover, £17,184 at present, my choice of subject would have been different. Feeling pressured to study for a course that would have more likely secured employment, humanities would not have been an option.

Looking back, I probably was not that different from many of the other students enrolled on an OU course. The cohort was extremely diverse, although there were many mature students, I did not feel judged by the 'masters' even though I was in many of the target groups that made up the equality agenda: low income; working class; disabled; mature; and at the time of starting the first 60-point credit I was pregnant (Equality Act 2010). At this juncture I negated a neoliberal agenda; I did not enter the academy to seek social mobility and employment, I was looking after two children. Therefore, not motivated to find employment, I used the space as a means to engage in conversation and communication. I really enjoyed the lessons, as much to soak up all the knowledge, as it was to escape domesticity. To seek knowledge for knowledge's sake was emancipatory, it was fascinating, I loved it. I felt like a detective of the past. It was intriguing to look at a painting or an artwork made yesterday or five hundred years ago and understand the contexts of the piece. And I think at that time, study was a way in which I could leave the space of the home to seek sanctuary in a different space, my space, 'a room of my own' (Woolf, 1929).

Although the lessons were only once a month and therefore the emphasis were very much focused on independent learning, the students were encouraged to meet in study groups and join the student union. However, once in the space of the 'master', the framework was very prescriptive and the take-up of the subject position of the novice/pupil was clearly encouraged. Even so, finally, I was in the game but as a working-class female student it took a long time to learn how to play that game. Although I was in the 'race', I was not winning the

game; I did not acquire the knowledge from the masters easily (Greer, 2001). I had to learn everything from 'scratch'; the way I was taught was not working. I was not 'too bad' at essays and research but sitting exams was very challenging for me. I was compliant and performed the role as best I could. I knew my place, which had been drummed into me from school. I was knowingly, complicit in my oppression. I knew full well how I was being oppressed and I recognised that oppression. However, internally contesting this way of being was acceptable to the masters, as long as it was not voiced. I think this was why it took me so long to speak up in class. I generally found that in my undergraduate degree I could not speak at all. I did not feel worthy of the place offered to me to study for an undergraduate degree and, as a widening participation student from a disadvantaged background with a disability, it did not seem likely that I would complete the qualification: I performed very badly at 'A' level, failed all bar one and that was after some very disturbing and somewhat mentally and emotionally challenging experiences. Some of these experiences in compulsory education would now be considered abusive. Many of the participants voiced similar experiences. For example, Mia's (Interviewee, 2017: 18.40) experience was particularly distressing:

I had a biology teacher who picked on me practically the whole time, a young bloke. And he actually said one day that: "this is an example of blood rushing to the surface", when he made me go bright red and he made me stand up and everyone look at me bright red. I was so painfully shy. So, I sort of played truant after that. I hated it, I hated it; really shy. I hated it.

In this space that divided practices and segregated bodies, the masters clearly defined the boundaries of the gendered classed dis(abled) body. The 'masters', for me were very much as Pollock described previously: they spoke from entrenched metanarratives that sustained the power/knowledges hierarchies of the discipline, art history, in the discourses of the Catholic, white male. The practices were not only dividing the disabled and able body (Foucault, 1982a), but the Catholics and the 10% of non-Catholics sent to the Roman Catholic school. Here, an education disciplined in a religious context was important. My mum asked a friend to write to the school on her behalf, as she was not a good writer and my dad was dyslexic. This was to explain why she was opting her children out of the local comprehensive in favour of a faith school.

Once there it was a foreign landscape, we studied RE as a compulsory subject, the seven sacraments; I did not know what a sacrament was before I went there; however, it was a power/knowledge to discipline and punish (Foucault, 1975/1991). In this way it was a really strange place that was full of contradictions. I thought as a child that Christianity was supposed to promote the principles of charity, equality, freedom, compassion etc. My sister and I went to Sunday school as children, but this Roman Catholic school was far from exhibiting those

principles. Exclusion was clearly practised as we, the non-Catholics, were made to sit around the outsides of the assembly hall when the services and mass were said. I did not know what was going on, I did not know the format of the service nor the words with which I was required to respond. As a child I felt that something was wrong with this marginalization, but I accepted the situation. However, the school did the job and I got twelve O' Levels, despite my dyslexia and my sister achieved ten.

In this institution I became the 'good' student, self-regulating. I was punished when I did not comply. If I spoke out of turn, I was told to open my mouth, so the teacher could take aim and throw the chalk in my mouth. Often, I saw the wooden eraser flying by my head and sometimes it collided with my undisciplined body. This was to punish behaviours that were not adhering to the 'rules'. Thus, speaking was, for me, directly associated with a Foucauldian notion of disciplinary power/knowledge and punishment. I could only speak when spoken to by the master, or if I put up my hand. If I did not comply with the rules, I was punished. I was from the context in which children were 'to be seen and not heard'. I was disciplined in multiple spaces not to speak: the gaze of authority was upon me, surveillance was all-pervasive and those that were the 'good' students evaded punishment. However, those that were 'bad' literally had the gaze of the whole school upon them. Every Friday afternoon punishment was received on the stage in front of the whole school. Boys had the cane and girls the slipper. Maybe it acted as a deterrent but Friday afternoons saw the same group of boys up on the stage getting caned and the occasional girl. It is strange that in a school teaching the love of God and the mercy of Mary, here we were looking on, as children were beaten. Furthermore, I could not ignore the association that the same students that were being punished were those that were in 'the remedial hut'.

Remedial is a term that means to take action to cure, correct, remedy. It is often used in education to denote a deficit model and in this school, it is an example of where practices were physically divided in the spaces. Those students with a learning difference or disability that were disruptive or in the bottom stream were removed permanently and placed in the mobile classroom, separate from the main block. Looking back, I think: 'there but for the grace of God go I'. If it were not for my parents' intervention I should have been positioned as a 'bad' student in the remedial hut. Not being able to read, I was a 'pretender'. At the age of eight I finally had to 'confess' to my teacher that I could not read; for three years on a regular basis I stood in line for the reading assessment/test behind the same student and memorised the sentence the previous pupil read out loud. Then, one day, the student read three sentences in

one go. 'Well that was it', I thought to myself, not being able to recall and recite three sentences I had to admit to my failings: the 'game' was up (Foucault, 1988b). Unbeknownst to me at that time, I had specific learning differences and so began the humiliation, fear, guilt and shame of being 'included' as a (dis)abled student. Now I realise that my 'acquisition' of knowledge was embedded in a self-regulation of reproductive education. To catch up with those already disciplined, my punishment was extra literacy lessons at lunch times. Learning in this context was 'overlaid with different groups' process of identification, access to power and ... taken-for granted elements of society that define where different identities are located within the broader social structure' (Stuart et al 2011: 491). Not being functionally literate would have defined a subjectivity as the child not able to fulfil my parents' aspirations to be something better than working class.

In this society being literate was a cultural capital that was a necessity; my parents being aware of this, bought me the Collins Encyclopaedia when I was nine. Still not a proficient reader, I used a visual technique to increase my understanding: I looked at the pictures in the book. Intrigued and curious it sparked a passion for exploration, for the discovery to detect the message(s) behind the depictions. Time and again I went back to one image, Dali's *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)* (1936), figure 6, wondering why a painter would want to create such a grotesque image. Dali said of the painting that it is: 'a vast human body breaking out into monstrous excrescences of arms and legs tearing at one another in a delirium of autostrangulation' (Dali, 1942: 357). As a child I had not seen anything like this before. Thus, on the margins of becoming a reader, I understood the power of visual culture. As a child I felt the 'power' in that image. It stayed with me and it is a painting I often refer to in my teaching of visual culture, specifically the lesson on Surrealism. On reflection, I now realise the ways in which the language of visual culture can move the viewer, I feel that my illiterate self was open to the emotions conveyed by Dali's depiction of the grotesque trauma of the horrors of war. In the 1970s I, as a child, had not been saturated with the prevalence of multi-media that is now the norm of visual cultures in the 21st century. Accordingly, my experiences are not so far removed from those illiterate peasants of times past, where they were instructed by the power/knowledges of religious visual language. The difference is that Dali is critiquing the social structures that promote war, by illustrating its dire outcomes, whereas the religious iconography propagates the frightful consequences of not following a Godly life. The emotional impact of such imagery is palpable.



Figure 6: *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans* Dalí, *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)*, 1936, oil on canvas, 100 x 99 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art

However, to be able to 'read' visual cultures was not enough to function in the 1970s Western society, to be literate was the requirement. Seeing the serious nature and implications of the situation, my mother took a cleaning job to pay for a private tutor, who came every Saturday morning for an hour. So began the lessons with the tutor who taught me to read, using Dicken's *Great Expectations* (1861). On reflection, it seemed a wholly inappropriate text for a child that was not able to read; yet it was apt in terms of the content, as it gave an insight into the educational/reading development of the characters of the book and therefore it was a relatable text. The text is a metaphor for the hierarchical nature of learning; Pip attributes his success to Joe, being taught with love, almost in a father/son relationship that draws on the apprenticeship model. This is the vein in which my Mum facilitated a caring, nurturing way in which learning can take place. This is contrasted with the abuses of the formal education I received at school and beyond, in much the same way in which Pip receives instruction from Miss Havisham and, in particular, Matthew Pocket.

Thus, some forms of knowledge have value and worth over others. I remember the lessons provoked much anxiety. I felt I was thick, stupid, as though there was something wrong with me, thinking I would never be able to read and write. It was emotionally challenging, a struggle. I much preferred a visual way of accessing culture and used this technique of discussing images with my mum, where we looked at the images together. Interestingly a similar visual technique is discussed by Eve in the next part of this chapter. Eve is able to encourage her students to be inspired and, indeed, be motivated to research. She expounds upon the way books are used in the library, where the LSAs are able to subvert the norms of its function and space. The space and books are not used to support research in the usual way, which is initiated from the reading list and project briefs. In not using books in the ways one would expect, it is a similar technique to the one I used. For many of the students I support, where failure around literacy is brought to the fore, it is an extremely stressful process. All of the LSAs are aware of this and some have experienced very negative learning experiences themselves. Most of the LSAs and I, on entering the academy as practitioners have the motivation to mitigate some of the traumas of our own education and experiences that may befall the students. Those unable to read, like Martha and Niki who hide their inability to 'master' mathematics, consider themselves 'pretenders'. I have experienced many situations where learning was problematic and traumatic; if only some simple inclusive pedagogic practices had been put in place, it would have negated those experiences. For example, it was not until I attended a study skills module at the OU that everything fell into place for me; it came just in time to mitigate the very low marks I was getting. I was barely scraping a third, so I learnt how to study, how to sit exams and use current theories that went against my notions of how I saw the 'truth' of my being. In this sense I was reproducing the knowledges of the institution: I did not question what I was told, I reproduced it, regurgitated it. The knowledges-'facts', as Dicken's character Gradgrind, expounds, are repeated in the 'Selfsame' 'mastery' (Cixous, 1986: 79).

I did not contest the power/knowledges of the academy; I was accepting and took up the discursive position of the 'good student'. It was a subjectivity that emerged from which I felt I had no authority; agency was limited and my voice was silent, a consequence of past experiences. My knowledges and language of a vernacular working-class position were not privileged. In this space I felt a certain affinity to Willy Russell's character, Rita, in *Educating Rita*, (1983). The film had a powerful and profound influence on me. A particular scene that resonated with me was when Rita was in the pub with her family and she asks her mother why she was crying. She reiterates her mother's reply to Frank, her tutor: "there has to be a better

song to sing than this". Like Rita I, too, felt that there had to be a "better song", a different truth to those in which I /she was positioned. Later in the film Frank says: "Found a culture, have you, Rita? Found a better song to sing, have you? No, you have found a different song, that's all - and on your lips it's shrill and hollow and tuneless" (Act 2, Scene 5). Although this is a negative response from Frank, the film is a celebration of Rita's development of agency and the interplay of subjectivities and relationships. For as Frank said of Rita, the 'song' of a middle-class culture sounded out of place on her lips, as it did on mine. It took until I started a postgraduate qualification to finally find my voice. However, in those past silences, there were resistances as I did feel agency in the realisation that I could resist the stereotypical reading of my once 'ungraded' position in the maths class, and other similar experiences, to feel that I now had the freedom to imagine that much could be achieved.

This feeling of achievement was bolstered by my experiences at a prestigious Russell Group university that facilitated employment into The University. Widening participation did play a part in my choices that began with the OU, as it laid the foundation to access a top university, as did a large bursary. Stepping into this space felt surreal; I physically ventured up to the 'Ivory Tower' (Jackson, 2004) to the space at the top of the power/knowledge hierarchy (Foucault, 1975/1991: 27-28). As I walked up the spiral staircase, I was anxious and apprehensive. What would I find there? Would it be like Rita, where entry into the 'tower' is literally a challenge, as she tries to get in the space to be educated? She is metaphorically 'stuck' on the outside, excluded, an outcast. I knocked at the door and walked in. It was amazing, just as I expected; books everywhere. I was offered a seat but there was nowhere to sit as the sofa was full of books. He moved them and I sat down. I refused the tea and digestive biscuit as I was so nervous, I knew my hand would not have stopped shaking.

Although I held the relevant qualifications, I knew my career options were limited, as my husband stipulated that I must get employment that fitted in with my domestic responsibilities as a *Housewife* and mother (Oakley, 1976). Hence, the need to acquire a teaching qualification. In this study all the participants had childcare commitments and needed employment to accommodate the school holidays. The way the systems are set up in education, including the policies, they produce the subject position of a gendered body. Women with children often find themselves in employment that facilitates their childcare needs (Connell, 2009; Williams, 2001; Puwar, 2004; Gatrell, 2008; de Beauvoir, 1949). Therefore, the rules of the game and the circumstances in which they are played regulate the gendered body. In this way the 'games of

truth' that follow the policies laid down by the government, drive the women into a gendered subject positioning (Foucault, 1970/2003).

However, the reproductive labour of gendered commitments was not the only motivation; like the other LSAs I, too, was drawn to The University because of an artistic predilection, as it was a new career after being 'a stay at home mum' for eight years. On completion of my BA in Humanities with Art History, I naively thought I could teach this as a subject specialism in a permanent full-time post. However, when I was invited for an interview for the teaching qualification by the Course Leader, he told me that he could not offer me a place unless I could teach a subject that was commonplace in FE. He said that if I picked English, maths or IT I would get a Golden Hello from the provider, as these were shortage subjects⁶¹. I said that I felt very apprehensive but he assured me that I would make a great teacher and really wanted me as part of the cohort. This was the first time in the academy that I felt that a 'master' genuinely saw worth in my becoming a student/teacher and this was very enticing; he offered me a place there and then and I accepted. However, the process was challenging for me, much the same as Martha felt in studying for her qualification at The University; feelings of not being good enough are compounded with anxiety and stress, as positions are reassessed (Burke and Jackson, 2007: 196).

⁶¹ A Golden Hello was a payment paid to newly qualified teachers/lecturers, on completion of their post-graduate teaching qualification.

Whether you succeed or not is irrelevant—there is no such thing. Making your *unknown* known is the important thing—and keeping the unknown always beyond you.
(Georgia O-Keeffe)

Tales of the Creative Other: The Texts in the Spaces of the *Écriture Feminine*

In our displacements and replacements, transformations are explored in the spaces of the *écriture féminine* (Richardson in Denzin and Lincoln 2005: 967; Gilbert, 1986: xviii). In these spaces of vulnerability and resistance, we had the ‘opportunity’ to take up a more ethical positioning that considers the student and the self in a holistic way; it made for spaces that facilitate a collective of supportive interactions (Burke and Jackson, 2007: 196; hooks, 1994; Hault, 2012; Clover, 2007). Ironically it is probably this ability to move between overlapping and colliding subjectivities, developed as the interloper and the resilient learner, that made this position of supportive practises possible. This interconnectivity and overlapping formations of subjectivities is the visualisation that I depict in the artwork I created for this study, *Mocking the Master Narrative: The Masquerade*, figure 3. It is an embodiment of the fragmentation of the selves. As we take on a diversity of subject positions; we mask certain parts of the selves only to reveal others. It was a response to the artwork that Diana created three years previously. The complexities of time and space and subject positionings are visualised in *Self-Portrait*, 2014, figure 2. We had many conversations together, and both of us were drawn to an iconographical approach, that I narrate here.

I saw Diana’s *Self-Portrait* as a metamorphosis of being, morphing into and out of different elements of a multifaceted hybridity of the self. This extension of multiple subject positions that move in and out of spaces is suggested in the image having no frame to the picture plane; there are no boundaries to contain the formation of the subject; there is a suggestion of change in a creative transformation of the fragmented parts. The organic fluidity of ‘growth’ is imagined in the unfinished branches that are extensions of the body. The possibilities for transformation are metaphorically symbolised in the spaces that are left open on the borders. I was having a similar dialogue when producing my artwork during the course of this study. Both are an embodiment of the ways in which women can disrupt the essentialist gendered positions; they can break the frame of their being. The creation of the *écriture féminine* facilitates this change, where the creative subject breaks the bounds of the Symbolic Order.

I make this a deliberate feature in my tapestry where threads hang down and found-bricolage, laurel leaves, have been stitched and embellished. They are loosely attached in a space that should be the frame. The piece is a truth to the materials and techniques. It is referenced to a type of Rodinesque representation where he metamorphosised the body from the medium of the marble. There is a certain authenticity in the obvious presentation of the materials. However, there is more to it than a Modernist's need to show the nature of the materials. The practise of my craft is clearly illustrated in the techniques and mediums used. I enjoy sewing; it is a form of relaxation. My mind is able to empty in the concentration of the repetitive task. I do it most days; it is a daily routine that in this piece connects me to the memories of my mother. The process reminds me of the Louise Bourgeois quote, when she says that: 'the art of sewing is emotional repair'. I think that I was physically repairing the trauma of the sudden and disturbing nature of my mother's death. When thinking about the conceptualisation of the piece, the death of my mother was very much in my thoughts. It brings to mind Cixous's writings on the death of her father and how this space of emptiness was required in order to be filled with the creativity needed to be able to write. In this way, from death, the life of the *écriture féminine* was born:

For a long time I lived through my father's death with the feeling of immense loss and child-like regret, as in an inverted fairy-tale: Ah if my father had lived! I naively fabricated other magnificent stories ... And I said to myself that I wouldn't have had death if my father had lived. I have written this several times: he gave me death. To start with (Cixous, 1977/1991: 11-12).

In a similar way, my own reflection upon my mother's death is made part of the creative process in both the conceptualisation of the artwork I produced and the encouragement and motivation she projected to support a body that was shamed into thinking that I was not good enough. This enabled an internalisation of Hault's (2012) notion of the resilient learner and limited the production of the object-other, the poor-bad student. I would come home from school having internalised the not good enough discourse of the deficit and pathologised learner. Now, I am reminded of the dialogue: I would say, "Mum I just can't do this!" Every time she would say: "take the 't' off and then you can; you can do anything you want; you can be what you want." In these conversations, it was evident that competing languages and practices were forming diverse subject positionings in compulsory and post compulsory education. I believe this was why I was so drawn to Woolf's characterisation of Lily and the continued repetition of 'can't' in the eventual shaping of the artist's subjectivity.

Thus, I feel that I am not separated from my mother in her death, it has given me a voice in which to resist death's embrace, as this voice fills the space of other, which is celebrated:

It's all there: where separation doesn't separate; where absence is animated, taken back from silence and stillness. In the assault of love on nothingness. My voice repels death; my death; your death; my voice is my other. I write and you are not dead. The other is safe if I write (Cixous, 1977/1991: 4)

In my own *écriture féminine*, the voice of the marginalised other is kept alive; the tapestry is a celebration of my mother's profession as a seamstress. Therefore, the choice of media directly relates to the legacy and memory of her and those unnamed and forgotten needlewomen that embodied their experiences in their art (Parker and Pollock, 1981). Furthermore, the work clearly references the reproductive labour of Woman (Oakley, 1974) and the power/knowledges embodied in the mythological positioning of Mother Nature. It has connotations of Gaia, the goddess of the Earth/universe, linking to the power/knowledges of wom(b)an, the maternal, the creator. Diana explores the importance of N/nature, and how it is a space of healing; she positions herself to embrace nature:

The Tree of Truth (figure 7), where I just looked up and I saw all the underside of the red tree and the red from the red tree just fell into me and washed straight through me. It was like letting go of all that anger and pain ... but she was meant to wear clothes, but it didn't work with clothes, ... when I decided to do her naked – I think that all art is therapy and all art is expressions of the self, so when she came through naked I thought that was quite relevant to what I was going through. I felt quite vulnerable and alone, and quite exposed to the world and so to immerse myself in nature, and looking up, it was, I was surrendering to a higher being, to guide me through, nature (Diana, 2016: 07.50).

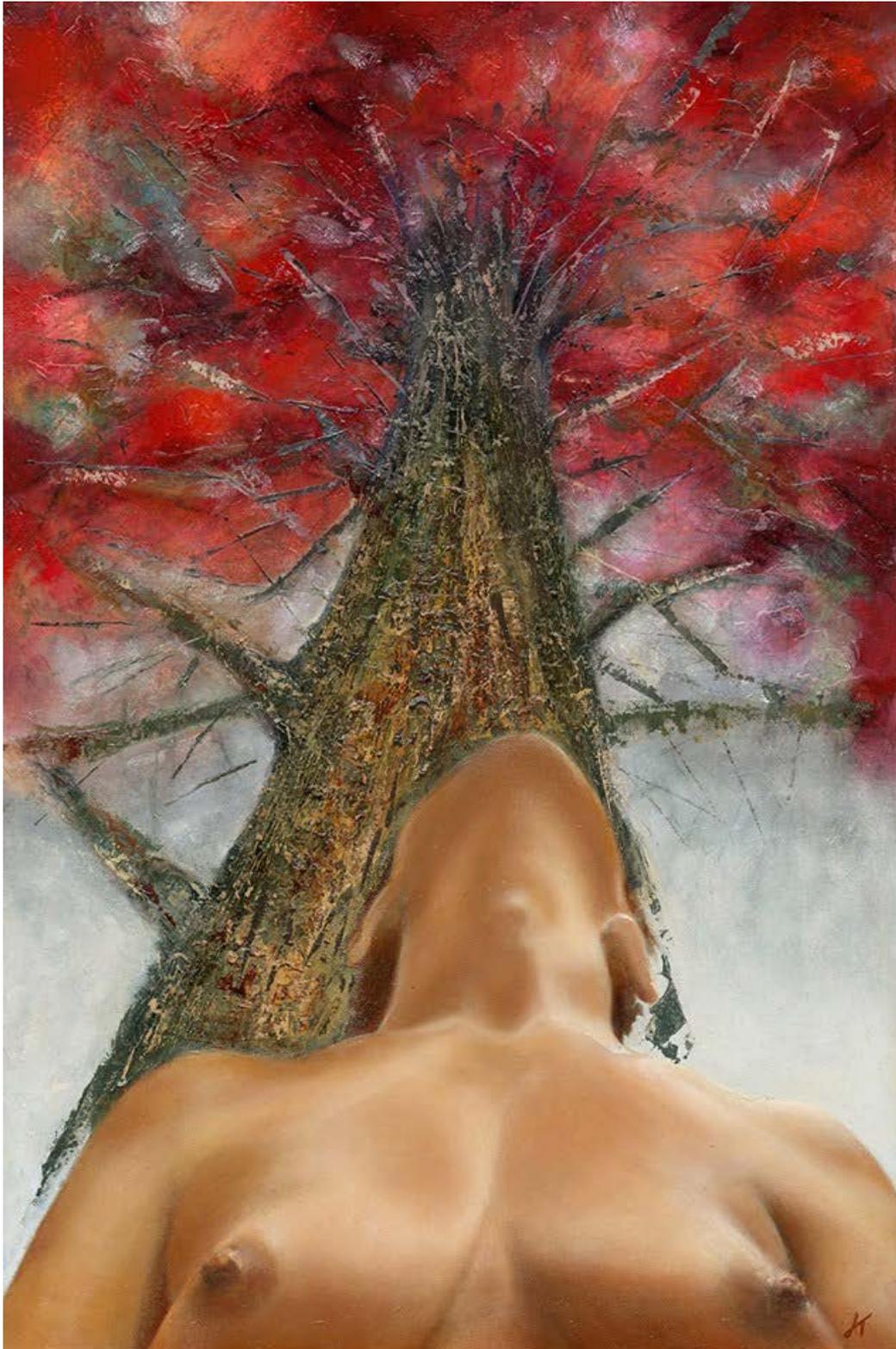


Figure 7: Diana, *Tree of Truth*, 2016, oil on canvas 51 x 77 cm, private collection

In the space of creativity, often the women express this space as being associated with nature, freedom and agency. For some, Prue, Diana and Nikki, this space is visited at a time of transformation and transition, at times when relationships had ended and Sorties were in the making. Nikki explores this in the creation of *Organic Form: Letting Go* (2010), figure 8; in its production it was 'just letting free, but that, that's where it came from, just letting free'. She says that most of her work is 'an emotion' and in that creation of the *écriture féminine*, she 'never has a plan' (Interviewee, Nikki, 2017: 1.12 and 3.57). It was the same for Diana, Eve, Prue, Nikki, and me, a 'therapeutic' space of healing, a place of sanctuary. All of the participants and I have an affinity with nature and this is also a theme that Heffernan explores in figure 1. She 'exposed' her body to the power/knowledges of nature; positioned in the space of the Real she is immersed in Nature's omnipotence. However, she is more than Nature and the warring discourses of man, for her jewel-like transformation is magnificent.



Figure 8: Nikki, 2012, *Organic Form: Letting Go*, 61 x 20 cm, acrylic on canvas, private collection

In my own conversations with Diana and her 'oeuvre', a dialogue ensued, both literally and metaphorically about nature and an alternative lifestyle. Diana often spoke about her time living in a tepee, where she gave birth to one of her daughters, and the spirit guides are an extension of that. In her *Self-Portrait*, figure 2 the crow, although positioned to point to the future is very much in the present: "it comes to visit me in my garden, every day" (Diana, Personal Conversation, 2014). As a viewer there are complexities in the gaze. You feel that you are looking into the eyes of the artist, but the gaze is diverted to the crow. Pointing to times that are yet to be, it is a representation of change, transformation, of what is to come. In Diana's past she lived in a counter-culture where she practised paganism, naturalism, tokenism, mysticism and meditation. She took the crow as her totem which embodies knowledges that are no longer valued in our society, such as prophecy, foresight and intuition. This we discussed in a conversation we had during the exhibition on Georgiana Houghton. I knew about Diana's past life experiences and I suggested that we went to the exhibition,

'Georgiana Houghton', at the Courtauld Gallery in London. At the time of writing this thesis, I felt it would be a nice day out in the summer holidays.

Often the LSAs would go to many of the major exhibitions, as part of their role was to accompany their students on these trips. Frequently, the lesser known artists would not be featured in these visits. However, I would research all the exhibitions and exhibit the posters and details on my wall when I had an office. I and a few of the LSAs, including Diana, attended this exhibition on the long-forgotten artist, Georgiana Houghton, a Spiritualist medium. She created a series of abstract watercolours in the 1860s and 70s, figure 9. She wrote on the back of each work the spirits that guided her hand, including family members and high Renaissance artists. Like many female artists, her work was ignored by the masters, only to be re-discovered years later.



Figure 9: Georgiana Houghton, A detail from Glory Be to God, 5th December 1864, water colour and gouache on board, and pen and ink inscription on verso, Victorian Spiritualist/ Union, Melbourne, Australia

Mark Brown, writing for the Guardian, in a review of the exhibition states that Houghton:

has been dismissed as an eccentric, amateur artist who claims to talk to the dead and receive their help with watercolours. But Georgiana Houghton's abstract style is beginning to be recognised as being decades ahead of painters in a similar vein such as Wassily Kandinsky and Piet Mondrian (Brown, 2016).

In Brown's alignment of Houghton's work with that of the old masters and the narrative of the 'genius' of the individual, he divides the practice of art into those knowledges that embody value and those that do not. He places value on the formal elements of the Modern aesthetic and dismisses the context of the work that inspired the painting, that is, spiritualism, meditation and clairvoyance. These power/knowledges were not an acceptable format for Victorian visual culture and she was not a popular practitioner. Today, however, narratives such as these are more readily accepted and Diana often meditates on both the universal philosophical 'truths', as well as the everyday mundane events. For her, meditation has become the everyday conversations with the self and others, with past masters and 'mistresses' (Parker and Pollock 1981); they are the normative routines of her day and her practice:

Beyond Space and Time (figure 10) and this is just, well it just is what it's called really. It is just allows you to drift into a different space and time of meditation, where you get little sparks, little ideas, just little realisations that just becomes little thoughts of realisations, where you are having little conversations with yourself. ... you know? What is life? Where do we all come from? What is the intelligence you find behind the creator? It is almost a secret geometry of all that patterns that occur in nature (Interviewee: Diana, 2016: 3.12).



Figure 10: *Diana, Beyond Time and Space, 2016, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 60 cm, private collection*

Her work was an embodiment of the philosophical meanings of the contemplation of life and death, as well as the everyday. Coming into The University chatting about life and work and interacting with others had an influence upon my own art practices. My tapestry portrays the reflections on those practices that divide, exclude and marginalise the body of a white, working class woman in education. The image is full of contradictions and layered emotions, experiences and events. This is illustrated in a type of Venetian masquerade shown on the features of the face. The impression is that the face is hidden, disguised and, in this performance, there is the suggestion of the uptake of multiple subject positions; a mum, a daughter, artist, practitioner, all made available through the interaction of power/knowledge hierarchies. In appropriating the essence of the title, from Joan Riviere's resourceful text *Womanliness as a Masquerade* (1929), I play with the notion that gender is a fluid performance. Woman is not fixed in a single subject position, as there is the propensity to

move in and out of roles and in certain situations there is the ability to move in and out of discourses. I play with the visual language of a gendered construction of 'woman' to imply that the subject is gender fluid in the ways in which s/he can take on what are considered to be non-essential 'feminine' characteristics, roles and or jobs (Butler, 1999). We are more than that discursive positioning. Accordingly, both pieces, figure 2, *Self-Portrait* (2014) and figure 3, *Womanliness as a Masquerade* (2015-18), are suggestive of a Foucauldian representation of non-identity as the borders are negated. The figure/s are incomplete in a surreal, dream-like space, positioning the subjects outside of the 'realities' of the home/work binary. The creative 'feminine' is experimented with in the fantasy, imagination and transformations that are visualised in the spaces extended to the margins in the gaps left for the mystic and mythic spaces of reflection and meditation.

Multiple subject positions were and are in the making; they are fluid, vast, intersecting. Foucault (2000a: 276) makes this point in his consideration of the construction of the subject as 'an infinite, multiple series of different subjectivities that will never have an end'. This is visualised in the work of Prue; she uses multiple representations of her body in a space of interaction from which to explore the fragmented self. In that space where the normative ideals of the 'feminine' aesthetic oscillate into subjectivities that are other than the norm, she is challenging the power of the established *Beauty Myth* (1991). In this moment, boundless subjectivities that make up the self are possible, not just patriarchy's construction of the Western feminine ideal. Her body of work jolts the viewer's consciousness into realising that how we present to the world is multifaceted. Of significance are the 'other' selves that are hidden, invisible, figure 11, *The Thought Blanket* (2010). This vulnerability resonated with my own work, where the materials used are open to the elements, to decay and the breakdown of the fabrics. In spaces of sanctuary, refuge and safety the masks too can be put aside, the internal insecurities and fears are overcome, thereby facilitating a subjectivity that can be shaped in the creative transformative 'feminine' spaces.

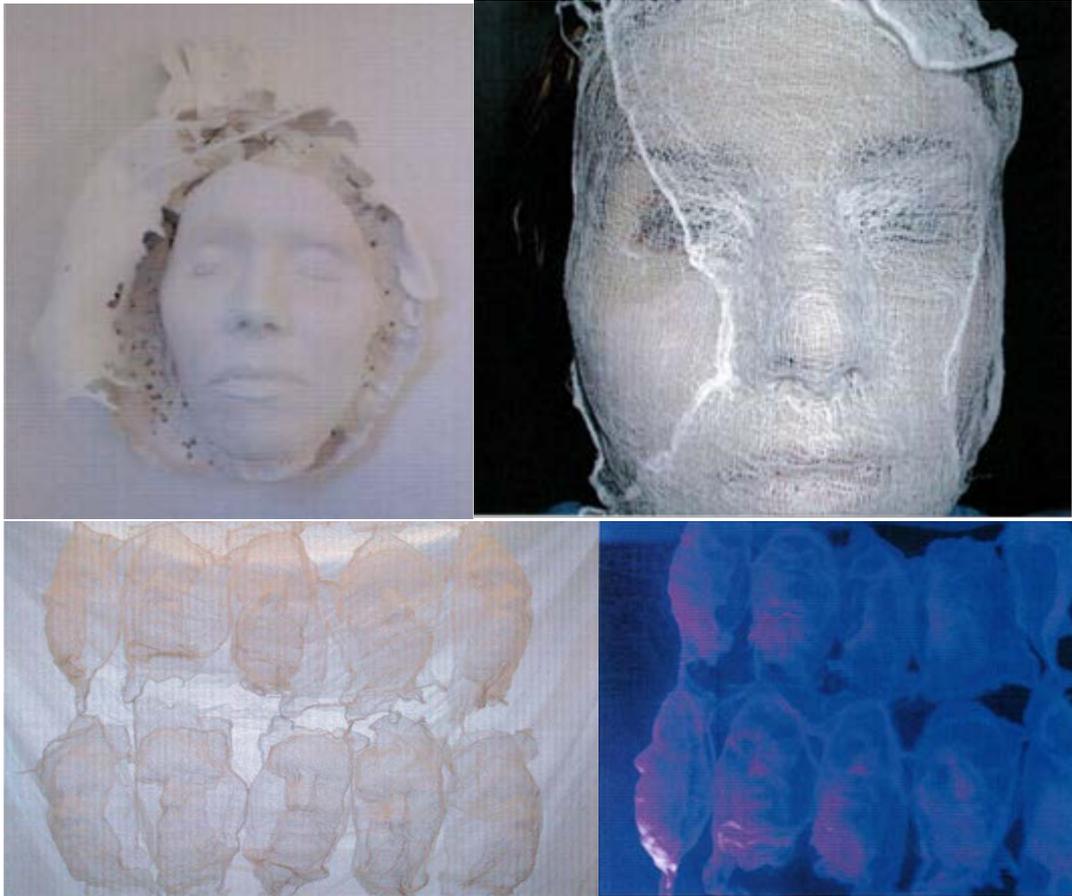


Figure 11 a, b, c, d: Prue, (2007). Preparation processes and Thought Blanket, mixed media large installation: mixed media with multiple elements, private collection

Equally, our work considers a Foucauldian interaction of the technologies of the self, that is how the individuals are able to shape their own bodies, intersected with society's expectations of the visual female form. For Prue, it is to provoke the audience's intersection with the 'body' of work, her body and her own compliance with the disciplines of the feminine ideal and, lastly, the agency she has to expose her feelings on aging, mortality and death. In Prue's artist's statement (2007) she says that: 'The viewer's experience is paramount, becoming part of the work itself, leaving one to question their own mortality as they seem to be at the core of our fascination with forever keeping young'. She argues that it is necessary to know the conscious and unconscious selves, 'the inner voices', in order to care for the self. It is necessary to make visible the 'vulnerability of women including self in today's society'. In making elements of the corporal self materialise in the installation, she felt present: 'it was like the only way I felt I could materialize this voice' (Interviewee, Prue: 2017, 0.02).

My own artwork was an embodiment of my experiences, past, present and the everyday. I take up a variety of subject positions, as I perform the 'masquerade' (Riviere, 1929). Sometimes masking my feelings, I take up uncomfortable positionings, but equally taking on

roles which are enjoyable and fulfilling. The tapestry displays an enchantment, mystery, and chimera, as the silk becomes detached, almost floating into what would have been the frame and the depiction of the figure becomes fluid. So, as well as celebrating the positions that are open to me, it is a celebration of life itself, my mother's life and the life she gave me. I wanted to make the piece a memory of her and included are some of the objects that my mother gave me as a teenager, shells, coal and stones, for luck she said. I vaguely remember the times that I obtained the objects but more vivid was that my mother insisted that I had to take them into the exam rooms as they were 'lucky'. She was superstitious like that; she saw ghosts and had premonitions and her Gran 'read' tealeaves. I feel that I have a connection with my mother whenever I look at the tapestry. It brings into play the feeling that life is more than the linear chronology of the narrative of birth, life and death; it transports me to a place that facilitates happy memories. She was a support to me when I failed my exams or felt under pressure due to my dyslexia. She just said, 'do your best; it will be fine'. It was in the vein of West's (2016) suggestion of being in the space of 'good enough'.

It brought to the fore issues around my educational experiences and those that were discussed previously. I was going to 'order' the objects into a cabinet of curiosity; yet this should then be a reproductive representation of masculine 'enlightened' knowledges of appropriation. To negate this association, I transformed the medium to reference the 'old mistresses'-seamstresses (Parker and Pollock 1981). These objects narrate the past into the moments of the everyday, as the tapestry is displayed in my lounge and, daily, I am immersed in the nostalgia of the piece (Stewart, 1992). Hung in the space of the everyday, it *is* situated amongst the old masters. The irony of the situation is not lost, as it is in the company of the epitome of the canon of high art. Included is a large detail of the body and shoulder of the Angel Gabriel, from Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks* 1491-9; Herbert Draper's *The Lamination of Icarus*, 1898; and *Mariana* by Millais 1851, figures 12, 13, 14. I realised the gendered nature of the display when I was contemplating the positioning of my own artwork in amongst these old white European masters.



Figure 12: Leonardo da Vinci, A large detail of the body and shoulder of the Angel Gabriel from Virgin of the Rocks 1491-9, poster of exhibition at the National Gallery, London



Figure 13: Herbert Draper, 1898, *The Lamination of Icarus*, oil on canvas, 183 x 155.5 cm, Tate Britain

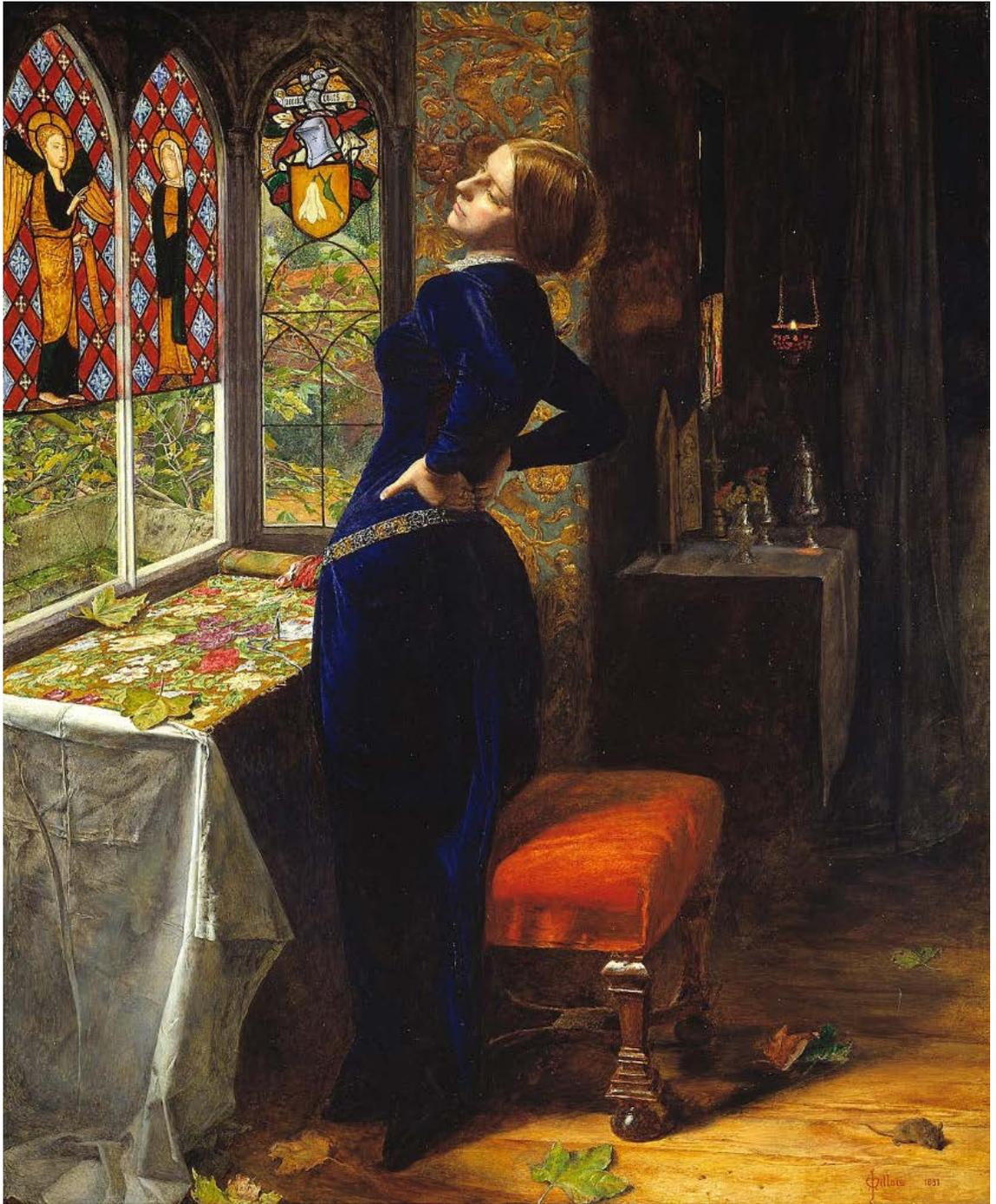


Figure 14: Millais, Mariana, 1851, oil on mahogany, 597 x 495 mm, Tate Britain

I decided to incorporate a visual pun into the tapestry to problematise this master narrative. This was the rationale for the use of laurel leaves; usually the preserve of the 'master's position, a symbol of the highest status, the victor, I subverted this by deliberately stitching the actual leaves into the material. In doing so I was aware that the organic nature of leaves would disintegrate the fabric. I did consider preserving the leaves with either wax or glycerine so that they did not decay the fabric and silks. However, the reaction of the foliage with the silks and the white aida (canvas) subverts the 'perfection' of the genius of the masters' illusionistic depictions of the old master paintings and the concealed brush. Now conscious to this positioning in my home, the space of 'sanctuary' (hooks, 1990: 47), I realised the extent to which the canon of art was so entrenched in the taken-for-granted truths in which I was immersed (Foucault, 1972). Only in the process of this study and consciously thinking about the art in my own spaces of the home, did I realise that I, too, was dividing practices. Foucault (1970/2003) was perceptive; in practice I hung no 'old mistresses' (Parker and Pollock 1981), so deeply embedded are the normative gendered 'order of things' (Foucault, 1970/2003). In a conscious effort to repair this positioning I purchased Diana's *Beyond Time and Space*, (2016) Figure 9. I felt drawn to the earthy organic colours, but, rather, it was the feeling of being drawn to a 'Time and Space' outside the confines of a two-dimensional picture plane. It was a space in which the self could be transported into an-other place.

I understood perfectly well how 'his-story' was all pervasive at the 'expense' of herstory or the story of those that are othered and/ or colonised. From the start of my degree in Humanities the set reading was Gombrich's *The Story of Art* (1950). There is not one woman artist referenced in the whole text. It was written in 1950 and I considered it was in much the same vein as Vasari's *Lives*, written 400 years previously, but even Vasari mentions four female artists. Unsurprisingly, he attributes their talent to it being acquired and learnt, whereas the men's talents were God-given. Knowledge that is gendered and God-given has a long epistemological tradition, traced to the Biblical narrative of The Tree of Knowledge. When I taught Art History A Level at the local Adult Education Centre, in the 21st century no less, women still were excluded. My shock was palpable when I opened the set book, written in 1984, *The World History of Art* (Honor and Fleming, 1984). It did not include one woman artist and the random inclusion of non-western art was bizarre: the book was rarely referenced. Then, just a few years ago, Michael Gove was advocating the return to the white European male artists in the revised curriculum. Warwick Mansell (2013) writing for the Guardian stated that:

In art and design, the draft [curriculum] is criticised for having "substantially weakened content" and for lacking "breadth, depth or cohesion". It has a "regrettably narrow" view of the subject, with a focus only on the history of western art produced by "white European men", "thereby ignoring the realities of the contemporary world".

Fortunately, the proposed policy was not put into practise and the truths that sustain this mastery gendered discourse are deliberately disrupted in my artwork. I do however, nod to the traditions of the canon, and the Classics of Greek mythology, after all I am a 'master' of the arts, specifically art history. I cannot wipe away the his-stories of the discourses in which I was taught and thus there are nuances of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the historicisation of the canon is revealed in the transformations of the women into trees and foliage. As well as references to Myrrha and Daphne, who were metamorphosised into trees, the tapestry hints to the high art of the masters, figure 15.



Figure 15: Piero del Pollaiuolo, *Apollo and Daphne*, probably 1470-80, oil on wood, 29.5 x 20 cm, National Gallery, London

One such example is Botticelli's *Primavera* (1482), figure 16, the likes of which were made to excite the gaze of the male viewer. These images were created to strengthen the order of things in the games of truth (Foucault, 1970/2003). This perpetuates the narrative of the feminine ideal that is Woman, as an object to be displayed (Mulvey, 1975; Wolf 1991). The gaze is upon them in visual culture's milieu of surveillance, to illustrate a self-regulated body (Foucault, (1975/1991). These stereotypical norms of femininity reinforce the gendered positioning of women. Conversely, my tapestry, Prue's installation and many of the others in this study, subvert the gendered norms in their complex and fluid positionings. For example, Mother Nature in my tapestry is a hybrid of human/plant integrating with organic forms. She 'mocks the masters' in a fluidity of subject positionings that highlights, knowledges that move between anti-essentialist and de-Oedipalising narratives. They are stories of subjectivities that are shaped to disrupt a neoliberal individualisation of the body and norms of the canon that try to enforce the grand narrative, a story of practices that exclude.



Figure 16: Botticelli, *Primavera*, 1482, tempera on panel, 202 × 314 cm, Uffizi Gallery, Florence

In this visual association with Nature, the tapestry embodies a way of being that is ethical and in a community of caring. The portrayal of a figure that is multi-layered shows the inter-connectivity of the subject within the many spaces that we find ourselves in day-to-day. We can then imagine those selves existing in and outside of discourses. I am situated in spaces that I can traverse, where alternating shapings of being are made possible. Often art in representing the 'reality' of the artists, shows the intersection of the material and mythological-mystical space of the maker, as the process of making brings the two together. For the very act of making is a process of transformation. Materials and concepts are brought together by the bric(v)oleur to create a different medium; this is other to that which the materials and fabrics were there to initiate the project. It is a bricolage of improvisation; bringing together the concept and creativity with the sourcing of materials (Miles, 1995; Vanner, 2015; Handforth and Taylor, 2016). An example of this process is where I used the bay (laurel) leaves from my garden to attach to the tapestry and the very process of stitched embellishment changes the function of the leaf from live plant to distressed and decayed decoration. This use of mixed media further critiques the canon of high art; it is an interesting use of the organic elements to be juxtaposed with the clean silks and fabrics.

Usually the needle worker would need to have clean hands and then the work would be washed to preserve the fabric to avoid the bacteria distressing the materials. However, I wanted to see the decay of the leaves reacting with the medium; this symbolised the disintegration of the master's authority, his genius that is accorded in a 'high' artwork. In this Feminist-'feminine' artwork, I collapse the boundaries of craft and art as well as the master/pupil positioning, which was disrupted in the making process. I was in my office with images of leaves and some books and internet research on leaf embroidery on my desk. I drew upon the work of Alice Fox, Hilary Waters Fyale, Susanna Bauer and Rachael Mayer to consider the embellishment process. During the week, I was tutoring some students who happened to notice my work and told me how to prepare the leaves and how to fix them at the end of the process. Although this was a process I decided not to complete, in these conversations about our practices it emerges that often practices are not divided. In what was my small space in The University, inclusivity and shared learning was evident.

The LSAs and I embrace a sharing of learning and knowledge production by embracing collective communities of being (Clover, 2007). Thus, the normative binaries of master/pupil, teacher/student, and expert/notice are negated. By decentring these subject positions that are often authoritative figures, that is artist, tutor, lecturer, and by implication master/expert,

'differently academic' ways of learning and development are sought and implemented (Jackson 2004). Inclusive practices are part of *our* everyday but not obvious, and often marginalised in the academy. Previously concealed power/knowledges are revealed, illustrating their production in the home and the workspace. For once buried in the layers of social constructions of the 'good' LSA, poor student narrative, subjugated and hidden knowledges are recognised and valued. This is the focus of the next part of the chapter where the subjugated knowledges of mentor, mother, ethical self and collective community are explored. This is in the present day of new 'beginnings,' due to the 'end' of the LSA role in the current context at The University (Cixous, 1977/1991: 41).

Knowledge

Lifetimes travelled, spun from spider's web,
Descended on earth, to learn and to grow.

Ancient knowledge, shrouded in centuries of mystery
Your words, they speak into my soul, a path unfolds.
I see the Rainbow Bridge.

Daydreamer, life giver, believer in destiny's unknown.

We seed, we sprout, we root, we grow.
We think, we search, we seek, we grow.

We scream, we shout, we cry, we grow.
We laugh, we smile, we hug and grow.

Within the depths of darkness, yet still life grows.
Side tracked, betrayed, down trodden, we grow

We kneel, we pray, surrender ourselves to grow.
Fall away from faith, yet still we grow.

Eternal, omnipresent and transcendent.
(Diana, 2017)

The Spaces of the LSA: Researcher, Knowledge (Re)Producer

In the spaces of the researcher and knowledge (re)producer, we were constantly 'search[ing]' for new and innovative ways in which to support our students and ourselves (Diana, 2017); we, the LSAs vied between reproducing the knowledges of the academy and those that defied and resisted The University's neoliberal agenda (Foucault, 1975/1991). As the subject positions of LSAs were 'ending' those resistances became more overt and frequent (Cixous, 1977/1991: 41). Cixous, (1977/1991: 41) states that: 'In the beginning, there is an end. Don't be afraid: it's your death that is dying. Then: all the beginnings. When you have come to the end, only then can Beginning come to you'. In the spaces of new 'beginnings' our 'death' is to be found in the subject positioning of the LSA (Cixous, 1977/1991: 41). It was an 'end' that the LSAs and I saw coming, as we were gradually othered in spaces that were dividing our practices from those of the 'master', leaving us on the margins. This part of the chapter, then, identifies those spaces and knowledges that are produced within the episteme of neoliberalism, as it collides with the impact of austerity. It extends the shaping of the positions of resistance explored in Chapter Three. Explored are those power/knowledges identified in the spaces of The University and, specifically considered, are those knowledges which are subjugated, hidden, produced, as well as those that are disciplined and reproduced. The spaces are those in The University, mainly

where the LSAs were positioned as a cohort in which we found ourselves, such as the library, the studios and the departmental spaces.

In the two years in which the LSA cohort was waiting for the inevitable, we were slowly being marginalised to the point of invisibility. Being positioned in the Disability Department at The University is one such space that is physically separate from the main student body and academic space. We are situated adjacent to the library, where the power/knowledges of the 'masters' are visibly stored to be 'possessed' by the students (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-160). Ironically, the spaces are a physical reminder of the valued visible knowledges to be found in the academy; a legacy of the 'Enlightened' Eurocentric 'categorised' ordering of things (Foucault, 1970/2003). This is juxtaposed against the hidden valued-less knowledges, which the LSAs are producing in ethical practices of care, community and collaboration.

Eve discusses the complexities of this space, how important the library, books and research are: 'If I'm really honest, ... one of the reasons for staying to work in the university is that I can have good access to the library' (Interviewee, Eve, 2016: 45.35). The space of the library facilitates their position – artist as educator. Therefore, research for these women is an everyday experience that is embodied in much of their artwork and their LSA employment. Many of the interviewees see themselves as artist and researcher and, by implication they often produce a subject position as a philosopher on par with the master. For Eve, her use of this space subverts the norms of research as encouraged by the academy. In every case the students are given a brief to explore. A reading list is included which has the texts for the usual categories of visual cultures pertinent to the topic. The brief is ignored for an unusual journey of discovery in a random unconventional use of books. The students are encouraged to ignore the assignment brief in favour of starting to discover, by chance, information that might be drawn upon in the research stage of a project:

every time you get a new student, your first session, 'actually we are not going to be doing any writing today, we are going into the library and walk round', and show them the wonders, the pleasures of looking down a row and just picking a random book and just opening it up and thinking what will I find here? ... it is to get them enthusiastic about using books and just opening a book. ... which none of our lot are doing, ... what am I going to make? I don't know, what am I interested in? I don't know, the rabbit in the head lights; I just don't know. So go into the library and just decide that you are going to walk up and down every row and every so often take a book out randomly, just for the hell of it. And after, bit by bit you might find, even if you find one idea, you might think I'm going to follow this one (Interviewee, Eve: 2016: 55.00).

In this unusual use of the library, it is a way to explore knowledge visually, as I did as a child, because research for these students is often alien and an activity that causes much anxiety. For

many of the students it is an extremely stressful process, where failure around literacy is brought to the fore. All of the LSAs are aware of this and some have experienced very negative learning experiences themselves. Practises were divided in this space which were intimidating, restricting and reproductive, not dissimilar to Eve's own experience as a student:

I remember reading something in the school books that I thought was a bit racist when I was about 16 and so I went into the local library to look it up, and the librarian nearly boxed my ears. She said that that's not for a schoolgirl in a uniform that's for the over 18s. "Get out, get out now". (Laughing) but I said that it was in my history book. I've only come to look it up. "I know you sort. Get out". Yer, so they were very, it was very puritanical (Interviewee, Eve, 2017: 8.10).

I like to think that, although physically we were positioned close to those reproductive practises, we facilitated learning that was fun, playful, experimental (Formenti and West, 2018:217). In our space we were separated by a long corridor from the 'ordering' of knowledge; it was not walked down unless visiting the department. As one student observed when I was tutoring study skills in a 1:1 setting: 'OMG, we are in the broom cupboard!' Nevertheless, situated on the side, on the margins of the main spaces, opportunities were made available that enabled resistances to the most damaging aspects of neoliberalism in HE. In a space of resistance, subverting the overt elements of the market around recruitment, attainment and 'success', we were able to make the experiences of the everyday meaningful and enjoyable. It promoted an inclusive learning environment for both staff and students.

There was an expectation that we, as LSAs, ensured that the students pass, but we had agency to manage this and facilitate an enjoyable and meaningful learning space in a 'feminine' ethical encounter (West, 2016). In doing so, the LSAs and I were able to negate the practice of self-regulation in the technologies of disciplinary knowledge. Our knowledges as former students of the arts and as mothers were of value, but often overlooked. We were employed from the student body because of our expertise in art and similarly, as mature women, we had transferrable mothering skills. These two subject positions were sought after when funding was ample. In the various institutions in which I worked, I was able to put in place support for all those in need whether they had evidence or not. State funding was not limited, as it is now in these austere times.

Thus, the LSA positioning was made up of many forming layers, the 'surveyed' and obvious top layer was the one that seemed to produce the compliant and conforming object. However, we used our experiences in the everyday to produce 'different', subjugated knowledges and in doing so positioned ourselves as subjects, educators and practitioners of the arts. These subject positions are visualised in the conceptual processes of the artworks, often learning

new techniques as we go, as improvisors and the bricoleur. As well as the pieces displaying an abundance and diversity of methods, techniques and processes, they are a material embodiment of the subjectivities that are being shaped in the discourses in which we were situated. Often the material-visual cultures produced, resist the norms of the discourses discussed in this thesis, the pathologising, medical, deficit model of disability, the good woman/wife/student and instead the 'feminine' bricoleur, the artist-craftsperson, and the ethical collaborator are produced. For example, during my interview with Eve, we decided to sit in her garden, when something fell from a tree. Here, as we were sitting on a seat, the experiences of the everyday became apparent. Many of the LSAs in this study were shaped by the subject positioning of the bricoleur as they 'searched' for knowledges, experiences, inspiration and creativity in found objects. In this serendipitous space I said:

Oh what was that? (Interviewee: 2016: 38.00)

It's a beechnut, an empty shell; it's rather pretty isn't it? Look – it's rather nice. It's another empty vessel, isn't it? I might use that. I'll keep that now, I'll take that (Interviewee: Eve, 2016, 38.25).

so you use found objects? (Interviewer: 2016: 38.30)

yes, I love finding things and making things with a bit of old something, also with clay. ... It's soft, (we take turns holding the beechnut), so if you look at it, it's soft, smooth on the inside, but look at the outside. It's deadly (Interviewee: Eve, 2016, 38.55).

This experience was incidental, bricoleurian; yet in a Straussian consideration of the bricoleur, Eve's use of the everyday in knowledge production is seen as worth-less. For, in the uptake of a Straussian position, it is the 'engineer' that produces knowledge of value, that is creative, progressive. However, in the everyday, the use of the found object is an example of how the 'engineer' can be (re)placed by the 'feminine' bricoleur and in this (re)positioning I would argue that there is creativity, innovation and originality in incidental everyday experiences. It is often these experiences that are overlooked in a neoliberal agenda as having no 'value'. Furthermore, in a 'feminine' bricoleurian production of knowledge, there is an originality and a uniqueness of knowledge production in the application of the collaged process of making. For the enjoyment, the 'love', has been lost, as an arts education has become a market in which the learner must succeed to get a job. If we are not given the time and space to get lost in those everyday moments, then knowledges such that Eve considers are not of value. Thus, in the mythological-mystic space as the 'voleur', Eve, and indeed all the LSAs, are flying above and outside the discourses of patriarchal neoliberalism (Cixous, 1975/1986: 887), as the magpie, robbing and stealing, negating discourses such as the binaried logic of Levi-Strauss (1962).

In our knowledge production we were prolific, the artworks were inexhaustible. For the LSAs were able to utilise the 'reproduced' knowledges in the studios where many arts and crafts were learnt and put to good use. Eve (2016, 31.00) said of a class she taught on book binding:

I love making that [book] and I quite liked teaching them how to do it. ... and I've got something else that I've quite enjoyed, working with people who want to learn something new that have never done it before, and who never had the time, and just seeing people, I love seeing people make things.

At this time, just before the 'destruction' of the department was voiced, I decided to showcase our own production of knowledges. I encouraged the whole department to prepare for an exhibition in The University's designated gallery space⁶². For, on completion of my MSc, I realised that I had initiated many conversations about the women's artwork and I was eager to showcase this in the gallery space that was reserved for exhibitions. I curated the whole exhibition and then a week before the hanging I was told the gallery was no longer available as students were to have priority over the space. This was disappointing, so I asked to reschedule the event and was told it was booked out to students for the rest of the year. Although I was dismayed by this outcome, I accepted it as the students should have priority. However, the next time I went into the gallery the work exhibited was made by tutors of further education. I was angry and frustrated by the production of power/knowledge hierarchies exercised in the academy that clearly positioned the LSAs below that of everyone else in the institution (Foucault, 1980). All the LSAs were fully aware of the circumstances of the decision-making process as I kept them informed at each stage. I felt a certain responsibility for the injustice of the situation as I instigated expectations that The University would visually acknowledge their subject position as artist-creative-practitioner. I felt guilty that I had built up their hopes, only for them to be dashed by those that see no value in our take-up of the position as artist-educator.

By exhibiting in this space, we would have been on par with those exercising the power/knowledge hierarchies that situates the masters at the top. Fortunately, at the time I had a very large office and made the space a small gallery where we all had the opportunity to exhibit (Clover, et al, 2016). This is an example of a disruption, a challenge to the gallery spaces of The University, where an alternative space of resistance was constructed. In this way a small space of belonging is revealed and a different reality to the master is opened up in the

⁶² During the editing and proofreading process, I realised that I had written 'destruction' instead of restructure. On reflection, this seems apt, as the effect of neoliberalism beds down in the landscape of higher education.

landscape of The University. Nevertheless, this is an example of where policy is dividing practice. For now, we neither have a space to exhibit our craft as artists-educators nor as LSAs; we are pushed further into the margins. It was shortly after this that we were told the department was moving, to the space adjacent to the library. We were told our staffroom was needed for the agency tutors when ironically the agency staff were conspicuous by their absence.

Long before the exit, we often would sit in what was once my large office and in the everyday experiences of work we would talk about our day and be immersed in the work on the walls. As mentioned previously, I was drawn to one particular image of Diana's and, when she held her own exhibition in the summer of 2017, nearly all the LSAs attended. When I purchased *Beyond Time and Space*, (2016), figure 10, I was still creating my tapestry and felt drawn to the energy of the piece; it was an inspiration and influence. Diana explained her creative processes in a small verse of poetry that accompanies the painting on her Facebook page:

Beyond time and space, lies infinite wisdom –
a world within worlds.
The mist transcends, silent tornados through portals.
Thoughts and feelings spontaneously combust, all logic and reason dispel.
It is here that you will find me, lost in my craft, capturing creation.
The masterful child.
(Diana, 2016)

The poem illuminates the process of a Cixousian example of the *écriture féminine*. Diana writes her body outside of discourse. The 'logic' of the Enlightened masters is partly negated in the creative process, as she explains how she is 'lost' in her 'craft' of making as an artist, 'capturing creation'. In the verse, the *voleur* is felt; yet the methods and content of the artwork was predicated upon an epistemology of power/knowledges that still is influenced and immersed in the discourses of a historicised Euro-phallogocentric painting narrative. In the interview she said that she researched the abstract expressionists, including the subject and medium of Marc Rothko, Kandinsky and the proto-abstractionist, Turner. However, this positioning is further problematised for in particular she drew on the sublime and the intuitive and emotive nature of Rothko's work. It seems that, just as the sublime was considered the antithesis of the Enlightenment, where both were operating alongside one another, the same may be said of the subject positionings of the 'feminine'-artist-creative and the legacy of the 'logical' 'reasoned' production of the artist-(re)-searcher. Creative experiences of the *écriture féminine* are interjected with the deliberate activities of the researcher, both revealed in the everyday and, often, they are symbiotic, intersecting.

Being a student of art history's canon that privileges Euro-phallogocentrism, the influences were not lost when viewing the images. I felt a connection between Diana's work and that of the Seagram Murals and Rothko's other paintings in the Tate; her work certainly resonated with that of past 'masters'. She explained that during this time she watched Youtube videos on Rothko's work and read about his ethos and beliefs. Diana directed me to the text she read on Rothko. He said of his work:

Maybe you have noticed two characteristics exist in my paintings; either their surfaces are expansive and push outward in all directions, or their surfaces contract and rush inward in all directions. Between these two poles you can find everything I want to say (Rothko, 1953 in Breslin, 1993: 301).

For the viewer, this non-linear experience of space and time is eloquently considered by Diana in her paintings and the narrative she constructs. Accordingly, the boundaries between the self and 'other' merge, as the internal exploration of the self and external production of the subject is negated in a borderless space. Interestingly, in this space of creativity she describes herself as on the margins, in a place of opportunity. She is performing the role of the cultural translator, the communicator of intersubjectivities, 'on the edge', where cautiously balancing on the borders allows for a celebratory space (Interviewee, Diana: 2016: 23.10). Thus, art is the embodiment of the experiences that are of importance to us at the time of creation, what is in the moment as the everyday and/ or a shaping of a subjectivity that has significance.

Making visible these creative spaces and subjectivities in the art that the women revealed to me during the interview process became most apparent while visiting their homes. An example of this creativity in the everyday is an example of knowledge production found in Eve's beechnut accidental, bric(v)oleurian moment that was not planned or deliberately considered. Like Heffernan's visualisation of power/knowledge, both artists reposition knowledge production in the spaces of the Real. In this space, the beechnut symbolises a 'feminine' co-constructed knowledge production, rather than the reproduced discourse of masculine practices embedded in the God-given power/knowledges of the Book, the Bible, where the apple symbolises masculine knowledge as property. This conceptualisation of power and knowledge as a thing to be possessed is an example of how a religious context has sustained the masters' discourse. However, like Heffernan's resistance to the hegemonic visualisation of woman in *Tender Mercenaries* (2006) and the discourse of gendered oppression, Diana's *Tree of Truth* takes the resistances further. Her resilience-vulnerability is embodied in the bold and open way in which she lays bare her creativity. Diana, at the start of the interview stated that: 'they (the artworks) come from an experience and feeling, there is no plan in these paintings ... they just come from a feeling I've had, that I just translate'

(Interviewee: Diana, 2016: 002). In our creative feminine production, it was evident that art is not always positioned in discourse. It is a Cixousian notion where the *écriture féminine* is at play; here the creative space sits outside of culture. Yet once created, the work is situated in a cultural con-text.

For the women their art retains its 'indigenous status' that is its integrity of production, as it remains in the community, displayed in their homes, created as a gift or sold to friends and family, with some commissions (Dewey, 1934:9). With the commissions, still there is integrity in the change of 'home' for the artwork. Diana (Interviewee, 2016, 32.54) states that: 'you need to make sure it's going somewhere safe. I don't necessarily like to think that I am going to sell my work to someone I didn't like or that I feel that he was going to lock it away'. Diana, wrote on her Facebook page at the time that she sold the piece, *Plato's Atlantis*: 'I am delighted to announce that the original oil painting has today been sold and is going to live on a boat! - (how very appropriate 😊)'⁶³. Moving from the space of community and belonging, the displacement of the object to the capitalist systems of high art, Dewey (1934:9) argues that 'the intimate social connection is lost'; the artwork 'is set apart from common experience'. His philosophy, although conceptualised in the first half of the last century, is still a relevant lens through which art as experience may be framed, as the women's art is visibly embodied with 'intimate social connection[s]' (Dewey, 1934:9).

In locating the women LSAs' artwork in the 'spaces of femininity', the home (Pollock, 2003), it seems that the function of display and creative production is a similar positioning to their ancestors, of the bourgeoisie housewife, decorator-craftswoman (Haweis, 1881; Tiersten, 1996). The space of the home is problematised, as the subject of the artist inhabits the home. Figures 17 a-e, are examples of the women's studios and spaces of creativity in the home. The photos illustrate the diversity of the spaces that were demarcated in the home for creative artistic output. Each participant tried to landscape a space for creative knowledge production. Furthermore, the women in this study all place their work in the arena of 'art', not just as a form of decoration. This may not comply with Dewey's definition of that which makes an object 'art'. For good art, in a Deweyan conceptualisation, must be an aesthetic experience (Dewey, 1934/1980: 344). Yet the experiences, being subjective to the creator, make it difficult to judge what is and is not a 'refined and intensified experience'. It depends upon the individual and the audience's reception and then interpretation.

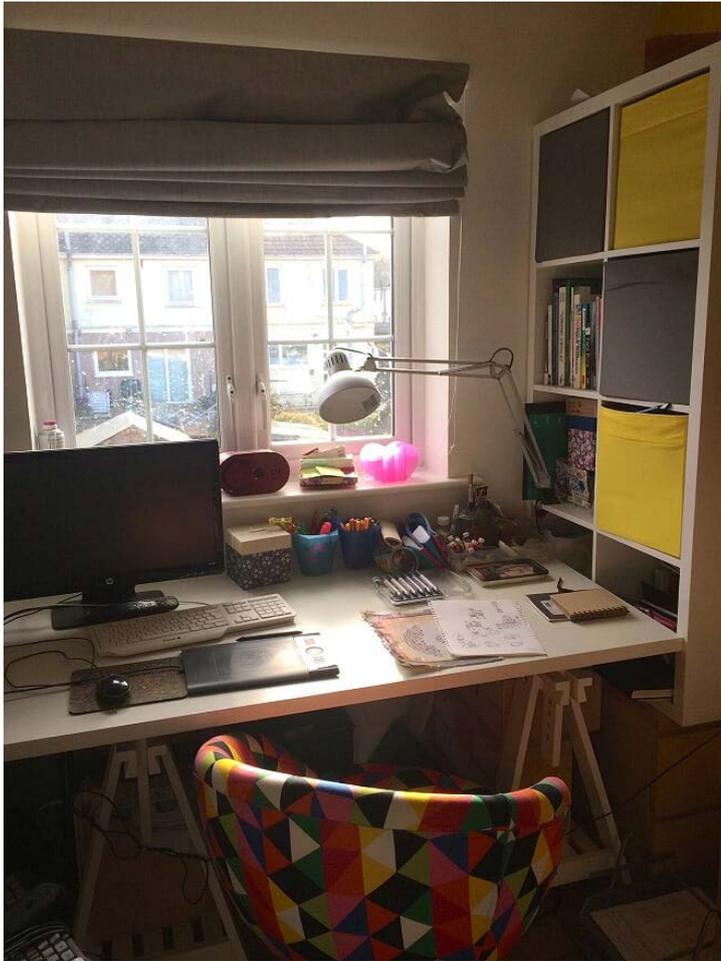
⁶³ *Plato's Atlantis* is fully explored later in the chapter, however, in order to understand the context of the housing of this piece, the painting represents a land-seascape.



Figure 17 a,b,c,d,e: Beverley Hayward, 2016, *Studios and Art Spaces in the Homes of the Participants*, Digital photography



Figures 17b: Beverley Hayward, 2016, *Studios and Art Spaces in the Homes of the Participants*, Digital photography



Figures 17c: Beverley Hayward, 2016, *Studios and Art Spaces in the Homes of the Participants*, Digital photography



Figures 17d: Beverley Hayward, 2016, *Studios and Art Spaces in the Homes of the Participants*, Digital photography



Figures 17e: Beverley Hayward, 2016, Studios and Art Spaces in the Homes of the Participants, Digital photography

Parallels may be drawn between Dewey's approach and that of Levi-Strauss, as certain subject positions and experiences are elevated over 'others' by both theorists. They place certain criteria upon who can be creative, as in Levi-Strauss, and what makes good art for Dewey. Accordingly, the condition that Dewey places on the nature of what constitutes good art is in the terms of it having a 'universal' aesthetic appeal. Although he does attempt to collapse many structural binaries, such as those that negate the differences between the everyday and universal, art that is defined as low popular culture and elitist high art, that links to a formalist abstracted approach rather than a cultural context that is representational. In this way he does not consider the need to think about the artwork in a structuralist approach of binaries. However, with his approach it may be argued that there are limits to the extent to which the everydayness is imbued in his notion of the everyday. So, as well as art's embodiment of Dewey's questionable notion of the 'everyday' experience embedded in a cultural context, he (1934: 75) does consider the importance of the materials used, and in that transformation of the media the object becomes a form of self-expression. He argues that 'the artist does his thinking in the very qualitative media he works in, and the terms lie so close to the object that

he is producing that they merge directly into it' (Dewey 1934: 16).⁶⁴ The manipulation of the media cannot be separated from the development and progression of the concept of the artwork; they are inextricably linked. This is the narrative made apparent in the range of the media presented by the participants. The variety was in itself surprising as it was so diverse, and those artworks that were presented as abstracted pieces contained a cornucopia of knowledge that was revealed in the narration of their objects during the interview process. All the women mixed their media and moved easily between the figurative and abstract, distinctions were not made apparent. The subject positioning of the 'feminine' bricoleur was taken up by the artists.

For example, Eve made an extremely complex blanket that was in the style of 'Bridget Riley', entitled *The Empty Nest Blanket*, figure 18. She took on the bricoleurian subject position in the way in which she set up the space of the artist: the media and materials were selected for their ease of portability: she could knit parts individually, every day, in a diversity of spaces to then attach at a convenient time in the space of the home. I saw proficiency and aptitude in 2D and 3D craft and art but, as well as the art-craft disciplines being deliberate choices for the women, often the media within the discipline was an intuitive choice, bound in the processes and production of their subjectivities that were influenced and mediated by the everyday and what they had learnt as students and as LSAs supporting learning. Eve said that although the decision to make her blanket was to create an indulgent luxury of comfort for her son to take with him to university, the cost of the wool was over £300, she now may keep it for herself to put in her guest room. It was, however, created to fill the empty space of her son on his gap year; she needed a creative 'project' to fill her time. It was an embodiment of the mothering experience and the production of the subjectivities of the 'absent mother' and the creative 'other', the artist (All Interviewees, 2016-7). Furthermore, Mia (2017, 9.40) considered the complexities of knowledge production with reproductive labours: 'I feel that I put it all on hold, you know? Its life. But I hope that I would really like to have that time, cause for me that is luxury, for me to be able to do that [art]. I haven't had the time'.

⁶⁴ A criticism of Dewey is his placement of the artist in a gendered context of the Modern times.



Figure 18: Eve, 2018, *Empty Nest*, wool blanket, private collection

This emphasised fluid subjectivities, not fixed and separate ones. For example, whilst Diana created the *Tree of Truth* (2016), figure 7, she was conceptualising *Darkness of Grace*, (2016), figure 5, the internal therapeutic space of healing overlapped with that of the mythological space of the m/other. I am reminded of Cixous's repositioning of Medusa, as Diana explores this in the metamorphosis of the imagery of the painting, *Darkness of Grace*, (2016):

the more I sat with that idea, err I thought is it an octopus, is it a tree's roots, what is wrapping itself around me ... And the octopus in history, has always been perceived as an evil entity, like a Medusa, like the tentacles are evil and strangling you, ... So the more I researched the octopus, and watched documentaries and read books on them, the more I, I, found out that ... she is nature's most beautiful mother ... so she will protect those [eggs] with her life. Oh God it's a bit emotional now (Interviewee: Diana, 2016: 09.11).

Yes it is emotional (we had tears in our eyes). (Interviewer: 2016: 10.10).

As we considered this repositioning of the myth of Woman through the anthropomorphising of the octopus, the emotion was palpable. Cixous, (1976) explores this maternal pre-Oedipal positioning of the maternal, as a mythological space that repositions women in a celebratory context. For example, she situates Medusa as an energising force that belies the patriarchal positioning women. In a similar vein to Cixous, Diana questioned the social ordering of women in mythology. As Cixous explores alternative readings of Medusa, Diana makes a similar association in the consideration of the monstrous femme, such as the siren and the mermaid

(Interviewee: 2016, Diana: 12.20). In 'breath and speech', the body, both the body of women, and their body of work are celebrated (Cixous, 1976: 880). I was experiencing the mother-daughter relationship as we viewed the painting. I felt the presence of my own relationship with my daughter and that of being a daughter myself, as did Diana. These feelings in the moment were outside of a patriarchal and phallogocentric discourse. We held that emotion – it was transformative and inspired the need to capture it in my work. To further explore the emotion the participant was feeling, I continued:

Can you expand on that emotion? (Interviewer: 2016: 10.10)

To show the octopus in a really beautiful way, as a loving mother, to me is like re-empowering the woman, so in a way it kinda has got a feminism sort of attachment to it, (interviewee: Diana, 2016: 10).

The women explored multiple overlapping subject positionings in their artwork and all self-identified with elements of the mothering position, none more so than with Una's verbalisation. Although she was joking when she considered her role in the home, it was not without her 'truth', being historicised in the oppression and domesticity of these positionings (Oakley, 1976; de Beauvoir, 1949/1991): she said:

Well mum obviously, housekeeper, (laughing) slave, chief bottle washer. No, well I still, even though I'm out to work I still see my main role as being at home really; that's where I would rather be, than at work. I would rather be in my ideal life I would like to be at home, cooking and stuff, I love it, (Interviewee: Una, 2016: 15.00).

I was interested in the complexity of the space of the home, the production of knowledges that overlap in that place. However, I did not wish to explore in this project the physical oppressive domestic positioning, as it was to the maternal, mythological creative space of the Real, which produces transformative s-texts. This is best expressed visually by figures 19a, b and, verbally by Eve:

maybe I quite like vessels cause there is, there's something inside, well also I'm a vessel, (laughing). No well there's something about the form and the shape; I like vessels, be it teapots, cups, pots, bowls, anything that can hold something, cause it can hold something secret, ... there's something about them that is a link to the home and the house by the shape and the form. Err it's something to do with that, inside/ outside space, and negative space, just empty (Interviewee: Eve, 2016: 24.46).



Figure 19: Eve, 2007-18 Vessels, mixed media, private collection

The creativity I found in their homes was overwhelming, as this made explicit the talents and skills used by the women in their everyday lives. The desire for a subject positioning that is creative is evident. It is not always possible as a sole career; yet it is often pursued duality, layered in and with other subject positions. Prue eloquently considers this: 'Yeah, I've always always had this link, this creative link. This is the link between my job, my home, my business, ... he's the builder, he will come up with the structure and I will come up with the layout'. (Interviewee: Prue, 2016: 40.15).

The uniqueness of their cartographies makes for varied land-seascapes, but some commonalities were evident: the spaces that were left empty as children went off to university were filled with the potential to be creative; the mapping of spaces, places and times in diverse textual production; and the ability to 'let go', be 'intuitive', 'playful' and experiential as the bric(v)oleur (Diana, 2017; Eve, 2017 and Nikki, 2017). These creative knowledge productions supported the 'endings' and the formulations of new 'beginnings' (Cixous, 1977/1991: 41). Although the land-seascapes in which the women were situated were important, just as significant were the relationships that were nurtured and fostered in the pursuit and passionate embrace of their art in all its forms. This included the performance of the LSA, as they encouraged the subjectivity of the artist in their students. This then nurtured an alternative community of democratic practice in the academy that was not a 'disciplined' space of being (Foucault, 1975/1991). As well as their students, this community of practice brought together the LSAs in a collective as the artists-practitioners (Clover, 2010; Wenger, 1998). The LSAs are positioned in that liminal land which borders those worst practices in a neoliberal episteme. In this 'borderland' is where the socially constructed norms of the job role are challenged and feminine encounters ensue (Bates and Bowman, 2015; West, 2016; Green, 2012).

Thus, the participants and I found ourselves in this strange land, with power/knowledges, crossing the epistemological borders in order to facilitate a smoother 'passage' (Cixous, 1993). This was in the pursuit of an art/creative inspired space of the *écriture féminine* and career pathways for the supported students that may not always comply with the norms of the systems. The 'masters' in this educational landscape may appear to control the narratives, the knowledges, and in this context the 'good' art that is assessed, graded and displayed. The students' and our artworks are often denigrated, suggested to be worth-less than those guarding their power/knowledges. But in this positioning, we are able to empathise with our students' doubts, knowing the voice that said we 'can't' (Woolf, 1927). This space of

vulnerability is verbalised by the participants as they discuss their creativity. For example, Nikki (2017, 15.50) says, 'I've done a lot of abstract work and I was told mine looked a bit childish and a bit like, and ... err you know, 'cause I wasn't really thinking about what I was doing I was just doing it'. And Eve (2016, 42.00) says:

it's like a visual pun, my emptiness blanket, like empty shelves, it looks like draws' empty sections, just waiting to have it filled up, Beverley I'm mad. (laughing). But it's just sometimes I get an idea, and you think gosh, that's a good idea, but it might not be'.

Nevertheless, we are 'good enough' in our creative production and this is celebrated by us. In this positioning as LSA, we can develop our, and the students' soft skills, managing negative critique, becoming independent, building confidence and self-esteem. Thus, the tools from the LSAs toolbox are varied and flexible, supporting an artistic land-seascapes, to become an artist, to be creative, both for themselves and the students alike. We are enthused about our own and the students' artwork. For the space of unnecessary failure is not one that needs to be repeated neither by us, not by them.

Therefore, in the construction of the subjectivity of becoming the artist the decisions to (re)educate the self is a process that is fluid, often with a tension between resisting and progressing. The body of the woman returner is (dis)placed only to be (re)placed in a new and exciting space (Gilbert, 1986: xviii). In returning to the academy from service industries, as mature students, we reclaimed the spaces in the systems that disciplined our bodies to believe that it was not possible to have a career in a pathway that featured a creative land-seascape. We found ourselves as refugees in a pedagogical political landscape of reproductive learning that located a creative and art focused learning experience on the margins. Cast aside, in exile, we came back to education as mature students in spaces of resistance (Cixous, 1977/1991: 66) to produce the subjectivity of the resilient learner, having failed in the academy as teenagers in the 1970s and 80s. With little choice and limited agency in our learning journeys, we returned again to the academy as support workers, as LSAs: we were resilient. The women were eager to share their own past experiences in the academy with me and this revealed a desire to support the students' becoming artists in a more positive way than their own. With this in mind, the experiences of being LSAs allowed for the facilitation of new knowledges other than that which the 'masters' the 'taste makers' and the controllers of culture deemed fit (Clover, 2017. In doing so this further promoted our own production and development of a continuation of becoming, transforming and transgressing (Hager and Hodkinson 2009).

In the beginning, I desired'
"What is it she wants?"
"To live. Just to live. And to hear myself say the
name."
"Horrors! Cut out her tongue
"What's wrong with her?"
"She can't keep herself from flying!"
"In that case, we have special cages."
Who is the Superuncle who hasn't prevented a
girl from flying, the flight of the thief, who has
not bound her, not bandaged the feet of this
little darling, so that they might be exquisitely
petite, who hasn't mummified her into
prettiness (Cixous, 1977/1991: 8).

The Territories of the Transgressors

As this study explores the multiple and diverse everyday experiences of the LSAs in their workplace and other spaces, it considered the territories of the studio/classrooms, library and home. In particular, those subject positions that are explored in this chapter are the transgressor, resilient learner, the ethical self and a continued exploration of the researcher, knowledge (re)producer and the subject that transitions out of The University. As they perform the role of 'learning' support assistant, various modes of power/knowledges are produced. In employing a Foucauldian consideration of power, which is productive, those knowledges that are revealed make for disciplinary bodies that are 'bound' in self-regulated positionings. Thus, within society the individual's behaviour is modified by others as well as him/herself. However, as well as disciplinary knowledges that produce the subject it makes resistance possible. For during the women's imminent '*Sorties*' they refused to self-govern (Cixous, 1975/1986). As Cixous explains in the quote used to open this section, now the women are freed from their cages, freed from the oppressive practices imposed by a gendered classed 'regime of truth'. The resistances to this discourse are further explored by analysing their 'Tales from their Creative Toolbox', in an application of the *écriture féminine*.

This particular tale, this 'passage' of 'The Territories of the Transgressors', analyses the production and positionings of the transgressive subjects in their resistances to the power/knowledges that privilege the norms of the academy. In the production of 'the object', that is the material cultures and textual making, shaped is the artist-subject. Furthermore, the production of subject positions is made apparent in the interviews that were conducted. Those interviews and the objects that have been produced make evident and visualise certain subversions, destabilizations and resistances to the norms of the academy and the discursive construction of the 'good' LSA.

Thus, the chapter shows the LSA as more than the 'helper', 'carer' and 'mum' discussed in the previous section. They transgress the norms of the discourse in which the LSA role often is positioned, that is, as Dyer considers, a 'committed location' (Dyer, 1996). However, for many women in this study, they were transitioning into the role from student of the academy and then exiting to other spaces, just as the men did in Dyer's research, the difference being that the men had the choice to exit. Within this transition, the transgressor's cartography is landscaped. Not being in the position of a committed (v)-location, in the way that Dyer considers, may partly explain why a third of the participants did not identify as being an LSA. Instead, the onus was on revealing and presenting a diverse and different positioning of the LSA that is highly complex – more so than that which is presented in some of the literature, as 'Pond Life' (Watson et al, 2013) or part of the Mum's Army (Stevens, 2013). Thus, in the women's material cultural production upon which this study draws, their images make visible those shifting hierarchical knowledge norms and positionings that are evident in The University, layered in and between the subjugated, hidden and different knowledges.

For the most part, it may seem that the power/knowledge systems of which education institutions are a part, appear 'neutral', autonomous (Ball, 2013). They often exist to impart reproductive knowledges that are normalised in the everyday routines of the regimes-games that become their, and often our own, 'truths'. In the LSAs' positioning within the academy, there are certainly injustices in their treatment, which in some instances was/is oppressive as discussed previously, with zero-hour contracts, little or no CPD and marginalisation from the academic departments. Weedon (1987) suggests that, '[w]e need to understand why women tolerate social relations ... and the mechanisms whereby women and men adapt particular discursive positions as representative.' With this in mind, the 'visible' LSA, appears to 'tolerate' oppressive technologies of power in the academy that present the subjectivity of the compliant worker (Weedon, 1987); yet looking outside the functionalist and systematising role of the LSA much is revealed. Here the transgressor is made visible, as this chapter visualises a transgressive use of the spaces in the academy, so that it is more than the LSA 'performing' a supportive role with a cohort of students who are labelled as (dis)abled (Butler, 2011).

Therefore, in applying a Foucauldian lens, overlapped with a Cixousian application of the *écriture féminine*, I am able to 'unmask' and make visible the power/knowledges of the women to suggest that they were active and knowledgeable in their self-regulation of the LSA subject positioning and transgressive practices. So, rather than producing a 'docile body' disciplined in the institution in which they are employed, they took the power/knowledges of

being former students at The University and the experiences of an LSA, and translated them into artworks that were embodiments of that power/knowledges (Foucault, 1975/1991). These knowledges were transferred from one space, the classroom, to another, the studio/home and other spaces. For this section, then, many of the spaces outside of the academy and many of the other subjectivities that were produced are not explored here. However, as well as becoming an LSA, the subjectivities that are considered include: the women as students of the academy; the artist, or the 'creative', as many of the LSAs label themselves; and that of the transgressor. These multiple ways of being can create tensions that are considered by the LSAs in this analysis. Mary, for example, in the latter part of this section of the chapter, finds that the disciplinary knowledge required to reproduce a Euro-phallogocentric landscape for a children's book is too constricting and she relinquished the commission.

In part, there is a tension between their negative experiences as students at school, resilient learners in the academy and the LSA role. Although the courses studied were in the creative arts, they were diverse. In this positioning as a former student they are practised in the formal learning experiences that were taught to them, including how to meet deadlines and complete assessments; that is, to perform in the norms and disciplines of the academy. Yet, 'knowing' how to, does not mean that they complicitly complied with the disciplines of the systems when transferring those technologies to their LSA role. Thus, in taking up this LSA role their motivations were bound in their personal experiences and in the failings of an educational system. From those internalised negative experiences a resistant subjectivity is formed to facilitate resistances and acts of transgression.

For example, Mary, not wanting to repeat her reproductive schooling experience, decided to home-school her children. Secondary education for the women was lacking in facilitating an art focused career pathway. All those that self-identified as artists or a member of a creative industry were discouraged in their pursuit of an art related subject specialism or employment; for many art was not even an option at school. Obstacles were put in their way by teachers: Una (2016: 33.15) said 'you couldn't do art, they wouldn't let me do art. I wasn't allowed to'. On leaving school Nikki wanted to go to art college but was dissuaded by her art teacher: 'well, from school I wanted to go to The Slade, but my art teacher told me I wasn't confident enough, so I didn't do it. I went and did book-keeping instead' (2017: 36.11). Diana (2014: 11.90) said 'I wanted to go to art college, but I was talked out of it by my mum and dad'. Her parents used the discourse of the market economy and competition; she said: 'It wasn't a real

profession; it wasn't a real job; it was a hobby. I wasn't good enough, do you know – like you are good, but not that good. It is very competitive, so everything was talking you out of it really'. The women's own experiences, where an art career was discouraged, have facilitated the impetus for the LSA employment choice, as it was positioned in a landscape of 'creativity'. Here the LSA/educator attempts to exercise power/knowledges to facilitate the subject positioning of the artist, that which was denied them in their own learning experiences. Even in an apparently creative space, often the students of the LSAs are reproducing a neoliberalist discourse of continued reproductive knowledges that are an endless succession of assessment, grading and competition: as Diana expounds, 'their creativity is knocked out of them' as they are encouraged to internally progress on to courses that are not entirely appropriate, or guided to projects that are not of the students' choosing, but necessary to produce 'success'.

The University is competing in a shrinking market with reduced student numbers, so 'creative' ways were devised to capture and retain students. Juxtaposed against this, yet still within the same system, the LSAs are able to produce an ethical subjectivity by resisting certain aspects of the market economy and competition, developing a personal framework of ethics grounded in the care of the self and others. Diana feels that she is giving back a creative part of herself, as her art and job are a landscape in which ethical concerns for the students' well-being, and by implication her own, are situated. Therefore, she is able to empathise with the students and the difficulties they might face in becoming an artist; Diana explains,

I should have gone to art college. She, I think, that's why I help the kids now. You know that's the link. It's nothing to do with the qualification, them getting the qualification. It's them acknowledging that there is a creative side inside them that will help them in their life. Like art is an expression, so that if you can express yourself through your craft you can truly be who you are. And if you are truly who you are then that's your gift to the world. That's your blessing isn't it? So even if that translates into one of the greatest artists, or architect, or the greatest painter of all time ... You know sometimes I wonder if I'm a bit of a philosopher, so I am philosophising about what is life where do we come from, what are we doing here, you know? (Interviewee, Diana: 2016: 40.50).

Accordingly, this awareness, this questioning of the knowledges about how the academy is constructed, is articulated by most of the women. They argue that the system in place is constraining the growth of the students; they are not encouraged to seek anything other than internal progression for their students, that is, a degree at The University ensuring retention. The market has, in this neoliberal episteme, sold the product so well it is to the detriment of welfarism and The University's 'civic responsibility' (West, 2012). Many of the women articulate this resistance to The University's unwritten policy and some women have direct experience of a system driven by targets and budget cuts as a student. Prue and Diana were former students of the institution; they resisted the oppressive power of the 'masters' that

wanted to close their course, while they were part-way through. They found a voice with which to speak and be heard. Prue explained that in order to close the course she and the rest of the students had to be moved to another discipline; this was to ensure The University retained their funding, but they refused. Accordingly, to secure their tuition fees for the course, the management were required to keep it functioning, and The University employed sessional lectures to cover the course leader's classes. Prue explained that, with the funding limited, it caused the course leader to resign. Practices were divided as the space was required for another discipline. The situation was challenging; she explains:

I felt I'd gone from this really nurtured, intelligent, err, environment with Tom, and they know you and they know your work, and they really understand you, and how you tick, to a bloke who just used to, just, paint portraits, who came in, was not the creator of the course, didn't love it, wasn't his baby, and was just basically there for the money and it wasn't, and well it was just really difficult (Interviewee, Prue, 2010: 10.00).

From their own experiences and 'knowing' the technologies of the system, that is Foucault's games of truth, the women often and deliberately advised their students against the norms of a system built on a capitalist generating model (Foucault, 1988b). When this happened to Prue's students, she advised them to sign a petition, write a letter and involve the student union:

I had a real affinity with these students, 'cause I've felt their pain, cause I'm thinking you know what I've paid all this money (laughing). In fact, I'd paid half of what they are paying. Mine was three theirs is nine. So that's why I'm saying don't stand for it. And they'd all do it and sign it. And I think they managed to get a bloke, one day a week. ... So it did work. So probably if they knew, if my boss knew that I would have got the sack (Prue, Interviewee: 2017: 44.00).

On participating in the post-structuralist framework of the contextual studies lecture series they realised that there is a distinct discrepancy between what they were learning in their classroom as students and the neoliberal structure of the way the system of the academy was/is operating. In the production of the subject position of the student, they were given the power/knowledges to question the taken-for-granted truths of an apparent monolithic hierarchical power structure. This was where some of the women used the widening participation programme to their advantage, to progress on to a degree. In this space, it was a means of liberation.

The women are not accepting of the hierarchies of power/knowledges in which they are situated. With new 'truths' taught in The University by the lecturers, they questioned their positions in 'the games of truth'. They saw the abuses of reproducing the 'mastery' discourses, the practices of their games and the dire consequences of the implementation of policy; they knew their role in those games in The University (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-146). Their artworks embody the challenges to those accepted realities. For example, Diana looks to make visible

the inequalities of power/knowledge relationships and spaces; Mary questions issues within a decolonial context imbued within her own everyday experiences of exclusion; and Prue's art complicates society's *Ways of Seeing* (1973) in the expected norms of the contemporary feminine ideals and the fragmented self. It is apparent that the women's art-craftwork embodies experiences that are in the forefront of our minds. Not only of importance is that which is in the moment, but also the wider context of the pieces. Clare O'Farrell in her book on Michel Foucault, makes this point when she says that, 'it is not a matter of analysing the motivations, creativity and discoveries of an individual who is the originator of that work, but in looking at what structures and patterns that work shares, and also does not share, with others' (2005: 111). Diana, in her interview, articulates perfectly in her verbalisation and her visualisation of how she sees the social structures and patterns of power/knowledges and, like Foucault (1971/2006), she too expounds upon the issues around social systems, injustices, oppression and freedoms. She explains that when she painted figure 4; it is:

the same as Plato's Atlantis [where there] is three stripes of earth getting smaller and so it's a bit like the pyramid of power, but it's in a circle and then the expanse of space that stretches out, outside of the circle; the last bit of land is where all the people gathered and that is where everybody gathered hundreds, thousands of people gathered from all around the hierarchy, but what happened in Plato's Atlantis is that overnight this huge tidal wave this tsunami just washed away, over, just took it all out. You know me, I'm very much a conspiracy theorist, with the illuminati and the pyramids of power ... It was basically, I think, Plato saying that you know all civilizations have destroyed themselves through too much power (Interviewee: Diana, 2016: 17.32).

Yet, within this discourse of Eurocentric power/knowledge hierarchies that Diana eloquently historicises to the time of Plato, she interjects the production of her artwork with the *écriture* feminine. The context of her art is within this discourse, but the conceptualisation of the creative process is immersed in a space outside of discourse, in nature and the mythical: 'and then I felt, well it started off as just a swirl of leaves and then it started as an experience and the, the swirl of leaves took me into this conversation that I felt that it wasn't of me it was something else' (Interviewee: Diana, 2016: 17.32). She continues:

I think Plato was talking about this Atlantis, it is almost like this mythical place, it could have been so beautiful, but it was built on power, but the power was at the centre and went out. You could say that that's life itself, but that's a misuse of the power and it was overridden; the law of nature took it out, so that's like his message to society. So I think that's in my artwork; it's the job of the artist, they used to say that the job of the artist was to stand on the edge of two worlds and communicate what he sees. I think that that is just a fantastic way cause when I paint I go into a zone and the zone always takes me back to nature, it takes me back to the space to be in a different world (Interviewee: Diana, 2016: 17.32).

Again, in the last sentence, Diana explores the creative space of myth-mystical, where an alternative space is considered. It is very much in the way that Heffernan visualises the stepping away from discourse, the Tower of Babel, to harness the force of nature, figure 1. In

the interview Diana explains that the painting process is often long, complex and challenging, developed through much immersion in the medium and application of the paint that may be intuitive and at the same time deliberate. Knowledge was purposefully gained through continued and diverse research methodologies via multi-media and The University library, as well as the application of the *écriture féminine*. She explored an understanding of power and knowledges and the ways in which society is constructed through continuous informal learning. She eloquently explained how, through everyday experiences and extensive research through books, but mostly online documentaries and demonstrations, she produced *Plato's Atlantis* (2016).

She connects this to Plato's description of Atlantis, figure 4. Diana explains that Plato's Atlantis is an allegory of social control where the elite must maintain the status quo in order for society to thrive. It is visualised by Plato as having a central point of power and the class system extends from that circular point of significance; this is the form of power that Foucault critiques and Diana, too, in her representation. In the painting there are no demarcations, as she merges the boundaries; on viewing the image in situ there are no delineations of hierarchical power/knowledges. On reflection, it appears three dimensional, multidimensional, other-worldly, a vortex into another space of myth. The paint shimmers, dazzles, transports the viewer to different spaces, to different land-seascapes of the mind; it is a pulsating 'passage' (Cixous, 1993a: 3), a 'portal' (Interviewee: Diana, 2016: 2.10). It is a type of Janus space, where an evocation of allegories concerning time is made apparent. Transitions and new 'beginnings' are envisioned (Cixous, 1977/1991: 41), in this space, as the viewer is meditative upon the presentlessness of the Janus portal. Interestingly, Janus is often associated with the circle, the symbol of eternity, a theme in Diana's work (Hall, 1992: 167). This focus of space and time is prevalent in much of Diana's oeuvre and in particular this series of work. From the simple everyday experience of walking, watching leaves swirling and the everyday learning from research into the subject and the context, the form was explored in the medium of an abstracted representation; the leaves moved into the Eye of the Sahara and from this a type of organic Turner-esque depiction was created. Aligned with nature, discourse was suspended as she creates the sext-text, the *écriture féminine*. Memories are transported from the past to present, not necessarily in chronological order, as the artist can go back to the past; they can mix it up, rob and steal as the voleur.

For, in Diana's depiction of power, it is not centralised and possessed, but local, mobile, changeable, and thereby exercised by those individuals that take up certain subject positions.

It is a pedagogic relation of democratic positioning that looks to equalise the relationship between LSA and student, a type of 'feminine' encounter. This experience was discussed by most of the participants, who were students in The University. Their relationships with their tutors were supportive and open: Prue discusses her experiences and the interactions with her tutors when she was a student herself:

Robert. He did all the lectures; he was amazing. It was, so I would go into my tutorial with Tom and Robert, and you know if you wanted to do a project, and you thought this was a bit dry, and you thought, you know I can't, literally you would go in a room with them two and within fifteen minutes you would come out brimming with, I've just got to go and research this person and that person. And I'd feel so much better and I'm loving this project (Interviewee, Prue, 2017: 5.13).

Similarly, Mary too had a positive experience, while completing her course:

they said come and do [a course] there will be lots of drawing and not too much animations (laughs). I'd never switched a Mac on. But the course was great, I learnt loads, absolutely loads, I had a great time, it was a great course. Totally changed, the theory totally changed my outlook on life (Interviewee, Mary, 2016: 3.30).

Thus, in taking up and producing the subject positions of the student and artist, they had positioned themselves in the landscape of the LSA. Here they are an energising creative force to influence others: the interplay of power/knowledges is evident in that many of the women encouraged each other to apply for the position towards the end of completing their degree. The LSA role fostered agency to further their artistic pathway and in this way the subjectivities of artist and LSA were merging, as the women were continuously engaged in multiple forms of 'learning'-support, that is artist as educator (Clover, 2010). Thus, subjugated power/knowledges are land-seascaped, as the 'others' perform the role day by day in a collective community of care, love and ethical 'feminine' encounters (Cixous, 1975/1986: 63-79).

Accordingly, it was the space of the studio/artroom from which they were employed, and not the academic teacher training classroom at The University. The art specialism was the priority, the knowledge of value, not the essential qualifications for an LSA. Yet, the advantages of the widening participation agenda for some of the women that overlooked these competency standards has been a contentious issue and a cause of much anxiety. Martha was from an ethnic minority that made for an atypical schooling situation; when she was positioned in a reproductive educational setting, she found aspects of this system challenging. One example of this was in her experiences of the reproductive acquisition of certain knowledges. Martha explains, in a whisper, that she was required to have essential qualifications to be an LSA and to be accepted on the Postgraduate Certificate (PGC) course that she is studying for at the time of this interview: 'I didn't get [that qualification] and I still haven't got [it], and apparently I'm

not supposed to do the teaching and the job, so I'm pretending. When they asked for it, I said that I don't have the certificates for it any more (Martha, 2017: 1725).

This was all said in a whisper: the importance of language and the use of voice in terms of who is listening and who is speaking was made explicit in this interview with Martha. When I transcribed the interview, I thought the recording facility was faulty because in places Martha's voice was a whisper and I found it difficult to hear what she was saying. After listening to the recording a few times, I realised that she was whispering when she discussed acts of resistance and transgression. This was most evident when: stepping into the space of the trainee teacher without the required qualification; she refused to continue with practises that were unethical; and when she identified as being an artist. I asked her with what roles she identified. She replied:

well I err am a mum I suppose, (very long pause) an LSA (sounded out the syllables), a freelance illustrator, that's an artist (whispering). I was having that conversation recently, but I never think of myself as an artist. I was talking to Nikki about that the other day' (Interviewee: Martha, 2016: 25:21).

In Martha's pretence, she is transgressing the norms of the academy's requirements, where it seems that in performing the job role for many years and completing the first year of the PGC, the entry qualification was superfluous. It is an example of where certain knowledge hierarchies have value in the academy, marginalising the women from the 'masters', for still it is an ontology embedded in cultural capitals that align education with the 'truths' of empirical sciences (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-146).

I considered the challenges involved in this type of knowledge production. At secondary school as discussed previously, in my maths lessons, I was oppressed. Yet, it was simultaneously an invisible space of liberation in which I believed in my own agency. I was so angry every time I stepped into that classroom. Motivated to pass the maths qualification, which I did, I remember I told my sister that I would pass that exam if it was last thing I did, many profanities were voiced. It contextualised a future resistance to the reproductive nature of education. I was not following the institutional fabrications of past discourses; I was not repeating the deceptions told to me to perpetuate a neoliberal agenda. I was told that: 'you will need to use algebra/ trigonometry etc in your everyday life, when you leave school'. I was aware that this, for the most part, is not the case, but the funding for the BTEC courses at The University are bound in the compulsory attendance of maths and English lessons. The LSAs and I have resisted this discursive discourse of the good, compliant LSA; they are not lying to the students. Instead, they have told them that it would be easier to secure employment if they

had GCSE maths and English, but much of the maths syllabus is obsolete, specifically in the creative industries, except for architecture, animation, some sculptural processes and a few other areas. For some students and staff, having sat the exams many times, it is demoralising and soul destroying to be in a continuous and prolonged position of assessment and failure.

Diana, Martha and others realise that these elements of reproducing knowledge that historicise educational norms can be transgressed. So like me, Martha is not discouraged, she is resilient and she pursued the PGC course even though she labels herself a 'pretender': she is pretending to have the reproductive knowledges required to enter the door of the academy and therefore she is not accepting of an oppressive situation. In taking up the subject position once again as students, both Diana and Martha realise the implications of their employment situation and take action to mitigate their exit. However their 'value' to the academy was articulated by a colleague enrolled on the course, who severely undermined their position: Martha describes her situated discourse as a site of subversion to those that have access and those that are restricted in the spaces:

well there is no jobs. I knew that and I would have to go, and I was thinking about what I should do, and then I saw it advertised, and thought I could do that course, and so I applied for that, and so did Diana as well, and she actually went and enquired about that and how we would get on it. But they didn't want any more LSAs and apparently I was the last one; there are only two. But just after I started they were really anti LSAs and they weren't going to take any more, don't tell any more about it. So Diana missed the deadline. Well, the first thing someone said to me was when I went to the class on the first day. I sat next to a woman who was head of the library, and she said to me that: 'oh I'm surprised you're there doing it, as I thought that all you LSAs would be gone at the end of the year. I said well that is the reason I am on it, as I want to do something. Anyway I thought that I might get it and then go back into ... education and do something with it like that. I'm not really sure at the moment (Martha: 2017: 20.06).

The implication is that the financial outlay of enrolling the LSAs on the course is put above the ethical concerns of the staff. For staff members the course is funded by The University, but instead of using that to facilitate an exit process for the women, to encourage a successful and easy transition, they are derided and excluded. She considers that opportunity should be open to all, not just the privileged few. In her preparation to exit, and begin a new journey, this qualification has afforded her the choice to become other than an LSA. However, aware that entry was restricted with no more LSAs allowed onto the course after her, it was a closed space. Although she did transgress the rules of entry requirements, she became a 'pretender', an imposter. To further marginalise the othered body from the academy as neoliberalism takes hold in perpetuating the 'Same', she was told that in her new positioning of a redundant worker in a year's time, the management were withholding registration as they now wanted her to pay the course fees.

From this example, it is apparent that '[r]elations of power are not in themselves forms of repression'; it is the societies and those within the systems and institutions that create complex power relations in certain social and cultural contexts. The environments 'are created to freeze the relations of power, hold those relations in a state of asymmetry, so that a certain number of persons get an advantage, socially, economically, politically, institutionally, etc.' (Foucault 1988: 1). This was evident in my own situation, when applying for funding for this project. My application was rejected as the manager said it had no significance to my job role. Yet, ironically, the neoliberal milieu, with an expanding market and widespread competition, has resulted in a huge drop in student numbers at The University. Accordingly, in the latter part of this project I have 'exploited' this situation to write up the thesis in 'work' time, as I have no students to support. Thus, the collective spaces of the LSA were, for the most part found outside this formal landscape as we supported each other. For example, I would support Martha by reading through her assignments. This I did with another student-tutor on the course; we would discuss them and share our knowledges. This research project provided the space of increased intersections, we became female bodies moving through time and space to facilitate a supportive connectivity and collective community (Clover, 2010). In the words of Prue, we were 'a little family of people' (Prue, 2017: 12.10).

Nevertheless, the effects of neoliberalism have led to the tightening of the purse strings, the consequence of which is to penalise those not on permanent contracts. No support was put in place for their imminent exit although the women still had one year left to work from the point of enrolment on their course. Yet Diana and Martha were not accepting of their situation: they, and most of the other women in the study, were exercising their power/knowledges to make effective preparations for their *Sorties* (Cixous, 1975/1986). They were aware that the theories in their lecture programmes, now reinforced on the PGC, that advocate inclusion, equality, democracy and heterogeneity, do not meet the practises of The University. Now, influenced by the post-structuralist theoretical discourse that was presented to them on their courses, it suggested that there are possibilities embedded in diversity, pluralism and counter-cultures. In this way the 'obvious' 'immobile' (Foucault 1988:1) discourse that privileges the 'master' is open to being questioned, challenged and resisted. Foucault explains that,

one of the meanings of human existence—the source of human freedom—is never to accept anything as definitive, untouchable, obvious, or immobile. No aspect of reality should be allowed to become a definitive and inhuman law for us. We have to rise up against all forms of power—but not just power in the narrow sense of the word, referring to the power of a government or of one social group over another: these are only a few particular instances of power. Power is anything that tends to render immobile and untouchable those things that are offered to us as real, as true, as good (Foucault 1988: 1).

At the micro level within the system of the institution, the LSAs were exercising their 'human freedom' and facilitating a degree of choice for themselves and their students (Foucault 1988: 1). Their positionings were different, 'other' from that encouraged by The University. They were using the space to transition and, whilst in the space of The University, to acquire a qualification in a creative industry practice and work as an LSA. In this context the LSAs positionings are formed as fractured and multiple subjectivities that are overlapping, as in the multiple layered masks that Prue created, figure 11. The representations of the artworks are both figurative and abstracted; Diana's abstracted painting, figure 20, was created specifically for this study: I asked for a depiction of the self in the space of The University. Diana was the only participant who created an object for the interview that she had made especially for this purpose. The medium of watercolour employed in the painting bleeds into and through the outlined boundaries of the split and disjointed shards of wood and other organic, flying and floating, elements. The depiction of merging borders, that initially appear defined, permeate into one another. This appears to embody and enhance the incomplete limitlessness of subjectivities that are multiple in the everyday. The overlapping and intersecting fragments are representational of the self that forms in the spaces of The University. Those spaces and interactions facilitate change and accordingly, the subject positionings that are produced appear to be floating fluctuating, spinning off in and out of the system. They are not fixed in discourses, but flying above (Cixous, 1975/1986: 88).



Figure 20: Diana, 2016. *The Self in the Space of the University: Molecular Structures: we grow, pen and ink with acrylics*, 29 x 21 cm, private collection

For example, Diana, excluded from the formal PGC learning programme is not ‘frozen’ in the rejection, she is resilient. She uses this opportunity to set up her own art course, ‘Drink and Draw’. Informal and in the space of the local, a local pub, it is a social space of a creative community. Therefore, the women’s positionings are not stagnant, although there are elements of self-regulation, visible in their performance as the LSA. They may appear to be producing the subject/object norms of the self-regulated LSA, bound in the discourse of the ‘good’ woman, but the stratified layering of the discourses are moving, as the tectonic plates of the landscape shift to reveal gaps of resistance. This need to forge and keep the disciplined position of the LSAs in the ‘selfsame’ landscape was evidenced by the response of Martha’s colleagues on the PGC course (Cixous, 1975/1986: 78-7). Again it is an example of where patriarchy intersects with neoliberalism to reproduce the same-mastery discourse that

marginalises the women (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-146). It is reinforced by the reactions of the tutors, once they were made aware of Diana's 'transgression' into their space in her newly produced subject position of the 'teacher'. In response to Diana's review of her Drink and Draw evening in the pub, as she excitedly discussed her event the next day, she is curtly 'punished' by their response to her successful evening in a sarcastic retort: 'Oh, so what, you're teaching now?' The need to situate the LSA in the subordinate position is made clear by the 'masters' in the system and is presented in the discourses. Although the discourses are bound in the gendered 'enlightened' master, there is a celebratory visualisation in the 's-texts' explored in this study, where the positive empirical knowledges are negated in an emotive, intuitive creative use of the *écriture féminine*. Diana explores this in her poem, as she presents as the artist, as a creative, energising, motivating force: 'yet still we grow. Eternal, omnipresent and transcendent' (Diana, 2017). The pupil, 'The masterful child' has transcended the master in a positivity that celebrates her emancipation (Diana, 2016); she is liberated in the gaps that move and shift in the everyday opportunities of community learning. In this visible production of the LSA as the transgressor, it subverts a subject disciplined in the ways of the academy. In making visible their 'performance' of resistance, the LSAs are situated in a space of the creative-artist and, here, much is made possible (Butler, 1999).

Foucault (1980: 78-89) suggests it is to the local that the researcher should look. By dismissing our thinking in a totality, we are in a position to exploit those local, 'naïve knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy ... unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges'. Accordingly, it is only when criticism is not reliant upon the approval of 'the established regimes of thought' can it work (Foucault, 1980: 78-89). Thus, being embroiled in those local, subjugated knowledges that are disguised, cloaked in the layered discourses, the researcher can expose these knowledges and it is here that the transgressor is revealed. It is in that space in which local knowledges are laid bare that the women are seen to be 'free' to resist, perform the role of the transgressor and be liberated. For power does not radiate from the centred position, but instead it is unstable, moving and fluid, between the LSAs: their students; the tutors; their colleagues and the management. Foucault considers this, so that power is not to be viewed in a top-down mode, but situated everywhere. (Foucault, 1978, 122). For example, Mary brings her own 'local' to the context of her art, as a critical comment on her past experiences. She questions the reproductive power/knowledges of the discourses in which she is positioned. She makes clear that her degree programme allowed her to challenge taken-for-granted truths:

So up til then, when I did the course, I hadn't really thought about it. I hadn't thought about it 'cause it's always been that way. So I started to question everything, why is this like this? Why are they allowed to do this? Why are people so much taking it for granted, 'cause we are all brought up the same? (Mary, 2017: 622).

The metanarratives that allowed her to make sense of her world fell apart in the power/knowledge, the theories, presented to her on her course. This jarring of her taken for granted truths occurred as new power/knowledges are experienced. The production of the subject position of the mature student was a way in which to question her positionings, both past and present and in doing so a source of liberation. She challenges her own truths of being, the taken-for-granted 'truths' to then accord a different reality, a different way of thinking, in effect facilitating a space to transform. She continues:

the course was great, I learnt loads, absolutely loads, I had a great time, it was a great course. Totally changed, the theory totally changed, my outlook on life. ... it was all the feminist theory and the contextual, looking at how we are placed in the home and in society, where they (women) are being pushed this way and that way. I just found it really fascinating considering my background. There's the Showman's Guild of Great Britain, is the only Guild in that still does not allow women in, to vote; they don't allow women as members, only as associate members (Interviewee: Mary 2017: 5.00-5.11).

As a member of the travelling community, in a society that has yet to be accepting and tolerant of 'others', she is marginalised; and doubly so, as she identifies that being part of that community reinforces the norms of the binary gendered stereotypes. Although in this positioning as a member of an excluded community, and as a woman therein, this has promoted Mary's desire for a society that is tolerant of all sections of society. She expands upon this need for social justice in her ability to put her moral and ethical considerations over financial gain. She realised that her subordinate positioning in her community and marriage was a space from which resistance was possible. Rather than reneging on her ethics in order to seek creative recognition and financial gain, she shows an inclusive representation of society. She would not compromise on her visualisation of a multicultural depiction in the children's book she was commissioned to illustrate. Being in a landscape of marginalisation and diaspora, she was enthusiastic and excited about taking on this commission. She flouts convention by transgressing the norms of the dominant ideologies; she crosses the boundaries. Figure 21a depicts a 'quirky', funky multicultural characterisation for an illustrated portrayal of a young child; however, as the commission progressed it became apparent that there was a huge disparity in the expectations of the client and that of Mary (Interviewee: Mary, 2017: 9.31).



Figure 21a, b, c: Mary, (2015). Multicultural illustrated character for children's book, sketch 1. Amended multicultural illustrated character for children's book, sketch 2, final sketch 3.

The power/knowledges at play were complex in this situation both in a micro and macro context, as the commission was for a children's book to be used in schools to teach philosophy, or, as Mary surmised, it was more likely to be for the teaching of RE. Realising the wider implications of the commission, that is the 'power' of the visual representation and discourse presented in a book for children, she transgresses this discourse to decolonialise the pedagogical narrative. For it is a narrative that perpetuates a Eurocentric, imperialistic reproduction of power/knowledges that positions some as marginalised and oppressed. She does this by confronting and challenging her employer, the supplier of literary sources that centres a colonial reproduction of knowledge. Mary sees this in the same way as De Lissovoy, (2010: 284); it is '[t]his systematic blindness to the actual violence of conquest, and to the fact

of philosophy's historical complicity in the projects of material, epistemological, and spiritual subjugation'. Mary attempts to disrupt the dominant discourses to visualise that the marginalised can be seen in books as examples to emulate. She has the integrity to not only resist this, the dominant discourse, as othered in this relationship but also she defies the hegemonic norms to employ decolonial theory and the 'ethics of the global' (De Lissovoy, 2010: 284). She discusses how the characters were to be visualised. She wanted them to be able to produce unlimited multiple subjectivities formed by exploring a diversity of landscapes, metaphorically walking in the shoes of others. She explains:

So it is about two children who go into a magic library and question all different people, really, about different things; and they get whisked off into different places to see what they, well, you can do a lot with it, really, but actually it, just, just, so err, sort of rigid about what would they would learn about RE, in their schools. They would wear these sort of hats and go and do this and this. But it was just so prescriptive; it was just horrible. But it could have been really good. And I really liked it when they told me about it, it really sold itself to me, but actually they didn't want what I thought they wanted at all, so err yeah they haven't hassled me about doing any more; it's not what I wanted (Interviewee: Mary, 2017: 11.49).

Here Mary refuses to take up the subject position of the master, and so she subverts the repressive 'power relation that has been institutionalized, frozen, immobilized, to the profit of some and to the detriment of others' (Foucault 1988: 1). She pictures the main 'female' protagonist as a spritely, almost a fantasy, depiction that is not positioned in a racial, or even gendered stereotype figure 21a; s/he is reminiscent of Shakespeare's Ariel, figure 22. Like contemporary representations, Mary's character is complicated and problematicised in a non-gendered, non-racial presentation. Here the socially constructed gendered identity, that codes the feminine norms, are subverted, as Mary plays with social codings through dress, gestures, hair and colour rendering. This depiction embodies the experiences of a liberated body, open to 'other' truths and positioned as a 'text' that may be read in plurality, multiplicity and playfulness. Her art embodies difference-othering, a selfless, altruistic, ethical production of a subjectivity that is embedded in an ethos of a democratic sharing of the space. In her creation of such a book, the reading of the text makes for an example where the *écriture* feminine is explored. This is not only in the creative process where she writes-illustrates her body, but she is facilitating a 'feminine' encounter, should her book be read by others, children and their parents (Cixous, 1975/1986: 63-79).



Figure 22: Illustration by Jeremy Floyd for the 2016, Notre Dame Shakespeare, Festival's Professional Company, production of "The Tempest."

In this space of 'educating' children, it is an example of how the systems function, where 'capillaries' of power transverse the landscape and interact with the everyday (Foucault, 1980). In telling the stories of the local, hidden, subjugated knowledges it becomes apparent that power/knowledge is diffused in this intersectional, multifaceted way, and forms of resistance to dominant discourses are made visible in our everyday lives. Foucault (1982a; 778) states that, 'While the human subject is placed in relations of productions and of signification, he is equally placed in power relations that are very complex'. Thus, the space of The University is a location where the women are simultaneously self-regulating while producing a subjectivity that is able to heal the self and support others. It becomes a place to heal from trauma, where communities of practice facilitate change (Clover, 2007). The women interacted with colleagues in their immediate department; used the resources to research and make artworks; considered other opportunities; prepared for change; and made the ultimate transgression by exiting from The University. In their *Sorties*, they transformed into a subjectivity that transitions to new workspaces, transported to a space of 'reinvention': the territory is transgressed (Cixous, 1975/1986). In our transgressions we visualised that to become the artist-creative, spaces of resistance and resilience were sought. In these challenging times where the territory of neoliberalism, austerity and Brexit have come together, we have landscaped our own terrain, in the curation of our exhibition in a location near The University in 2020. To return to Cixous, whose voice was used to open this thesis, we are no longer accepting of the 'dark', for this study has shown that 'women's imaginary is inexhaustible' (Cixous, 1976: 876).

The Meaning-maker: the creator

Leaving behind the shame, guilt and fear,
We step into the light.
Behind us, we leave the dark.
No longer are we the bearers of meaning,
For we are the meaning-makers,
The mark makers, the artists, the creators.

Leaving behind the humiliation, the self-doubt
We step into the light,
To spaces new to us,
Here we transform, reinvent.
For we are the meaning-makers, the mothers,
The resilient other.

Moving forward, we are in the light.
Basking in this space of joy, mysticism and chimera,
Our meanings are made.
We are transformed,
We are the poets, the authors, the artists.
It is our time, our era.
(Beverley Hayward, 2019)

Chapter 5: Reflections from the Landscape, The Beginnings, Les Debuts

⁶⁵Reflecting upon the waters, standing on the edges of this sea-landscape, this researcher has reached the shores of the 'other' (Cixous, 1993a: 3; Said, 1978; de Beauvoir, 1949). The navigation of the 'crooked contours' of these shores has not been without its challenges (Foucault in Davidson 1997: 156). In this perilous terrain, in which I have created this thesis, this 's-text', I have mapped together a collage of collaboration (Cixous, 1993a: 3). The two shores upon which I and the women stand, as the researcher and the researched, have come together through and beyond this 'passage'. In a dialogue with the self and Others, the writings and craft-artworks have brought us from the 'dark', as we 'pass' through the old, 'selfsame', 'mastery' discourses into the light of new knowledges (Cixous, 1993a: 3; 1976: 876; and 1975/1986: 79). Journeying to (re)search and discover the new, hidden, subjugated power/knowledges (Foucault, 1975/1991: 27-28) in the mythological spaces of the *écriture féminine*, our tale(s) of creativity are told. So that in the words of Walkerdine (1997:15), research 'provides not only ways of seeing others, but ways of understanding ourselves'. To see 'others' and make our own meaning(s) (Parker, 2007: 790), in my epistemological position of privilege, the *écriture féminine* is a tool that is essential, as part of the researcher's 'tool-

⁶⁵ I have taken this space, that is a sea-landscape in which to reflect, to write in the spirit of Cixous's *écriture féminine*. The writing style of this chapter errs on the side of the creative *écriture féminine*, where I have interjected the chapters 'academic' writing with metaphor, myth and poetry.

box' (Foucault, 1974: 523-4). It not only facilitates a method of writing that is playful and experimental, it supports a research process that makes for diverse, knowledge productions to be celebrated and exhibited.

I feel that in the intensity of where we were positioned in the everyday, what was the neoliberal episteme of higher education, it heightened our 'Imaginary'. To reiterate Cixous's (1976: 876) words that opened this thesis, our 'imaginary is 'inexhaustible' as our 'streams of phantasms is incredible'. The women, no longer silenced, have filled this small space with the 'noise', emotion and abundance of their creativity; it is very much a co-construction, where I feel that I have tried to let the women and their tales from the toolbox 'speak' for themselves. As well as art as the embodiment of the everyday experiences and a means of self-expression, other themes that became apparent were: the importance of certain spaces that facilitate the creation of art and the production of the subjectivity of the artist as educator; belonging in communities of practice that were revealed as positive experiences; subversions, destabilisations and resistances to the norms of the academy; and the LSA positioned as a resilient learner. In this exploration, I have contributed to the creation of the narratives, and in a feminine encounter (West, 2016), I hope I have given a richness to this snapshot of a partial (con)text, as I explored the subject positions of researcher, knowledge (re)producer and transgressor, as their creative contents-contexts embody their stories.

Positionings, Policies and Practices of Arts, Crafts and Educational Spaces

Our story brought to the fore tales from the creative toolbox of a small collective of women LSAs including my own tale. Our artwork embodies the production and performance of positions, overlapping subjectivities, everyday experiences and practices, in and outside the space of 'work'. The genealogy for this thesis was contextualised into the neoliberal agenda of current policy changes that marginalised this cohort of women. Therefore, it is important to communicate the narratives of the women both visually and verbally, as now the women are marginalised completely from The University due to these funding cuts. This positioning of redundancy further reinforces the hierarchies of power/knowledges that are most valued in The University. It is a landscape in which the 'mastery' of knowledge is upheld (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-160), by those for whom institutionally reproduced knowledges in Western academies remains the same, in terms of who is speaking, what is being said and what is (re)produced.

Yet, for the participants, it was not the reproduction of the embodiment of mother, helper in the formation of the subjectivity of the LSA, instead it was the motivation for participation in the job role that was the connection to the creative spaces. Although in the vein of Skeggs (1997), the knowledge that aligned the role to motherhood facilitated a confidence to step into the workplace after having time out to have children. In a conventional and essentialist discourse, the production of the subjectivity of the mother being caring and nurturing is what eases the migration from the 'comfortable' space of the home to the workplace. However, for this particular cohort of women, the role of LSA is not one of mothering. It is more than just helping, 'assisting' the student by bridging the gaps of epistemological knowledge with additional study skills. Instead, in the everyday of being the artist within the spaces of the art studios, sharing their experiences with others, particularly the students they support, is part of the formation of the subject, the 'creative', the artist. All the women said that this was the main motivation for being in The University, that and belonging in communities of practice, which were revealed to be positive experiences of knowledge production. In our practice of inclusion, we learnt together, with and from each other. Even when The University's practices were dividing, a community of care, enablement and support is a tale from the toolbox that is being told. In effect we had nothing to lose, and in the language of marketisation, our 'rewards' were the shaping and take-up of a 'feminine' subjectivity. Placed further and further on the margins of The University, this liminal space on the periphery, meant the 'good' woman-LSA narrative was less appropriated, as the academic practices were ignored.

In spaces of non-compliance, the disciplinary knowledge/power hierarchies in The University, were flouted. The expected norms of the m/othering role, for these women, was not a subjectivity with which they identified. This came as a surprise to me and it was an assumption I made that is now disputed. It was not a 'committed location', in the vein of Dyer (1996) and the theme that is put forth in the majority of literature written on the subjectivity of the LSA (Barkham, 2008; Roffey-Barentsen, 2011; McLachlan, & Davis, 2013; Watson, et al., 2013; Robson, & Bailey, 2009). The only book written on the role of the LSA by O'Brien & Garner (2001) and the limited articles, put forth the committed desire women have to perform the job role in order to care for and help their students. However, the norms of the role of LSA did not appear to be the major part of their identity and they did not self-identify as an LSA. When asked what role they identified with, none of them said LSA; instead they self-identified as 'artist'-'creative' and 'mother', that is the mother outside the classroom to their own children and not to 'mother' the students. There did appear to be a tension between the production of the artists whilst overlapping with the mother. This was in terms of time constraints as discussed by Prue, Eve and Mia. Yet, this is only part of their story for there are many other subject positions yet to be unearthed in future research, besides the LSA, artists, practitioners.

In consideration of my own subject positionings and practices required to create this story, I took to the production of certain subjectivities with ease. For example, as the ethnographical bricoleur, experienced interviewer and ethical and considerate researcher, I gleaned an understanding of the women's perceived realities, both in the physical and mythological spaces, which were embodied in the subjects/objects they produced. The shaping of other subjectivities was for me more alien, strange to me, such as the production of the poet, but in order to fully embrace the *écriture féminine* I felt that I should dip my toes into the 'salty waters' (Cixous, 1977/1991: 66). I believe that, like Cixous (1993a), in her own experiences of her father's death, the death of my mother was 'a gift' that allowed for my own transformation. In the trauma of her loss, the pain was so intense, the like of which I had not felt before, and as the intensity of that feeling gradually dissipated, I realised that very little else in my life would come close to the grief I felt for my mother's 'pass'ing (Cixous, 1993a: 3). Yet like Cixous I took that poison-gift and harnessed the force of those feelings to apply for the undertaking of this PhD. I knew I could take up the subject position of the resilient learner for in my new context of loss, much could be achieved. Failure was indeed a possibility, but the fear of the consequence of that had lost its grip over my psyche. The experience of grief gave me a strength of purpose that I had not had before; I had the desire to try new things, poetry included. Cixous said:

And then there are those who received the desert in the cradle. It is a poisoned gift, both poison and gift, and sometimes the poison is a gift – an endowment, the terrible gift granted to some, a sort of curse that is a blessing, a natal desertion, and that condemns and brings them up to poetry. (Cixous, 1993b 209).

Accordingly, I enrolled onto a creative writing course. It was both uncomfortable and liberating. Once I realised I need not write in the masculine, logical, objective format, when the topic is not only multidisciplinary but qualitative, featuring the emotive feminine-‘feminine’ messiness of life, my thinking had to change. As Cixous states:

And this tissue from which your pains tailor this body without any borders, this endless wasteland, this ravaged space, your ruined states, without armies, without mastery, without ramparts – you didn’t know they were the gardens of love. Not demand. You are not jealousy, not calculation and envy because you are lost. You are not in touch. You are detachment. You do not beg. You lack nothing. You are beyond lack: But you wander stripped down, undefined, at the mercy of the other. And if Love comes along, it can find in you unlimited space, the place without end that is necessary and favourable to it. Only when you are lost can love, find itself in you without losing its way (Cixous, 1993, 39).

In response to Cixous and the visual narrative of Heffernan’s *Tender Mercenary* (2006), figure 1, I wrote this poem:

Mercy of the Other

A poet in the land-seascape,
I see the strangers, as they wait;
They wait for me,
On the shores of foreign sands.

With my vulnerability exposed, I escape.
I escape from the him-ter-land,
To the promised land
To a sea of honey,
And the salty taste of the stranger.

Those strangers receive my body,
Now, open to their stories,
For the masculine, no longer coverts me,
I am free.

I see, the mercy of the Other.
(Hayward, 2019)

I felt that I had to free myself from the shackles of the masculine academic approach of writing, as it was still an approach that I frequently needed to revisit. Even at the end of this process, in writing this reflection I was tethered to a way of thinking that is so entrenched and ingrained; yet that feeling produced a jarring in my writing. It was a resistance to the ‘authority moves’ perpetuated in reproductive academic writing (Richardson, 1997): this act of resistance appeared as ruptures in the landscape (Nicholls, 2009: 35). I felt my creativity choked in the need for order and logic; I sought to ‘order’ this reflection into sub-sections of policies, positions and practices (Foucault, 1970), but after many days of ‘reflection’ it became apparent

that these elements were so intertwined that separation was not possible. Once again, I found the process less about untying the knottiness of life and more about telling the strains of the tales as they appeared to me. Thus, in cutting the ropes of my bonds of masculine discourse, it was the tool of the *écriture féminine* that lights our passage. Often, in the production of knowledges within the creative arts, whether reproductive or productive, multiple subjectivities are shaped, they are overlapping, the artist-researcher-LSA. As artists we are influenced by discourses, but also there are creative moments that leave language and practice behind to fly to 'other' worldly spaces.

Yet, as the subject positions are produced, we as practitioners are thoughtful and mindful of the 'Other', those that are marginalised in policy and practices. Foucault suggests this process of technologies of the self makes for the production of an ethical body of care (Foucault, in Rabinow, 1984: 7). In The University's spaces in which we practise, for us there is an ethos of democratic sharing of the spaces and intersubjectivities that are layered, practice is collaborative. The women, in their interviews, state that they are giving of their space and time to each other and their students. This could be considered a subversion to neoliberalism, where competition and the marketisation of education is ignored for the holistic well-being of colleagues and their students. Thus, for both staff and students, their objectification is compounded by 'dividing practices'; but, as we unite in our practices, objectification gives way to subjectification in an ethos of welfarism.⁶⁶ In many of the interviews they make the point that they are 'giving back'. Many of the participants had experienced very negative learning experiences and often it was because of this that the LSA role was appealing, to negate experiences that they/we endured as students. This is in much the same vein that Diana expresses in the poem, *The LSA* (2014); she illustrates how she takes up the LSA position: it is one of altruism, welfarism and encouragement.

In essence you are already it,
I'll show you, in my own special way.
Equipping you with the tools that you'll need to succeed.
Take them from me, they are a gift,
My pleasure, all yours.

This is the approach hooks advocates:

⁶⁶ I remember many years ago when I first decided to study for a free course to teach study skills, a short course at the local college, I was required to write a letter to the principal, as part of the initial assessment explaining my motivations for wanting to study the course. I wrote in the letter that I 'wanted to give something back to the community'. We wanted the best learning experience for our students.

When I think about my life as a student, I can remember vividly the faces, gestures, habits of being of all the individual teachers who nurtured and guided me, offered me an opportunity to experience joy of learning, who made the classroom a space of critical thinking, who made the exchange of information and ideas a kind of ecstasy (hooks, 1994: 202).

Frequently learning, specifically learning linked to a creative act, is an emotive experience, strewn with moments of self-doubt and insecurity. These feelings are eloquently identified by all the women to varying degrees, as part of their own production of the subjectivities as artists as well as that of students. In our *Sorties* (1975/86), this landscape further facilitated the subject position of supporting the supporters, that is mentoring and helping each other. We were able to foster a type of emotional mobility, by this I mean we healed ruptures and trauma to our emotional well-being and mental health. This healing built our confidence and self-esteem, in a community of collaboration and creativity, which smoothed the transition to exit. However, this community of support had become more challenging as the exit came closer and neoliberalism took hold. But, simultaneously, our productivity as artists grew and smoothed the land-seascape to aid mobility, transition and transformation.

Yet, the paradox remains for, as universities competed for students, access was opened up to allow entry to an arts education that was denied us many years ago. This facilitated the production of the creative-artist that we dreamt of being. None of us completed a degree in the traditional format from school; the doors of the academy were firmly shut. But as the market opened up, so did the door of the academy and we entered. Policies intersected to enable the positionings of the student-artist in the 'regimes' and 'games of truth' (Foucault, 1988b). Yet, the positionings were complex and multi-layered: those same 'games of truth', that were being played in The University, sought to oppress the production of the practices of the artist-creative-educator-practitioner, and intersected with the shaping of the LSA subjectivity (Foucault, 1988b). Therefore, from the academy as mature, mainly working-class students, we steered our way through in what has become an increasingly aggressive neoliberal system, as the spaces of support were shrinking (Harvey, 2005). The very same rules of the game that trained us to perform the role of artist-practitioner in the first place, then attempted to fix us in an essentialist discourse. Yes, we self-regulated in the production of the 'good' (enough) woman-LSA (West, 2016). Disciplinary power/knowledges were part of our everyday in our landscape, which was viewed by the masters in The University. However, we resisted that alignment of the essentialist discourse of gendered mastery (Cixous, 1975/1986: 136-160).

The research suggests that the participants were aware of the power/knowledge hierarchies at play in the institutions that perpetuate certain 'truths' by the masters. But beneath that top layer of the observed 'good enough' LSA (West, 2016), we resisted, to position ourselves as 'resilient learners' and transgressive practitioners (Hoult, 2012). So, instead of being labelled, the 'poor students', as many of the participants and I were once positioned in compulsory and post-compulsory education, I suggest that we are the 'resilient' ones, in the processes of transformations (Hoult, 2012). For the LSAs, and indeed the students, are constantly navigating subtle nuances and overt power/knowledge hierarchies to take up multifaceted positionings to either comply and/ or destabilise the 'order of things' (Foucault, 1970). We are not 'fixed' in a negative positioning; instead we-I have refused to be disciplined in the order of the systems of higher education.

In visualising the power/knowledges and language relations in the experiences of the LSA/learner of The University, the deficit-negative discourse may be displaced. Yes, I have stolen and robbed from the mastery discourse, but equally I have been given the stories to thread together a rich and colourful tapestry. In this way it is an additive process that visualises the stitching and layering of our stories. The dense fabric that makes up our creative selves, 'speaks' to our arts-crafts as a way of knowing. Accordingly, this perceived deficit (dis)placement from The University implies a re-placement elsewhere. In this displacement the (dis)abled, female, working-class body or one that is considered worth less than those high up the knowledge/power hierarchy, may be celebrated. Knowledges that have been identified here, hidden, subjugated have facilitated transformation, collaborative communities of practice, care and consideration of the other. Thus, those power/knowledges that privileged the LSA-artist-practitioner, allow the reality of the individual to be of 'value'.

My Space: A Small Contoured Contribution to the Landscape

In documenting this account of the LSAs, it supported the production of my subject position as the curator of their work. In the writing and curation of the exposure of our hidden, subjugated knowledges, I facilitated a small, partial, yet significant contribution to a 'barren' academic landscape. The landscape of literature on the LSAs is sparse at best, but in adding the creative layer, where the LSA is producing visual cultures, it made the search nigh impossible. With this in mind, I sought to bring into the light the women's creativity in a collective curation of celebration and hope my small study has achieved that.

In this curation of subjugated knowledges, I speak to those in the arts and adult education, and the policy makers. For now, in the collision of neoliberalism, austerity and Brexit, I urge those who make, write and implement policies to seriously consider the discourses in which those policies are being positioned. For all the while the discourses position students as units-commodities-numbers and not as human beings, then the market for students will promote competition and unethical practices, some of which were illustrated in this project. Yet, in that neoliberal episteme the customer-student is aware of the impact of their 'investment' and the 'reward' for their 'purchase'. Students are 'knowing' of their consumer rights and they are 'shopping around' for the best quality product. Those that are able to play, and indeed pay for the game, are doing so which has the consequence of reproducing the entitlements of the middle and upper classes. The effect upon the market for the best quality education has certainly made for the marginalisation of certain groups one of which has been the working-class with disabilities. Many of the student cohort are local to the area, which is in a location of much poverty and deprivation.

This alignment of a working-class subject positioning with limited economic capital, resonated with the participants in this study and many of those women that did not participate. We had many conversations in our staffroom before we were forced from the space, discussing the implication of the increase in tuition fees from £3,000 to £9,000, as many of our children were of the age to progress to higher education. In one encounter we calculated that a three-year degree would cost £50,000 plus. We were all aware that this was a tax at source but, from the working-class ethos of 'never a lender or borrower be', only one of our children went to university from a possible fifteen. Therefore, once again, policy was dividing practice but resistance was present. For example, in understanding the force of the market, one of the children of a participant, realised that her child was 'sold' a poor-quality product and left university after four days, securing an apprenticeship where the company paid for the degree

whilst they were salaried at £24,000. Accordingly, we have the power/knowledges to ensure our own children are knowing of subject positions that are open to them, but this is not always the case with the students that we once supported. However, in some instances discussed in Chapter Three and Four, we did try to impart our knowledge of the milieu of neoliberalism to the students, so that they were able to make informed decisions about their futures and thereby shape a subjectivity that is resistant and transgressive.

That said, there are more layers that have yet to be revealed and positionings that might have been explored, should further research be conducted. But that is for another story, another 'passage' to be written. I should have liked to have explored the production of the m-othering subject to a greater extent, as there was an obvious material trace of the shaping of this subjectivity by most of the women, and one that clearly had an impact upon the subject positions the women took up. Yet it does respond to Dyer's call to research the LSA role in terms of the gendered positioning of the LSA. Accordingly, the data that I collected partly disputes Dyer's findings, that I discussed at the beginning of my thesis. In her article, Dyer suggested that for 'some women, the choice of career as an LSA remains one of a committed location' (1996:192). Our participants were from differing subject positions. Her participant cohort were studying for a learning support qualification, whereas mine were graduates of the creative arts. So in a dialogue with Dyer, her question is a poignant one and one to which I wish to respond. The committed location for my participants is one of a creative space, rather than the vocation space of support. So where have they, the women, gone from here?

3 x Creative career – self employed
Employed at The University in the disability dept in an admin/advisory role (limited student contact and not in the studios)
Caring for mother
Early Retirement – self-improvement
Housing Officer
Art technician (teaching at the university)
Career change on completion of PhD; working part-time whilst writing and publishing

Cixous's Contribution

Without a Foucauldian conceptualisation of discourse, the navigation of this landscape would have proved to be challenging. The tools from his toolbox held me in good stead to sustain this project. It is, as Foucault suggests (1972: 25), by 'suspending' the 'discourses' the researcher can question and examine their construction. However, whereas Foucault insists that discourses are always in operation and 'must not be rejected' (ibid), in taking a Cixousian stance, I argue that the women and I, in the embrace of the *écriture féminine*, are able to shape the subjectivities of the artist-creative-craftsperson and transgressor outside of discourse. Diana eloquently expresses this, the production of the artist, the 'free-spirit' (28.31) the 'adventurer' and 'explorer' (29.30). She explained that the artist ventures in different spaces:

it takes me back to a space to be in a different world, you know music can transport me there and the work can transport me there and actually it's the letting the self go ... the second I try to start to control it too much I have to walk away and let go, cause that's when it starts to go all wrong, so it's like in the moment, in the moment, in the moment. So it's like it is a spiritual experience when you paint (Interviewee, Diana: 2016: 23.50 - 24.30).

Therefore, in moments of creativity the artist is not in discourse, but in the space of the *écriture féminine*. In a Cixousian 'reading', this is producing subjectivities that make for a transformative subject positioning. Cixous suggests that:

Later if I emerge from my waters dripping all over with pleasures, if I go back the length of my banks, if from my shore I observe the revels of my dream-fish, I notice the innumerable figures they create in their dance; isn't the current of our women's waters sufficient to unleash the uncalculated writing of our wild and populous texts? Ourselves in writing like fish in the water, like meanings in our tongues, and the transformation in our unconscious lives (Cixous, 1977/199: 58).

Cixous has enabled me to tell their stories in the space of the Imaginary, myth and the mystical. For here we are able to 'dance' to our own tune of enchantment, chimera and curiosity. (Cixous, 1977/199: 58). We are creative and, when reflecting upon the process, this act of reflection becomes the object upon which the subject is able to develop and transform in a continuation of creativity, reflection, research and knowledge production. In the creative moment we are in a space of production, as the artworks are a material embodiment of our knowledge production and reproduction. The knowledges do seem to overlap where the reproduction of disciplinary knowledges intersect with new productive knowledges. Yet, in our knowledge productions, it became apparent that the creative element was a constant force that required expression: Prue said she needed to be doing 'something creative', she 'always loved art' (Interviewee, Prue, 2017: 2.22). Mia said that going to art college 'was like freedom' (Interviewee, Mia, 2017: 18.36). Eve (2016: 20.33) makes a similar connection between the

creative-écriture feminine being a space of transformation, facilitating agency: 'I want to start making things again, to be creative, as does Una, so like coming and going, like free spirits'. As our 'freedom' became closer the latter interviewees expressed in detail some of the spaces in which they wished to be positioned.

I've started to do yoga and I'm sort of into that fitness and spirituality, ... which is something I've never done before, 'cause I think we were brought up in a generation where you were told to stop being silly. ... we were never really taught to love ourselves. ... So, I would like to do some more of that and I would like start doing some drawing, doing some doodles; I don't want anyone judging me, sort of thing, so I wouldn't do them (exams) (Interviewee, Mia, 2017: 2116)

It is as Cixous states, as women, if we can harness the force of our creativity, we can initiate change in our art-texts. We can highlight the injustices of our position. The extract below from Eve was poignant because of the positivity she sees in our exits. She sees herself as having a fluid identity where the subjectivity of the artist is in the making. She self-identifies as a mother, but in the process of becoming, as she is on a journey of transformation.

this is like an opportunity, to not to close the book, but to move onto a new chapter and to move on to something new. Except it is just I'm thinking that for years now, or for the last 19 years, it's been more or less about my child, and about doing things. And bit by bit I started doing things for myself, and now I think it's about time I start doing something a little bit more for me. So at the moment I'm in a sort of in an in-betweeny stage, cause I'm not quite sure where I'm going. But I know I'm going somewhere, but I just don't know where I'm going. I'm on the platform and I'm waiting for the right train to come (laughing). So I'm on a journey, well we're all on a journey Beverley (Eve: Interviewee, 2016: 13.16).

Eve's use of language was significant; the use of 'book' and 'chapter' was interesting, as it is a metaphor for change. Her s-texts, as with all of ours, are an energising force to be free in the spaces of the écriture feminine; here in our space of this project, we can write our own chapters and our stories. We can create 'passages' to new spaces in our *Sorties*. This is illustrated in my own practice. I am stitching my own story in the very precise, definite punctuated marks in the aida (canvas). I sew in a deliberate way to follow the pattern of the stitches. However, as I move into the creative spaces of the écriture feminine, I lose the structure of the format and do not keep to the instructed number of stitches. Prior, to this project, I would have gone back and unpicked the 'wrong' stitches. Now I incorporate this creativity into the text-[tile]. I-we are able to use Cixous's contribution to flout the rules of the game. In our creative processes, the metaphor of the additive processes of sewing, illustrates the layered complexities of our subjectivities. As I stitch our tales, rather than trying to reduce or 'unpick' the accounts of our lives and knowledges to comply to a mastery logic of 'Enlightened' (Formenti and West, 2018), and organised 'order' (Foucault, 1970/2003), I acknowledge the 'uncalculated', 'wild and populous texts' of our lives (Cixous, 1977/199: 58). It is as Formenti and West (2018: 244) suggest: 'Narrative, poetry and art go beyond the logic of evidence into a qualitative different yet important domain'.

The 'Feminine' Bricoleur in the Wider Landscape: my Transformation

As my transition ends and new formations begin, my own (trans)formation has been facilitated by this project. In writing I have taken up and considered many subject positions to produce, this our story(s) in these hazardous times. Specifically, the sharing and interconnectedness of the process was fundamental (Formenti and West, 2018: 268). As the researcher-'feminine'-bric(v)oleur I have written my way through, above and beyond language and the discourses of mastery. I have navigated those choppy waters to greet the 'stranger' on the Other-side (Cixous, 1993a). Now at the 'end' of this 'passage' of our journey, I am able to reflect upon the process, as I prepare to curate our exhibition in the shores of the 'outcasts' (Cixous, 1976, 875-893). In 'coming out' of this passage as artists, we emerge, we see new beginnings on the horizon, our debut is imminent. In the same way that I have put together this thesis, I hope to curate our transformations as the artists from my position as the bricoleur. For,

bricoleurs have an aptness for creativity -- they know how to artistically combine theories, techniques, and methods. Furthermore, they are able to create their own methodological tools when needed. Reiterated by Denzin and Lincoln, "if a researcher needs to invent, or piece together new tools or techniques, he or she will do so" (Roger, 2012: 4).

With this in mind, as the bric(v)oleur I leave the academy, together with the other support workers-artists-practitioners and the 'truths' of their and my experiences are constructed as new bodies of knowledges produced in spaces of creativity and transformation. Our art 'speaks' to the injustices of the situation. Yes, I do feel sad and apprehensive at leaving this space but at the same time I am hopeful and optimistic to be positioned in other spaces (Formenti and West, 2018: 245) As the 'writer' of this story I am facilitating the creation of the *écriture féminine*, as I collage their stories. In this way I am subverting the binaried position of Strauss's bricoleur/engineer for, as the bricoleur, I have collaged new knowledges in new spaces, the space of the gallery. And, in Cixous's spirit of writing the feminine, I end on a poem created by one of the LSAs given as a gift to me, just before she exited from the academy. It is entitled:

Begin Again

Stay if you'll let me,
hold on if you'll have me.
Just one last minute,
so I never let go

Cradle, rock, carry me,
never to be free.
Nurture, love, then betray me,
till my grip loosens its hold.

Falling...
suddenly I find.
I move through fear
to peace of mind.
Landing...
two firm feet.
The future, my gaze.
a vision complete.

Wings outstretched,
perspectives change,
life turns over a different page.
I write the stories now.

The end is where it begins again.
(Diana, 2017)

Chapter 6: The Exhibition

Our exhibition is organised for next year and some of the participants have responded, detailing what they would like to exhibit and their accompanying artist's statement. Others have expressed the desire to create a new text-knowledge in a dialogue with my exhibition statement.

Exhibition statement: Tales from the Creative Toolbox

The visual language of the exhibition is one of inclusivity and collaboration. As a collective community, it brings together the work of a small group of support workers that were made redundant from a local university in 2018. This small exhibition space gives a snapshot of the abundance of the media, contexts and disciplines in which the cohort were working during the ten years as learning support assistants. It is an eclectic mix of interests and passions brought into the light, as they are (re)positioned as participants of social change and transformations. This display represents the strength and ability of the artist as educator, to survive in a milieu of oppression and injustice. They practised their 'craft' as educational practitioners, as well as artists, makers and creatives. Tales from the Creative Toolbox is a cornucopia of the artists' creativity, a space in which their art is made visible, where recognition for their talents is celebrated.

Curating Our Craft

Diverse are the texts of knowledge creation.
Finally displayed on those whitewashed walls,
On par with the work hung in those hallowed halls,
We are exhibiting, crafting our curation.

In place of those old masters of the arts,
Our art and craft in all its Majesty, stands tall.
No longer relegated to those dusty backroom stalls
We are here, this is just the start.

Oh, what joy, oh what pride,
We have found our own Truths; we have the keys.
Our oeuvre is a cornucopia of beauty and fecundity,
For now, our art-craft is crammed high and wide.
(Hayward, 2019)



Gallery Space - exterior



Gallery Space - interior

Artist's statement: Organic Form: Letting Go

Painting is used as a release of feelings and in this painting, it represents a time of transformation from a scared girl who cannot deal with the world, to a woman who is ready to take on the world. After a fourteen-year relationship ended, this was a rare night alone, with the children. Not knowing how she was feeling, the artist painted to take her mind off things. She said: 'I felt free painting in my underwear just because I could and most importantly it made me feel me again, and that I've got this.'



Artist's statement: Mocking the Master Narrative: A Masquerade

This mixed media textile embodies the experiences of a support worker as she was made redundant at a local university. It explores the value placed upon certain cohorts and their production of art, over 'Others'. The increased marginalisation of support workers was due to the way funding cuts were managed within the increased marketisation of education. Accordingly, this piece challenges the elitist canon of what is art and the spaces in which art can be 'taught' and those who are considered to be artists. The story celebrates the hidden voices of a feminine-feminist narrative. It remembers the genealogy of those women artists as educators, craftswomen and knowledge producers. The textile unmask the lost tales from many a creative toolbox.



Artist's statement: Beyond Time and Space

Beyond time and space, lies infinite wisdom –
a world within worlds.

The mist transcends, silent tornados through portals.

Thoughts and feelings spontaneously combust, all logic and reason dispel.

It is here that you will find me, lost in my craft, capturing creation.

The masterful child.

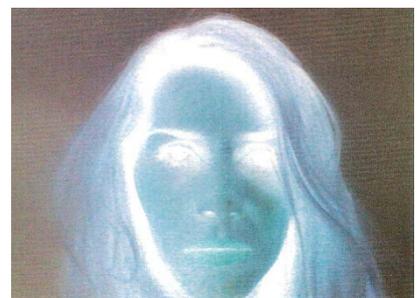
(Diana, 2016)



Artist's statement: Thought Blanket

Investigating notions of the human thought pattern, ie, “The Ego”, the current body of work is simple and subtle using simple mediums from paper to gauze alluding to exposed vulnerability of women including myself in today’s society. The viewer’s sense of a link between their own inner voices and the ego, but with a difference emphasis. Interaction with the work heightens an awareness of the self. The viewer’s experience is paramount becoming part of the work itself leaving one to question their own mortality as this seems to be at the core of our fascination with keeping forever young and never wanting to confront the most natural part of the circle of life which is of course death.

What is most important to me as an artist is not what people see in the Exhibition, but what people feel after looking at the work, how they confront their own inner voices, once being exposed to the notion of the fact that we all hear inner voices. My hope is that the viewer feels liberated from the silence and almost taboo subject of the inner voice or ego and accept and talk openly about this very subject.



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Appendices:

Appendix 1: Ethics Form

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE, HISTORY & PHILOSOPHY
BIRKBECK, UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
PROPOSAL TO CONDUCT RESEARCH
FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL**

NOTES TO THE APPLICANT:

- The purpose of this form is to make sure that you as a researcher, your research participants and the College are safeguarded.
- Please think carefully about each of the questions and give as much information as possible about what your research with human participants, sensitive topics, sensitive materials or human remains will involve.
- If you are a student then your form should be sent for consideration to your supervisor in the first instance.
- Students should be aware that the submission process may vary by Department, please refer to your own Department for how to submit your proposal
- If you are a member of academic staff your completed form should be submitted directly to the department ethics officer (listed on the website).
- Once approval has been received, the supervisor or staff investigator is responsible for ensuring a copy of form is logged with your department office.
- No research with participants may begin before ethics approval has been granted.
- Please refer to the additional guidance on ethical research provided by your department, the school and the college.

A: Your details

1. Name of investigator: Beverley Marie Hayward
2. Academic Status (e.g. staff, PhD student, postgraduate, undergraduate): PhD
3. Department: School of Social Science, History and Philosophy
4. Programme of study (if you are a student): MPhil Education/ Lifelong Learning
5. Name and department of supervisor: Kerry Harman and Liz Hoult
6. Contact email: beverleyhayward01322@hotmail.com

B: Your project

1. Title of your study:

Making the invisible visible: To what extent is the positioning of the part-time LSA in post-compulsory education located in a space of resistance, transformation and or reproduction?

2. Main research question (brief abstract of your study):

This doctoral study examines the extent to which the positionings of the female Learning Support Assistant (LSA) in post compulsory education is located in spaces of resistance, transformation and or reproduction. It looks to consider whether their navigations and negotiations of the spaces in which they live, learn and work will be considered as localities in which transformation may be revealed and or possible oppressions made apparent. It explores the intersecting and complex cultural constructions of their lived experiences, lifelong learning and the development of their becoming. The study looks to make visible: the varying and diverse subjectivities of the women as they perform their many roles; the systems from which discipline and punish[ment] are exercised in the sociospatial positionings of the

women; the degrees of agency within the systems and spaces in which they reside and the women's resistances in the disciplined spaces in which they are positioned. The foundations from which this study was conceived was partly derived from the MSc I completed two years since, entitled: 'An exploration into the extent to which the gendered legacy of care resides in contemporary 'spaces of femininity', with specific reference to the roles the Learning Support Assistant performs'. The expansion of this investigation is in that the PhD explores beyond the gendered spaces to consider other subjectivities in a diversity of locations that reveal lifelong learning experiences in a Foucaudian lens of resistance and or transformation.

The project is

3. Research schedule

- Date of ethics application: 26th April 2016
- Date project started or is due to start: 14th April 2015
- Proposed starting date of data collection: 1st May 2016
- Date by which research must be completed: 1st September 2017

4. Other organisations

- Are you applying to an external body for funding? No
- Are you involving an external body (e.g. a school, charity or company) in your data collection or for access to participants? Yes
- If yes, does that external body have their own ethics approval process?
No
- If yes, please give details of committee, stage of process/decision: Initial stage of the process
- If no, does that external body require institutional certification of ethics approval from Birkbeck?

Yes

- If you are a member of academic staff applying for external funding (e.g. from the AHRC, ESRC, etc.) are you seeking approval for:
 - Outline proposal **YES/NO**
 - Full proposal **YES/NO**
 - Modification to your previously approved project **YES/NO**

If this is an application for approving a modification, please provide the title and date of your initial application.

C. Methodology

1. Your participants:

- Who are they?

The participants are Learning Support Assistants, or Study Assistants; they are the support staff from an array of educational institutions in the English post-compulsory sector, comprising a mixture of universities and colleges, specialising in art based courses. They are the staff allocated to assist the learning needs of a small cohort of students to whom funding, the Disability Student Allowance (DSA) is allocated, via Student Finance England (SFE) for HE or through the Skills Funding Agency for FE. The participants are not Teaching Assistants or Classroom Assistants, the job title given to those inclass support staff employed in compulsory education, where usually the role is in support of the teachers and not funded by SFE or the SFA. With the current DSA changes the funding stream is likely to change where the institutions will be required to fund some of the learning support staff; however it is anticipated that LSAs still will be required to facilitate the learning experience of those students for whom a high level support is needed.

DSA is in a transitional period, where band 2, the funding stream from which the LSAs for new students in HE is being phased out. Accordingly, in the 2016/17 academic year, the educational institutions are required to embed the support and with this in mind it was considered that it should be prudent to include FE colleges in this study as there is a degree of uncertainty around the availability of the cohort in HE, as the study continues. The government guidelines have stipulated that those students in the system will retain their level of support for the duration of their course.

Attracting a particular cohort interested in the arts, a large number of those students have learning differences and or disabilities (LDD), as frequently students with LDD have an aptitude for creativity in an art related subject, or other vocational courses (BDA, 2013). With a vast choice of creative based courses across the institutions selected, they attract a large number of students, with learning differences and disabilities (LDD), currently standing at 16.7% at the institution at which I work. The statistics from HESA (2016) documents that at the other institutions at the time of completing this ethics form, the data is comparable; for example, at the University of the Arts London those students in receipt of funding from SFE stands at 20.6%

With this in mind, there is a requirement for LSAs to facilitate their learning needs. The Equality Act 2010 states that 'reasonable adjustments' are necessary to ensure that the student is able to access the service. In this context, only those students with documentary evidence that specifies additional learning support (ALS) needs are entitled to an LSA. Educational Health Care Plans detailing normal ways of working constitute such evidence. The diversity of the students LDDs are extensive and wide ranging and an LSA is allocated for the support of: study skills for those with learning differences, and or mental health issues; physical disabilities; and short and long term medical problems, as required.

The various institutions have a department established to manage the employment and allocation of LSAs. At the institution at which I am employed, the Library and Student Services, of whom I am a part, as the Dyslexia Adviser and Tutor, is there to support those students. It is part of my role as the Dyslexia Adviser, to co-ordinator the LSAs to ensure the students with LDDs are supported to maximise retention and achievement by allocating ALS, as required. As I have just been asked to cover for the LSAs in the GCSE maths classes, I will include the observations from those lessons, making this partly a study consisting of autoethnographical practices. I will keep a

reflective journal as a means to document the experience and spaces, both by text and diagrams/photos. Being 'experience near' (Anderson, 2002: 23), the journal will allow for reflexivity of my own taken for granted assumptions in the spaces, as well as insider/outsider positions.

Employing this methodology, it utilises my positionality as an 'insider' both as a participant and the researcher. This may raise issues for the participants; yet, in the vein of Floyd and Linet (2010, 5), [a]lthough a potential minefield, insider research can also be a rich pasture, from which important data can be harvested, with appropriate boundaries to satisfy ethical concerns'. Thus, this cohort was selected 'because of the undoubted benefits of insider research in terms of access, rapport and shared frames of reference with participants, and an in-depth understanding of the organisation'.

Conversely, I may be seen to be an 'outsider', as the interviewer and researcher, for even though I am working in education for an organisation, in a post that directly relates to the LSA roles, they may see me as an authoritative figure, possibly feeling the need to please, giving responses that they believe to be 'correct', what they feel I want to hear. They may consider me to be in a position of power (Kvale, 1996), yet, it may be argued that the interviewees hold a degree of power themselves in what they choose to divulge or withhold (Munro et al. 2004; Thapar-Bjorkert & Henry 2004). Accordingly, the relationship particularly between my staff and possibly those in the other institutions may change, the dynamic may shift, and will be an effect that shall be reflected upon in the research.

The power dynamic will be further disrupted in the use of visual images/objects as this, according to Manney (2013), challenges the rigidity of the often linear interview technique. Simultaneously and in the vein of Mason (2005), Packard (2008) and other authors the visual makes possible a greater degree of understanding of the subjectivities of the participants.

- How many?
I intend to have 15 participants, about 3 or 4 from each institution
- How will they be selected?

I have initially made contact with the heads of Student Services/ Disability Depts. at the universities, who, as the gatekeepers, will be requested to approach their staff members to explain the process, stressing that it is anonymous, confidential and voluntary. I will then follow this with an email to obtain the contact details of the staff that maybe willing to participate. I will email the possible participants to request 3 – 4 women. Those first to respond will be selected.

The LSAs across the university where I work, who selected from my previous study, were asked if they would be willing to take part in further research. Three participants agreed and one more may be selected.

A pilot will be conducted using a colleague at Rochester, the campus where I work, to see the response to the interview technique, shadowing and mapping the spaces. The pilot participant has agree to all of the research methodologies.

- Are there any inclusion/exclusion criteria?
The only exclusion criteria is that of male participants; while a perceptive study should have developed by examining the motivation and the gendered construct of the male LSA, as would the role of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender etc., and ethnic identities, the limitations of this study have necessitated that certain boundaries are established. Future research in this area may lead to a greater understanding of the

social construction of the LSA, within a broader gendered context, but that is not for this project.

The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) is a specialist college and university offering further and higher education courses in Kent and Surry, four campuses in all, situated at Rochester, Canterbury, Farnham and Epsom, specialising in art and design courses. For ease of access and cost implication the sourcing of the participants, situated within FE and HE sectors, across creative arts/industries courses are institutions from in and around the M25. Although the institutions may offer course from other disciplines, only those LSAs assigned to creative arts courses are to be selected. This is to set boundaries in a specific cultural context to make visible the subjectivities of a particular cohort of women.

2. If you are using live participants, does your research involve:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Unpleasant or emotionally difficult stimuli? | YES/NO |
| • Unpleasant or emotionally difficult situations? | YES/NO |
| • Invasive procedures? | YES/NO |
| • Deprivation or restriction of basic needs (e.g., food, water, sleep)? | YES/NO |
| • Drug administration? | YES/NO |
| • Any procedure which could cause harm to the participant? | YES/NO |
| • Any participants whose physical/mental health could be put at risk? | YES/NO |
| • Actively misleading or deceiving the participants? | YES/NO |
| • Withholding information about the nature or outcome of the study? | YES/NO |
| • Any inducement or payment to take part in the study | YES/NO |
| • Any procedure that might <i>inadvertently</i> cause distress ? | YES/NO |

If you answered YES to any of these questions please details the steps you will take to additionally safeguard your participants:

The questions in the interview are very open-ended; they are semi-structured and indicative, derived from a timeline/map of life events and spaces, and an activity that I will ask them to complete before the interview. Accordingly, it is likely that they will have a predisposition to the interview theme. So it is unlikely to cause concern. They do not invade the participants' privacy; although I am trying to elicit lifelong learning experiences, past and present, in spaces in which the norms are resisted. Thus, it maybe that those experiences have been traumatic, painful and disturbing for the participants. In the event that this maybe the case the names and numbers for the institutions' counselling service will be to hand and given to the participants. This will be prepared in the event of a participant possibility becoming distressed. In any event the participant is my priority, not the data collection. I will stop the recording and ask the participant if they would prefer to terminate the interview. They might want to talk to me about what is distressing them. However I should be mindful of the boundaries and that the participant might benefit from professional help which I not in a position, nor under obligation to provide. In circumstances such as these, having prepared the contact details of the professions in the support services, I will offer this information to the participant should this situation arise. This will be discussed with my supervisors to prepare myself before embarking on my research.

For the interviews and the other activities participation will be their choice. They do not have to participate; it is voluntary and I am available to be contacted should they wish to discuss the process at any time. They will be told that they can terminate their participation should they wish to do so.

Payment will be offered for one part of the participation. They will be asked to bring an object of their choice to the interview; this can be an object that they have made, specifically for this exercise and research project. This being the case I will offer to pay for the materials required, up to £50 per person. I will not be taking possession of the piece of material culture, only a photograph of the artwork.

3. Where will your investigation take place? Provide details of the setting for your interaction with participants:

For the interviews the participants will be given a choice of location. I can travel to their place of work, their home or conduct the interview by Skype. This may depend upon the time of year, whether or not I conduct the interviews during term time. For the MSc I procured a room, and one that was soundproofed, but none of the participants wanted to be interviewed there; instead they suggested their homes. The shadowing will take place in their place of work, and their homes and others spaces yet to be determined, such as community learning locations. If this is not possible I will ask the participants to photograph their positioning in the spaces by mapping their locations and how they feel in those spaces.

4. How will you collect your data (e.g. experiments, questionnaires, interviews, group discussion)?

I will collect the data by asking the participants to construct a visual timeline/map of their most significant life events, spaces and places. As well as the timeline/map I will request that they bring an object of significance to the interview. This piece of material culture can be something that they have made prior to the study or made specifically for this project. This use of a mixed methodology, specifically the visual, as considered by for example, Manney (2013), Pink (2004) and Rose (2010), is drawn upon to elicit from the participants data that will illustrate how the women understand their lives.

The interview will consist of mapping their significant life events producing transitional and transformative visualisations of power/knowledge in the spaces. The timeline/map and object will be drawn upon as a means to begin the narrative. This data collection will continue from the visual imagining of their significant life events/process, where they will be asked to extend and develop this in the interview.

To further document their current positioning in a contemporary landscape I will shadow them in the spaces. This will be possible in my own institutional setting, but should this prove too problematic in the other institutions, and is not possible to do due to the logistics of the availability of the participants, then I will ask for a visual mapping via diagrams in the spaces. Should this be by a photographic medium, the photographs will obscure all the student's identities. How the LSAs feel in those spaces will be considered in the interviews: is there room for openness, transformation or is it reproductive?

5. Are you using any forms, questionnaires, interview schedules or other materials to gather your data? If yes, please provide copies.

Yes: see the two completed consent forms below and the interview schedule

6. Briefly describe what participating in your study will involve:

Creating a visual timeline of life events/moments/processes of significance that make visible the positioning of the subjectivities of the women, including that of the LSA in contemporary society. They will be asked to make visible events that are significant to them. Where the data is not explicit on the timeline in revealing the spaces of resistance, transformation and or reproduction, it will be extended in an interview.

An object will be obtained from the participants to support the interview process of obtaining data on events of significance and how that may visualise transformative processes in spaces of resistance.

They will either document or be documented in the spaces where they reside by a mapping of the spaces. They will be asked to record how they feel in their positioning in the localities.

D. Informed consent

1. How will you explain to participants what will be involved in taking part in your study?

Information sheet distributed to each participant **YES/NO**

Information sheet displayed on screen for all participants **YES/NO**

Information included in header of questionnaire **YES/NO**

Other (please provide details):

2. Do your participants include minors (under the age of 16 years) **YES/NO**

Please indicate which age groups will be involved:

0-4 years (Requires consent from parent or guardian.)

5-12 years (Requires formal consent from parent/guardian, informal consent from child.)

13-16 years (Requires dual but independent formal consent needed from parent/guardian and from the young person)

If you are diverging from this practice of consent for minors please provide your rationale and the steps you will take to gain consent.

3. Do your participants include vulnerable individuals or those with limited legal capacity? **YES/NO**

If YES, please provide details of who else will give informed consent:

4. Will this study be conducted in a school or other institution where the researcher has a duty of care? **YES/NO**

If YES, please provide details of opt in/opt out consent from parents or guardians:

The study is centred on the support staff not students; therefore consent from parents/guardians is not required. The students are not involved in any way in the study.

4. Are you using the Birkbeck template information and informed consent forms? **YES/NO**

If NO, please provide details of how you will gain informed consent.

Please provide the information sheet and consent forms you plan to use.

E. Confidentiality

Are you seeking to ensure the confidentiality/anonymity of your participants?

If NO, provide details of what steps will be taken to ensure that participants understand and agree that their participation will not be kept confidential and the reasons why?

If YES, provide details of how will you ensure the confidentiality/anonymity of your participants:

- During data collection and analysis?
- In the dissemination of your research (e.g. in essay, theses, talks, websites or research publications)

During the data collection all names will be anonymised, both the participants and the institutions in which the participants learn and work. Any paperbased information will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office, again the information will be anonymised. There will be no identifying features on the interview schedules. Should the participants produce an artwork/object that has obvious identifying features consent will be sought to use in the dissemination of my research. In the dissemination I will anonymised the data and pseudonyms will be used for the participants and the institutions.

F. Storage and Dissemination of Data

1. How will your data be stored, transferred, transcribed?

The recordings for the interviews will be kept on my PC and coded in files where their names will be anonymised. Any paperbased information will be kept in a locked cabinet in my office; again the information will be anonymised. Pseudonyms will be used throughout; there will be no identifying features on the interview schedules, or on any notes made in the interviews. The Management will not have access to any of the data and it will be kept securely by me in a separate locked cabinet. The key will be kept in a safe with a key pad. This is the same procedure used by the onsite counsellors who are required to keep their clients' details confidential. I have authorized permission to do this by the office manager. During transference all names will be anonymised, for both the participants and the institutions. There will be no identifying features on the interview transcripts; coded names will be used.

I will transcribe the data myself, where possible, time allowing, using pseudonyms during the transcribing process. If I am short of time I will employ a service that is of the highest calibre, complying to the confidentiality and security of court transcribers; adhering to the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Telecommunications (Data Protection and Privacy) Regulations 1999.

The participants will have the opportunity to view the data once transcribed before it is used in the project, and any amendments will be made.

2. How will your data be saved, shared and disseminated after the project is completed?

The data will be saved digitally in coded files on my own PC; it will be kept for 3 years, should further research be conducted where the data might be considered of value. It will be shared and disseminated after all confidentiality and ethical issues have been considered as stated above.

G. Risk

1. Risk to the Research Participant/Materials

Does your research involve: (If YES, please provided details)

- Live participants? **YES/NO**
- Sensitive topics? **YES/NO**
- Sensitive materials (e.g. diaries, letters, confidential papers)? **YES/NO**
- Human remains? **YES/NO**
- Wider community? **YES/NO**

If your research involves minors or vulnerable individuals have you had the necessary criminal background check required? **YES/NO**

I am entering institutions with students under the age of 18. It is therefore necessary that I have the check – this has been completed.

2. Risk to the Researcher

(If YES, please provided details)

Is the research environment potentially dangerous? **YES/NO**

Will the investigation involve illegal activity or the discussion of illegal activity? **YES/NO**

If you are involving live participants, will you be alone with them? **YES/NO**

Although I will be alone in a room conducting the interview, most likely in the participants' home, as this is partly an ethnographic study with autoethnographic elements, safeguarding practices will be adhered to. I will inform a colleague where I am interviewing and how long I will be. Alarm will be programmed into my mobile phone as a safeguarding precaution. As indicated by Meg Sewell (2016): '[j]ust as participants may experience psychological stress from disclosing more than intended or being reminded of painful experiences, interviewers may be overwhelmed by the sensitive nature of what is seen or heard, especially in home- or field-based interviews'. Sewell suggests that should these circumstances arise a 'debriefing' might be required after the interview. Accordingly, I will have my supervisors' contact details to hand should I need support.

3. Risk to the College

(If YES, please provide details)

Might the research raise media/social/legal concern in the public domain? **YES/NO**

Could this potentially compromise the reputation of the college? **YES/NO**

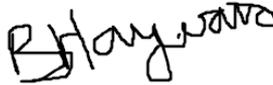
Do you envisage needing help or advice in managing legal or media attention? **YES/NO**

H. If you feel the proposed investigation raises other ethical issues please outline them here.

FOR COMPLETION BY THE RESEARCHER:

- I have answered the above questions as fully and honestly as possible. **YES/NO**
- I agree to inform my supervisor/departmental ethics officer if there is any change to the research project detailed here and if my supervisor deems necessary will seek additional ethical approval. **YES/NO**
- I agree to carry out the study in an ethically informed way and to ensure that participants, researcher(s) and the college are safeguarded. **YES/ NO**
- I agree to carry out the study in line with current Freedom of Information and Data Protection practices, including storing and transferring data securely. **YES/NO**
- I confirm that the research conforms to expectations of ethical research in my discipline. **YES/NO**

SIGNATURE of researcher:



Date: 1/5/16

FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY

For completion by the supervisor/mentor:

It is the supervisor/mentor's responsibility to ensure that once this application has been approved it is kept on file in your departmental repository and available for audit.

If you determine that this application does not raise any additional or novel ethical issues and is deemed to be 'routine' you must answer YES to the following questions.

If the answer to any of these questions is NO, or you have any concerns about the ethics of the proposal, please send this application to your department's ethics officer to be handled as 'non-routine'.

- I have read the application and/or discussed its ethical implications with the student and confirm that in my view all ethical issues have been addressed: **YES/ NO**
- I consider the application to be 'routine' because it does not raise ethical issues beyond those of a study which has already received school ethics approval: **YES/NO**

If NO please provide details of the ethical concerns briefly here:

SIGNATURE of supervisor:

Date:

If you have signed the application off as 'routine' please send this form to your departmental ethics officer to confirm approval and send to the departmental repository.

If you have signed the application as 'non-routine' please send this form to your department ethics officer for further consideration.

‘NON-ROUTINE’ PROJECTS

For completion by departmental ethics officers:

1. I consider this application: **routine / non-routine.**
2. While the nature of the application is 'non-routine', I have worked with the applicant and/or supervisor to address ethical implications and confirm that in my view the ethical implications have been addressed, and I hereby grant approval for the project to commence. **YES/ NO**

If you have replied NO, please provide details of the ethical concerns briefly here:

SIGNATURE of the departmental ethics officer:

Date:

If you consider the application ‘routine’ or have replied ‘YES’ to question 2 above please return this form to the investigator/supervisor who will inform the student that the project may commence and send this form to your departmental repository.

If you have replied ‘NO’ please indicate an appropriate reviewer external to your department (but within the college) who may be more cognisant of specific disciplinary issues in regard to ethics and send this form to the school ethics committee at sshpethics@bbk.ac.uk.

Name of External Reviewer:

Email:

Have they already agreed to serve as an external reviewer? **YES/NO**

Have you already contacted them regarding this application? **YES/NO**

SIGNATURE of departmental ethics officer:

Date:

STAFF PROJECTS ONLY

For completion by the departmental ethics officer:

1. I consider the application: **routine / non-routine**
2. If ‘non-routine’:
Please provide details of the ethical concerns briefly here:

ALL applications from staff – both ‘routine’ and ‘non-routine’ – should be sent to the school ethics committee. Please indicate an appropriate reviewer external to your department (but within the college) who may be more cognisant of specific disciplinary issues in regard to ethics and send this form to the school ethics committee at sshpethics@bbk.ac.uk.

For **all** projects funded by the ESRC, departmental ethics officers should take note of the guidance on the approval process on the [SSHP Ethics website](#).

Name of External Reviewer:

Email:

Have they already agreed to serve as an external reviewer? **YES/NO**

Have you already contacted them regarding this application? **YES/NO**

SIGNATURE of departmental ethics officer: Date:

For completion by the EXTERNAL REVIEWER

Has the investigator/supervisor addressed all ethical concerns satisfactorily? **YES/NO**

If NO, please detail the ethical concerns that need to be address and return this form to the investigator/supervisor for their consideration.

If YES, please sign below to indicate that this project now has ethical approval to commence. Send this approved form to the school ethics committee at sshpethics@bbk.ac.uk who will inform the departmental ethics officer and investigator/supervisor that the project may commence. This form will be sent by the investigator/supervisor to their departmental repository.

If you consider the application 'routine' or have replied 'YES' to question 2 above please return this form to the investigator/supervisor who will inform the student that the project may commence and send it to their departmental repository.

SIGNATURE of External reviewer:

Date:

Information sheet

Department of Applied Linguistics & Communication
School of Social Sciences, History & Philosophy
BIRKBECK
University of London
Malet Street,
London WC1E 7HX
020 7631 6000

Title of Study: Making the invisible visible: To what extent is the positioning of the LSA in contemporary society located in a space of resistance, transformation and or reproduction?

Name of researcher: Beverley Hayward

The study is being done as part of my PhD degree in the Department of Applied Linguistics & Communication, School of Social Sciences, History & Philosophy, Birkbeck, University of London. The study has received ethical approval.

This study wants to explore how you, the LSA understands your life and the spaces in which you live, learn and work. I will be using interviews, observations and you will be asked to produce of a timeline and artwork.

If you agree to participate you will agree a convenient time and place for me to interview and shadow you in your workplace. The interview will be about an hour, the shadowing the same, but over a few hours. You are free to stop the interview and the shadowing, and withdraw at any time.

Your data will kept be anonymous by B Hayward and will be stored at UCA

The analysis of your participation in this study will be written up in a report of the study for my degree. You will not be identifiable in the write up or any publication which might ensue.

The study is supervised by Liz Hault and Kerry Harman who may be contacted at the above address and telephone number.

Consent form

Title of Study: Making the invisible visible: To what extent is the positioning of the LSA in contemporary society located in a space of resistance, transformation and or reproduction?

Beverley Hayward

I have been informed about the nature of this study and willingly consent to take part in it.

I understand that the content of the interview will be kept confidential.

I understand that should I produce of an artwork that is representational it may compromise my anonymity in publication.

I understand that the content of the observations/shadowing in the spaces will be kept confidential.

I understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time.

I am over 16 years of age.

Name _____

Signed _____

Date _____

There should be two signed copies, one for participant, one for researcher.

RESEARCH ETHICS GENERAL GUIDANCE

Ethical approval for all research. Ethical approval is required for all research which involves human participants. This includes research where there is no face-to-face interaction between researcher and participants (e.g., postal questionnaires, telephone interviews, and internet surveys).

Protection of participants. All researchers are obliged to protect the physical, social and psychological wellbeing of their participants, to preserve their dignity and rights, and to safeguard their anonymity and confidentiality.

Informed consent. Article 17 of the *Protocol to the Convention on Human Rights in Biomedicine or Biomedical Research* states: 'No research on a person may be carried out without the informed, free, express, specific and documented consent of the person'. This places a legal obligation on researchers to obtain and record consent from participants or their guardians, on the basis of information that should be given to them before their participation begins.

No coercion. There should be no coercion in the recruitment of participants.

The right to withdraw. There is an obligation on participants to participate in research for which they have volunteered. Nevertheless, participants must be given the right to withdraw from any given research, at any time without penalty and without providing reason. Participants can also require that their data be withdrawn from the study.

Anonymity and confidentiality. Participants must be assured that all information they give will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and that their anonymity will be respected at all times unless otherwise determined by law (for example, in the case of records maintained by the Prison Service). Where relevant, participants should be told about where information about them will be stored, who will have access to it, and what use will be made of it. Procedures for data storage must conform to the Data Protection Act. Express permission must be obtained for any non-confidential use of participant information. Express permission must also be obtained for access to specified information from confidential records, e.g. medical notes, or educational attainment records. Where relevant, any limitations to confidentiality (for example obligations under law, or where there may be a threat to self or others) must be explained.

Appropriate exclusion criteria. Recruitment of participants for a given study should apply exclusion criteria that protect the health and well being of participants (for example, exclusion on the grounds of psychological vulnerability or a pre-existing medical condition).

Monitoring. Researchers are obliged to monitor ongoing research for adverse effects on participants and to stop the research if there is cause for concern about their well-being.

Duty of care. There is a duty of care on researchers to ameliorate any adverse effects of their research on participants (either personally or by referral to an appropriately qualified person). As a general rule, researchers should debrief participants at the end of the research either verbally or in writing.

Additional safeguards for research with vulnerable populations. Special safeguards need to be in place for research with vulnerable populations. Vulnerable populations include schoolchildren, people with learning or communication difficulties, patients in hospital or people under the care of social services, people in custody or on probation, and people engaged in illegal activities, such as drug abuse.

For example, research with vulnerable populations may require Criminal Records Bureau clearance; research with schoolchildren also requires that parents or guardians be informed about the nature of the study and the option to withdraw their child from the study if they so wish.

Appropriate supervision. Student investigators must be under the supervision of a member of Academic Staff. It is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure that the student is aware of relevant Guidelines and of the need to observe them.

How to obtain informed consent: In order that consent be 'informed', consent forms may need to be accompanied by an information sheet for participants setting out information about the proposed study (in clear and simple terms) along with details about the investigators and how they can be contacted. If applicable, this sheet may also make reference to any screening procedures, the confidentiality of the data, any risks involved, and any other points which participants might reasonably expect to know in order to make an informed decision about whether they wish to participate, and which are not included on the informed consent form.

A checklist of points on the informed consent form that participants are expected to sign might typically include: **(a)** That their participation is voluntary, **(b)** That they are aware of what their participation involves, **(c)** That they are aware of any potential risks (if there are any), **(d)** That all their questions concerning the study have been satisfactorily answered. Documented consent may be signed or initialled (if participants wish to maintain anonymity). In situations where information about the research and participant consent is conveyed verbally, it is recommended that the information be recorded on and read from or cued by a written information sheet; verbal consent should also be taped in order to provide a record.

Added safeguards may be required to obtain informed consent with vulnerable populations. For example, research with children in schools cannot take place without the permission of the head teacher and teacher responsible for the children. Where they are competent to give it, informed consent should also be obtained from the children themselves. In addition, parents or guardians should be given all relevant details of the study (in a letter) along with an opportunity to withdraw their child from the study if they so wish (passive consent). If the school requires it, parents may also be required to return signed consent forms (active consent).

This document is modified from the guidelines for minimum standards of ethical approval in psychological research, [British Psychological Society](#)

Further detailed recommendations regarding ethical considerations can be found in the Statement of ethical practice for the [British Sociological Association](#)

Interview Schedule:

- 1 Can you tell me about the object you have brought along?
- 2 Using the timeline/map that you created, can you describe the events and spaces/places shown?

Sub-questions, to be used if information not gained from the two questions above.

- 3 Can you describe the roles that make up your life, currently and in the past?
- 4 How do you feel in those roles and spaces?
- 5 Can you tell me your schooling?
- 6 Can you tell me about your learning since you left school?

Add question

- 7 Can you explain if you have advised students against the norms of the academy?
EG not IP

Appendix 2: Interview Transcripts

Interview 1: pilot interview: Una and follow up email

Introduction to the interview:

This interview is for my PhD, the context of which I explained in the information sheet I give to you and again on the telephone, when I set up the interview. It is entitled: policy dividing practice: an exploration into the subject positionings of the female learning support assistant in post compulsory education, as they practice their art/craft in spaces of the everyday.

You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know. (Took photographs of her artwork, many images included below. I was in her home for three hours and cut short the interview after 45 mins as I could see she was getting tired and she was hungry.)

0.01 Interviewer: Firstly I would like to start by asking you which object you would like to discuss in the interview, although I have photographed many of the artworks that are displayed in your home, I understand that the one you specifically made for this project is not completed due to the situation with your daughter. So I do have some set questions for the interview which I should like you to comment on after the interview as you are the pilot participant, but really they are just a prompt to remind me of the information I would like to source for the study on art, subjectivity and how you feel about the everyday . But, this is more of a narrative approach where you can just talk and talk, so really, it's about your experiences around everyday learning.

0.36 Una: OK

0.37 Interviewer: So how we are going to do this is, I would like you to bring your object to discuss, or choose one I have photographed from the many pieces on display (foot is in a cast so I did not want her to have to move about again). It can be one or more than one, it's up to you. So why this object, how it relates to you and how it shows your everyday experiences. Ok so when you are ready ... (pause)



1.30 Una: OK, so I ... err, OK so I could talk about err, well really, they are connected, so I could talk about my vases and my Pelion house, which are all sort of Greek really. Although they are different, because the vases are made of found objects and, although that has found objects as well, because I'm quite interested in using recycling and found bits and pieces. So the glass vases are using sea glass that I picked up on two beaches and err one of the vases I am potentially going to give to one of our friends who went on holiday with us for his 60th birthday, err just because it's err, a place that we love as much as we do really, so it will be a nice sort of memento for them really. Em ... (pause).

2.34 Interviewer: Why are you interested in found objects?

2.35 Una: Well I've always been interested in found objects, in recycling objects, it's probably because I'm a hoarder. (both laugh). So, I end up with loads of stuff. Then I have to think of something to do with it. So, well when you look at my desk upstairs you will see it's so piled high with things. Well when I did my degree, when I did my degree projects, they were generally using all found stuff as well, although my final project was sewing so that was different, although it was err maps and memory, so I suppose in a way it was still kind of tied in with, err recycling, recycling my memories I suppose. But a lot of my projects did use err, recycling. Recycling paper, I did a recycling paper projects, found wood – I did a project with that, so err (pause)

4.07 Interviewer: Can you tell me a bit more about your projects?

4.08 Una: Well my final project, the sewing, one was a great big bed sized quilted map thing of neurons, it was based on neurons, like a neuron design, which I machine stitched and then in side that, inside the neuron bits were hand stitched maps of places that were important to me from my past. Err (pause).

4.39 Interviewer: And where is that now?

4.40 Una: It's in a big black sack in the box room (her workshop), somewhere (laughter). It's just not, not the sort of thing I want to put on show, or on the bed

4.50 Interviewer: No?

4.54 Una: No

4.55 Interviewer: why not?

4.56 Una: because it's just not, it's just not. It was alright as a wall hanging piece in New Designers, as a sort of focal thing, but it is massive – it is kind of 6ft, square

5.08 Interviewer: Oh, so it is kind of a quilt cover size?

5.09 Una: yes, it is a quilt cover size. And it's kind of rusty brown, and the sewing, the sewing is well, and the stitching of the neuron bit they were a kind of heathery colours, like purples – I can send you some picture if you like?

5.29 Interviewer: Yes, that would be great – thank you

5.30 Una: Err and the little maps are all hand stitched on, based on, and yeah, you wouldn't know they were maps to look at unless you knew it, as they were all just sort of random

5.49 Interviewer: Oh, so they are all quite abstracted then?

5.50 Una: Yes, they are abstract, err, but yeah it is not something that you could put out, well, really

5.51 Interviewer: Ok, so in that experience of creating that, did you learn any new techniques?

5.52 Una: Err, that was my first go at quilting, err really, I sort of, it wasn't piecing quilting, it was just sort of quilting through, which I had never done that and obviously it was such a large piece and it was quite difficult keeping it flat while you were quilting and so that was quite challenging (pause).

6.35 Interviewer: So, your degree was in Applied Art?

6.36 Una: Yes, Applied Art

6.37 Interviewer: So, you had the choice of whatever? Medium?

6.38 Una: Yes of what we wanted to do, yes we did, so yeah, so I chose the fabric for the final piece and well I hadn't used fabric for any of my other projects at all, and the minor, yeah the minor I did was a small book of maps which I then took into the final project, which was a kind of bedding to the major project.

7.12 Interviewer: So, what was your interest in the theme of maps and memory?

7.13 Una: Well again, my dissertation was on nostalgia, so err, so err, it was all kind of to do with memory and place, so it all sort of tied in with that. And I have used maps before in sort of different kind of craft things as well, in using bits of maps which is quite interesting, they are interesting to use, err ... (pause)

7.41 Interviewer: so how did you feel about recording all your memories?

7.42 Una: Err well they were all pretty positive so well the, the maps that I chose were all kind of positive memories; so, it was kind of interesting to revisit, to actually look at the maps of the places, maps from Wales. I lived in Wales, my children were actually born in Wales so, yeah that was quite good, so I had the maps from here 'cause I moved from here then to Wales and then back again (laughter). Yeah so there was different sort of locations that I chose and they had sort of a meaning to me, err yeah so it was quite a positive experience for me really.

8.51 Una: So, I could use this as the visual representation of the timeline, if you wanted to get it out of your black sack, or the images would be great from New Designers.

9.01 Interviewer: Yes I can send you the photographs that were taken for the New Designers and I could probably dig out the small book of maps that I used, but when you see my box room you will be able to see why I won't be able to find it (laughter)



9.23 Interviewer: So why is the space being used as storage and not your workshop, then?

9.24 Una: Well it is literally a storage room that we use in place of an attic, so it is all full of stuff anyway, and in the mean time because I haven't really been doing anything over the year it has just been a case of take something and take it in and dump it on my desk and it's just basically been a dumping ground. Err I think that if I had, if I actually had a proper project on the go then I would probably have to clear it out. You know, there's not proper windows in there it is all artificial light and so it's not always ideal to be able to see what you are doing.

10.28 Interviewer: I see.

10.29 Una: my box room is my study, but I don't do my study in there, because it is a bit isolating, I study here (pointing to the sofa).

10.30 Interviewer: Yes, I agree, that's what I mean, it's nicer just to be in the proper daylight, to have some daylight?

10.36 Una: Yes, well it is pretty dark and dismal up there as you are right at the top of the house. So, it's a long way away from the, err, kettle and the biscuits (laughter). And it's right next to the bedroom (laugh) ... pause

10.45 Interviewer: So other than the quilting did you learn other skills or techniques from your degree or did you bring them to the course from previously?

11.32 Una: I learnt lots of other techniques and skills, so I've done ceramics and I also did some metal work, and I used the workshop wood saw, so I used all that kind of thing, which I hated. I was so scared of them, you know the great big saws and the drills and things? And it was a disaster, we had to make a box, just a simple box, like cut all the pieces right to the size out of MDF. You ask Eve, my box was, let's just say it wasn't! (Laughter). Well the angles were all so far off, like one bit was like that and one like that (visually indicating with her hands that the box was disjointed and not straight). So, it was abstract, as well (both of us laughing as she recounted the story). It wouldn't go together, it was a disaster. So, I knew at that point that I

would not be doing wood (pause) I did quite enjoy the ceramics, err, but I did tend to always go back to the found objects (pause).



13.04 Interviewer: So would you say that you were more inclined to work in 2D or 3D?

13.05 Una: Well I actually think more 3D, painting and things like that, I do enjoy it, but I can't get the time to get going on something, spending, you know dedicating the time. I would rather have something you can pick up again and again. I know you can do that with painting, but I like to just get stuck into a painting, but I would like to have the time to do it (pause).

13.46 Interviewer: So, what inspires you?

14.08 Una: Well if I'm using objects then it's obviously just whatever I've got, what I've found and I think well that will be good I can use some of that (pause)

14.20 Interviewer: So OK can you describe how you see yourself and the roles that you embody, both currently and in the past?

14.35Una: Laughs, pauses

14.48 Interviewer: Well whatever comes to mind.

15.00 Una: Well mum obviously, housekeeper, (laughing) slave, chief bottle washer. No well I still, even though I'm out to work, I still see my main role as being at home really; that's where I would rather be, than at work. I would rather be, in my ideal life, I would like to be at home, cooking and stuff, I love it, but I don't have the time, to you know, yeah, but no, saying that, ideally, I would like to be a baker (laughing) I love baking.

15.39 Interviewer: You do?

15.40 Una: Yeah, but then I suppose that is creative too isn't it? Yes, well I do like making a nice decorated cake, but I just don't have the time to do that, again it's just not something I get the time to do.

15.50 Interviewer: did you learn that specifically or did you teach yourself that skill?

16.01 Una: It's just self-taught, err, yeah, you know, but saying that it makes it sound like I like being at home, that I like doing house work and things, when I don't, I really don't (laughing).

16.20 Interviewer: So, you like to be at home to bake, but not the cooking and the cleaning?

16.30 Una: No, the cooking alright, but not the cleaning; it just gets done when it has to.

16.40 Interviewer: Can you elaborate?

16.50 Una: Well the shopping for the baking I like, I like the grocery shopping, but I'm not into any other kind of shopping, clothes and things, you can keep that. But I do like a bit of grocery shopping. And I do that pretty much every day, 'cause I don't drive so I walk round do my shopping every day, and while I'm at work, by the time I come to work I've been shopping, and then sometimes I go shopping again afterwards if I've forgotten something (laughing). Yeah so I shop small, I don't do like a weekly shop, so yeah.

17.00 Interviewer: So, can you drive?

17.04 Una: No, I can't drive. And I mean Peter would take me shopping but I can't have him coming grocery shopping because I always feel stressed, feeling like I've forgotten something.

17.36 Interviewer: so, you don't take a list?

17.41 Una: yes. I do take a list but I don't usually stick to it (laughing). Yeah, but no, but I do sort of enjoy the homemaking, the creative homemaking, yeah, I would say. All the kids have grown up now so they do their own thing anyway now. And my role at work, it fits in really well actually, for me it's ideal, well it's been idea up to this point, err because it's flexible, err really you know, you can juggle the students around if you need to you know, and it's quite good having the flexibility. I think it will be the same in my new job role, as I going to job share with Eve, we can mix and match a bit. And I am still going to do the mentoring as I have still got a studentmaths, so I think it will be alright. And I don't think once I got into the maths last year, I quite enjoyed it actually. I found doing the maths half way through the year there were gaps, but then there were the revision classes and I found that some of the things I'm thinking that they must have made this up cause I don't remember doing this, they must have made this up, like it must have been invented since I was at school (laugh) cause I don't remember doing this or any of these terms.

20.38 Interviewer: So, as a learning environment how did you find the process?

20.39 Una: I didn't find it particularly successful really, I mean to be honest I could have done a better job than she was doing, it was just recycling off websites, you know and handing out a paper and then just going through the answers sort of thing, but that might have been because I missed the beginning of the year when they had been taught more things so that might be different.

21.40 Una: But maybe that is our assumptions, that they were being taught things?

21.50 Interviewer: Yes, it would be interesting to see in the beginning of the year, to see how she starts off, cause obviously she has to do some kind of assessment to find out what everybody knows and doesn't know, I'm assuming.

22.00 Una: yes, they do the assessment in the 3rd week of the term. However, they do not comply with the assessment process as those students this year that were at the functional skills level were still entered for the GCSE because the provider did not source an exam centre in time and so they all did GCSE.

22.28 Interviewer: But as a, as a sort of learning environment I didn't think it was particularly successful really, because it was just everybody doing, you know working on a sheet and then just going through the answers. Really, they could have been doing a lot of that stuff themselves at home, 'cause it was all website based or whatever, you know, cause what they actually seemed to be learning and she didn't really, I don't think she really explained it very well either. So quite often I was explaining the things to them and they kind of went 'Oh!' cause they just hadn't had it explained in a straight forward way to them, you know. And then it just sort off clicked. But I thought that's not really my job, that should be her job, to be teaching them these different methods for different things.

23.40 Interviewer: Yes, it will be interesting to see the results for the cohort. So, going back to your own experiences can you describe if that experience brought back any memories for you?

23.55 Una: What the maths?

23.59 Interviewer: Well the maths or anything else you think is significant?

24.24 Una: Well I hated maths at school, so I was really scared to start with. I was. Well I did do O Level maths. I got a C I think. But it just, it just never seemed to click with me when I was studying it myself. But saying that when I was looking at it again and explaining it to the students it seemed to make more sense to me so I don't know if that's 'cause I'm older or because I explaining it to someone else.

25.20 Interviewer: OK

25.22 Una: Yeah I thought that this never made any sense to me then suddenly, but I think because you are sort of verbally explaining it to someone, rather than just sitting there with it in your own head going round and round, I think it does definitely help to kind of verbally speak to someone, explain it to them. Even if you are not sure yourself, kind off talking about it, it kind of somehow clarifies it, in your own way. Even if you are not using the maths yourself. Although I did use some maths, yes ah, yes I used Pythagoras's theorem, the sides of a triangle? Because before when I had my foot done I had a plan to make a bean bag, a bean bag cause I was sleeping down on the sofa with me leg up here on pillows and things, so I thought I would make a triangular shaped bean bag like this (shows me with her hands) that I could put my leg up on, so I worked out the height that the bean bag was going to be and how far along it was going to come, and I actually worked out what, what the length would have to be. So, I was using that theory you see.

26.40 Interviewer: So, it was a surprise to you to be using this?

26.51 Una: Yes, it really was. I never thought that I would be using this (laughing), but I never made the bean bag. In theory I could have done, but I know how much material I would have needed. So yeah that was a practical use for something, thinking that that was something that I probably would never going to need.

28.07 Interviewer: so how does that compare with the more creative aspect of learning in the everyday?

28.10 Una: I think that probably the creative learning is probably more engaging learning from the outset, I would say, the mathematical learning is more of a challenge. It made me feel more, it is maybe more of an achievement, the feeling of achievement if you do sort of work out what you are doing. It is not that kind of achievement, that achievement if you were kind

of doing something creative really. That would, that would be more of a satisfying outcome with the creative, whereas the maths is more of a just an achievement. Do you see what I mean? It's not the same kind of satisfaction as actually making and learning something creative.

29.00 Interviewer: So how do you feel in those different spaces?

29.01 Una: Well with the maths class I was in there half way through the year and so I was difficult, so I just focused on the students that were down on my sheet, I think if I'd gone, at the beginning of the year, you get to know all the students more as a group you might feel more comfortable moving about, generally in the normal classroom setting even if I'm supporting one student I tend to move about between the other students as well just to see what they are up to and that. So, I think maybe that that was coming in half-way through the year again, because I didn't know all the students. I was just focusing in on the ones I was in there to support. Err and again the classroom setting was that weird big space with five students spread all over the place, you couldn't just casually mingle. It was hard to, you just couldn't casually mingle, you have to make an effort to get up and go around all the desks and go over there in that corner and then come all the way back the other way, that sort of thing, whereas if you are in a smaller space and everyone is just sort of sitting around you can just sort of get around a lot easier. I don't think that big, kind of big computer room is really ideal for that. I mean ideally one of the seminar rooms with the projector, that's what you need isn't it? You do need to be all spread around. I suppose if you are using computers though you do need to be in a big room. It did seem to, like everyone was just so spread out for such a small number of students most of the time. I think the most that there was ever in there was in the afternoon class, was eight maybe, and that was on a good day, and I would say five was probably the average, but no more than eight, I think there was in a class at any one time.

33.01 Interviewer: Do you think there was anything in your own schooling that was of significance as a learning experience?

33.15 Una: Oh God, I can't remember. I wasn't a very good student really, I don't think. Em I did alright, I was reluctant, I was a reluctant learner really – I would rather go out and do other stuff. Err yeah, I mean I did what I had to do and that was it really, I wasn't like err, I did do my O levels and then A levels: English, German and French, failed the French, only because I didn't bother to go to any of the classes, that I should have. I hated French, only because I found German so easy, cause my Mum's German, so I have, I have a bit of an advantage of speaking German anyway, although the German A level was all sort of obscure German literature and all things like that – not very nice to learn and I was doing that alongside English Literature as well, but because I found the German comparatively easy I found the French really hard err, but I did French O level but of course if you did English and German you had to do another language, you couldn't do art they wouldn't let me do art. I wasn't allowed to do it, it was on the wrong group, you know all the groups that you had to pick from, so I would have liked to have done art, but it wasn't an option so I did French, so you know, you know like they had, they had the French conversation students to come in to do the conversations. Well at the end of the year I showed up when I hadn't been to any of the conversation classes, but I thought I had better go along to the last one, and the person sort of said, 'Who are you?' (laughing). So I got another another O level in French, with is really useful (sarcastic) and I got English and German and then I left school, went to work, then had kids and then and then when I moved back down here I went back to college to do the BTEC classroom assistance thing, at the time it was called the Certificate in Literacy and Numeracy for a Classroom Assistant, so I did that

which was part-time, got that then I started to work in a school and yeah I did that for a few years and then I did the access course at The Uni, err and then I did the degree (pause).

37.01 Interviewer: So, you were then offered a job at The Uni after your degree?

37.10 Una: Err, yeah. I think that was, err yeah, I think I think it was Julie who was already working there. She was I think been working there a year I think. So I started there I in 2009, but I knew her from school, cause I went to school with her and obviously I had seen her when I was studying there and she was working there already and I think that she probably just said to me there are some jobs coming up and because I had just done the ambassador stuff at uni and I had done mentoring as well for the widening participation at the school, I think it was, as I had gone into some of their art classes there, in their 6th form and done sort of mentoring there. Yeah so it was ideal really. And I did have a really good time and I really did enjoy doing my degree, being there and I thought well I thought I would just stay here. And so, I've been there ever since. I also feel I was really lucky ending up in John's class right from the outset, cause I think that if I'd been somewhere else it would have been a different story; it's just been so much fun most of the time, obviously it has its moments and some of the students have not been so much fun, generally as an atmosphere it is generally a really nice place to be based. So. I think I've been lucky on that score. I think I will be doing the film reviews for him, although he is altering that and making it part of the theory kind of programme now, but they will watch their films and they will have to write a film review, which I have been doing the last couple of years for him, just two hours a week from home really. I do it on the computer, so they write the film reviews on their blog and I go in and have to kinda of advise them on structure and err on the theory. I am supposed to be helping them towards their essay, and err referencing and all that kind of stuff, err but I think he is talking about incorporating that into the theory part of it, cause it's different this year so.

41.50 Interviewer: So that element of your job is not certain?

41.51 Una: No, well I'm assuming that I still will be doing something along those lines, but I haven't heard from him at all over the summer, so I don't know, so err yeah (pause). Shall we stop for lunch then?

41.57 Interviewer: Oh OK, so I can take a photo of your workshop then, after lunch? And have a chat about the questions? I love your photos they are amazing – I will put some in.

41.58 Una: Yeah. Great.





Email: Hi Una,

I just have a few questions to follow up from the interview, if that's ok?

You say that you love baking, why is that not a career that you are not pursuing and do you have any images of the cakes you have baked?

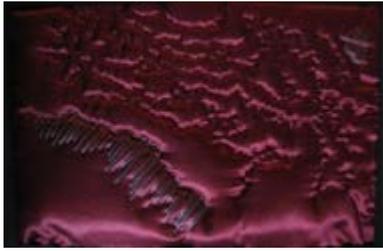
Re baking as a career... I did consider it some years ago, and looked at different courses, but in the end, Peter lost his job and I needed to get back to work sooner rather than later, so that's how I ended up where I am now! I have attached my most recent cake - the engagement one for daughter (all seems to be back on track, but I'm not asking too many questions!) Lemon drizzle with lemon and poppy seed buttercream. I have more recently thought about looking at doing a food hygiene certificate and registering with the council, but to be honest, I am not sure if I would have the time to make it worthwhile.



Do you have a caption for your mapping and memory piece and can you dig out the book for me? Can you give me an idea of the maps' specific locations and places and how they relate to you?

The final project piece was called 'Memory and Place - a Comfort Blanket'. I have managed to find some images of the supporting research which was in the form of the books which contained the individual maps; these were places I had lived (S. as a child - R D area; S. now - R area; Cardiff - my first move to Wales on my own; BR - where the children were born and spent their first years; L in G. - where my gran lived and I spent most summers as a child; memorable holiday destinations, including B in S, and several Greek areas - the Pilion, Skopelos etc) I have included some of the construction of the books too. These individual maps were then recreated on the big final quilt, set among the overall design which was based on neural pathways to signify memory.





With the recycling theme in your work, are you interesting in environmental issues? Or is it just about the hoarding? And why do you think you are a hoarder?

The recycling/hoarding! I have always collected 'stuff' that I think might come in useful, and I don't like to throw things away, but I don't think it's necessarily from an environmental point of view, more the thought that once I've chucked it, I am going to need it for something the very next day!! After all, you never know what the next project might be!! I am a Womble... :)

Can you explain the issues you had about learning to drive? I can't remember what you said as I had the recorder off at that point

The driving - I started when I was 18, down here in England, had loads and loads of lessons, and just never felt really comfortable or happy. Failed a test. Then I had lessons again in Wales (where there was hardly any traffic!) and still was a nervous wreck every time I had to get behind the wheel, and failed again. I don't think it was my actual driving that was making me nervous, more the fact that I couldn't control what all the other idiots on the road were doing. We never had a car when I was growing up, so it was not something I particularly missed, and I was used to either walking or taking public transport. And now it keeps me fit.

Interview 2: Eve

This interview is for my PhD, the context of which I explained in the information sheet I give to you and again on the telephone, when I set up the interview. It is entitled: policy dividing practice: an exploration into the subject positionings of the female learning support assistant in post compulsory education, as they practice their art/craft in spaces of the everyday.

You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know. She showed me around her home and the space that is to be her studio. The building work was taking place as we conducted the interview and the noise is in the background as we decided to sit outside, it was an extremely hot day and Eve took photos to email to me after the interview.

0.01 Interviewer: OK so tell me about your artwork, anything that you want to discuss.

0.02 Eve: Ok so maybe I'll just tell you about the one I started this year, about the blanket, cause as you know my son is going off to uni and sort off leaving home, in a way really. But we had a practice time when he went off for three months to Russia and I thought I'm going to miss him: empty space. And so I thought I would start on a new project, and the new project was to make a nice big blanket, a bed blanket, a nice cover, a sort of warm, sort of wrap you up, so that I might give it to him for a present, or I might not; if it's too nice, I'll keep it for myself (laughing, as if joking). It was sort of for me as a comfort kind of thing. So basically, I called it Empty Nest Blanket. Err because it was to give me something to do and it was new project, to give me something to do. Something to just draw on, design, and start working on, to keep me busy. So, I've came up with this pattern and started working on it, but it's not finished, I'm half way through it because I took a little break because actually, he's home again, at the moment. But he's off again next week, so I probably take up the knitting needle again next week, and I will continue with it and it will probably be finished by Xmas, maybe before.



2.00 Interviewer: so. is this a new medium that you learnt for this project?

2.04 Eve: no but it is a new technique, so it was a different technique, yes so it's made in squares and you join the squares together and that way I can carry it around in a small bag with me, so you can take it anywhere you like. It works out at about 30cm squared so that if you've only got a small thing and three pieces of wool you can carry it about anywhere, in your handbag. I do it on the train, in the car, when I'm not driving (joking)

2.43 Interviewer: so, it's like portable art? Craft?

2.44 Eve: yeah and also it was a new technique because I learnt mitered corners. So you really have to start out big and each square end up with just one point, so you start out with a long line and you just knit into one stitch and so as you get through it, it starts to get faster and faster so as you get to the end of each square and then you just join the squares up when you have a minute or two.



3.18 Interviewer: so how did you learn that technique?

3.19 Eve: on YouTube, YouTube and Pinterest and just looking around and trying and I did several practice pieces. Starting out and going in but I'm going to have to learn, learn a way of going in and then out, cause I'm going to have to knit a boarder as you come to the square bit so I'm going to have to do a mitre outwards, as opposed to a miter inwards. So there were new techniques involved and I spent a lot of time working and looking at colours and they might seem a little subdued and muted because it's off white, silvery grey and dark grey, but the colours just seem to go and then I thought that if I did give it to my son it is slightly more boyish and masculine, then again as I said I might just keep it for myself, just to remind me of my boy, to fill my empty nest and I'm already looking at my next project and seeing what I can do after this. Hopefully I'm going to start to do a little bit more of the book binding as I really enjoyed that one when I learnt how to do that, as I want to do a course, a brief course. Err that was lovely cause I really like paper, I love paper, so I'm going to have another go at that when I've got my little space. So at the moment in the position where I'm maybe going to work half a week at a time, so I'll have half a week hopefully, if I can get myself organized, to err start making again, cause I always thought I gave up work when my son was little to be there for him and sort of went back to work as he began to not need me quite so much and of course now he's going off to uni and I want to have, it's my time now really. I think. You know I can now do something for me. It's not an excuse but it's a sort of time to do it, yeah. Err when he was away, we did have a good system going when he went for the three months to China and I remembered that when I was about 12/14 I went to colleges in the summers. We went off for about a month, off to the college in Portugal in the summer and my grandfather used to write to me during the time there, every week, and sometimes twice a week and he used to put little things in for me like pressed flowers, really lovely things and tell me all the news. So I had this idea that I would write to my son every week, when he was away cause the phone to China is very expensive and, and so I did I wrote to him a week after he went and I explained about this and I put I typed it as a letter and I attached it to an email. It wasn't the body of an email, cause for me that's quite important that it's not an email, that it was attached to an email, but it was a letter and I had to type it because my scanner doesn't work so I typed it and then it could include photos in it, in the body of it, so I would send him a letter with some photos in it and everything that was going on and all the nonsense. And then he wrote back to me and we did this every week that he was away. I had a letter from him virtually every week that he was away and then he got one from me, and I've kept them and we've agreed, and we were talking about this yesterday and we're agreed that when he goes to Scotland, that's what we're going

to do; we're going to do a weekly letter and he'll write back cause he said that he actually really enjoyed doing it. (whisper) He wrote really nice letters and they were really interesting. Like he was discussing all sorts of things and, he, you know, there was a guy that he was talking to about child psychology and he started launching into all this child psychology with me and I thought yeah OK (laughing), which was good and then he was telling me about all the things there and then what was happening and so hopefully that would be nice and kinda fill the ... cause I'm going to miss him. Yeah, I'm going to miss him, really, it will be kinda different and I'm thinking that will be a nice and oh yeah (sigh) yeah. So that's hopefully, we'll kinda do that on a weekly basis 'cause he still doesn't have a smart phone he's not really interested in that, so no, he doesn't have one. He's still got an old little phone that texts and does phone calls. He said I might have to do that though cause in college they might be giving you new timetables and stuff and whatever, and he said, "I might have to". Well he might have to, but in the meantime, but it could be on the laptop, as we got him a new laptop. We got him a lovely new laptop this year, a good, new, fast laptop, so I think that he will probably do that and just keep his manky phone, 'cause he not interested, he's just not interested.

9.50 Interviewer: it can be distracting.

9.51 Eve: Err, yes I totally agree it is so it's distracting and I could skype, but, unless I'm really desperate, as it's the letters that are for me really good, cause if you take the time to write it then I think you can consider what you are saying and I don't think you miss out on emotion and his letters were interesting and yes we can skype and I'll go and see him and take him out to dinner once in a blue moon.

10.10 Interviewer: yes, I had a similar situation, when my mum went deaf. I used to write to her and when she died she had kept all the letter. I found them and I didn't remember I had written them.

10.30 Eve: wow that's really good. Yeah

10.35 Interviewer: I was reading them and thinking oh yeah, it was just like a conversation, you know, chit chat.

10.40 Eve: well this was it. I was writing to him telling him all the things that were going on and what happened this week, and who was where and what was what, and more or less replied to some of the things I'd said, and given me knew things, and then I'd reply to the things he said and give him new things, and that's kind of how we did it. And so, each time you could see a pattern and referring back to what, what's said, and then typing new bits and so I'm looking forward to that actually. I thought I'll try and keep them in a folder or a book; yeah, I will put them all into a book at some point. I, yeah, that it's a turning point in my life and yeah, your life as well, because your babies have sort have grown up now. Oh, something happened the other day that I want to tell you about that was a bit spooky. My brother Malcolm sent me a photo the other day on the internet and said is there any chance you can use your magic and get rid of the red eye that was particularly ... it was a nice photo of mum and dad, it was a couple of years old, a few years ago. And they both look well in it and my son was in it, and his son Antony and Liam who are in Germany, and they all, or nearly all apart from my father had red eye. And I did it, I fixed it and sent them, and he said well I did get them and I didn't get that I didn't attach it. So, I had real hassle sending the thing. So, I had to redo the photo again and put it back into photo shop and slowly do all the eyes that took forever. I did it and when he wrote back to say he did get it and on another slightly different topic did I tell you about my sister in-law brother dying?

13.10 Interviewer: No. do you want me to edit this out after?

13.16 Eve: No, its fine. Denny's wife, she said, Mark said Rose wants to know if we can put Denny into Marko's first day at school photo. Yeah, see your face is the same as me and I put I could try, but I didn't say 'don't do it Mark'. But I'm going to say to Mark that I think that really isn't a good idea. It's a really bad idea. I think she's in shock; I mean he's not been dead, not even a month. He will be dead a month in a couple of weeks' time, or something. He's only 40. And his son is only 4, the youngest and the eldest is 14. (pause) yes so what other projects? Err I decided that I'm going to reinvent myself, Beverley, (laughing) Well I have decided to reinvent myself. It's time to reinvent myself again, because each stage in your life you do sort of reinvent yourself or else you stay stagnant and you just don't do anything. So, my son moving out to me, this is like an opportunity to not to close the book but to move onto a new chapter and to move on to something new. Except it is just I'm thinking that for years now or for the last 19 yrs. It's been more or less about him and about doing things and bit by bit I started doing things for myself and now I think it's about time I start doing something a little bit more for me. So, at the moment I'm in a sort of in an in-betweeny stage, cause I'm not quite sure where I'm going. But I know I'm going somewhere, but I just don't know where I'm going. I'm on the platform and I'm waiting for the right train to come (laughing). So, I'm on a journey, well we're all on a journey Beverley.

17.09 Interviewer: well once you get your space sorted out (pause)

17.27 Eve: well I'm in shock a little bit about that, because it's been at least, well we're been here 16 nearly 17 yrs. And for a good 10 of those years I've been looking for a room in the house and of course there's the manky room, the engine room, but he's had to have that mess, but he just has to have that room, and all I wanted was to have that little room to work in. I could have had my own business. So, the fact that it's actually been built, I'm in shock that it's actually happening. He been good, except for the balustrade at the back; he wanted a balustrade, but I wanted wrought iron railings at the back of the building. I know someone who makes lovely wrought iron railings, so I thought that I would ask for a quote and he said quote away. Well he is making the steps; the guy is making the steps; he has molded the steps for us. Well he can do the steps, but I'm not having a balustrade. He said you won't see it, but I see it now, you only have to walk by it. So, there is only two things I put my foot down about. One is the balustrade, I don't like it, and two he wanted to put in a ceiling in the building and I said no I want it open to the rafters. Cause I want that airy light feeling. I want ... I don't want you know like a coffin. It's symbolic as well, you know I don't want to be hailed up there like I'm confined in. So yeah, air, light space, so it is going to be opened up to the rafters. And there will be beams going across, you know, but I don't mind that at all. They can be suspended from there; they can be out on there. I don't really mind at all; I just want a space. I'll have a room, a room of my own, a room of your own ha. So that's it, so that's why, as well I've got to mix and match and have a job part-time. I don't want a job full-time, she did ask me if I wanted the job full-time, but no I wanted it as a job share, so she offered the job as a job share and she said can I ask you why and I said that I want to start making things again, to be creative, as does Prue, so likes coming and going, like free spirits. (she laughs). You are a free spirit. (we laugh).

20.33 Interviewer: I try.

20.34 Eve: you do a lot actually, I'm always impressed by your energy.

20.35 Interviewer: and I by yours.

20.36 Eve: yes, but you get a lot done.

20.37 Interviewer: well unfortunately a lot of it gets done on my bum, but I've been trying to keep fit lately.

20.38 Eve: and I've found a place to go and once I've decided this job is going somewhere and it's viable, err, Ashley Park. It's a place here on the motorway, it's just by the next junction along from ours. So, I could go from here to there, along the little road, go in, do a little bit of gym and a little bit of whatever, have a nice shower and go straight to work. And that I could do cause it's on the way and I don't have to make a big detour. It's like a five-minute detour and that's good. It's something else that I think is important. I need to get fit. And it's good mentally – you can get some good ideas, I do when I'm driving, then I thought no I can't, I've got to pay attention to the road. But if I get into the gym and I start to do the exercise it will be fine. I'll start to swim up and down and then on the tread mill. So, I'm looking forward to doing that and I could go Monday to Friday and there's a gym there and it's clean and nice. Ok so ask me some questions.

22.25 Interviewer: Ok, so would you like to talk about any other art works? What about your vases?

22.34 Eve: well the vases are old things that I made before, but there is something about working with clay that I really like and you see this is where I have something of a bit of a dilemma at the moment, as I'm not sure what I'm going to do in my room yet, because I like too many things, cause I'm too (pause). That was one of the problems with applied art you can use any material you like. You can mix and match. It might come to that I might use a mixture of different things. But I do like architecture and architectural, or sculptural or vessels that have an architectural quality to them.

24.45 Interviewer: Ok, why is that?

24.46 Eve: that's a good question – it's something to do with the form. Err maybe I quite like vessels because there is, there's something inside, well also I'm a vessel, (laughing). No well there's something about the form and the shape; I like vessels, be it teapots, cups, pots, bowls, anything that can hold something, cause it can hold something secret, it can hold, well it could hold nothing, or fresh air, there's something about them that is a link to the home and the house by the shape and the form. Err it's something to do with that, inside outside space, and negative space, just empty or, err just but, also, I particularly like different stages of architecture. The different types of ones you get, where each era had its own thing and I quite like playing with bits of paper and clay and making. Just taking a little something from one and making something out of it. I quite like that. So that's a very real possibility and like I said I also have the possibility of paper, the bookbinding, but quite how feasible that will be, I have to be practical as well I suppose.



26.39 Interviewer: Yes, everyone loves your folded book you did, that is in the office. Everyone loves it, they all comment on it. I said that one of the LSAs made it.

26.47 Eve: oh excellent. But I now may be the LS Coordinator, not an LSA. Oh good, because one of the other possibilities I have with my new space is, but I will have to have public liability insurance is, to start running, just interesting one day workshops, or all sorts of different things and do sort of, you know, like a nice cup of coffee or tea in the morning, with biscuits and you work for a couple of hours and then you break for lunch, a nice bowl of soup, some fresh bread and tea and before you leave in the afternoon a cup of coffee or tea and a piece of cake, you would have learnt to do something, could be the book folding. It could be as simple as that, but it is quite therapeutic, particularly because it's restful and you can listen to music or whatever, some sewing. It could be some simple ceramic type things, like making Christmas decorations, from ceramics, or paper folding. There's loads of things that I could just happily do workshops in. Yes, I think I could do that actually, just start off gently. I did teach that paper folding thing that we did last, that day we did that lesson; they all loved it. You know that paper one? You were there and I taught them how to make that thing out of 3 pieces of paper. I'm going to bring it out because I want to show you, because I want you to see it cause it's another shape. So, this is the one I made to show the people how to do it, so that was my sample and I'm thinking that you could do an advent calendar, cause it's only made from paper. It's 3 pieces of paper – that's made with paper card. But I've done it with Christmas wrapping paper. But I was thinking that you could do it for children, for adults. Or you can make them bigger to use them for wrapping jewellery, earrings, something small, so rather than putting them into, into, yeah, you can put them into something that makes it a bit more interesting. I use them with the strips going down different ways, so I'm thinking that there's all sorts, but I love making that and I quite liked teaching them how to do it. So they all got quite, some of them said that they never, oh I've got something else that I've quite enjoyed, working with people who want to learn something new that have never done it before, and who never had the time, and just seeing people, I love seeing people make things. Like even the book binding, when I did that staff book binding, everyone came away with something, as I try to be inclusive and include everyone.

32.25 Interviewer: Ok so going back to my questions, what roles do you identify with, both past and present, any roles?

32.37 Eve: Oh, my goodness, that's an interesting question. What roles, like how do I see myself? (interviewer yes). Well I sort of see myself as here in the home at the moment and a parent and sort of his teacher, as there is a lot of teaching involved with a small child and a teenager, and you have to keep changing to keep up with it. And learning a few new tricks. Err so I do see that as one of my roles up 'til now, as a home person, and a mother and a parent, and teacher and also in a role I see myself as a creator, as a maker, yeah, if I'm sounding a bit pretentious, I'm not. I don't know it just, well maybe I am, it's just because, I see myself as an artist, well maybe an emerging artist. I see myself as a creator person. When I was leaving school, I did want to do art and I wasn't allowed to. I would have liked to have done it. But then we wouldn't be here now we wouldn't be having this nice conversation and everything, but I did want to do that and I always have been, all my life I've made things. I can't remember a time when I wasn't playing with a bit of string, a bit of paper, a bit of fabric, a bit of clay, always, always, always made something all my life so I see myself as a creative sort of person. I would say that they are the two main things in my life. They are quite good things and they are not exclusive, mutually exclusive; they can work together. The balance is going to change that's the only difference. You know, hopefully, may be hopefully I will have more time for the

creativity, because Ed's leaving, moving away and bit by bit letting him go and that's the thing. Err which I was trying to explain to my mother recently, so she just, she had real difficulty because my son went to Yorkshire, you know when we went on the canals for four days, my son came with us because, you know there was going to be the other Chinese family, so that was good. One older and one younger than him, so he was in the middle, and us and they are just turning into their forties, the couple, err, so anyway he came with us. So anyway, after that he went to AAA, he drove to AAA and went to Scotland for about 5 or 6 days and when he was there and I was talking to my mum, she asked my son 'can you go and stay with Mark?' and I said well no I can't and she said well what is wrong and I said well nothing is wrong he's 19 and I said if you were to ask him you know if you want to get in touch with Mark, that might be nice, but I'm not going to tell him to do anything. She said well you are his mother and I said, "Yes I am his mother, but he is an adult, no mum, he's leaving home more or less". "Oh, don't be saying things like that". I said, "Mum he's 19 and he's about to embark on a whole new life". This is his, you know this is his, leaving the nest. He's had 3 months away in China, where he has grown up incredibly, he really did. So, he doesn't need spoon-feeding. So, she just could not understand why I would not be dictating to him and telling him what to do. And I thought that was part of her problem; she never wanted to let go of any of us; she still wants to tell us what to do. And I thought, well she does. And she goes, 'well I won't say anything anymore'. And I thought that you constantly go on at Dad. (Something fell from a tree, we were sitting in the garden.)

38.37 Interviewer: Oh what was that?

38.38 Eve: it's a beach nut, an empty shell; it's rather pretty isn't it? Look – it's rather nice. It's another empty vessel, isn't it? I might use that. I'll keep that now, I'll take that.

38.53 Interviewer: so, you use found objects?

38.55 Eve: yes, I love finding things and making things with a bit of old something, also with clay. You can take a bit of clay and make little shapes, take pieces of clay, so you can take little pieces of clay and just stretch and bend it, and get these, so as not to make a replica of it, but to just make shapes and forms and to make that lovely curve. It's soft, so if you look at it, it's soft, smooth on the outside, but look at the inside. It's deadly.

39.40 Interviewer: so, do you have a preference to how you like to work? So, for example with the blanket?

39.49 Eve: what, how does that evolve? (yes). Err well if I'm really honest, I decided that I was going to have a project, I needed a project. So, the idea was that I was going to make something. I was going to have a project not to learn something as such, not to take on new things or go and do a course, or, I wanted to have a project to go and make something. And I thought about the different things I could do. It was March, it was cold and he was going off to China and I was thinking aww, there's something really nice about a blanket. You can put it on a bed, you can put it on a sofa, you can wrap it round you if someone's cold. It's multi-functional. Also, it can be made in little pieces and put together like, like, I said, and carried around. Then it was a question of deciding on, on, on a yarn. Was it going to be a thin light weight one, was it going to be a light one? As it turned out it was going to be a very heavy one which was why I am having to take a break because the yarn alone was going to have to cost about £300, £250, just for the yarn. I couldn't sell it because it would be far too expensive, cause it's the time and the, but having done that I've started looking at the patterns, what patterns and shapes and forms I might do and then it quite, I sort of was drawing and playing

and I was just sort of drawing boxes and I thought woo, I'm going, going somewhere here and it was like that one thing led to another and you sort of look it up and start to think and do a bit of research further and then you pick colours and patterns and then I just sort of liked the pun really, it's like a visual pun, my emptiness blanket, like empty shelves, it looks like draws empty sections, just waiting to have it filled up, Beverley I'm mad. (laughing). But it's just sometimes I get an idea, and you think gosh, that's a good idea, but it might not be. But here's a question: it could be, for me it's just the visual concepts, cause it might not be an intellectual thing to start with, but then you might find some things as you look back; I do like, like looking at other artists and people who made things, what they've done and their approach. It might be just colour, anything and it's doing that. One thing I'm looking forward to, which would just astound the tutors is to do a sketchbook. Any time I find anything, ideas, I'm just going to stick it in, I have some and I've just bought some copy books to stick things in and have one for every project. As you said though, I may use Pinterest, but I was using it wrongly, if you can use it wrongly. I have a couple of followers, but I was just using it to store ideas, so I'm putting things there, into folders that I think. And there was just one generic one to start with and I just shoved it all there and then I thought that doesn't really make sense and then I have called 'Just Because I like It'. And then I've got one called craft and I've got one called organizing. I've got to go through my big one and move then into the half dozen little ones. I don't really follow anyone, but a couple of people wanted to follow me.

45.30 Interviewer: Oh ok. So, how do you feel in those spaces as you perform your roles

45.35 Eve: well I'm in the home as the artist and the mother, but I don't feel comfortable doing that because one butts in with the other. I want to be a bit more disciplined so that I can be a bit more focused when I do the artist role and not to have so many distractions, cause the jobs that need doing, the boring everyday jobs they butt in. Like I'm talking to you and then I suddenly thought oh god the washings on and then you can be really distracted if you're not disciplined, but because the other two are dependent on me to get those things done it was the bottom line that I was the one that had to get those things done. And I had to do them, so I wasn't very successful at dividing things up, of doing that separating that one. But I think that once I've got my own space that I have to come out of there and go somewhere else, then I think that I will get an awful lot more done. And it's just right, you've done all the jobs before you go out and everybody has to do those boring jobs, but you just go out and leave them. And that's what I'm really looking forward to; that I've been waiting for, for ages, to just be able to close the door – Ok it might not be very far, but, and I was reading something really quite interesting recently and they were saying about even if it's a garden shed, if you want to write or if you want to make things or whatever it is, even if it's just a garden shed, that act of closing the door and going out and leaving it behind is quite good for you cause you can be freer to think. And to be more create and to start to do your research. Oh, and that's just made me think oh my goodness it would be good to have the internet over there. I'll do that - good point. I would have to have to be able to do some research. If I'm really honest and I'm sure I can be really honest with you and one of the reasons for staying to work in the university is that I can have good access to the library, cause the library is good, for the moment. And it's massive and you can order in. Yeah so, when I was at uni, cause it was a copyright library, it's only one of a couple, I think the other one is Oxford, so every book they get a copy and so even when I was there in the 70s you could put a chitty in in the morning and most of it was stored off site, but there was different libraries around the campuses so I used to use the arts library, but you had the maths, the science ones the this that and the other, medical ones, but so I could go in in the morning and fill out a chitty for the book and it would either come that afternoon or the next morning cause they had a shuttle going to and from and you can get any

book. I can remember being really bored and looking for a Raoul Dahl – the one about all his short stories, yeah great I came by lunch time and sat there all afternoon and read it. The Spanish was pretty good. But our library is pretty good and with the new FE students, every time you get a new student your first session, actually we are not going to be doing any writing today, we are going into the library and walk round and show them the wonders the pleasures of looking down a row and just picking a random book and just opening it up and thinking what will I find here? Cause I think that that is something else, in Prue and our new role, it is to get them enthusiastic about using books and just opening a book (emphasizes this part). Cause I used to, so yeah that's the fun thing you're in the course especially the ones who are making something, designing something, so for example, which none of our lot are doing, even photography, anything, so you've got carte blanche, what am I going to make? I don't know, what am I interested in? I don't know, the rabbit in the head lights; I just don't know. So, go into the library and just decide that you are going to walk up and down every row and every so often take a book out randomly just for the hell of it. And after, bit by bit you might find, even if you find one idea, you might think I'm going to follow this one. You know, dada, dada, dada, dada, you know, great you know, so that's what I'm thinking if you can get them into that habit in year 1 of foundation, even better, and that's something the student can build on and by the time the students really do need to start using books and not just Wikipedia, you know, go on and just, and also the other thing I was trying to explain was looking up the back of the book, the index, the contents and see what they've looked at the bibliography, looking at their research. But yeah, yeah, I suppose I quite like people, I like people, I like interacting with people, but I do like, so it's my own space as well, so it's quite nice to be, and that's the other thing I was going to say about being half in the home and half at work, so that, or being in the studio space, that, which I would like to call it now, it's because you can learn so much from people, cause people have sort of loads to offer and give, so I sort off see myself in a couple of different places. So, I'm sort of shifting a little bit away from one into a slightly different space. Is there anything else?



55.46 Interviewer: not really, but if there is anything else that comes to mind when I am transcribing can I email you? And I could use your past interview to pick up your schooling experiences if that's OK?

56.17 Eve: OK – I did quite like school, you see. A few things were a bit ridged but most of it was OK, by and large. But to be fair I do like languages, as you know. I do like the challenge and learning to communicate effectively in another language, it quite, it's fun but it's quite, did I tell you I am doing a GCSE this summer, yeah (laughing). But I think it's just pursuing other things that I'm just interesting. And I decided that this was the way to do it, because I'll have a bit more free time – John doesn't know it yet but I'll be making soup for supper of an evening. Well he does sometimes have nice lunches, proper lunches. Oh did I tell you about my 30 day plan? Oh no my 28-day plan, sorry. So, my 28-day plan is to give myself more time, for doing other things. I'm formulating a 28-day plan of like dinners shall we say, so that I'm not going to waste time thinking of what to cook tonight, as you could spend hours mulling over. So, I'm going to scratch that off my list as I'm not going to spend any more time thinking about what to cook. It's 28 days, it doesn't matter what four weeks they are. Some of it may be two weeks or less depends what they are. If you work it out correctly and say start off a Monday some of it may last to Tuesday and some to the next day, so that my 28-day plan. Again, it's to give me more time and stop the hassel. I'm conning my son into formulating some of the planning. I'm good at time management but not always for myself. But this is part of my reorganisations, my reinvention.

Interview used for my MSc used for interviewees schooling experiences

0.01 Interviewer Introduction to the interview:

This interview is for my dissertation entitled "Care in the Private and Public Sphere". You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know.

0.05 Interviewer Can you tell me any pertinent events/conversations that have happened in your life to influence your career pathway?

0.07 Interviewee Some are a bit random. I mean the reason I went to university in the first place was to do languages 'cause I drove past the buildings and it looked fascinating and I thought I liked the look of the place and I used to go into see it and that's why I thought that I wanted to go to study languages, 'cause I did languages at school 'cause I was good at them. It wasn't one random sort of thing ... em I also had a teacher that was very good, a very, very ... what's the word you're looking for? Very inspirational – and she was good. But I also had a really disastrous teacher and I thought yes, I could do a better job than she could and I wanted to be a teacher originally. So, at the time I didn't finish university the first time around. I left university after two years, mostly for personal things. I grew up with my grandparents and then I moved in with my parents. I had a boyfriend; there was university and suddenly I felt that I thought there were too many things pulling. They just all wanted a bit of me I felt. And do you know what I thought? I'm out of here and I up sticks and I left.

03.5 Interviewer So you left without finishing your qualifications, and what languages were you studying?

03.8 Interviewee I was doing a BA in Spanish and History of Art. Do you know what I think I am missing? The ambition gene. Really! I get interested in so many things, I just

you know, go off. If you had cottoned on sooner you know if I'm honest, life hasn't been that bad. I don't have a bad life. There's been a few things I didn't like, but if I had found my original path then I wouldn't have met John (husband) and I wouldn't have Richard (son).

05.0 Interviewer Beginning with your childhood, what was your school experience like? Did you have a positive or negative experience?

05.2 Interviewee Oh yes it was very positive – I loved going to school. There were a few things that I didn't like. One teacher I mentioned a minute ago. Em, I can see her face! Anyway, she was my French teacher. And it came about that I was top of the class for French actually and there was just something about her and I started getting all these bad marks one time and I thought I'll compare them to my friends and they were all getting really good marks. I asked her then and we went outside and that was really unusual as I do not like confronting someone. And I say why? She said that maybe you were getting complacent, so I thought I would give you a bit of a poke. I wasn't very happy with that so I thought I would be a better teacher than her. But I didn't in the end. I loved school – all of it. There was always someone to chat to, something to do, there was always a laugh to be had. I loved it.

08.4 Interviewer Do you think you were particularly steered towards gendered subject choices?

08.6 Interviewee In the senior school for my leaving certificate I did English, Irish and maths 'cause you had to, they were compulsory. I did art, Spanish, Latin, I can't remember – it was a long time ago. I did do all the sciences- I loved, I really liked all the sciences and I had to choose, it was really, it was very limited. I mean when I look at Richard's (son) choices now the difference is humongous. Err, but so I really liked languages. My Spanish teacher was excellent; err so I decided that I would do that. I told you I fell in love with this building, Trinity College, in Dublin and I used to just drive passed and look in from over the top of the upstairs on the bus. I could see all these people walking around and I would just think – ah, that's the place to go (tuts). That's bizarre, but anyway. I don't regret I left after two years. I don't regret having gone there.

11.0 Interviewer So you could have got a diploma after studying for two years?

11.2 Interviewee Yes I could have but I just left. After that I came to England. Well I decided that I would do err, well someone said that I should do a typing course as it is quite good to fall back on as a girl, so I did. And while I was doing my course, they offered me a job. To come over to England to London, to the office here and work here, so I thought alright then, so I did. So, my life has been really a series of one thing after another. I would say there has been no proper planning (long pause). If I'm honest I've wondered along. I think you make your own luck to a certain extent, but I do, I always have thought that one thing will always lead to another and I said that to NAME (a student that she supported at work) even, just because you're starting - I said it to NAME (son) - it doesn't matter, pick any one point if that idea appeals to you, do it, and you will find if you are doing it properly oh that's interesting, and then why don't I look at that one and that should lead somewhere else and by that time you've got the big picture; I'm still trying to work out what the big picture is (Laughing) if I'm honest. But you know then it's like, yeah, I get this job doing that and then that was

funny, so then I was with another girl called NAME, who was into drugs actually putting a bed sit together in PLACE in the top of this really lovely house. ADDRESS. We had been away for while, - the plan had been for a year and the guy who owned the flat was Jewish and he lived there as well, so we had a room together and then there was a sitting room and a kitchen and a bathroom and his room. I never went in the sitting room, and sometimes when you were cooking something he would come in and turn down the gas, it was something so typical, NAME, that was his name NAME. Anyway, and then we left that, because well there was something not very nice going on and I got a job I went to err. She helped me get a job the boss there helped me get a job. And I got a job working for one of the private dental practices on Harley Street, ADDRESS. It was quite good for six months or so, I had umm lovely space actually you know those filling cabinets those filling drawers, it was a beautiful big desk with a leather top, it was a private place. Yeah, I had a big draw there but no one told me it was a filing cabinet. It was a great big drawer so I used to keep knitting in there and people couldn't come in unless they rang the bell. So, I'd be knitting, "Hello nice to see you, please do come in", it was great umm it was quite entertaining. Then I decided I really did like Spanish and a friend of mine who stayed on at university and finished, she went to work there for the summer and for a while I said well we'll see and try and find a family for me because I really liked my Spanish and I don't want to lose it. So, I did. I just gave up that job and went off to Spain for six months and I taught English just privately. I stayed with a family that's where I met my Spanish friend who is going to stay with me soon - we're still quite good friends. So, I spent some months there and I got my Spanish really fluent. Then when I came back, I was broke again and I thought I can't go home broke so I thought I'd stay a bit longer.

- 29.7 (What came after that?) After that I think I was still in touch with this other NAME (person mentioned above) and we decided we would open a small shop, workshop, but we had seen advertised this whole new thing in the Westway in (PLACE). And they were building this lower arcade of shops, but it had to be workshops, so you made and then sold and we got one between us so we used to do children's clothing, I was the knitting person, and she was the sewing person and we did sale or return on second hand clothing for a while, but as I said I really, I just didn't like it. (sewing machine noise) with the sewing machine and she would make so many mistakes and she was out of her head on stuff and then she'd spend days unpicking everything and she used to bitch at me and moan because I'd go home to bed at half eleven. Well I said you know, I'm sorry no, as I do and I do the work but I'm not going to well take something, but I don't want to take anything I want to live a normal life thank you very much. And then I met my first husband through that sort of PLACE scene and then I got a job in the company that I stayed in for fourteen or fifteen years, sixteen years actually, no thirteen years. Because when I left, I thought OK what do you know how to do? Well OK you can speak Spanish fluently, you can speak some French, bit of this and that and you used to teach people to be receptionists you can be a receptionist well off you go. So, I did, and I went through an agency and I got this job and they sent me for this interview in the city for this company that was re- insurance. (338) I looked in the dictionary and I thought oh OK, so I went for the interview and I got the job, and I started there on reception. The company then got bought out by another company, it got bigger and bigger and my job you know changed completely, and I stayed with them actually. NAME (husband) used to be my boss at one point. NAME is quite nice and we still here from him occasionally. When we moved to a new building, we each

did different types of business and it was quite flattering actually because each one wanted me to work for them. He worked Spanish mainland and South America I could use my Spanish and to be honest that was part of it I wanted to use that so I did that until I got pregnant. So, we started going out together by this time I had left my other husband he was a nasty piece of work. I moved from working with him to the training department, because we were quite a huge training department because there was a big international company so then using similar skills though. If you think about it the PA, the languages, the teaching, all those skills were really useful in the training department because it's like those things they ran at the college. You stand up you present to a group of people; you have what you want to do. (370) You have to keep them interested keep them all moving the same way so it was good. Anyway back to the company - so then when I became pregnant, I thought because of having NAME (son) and having NAME travelling so much I thought I would take a couple of years out, until I well NAME (son) was in year 7 (long pause). Then I did the course; four years of the course I took one year out and Name had moved from junior school to senior school, I took a year out because we lived quite a long way from the school. Sorry afterwards I did take a year out to be honest, I had to; one day I had to go all the way to Ramsgate to pick up an oboe that he had left on the train. I went to the station to get him and he was in tears at the window. I was sitting there I thought ahhh. So, I went inside to see when the next train was coming and there he was at the ticket office. I said, "are you alright what's the matter?" "I left my oboe on the train. So, I thought oh NAME and I picked him up in the evenings. So, I thought I would give up a year, it's more important for him to get settled and to know what he wants to do. (400) So, I thought well I can take a year out I've waited this long to do it so another year isn't going to make any difference at all. And I to be honest it was perfectly right to do it. I was right to do it because he was much more settled after Christmas you know by the time that first term had gone he was much better 'cause before I was having second thoughts and he, he was having second thoughts. Because having come from the parent teacher evening and they said this that and the other. And after that it did work actually, she says, that was when he was in the junior school, year five but then I went straight from the access course to doing the degree course. I took a gap after year two, by year three I thought I liked ceramics I liked the woodwork and I like making anything, Beverley. I've never really settled. I'm a multimedia artist, (laughing) that's me erm yeah. So, I'm trying to think what were the big defining things? I think it was just something in me, I wanted to make things. All along I've always had some project on the go. The thing is when I went and did the degree course, I learnt a bit more about (long pause) the process. I did think about it and consider it in advance and I had to research what I wanted and to find a better way of doing it or to, what's the word I'm looking for? Well to develop the ideas further because some of the things I made when I look back on them, I thought well that was a good idea but you didn't really take it very far. I'm not sure I've taken anything very far. Once I've something a few times and perfected it, then I want to move onto something else, another challenge. Its discipline maybe, but I just move on from one thing to another.

44.8 Interviewer: Did you have any choice in your career?

44.9 I remember that there was a table with leaflets. I really wanted to go to arts school, but all the leaflets were pretty gendered really, as being at a convent. It was I would say they pretty well were gendered. I do remember having a big row with the parents., 'cause although I liked the building, Trinity, by the time I'd got to that age I

wanted to go to art school and the nuns had said that she is capable of more than that – make her go and do something else, and she can draw in her spare time. And they kind of guided me, so they said you always wanted to go there so go there. But I’ve changed my mind now; I think I’m doing the right thing now. Although I like them both [art and languages] to be honest quite equally. Em and then last year I do remember that – that was it making and designing and painting, em yeah I do know what I was going to say, I do remember that about a good half to a third of the girls in my class of about 17-18 year old were just looking to the boyfriend, to leave school and get married, to start a family. They really just wanted to get married and I was just really horrified by that. I was horrified that someone of 18 just wanted to go and get married – ‘cause I was saying what for? I thought you couldn’t possibly want to go to have a child until you were at least 28. I thought 28 was the optimum time to do it. I’ve done biology I thought well, because I thought by 28 you could have done a couple of things, you could have been working and have had a career choice and by then you could have been fairly well established in it. You know and a few years down the line, that’s almost ten years after leaving school, and or college, you would be somewhere err, what’s the word I used there? Err, settled, err no.

50.6 Interviewer: Established?

50.7 Interviewee: Err, yes, established. It could be a good time to take a break, but also by then you would be old enough to cope with it all. But then you’re never old enough to cope with it all (laughter). So em, that was that. Curiously enough, in 1988 I got married for the first time. Em and then had a strange pregnancy, that I err miscarried, which left me a bit scared because it was err a really weird thing and they monitored me for two years after in case I got cancer from it. It was called a hydatidiform mole pregnancy. And this is what happens is the cells just all start multiplying in a crazy way, so the baby never really develops, it’s all the baby’s cells; but not in the right order, em you generally do miscarry, but because of the abnormal cell multiplication and division they monitor you. I didn’t know when that happen that there was that risk and I went back for one of me check-up and this doctor went, “I’ve never seen one, well I suppose that if you are going to get cancer then it’s one of the most treatable ones” so I guess, so he said didn’t you, didn’t you ... and no I said this is the first time anyone had said. I said just go back just a little bit – go back just a little bit. So, as you can imagine I was in there longer than my allotted 15 mins. And that’s when I got married, seriously, for the first time at 28. Amazing isn’t it. And stayed with him for a few years though by this stage and then stayed for a few more years and then thought this is not for me.

54.4 Careers advice I would say was a bit poor on the ground. There was a few I would say nursing. I would say nursing, there was the banks, there was insurance, teaching: nursing, teaching, the banks, insurance. I didn’t see anything about medicine or science or any of those interesting things to be honest. I do remember having a discussion with someone afterwards, thinking you know before, you know when we did our interest, that’s when we should have had some decent instruction or talks about what’s out there, what you could do and chose your subject carefully. But we didn’t seem to get that then. What about you?

56.6 Interviewer: Well when I was at school the English Teacher was the Careers Advisor.

56.7 Interviewee: Ah well they all used to double up in those days didn’t they?

- 56.8 Interviewer: Yer and so I went along to tell him I wanted to be an auctioneer, as you know I've always been interested in art. Anyway, he said that there were two reasons why this was not an option. One I could remedy the other I could not.
- 57.6 Interviewee: Oh and what was that then?
- 57.70 Interviewer: My class and my sex. I could try to change my class by going to elocution lessons to fix my accent, but the other I could not change.
- 58.2 Interviewee: Ah that's horrendous. That's bad isn't it? I can't believe that. Oh, so that's how you ended up working in a bank. You had a mind to knuckle down and work in a bank. Yeah, and that's the thing in any of these places you go to though you work in these places in offices and that's the thing it grew and it was quite big and there were so many different people and it was quite busy and it was very busy and you didn't have much time to ...yer worry about these things, but there are always some interesting things in the city, so there are places to go. I used to love going to the PLACE at lunch time. I'd buy a tube ticket, 'cause right under my office was Name of Tube Station, straight to the PLACE, fantastic library and music library. So I used to go there, get books, sit outside have my sandwich in front of all that lovely water and think I would like to buy one of these flats. I wished I had focused on it cause I could have been well off by now (laughs). It's interesting, but I just always loved the atmosphere there; it's always somewhere to walk, to go to church to look at or a building.
- 61.0 Interviewer: Yes so cosmopolitan
- 61.2 interviewee: Yeah, not like work; that hill we're on buggers me. You know you walk down to look at the cathedral and by the time you get back you're dead. And PLACE is certainly not cosmopolitan. You walk down PLACE high street and sometimes you think ... I saw these two girls coming towards me and I thought, do you know I think I've seen it all now. Well you know they weren't hiding very much, and they had a pram each. Bless them. But the thing was that they were so young, so young. The first year that I was in the college I never went down PLACE high street, I used to go into PLACE. I didn't even know that PLACE high street was there. But if you think about it I was always rushing to and throw to pick Richard up from school. So I used to go in, drop Richard and then go in early and then be out of there by half two three, cause I had to, unless there was a lecture, cause I had to pick Richard up. And that's entirely why I took the job, Beverley if I'm honest. It was because I wanted to stay in work. I wanted to stay. I have a son at school and a husband who frequently travels because of his job. Until my son leaves school/goes into higher education, he is my main responsibility. I did not want to be at home all the time especially since he is now getting older/more mature and doesn't need the same level of attention - he has only two and a half more years at school - when the opportunity to work in a creative environment came up I jumped at it. The timetable is reasonably flexible and allows me some time for designing/making. It is also good to have some financial independence - which I really missed when I gave up work to bring up my son! The environment was quite good; it's interesting as you can pick up thing and you can still learn, but em it meant I had time, time, it meant I could be back, I could be back as he is an only child and a boy. Phew. As long as I caught up with want the students need to do. For example, George can sort himself out. If it's a thing that need notes I will try to get someone to take notes for him because he does get tired, which is

understandable. And likewise with the others. But I genuinely do tend to be there. Cause if I'm not needed I will go up to the library and take out a craft magazine or a book. S/he will come to find me and we do have a laugh.

65.9 Interviewer: Do you think you will stay in this job?

66.0 Interviewee: Probably not. I would do if the hours were more regular. If I could work either four days a week or every morning or every afternoon Monday to Friday and students came and went then I would do it but I get very frustrated because they don't turn up and you only get paid for the hours you work. So, you could drive all the way there and only have an hour or two work. It's just not worth it. It's a 35-40 min drive. But when it's going well and the students are attending, I quite like it. And I quite like the place, but because it's so unreliable it's not great, so I might just see these two out. I might not have a job after that as they might withdraw my service. But I thought that I would see these two through their third year having come this far and by then I might have a space to work myself, cause that's the plan. Because there's loads of things I still want to make, to try lots of things. I think I need to take a few little ambition pills (pause). It's not even that, I think it's more (pause) there's too many things happening. I suppose Richard is still around as well; I did think I would wait until he left school, which would be two more years really. Em and then husband's NAME is always travelling and it is a big house, it does take a lot of my time. You know I'm getting there. I'm sort of doing room by room; I've done the dining room now. We've done everything kind of once, but the first time we went round it really was quick and we threw paint on it because it was disgusting, it really was. We had our house warming party here and we had a family staying in every room. It was like Russia it really was and there was one family in here with little kids and he said he would draw all the curtains for us so the children could sleep and he pulled them and they were rotten and came away in his hand, really horrible. (much laughter)

70.0 Interviewer: A similar thing happened to me when I moved into my house. The first evening I drew the curtains and a panel fell out as it had been eaten by the pet parrot. I just stitched it back on

70.2 Strangely enough though my ex-husband had a hamster he said that lived in a cage by the window and he was in real trouble when his mother came in and pulled the curtain and there were many small tiny dots all the way along the curtain. (pause) You see both of us have big families and cause it's a house in the country they all want to come. There's always people coming to stay. It is nice really. I'm not winging about my lot in life I just would like to be a little bit more organised. I'm just not an organised person. It is strange though 'cause that is part of my job. But maybe I can see in others what they need to be doing (laughing) I can be very organised; but sometimes I just can't be bothered.

72.2 Interviewee: do you ever feel like that?

72.3 Interviewer: Yes sometimes

72.4 Interviewee: It silly things like when you think ah the grass needs, you know things like that. I can't be bothered. It's a few things like tidying when I looked at that last week and think it's now still there. But I did see a new gadget in a shop, a new steam gadget in a shop and I thought I'm going to buy it. It's meant to be very good for doing showers, round the taps. You know my kitchen floor is desperate. Do know the

amount of time I've spent up and down on my hands and knees on that floor. But we won't go there. (laughing). No stop the tape edit it out (laughter and joking). Now are there any other questions

74.0 Interviewer: Do you think class has an impact on any of your career choices to date?

74.2 Interviewee: no not really. I would say I don't think particularly because I grew up on a council estate, I think I was one of the first in my immediately family, like my parents, siblings and my Dad's sibling who, one of the first who went to university.

75.0 Interviewer: So who encouraged you?

75.1 Interviewee: It was my idea. I just thought it was an interesting thing to do. You know. You know I was on a council estate working. Some of my peers in my classes at school did go to university. I went to a convent not the little local school that all the other kids in the street went to so they used to pick up on my accent as it wants the same as theirs; dis dat dees and dose for this that these and those. Go on talk posher they used to say. So, yeah it was my idea. My Mum is hugely dyslexic and really suffered all her life and she was just considered stupid and ignorant and bad about not being able to read. And I would say that she wanted me to go to the convent, she wanted me to have an education, so yes, I suppose that was something and my dad went along with it. It was her choice to send me to the convent, not his and it wasn't free and they had to pay for my fees and they had bit of a lucky break because by the time I got to the the senior school it was virtually free, as they changed to free education paying about £30 pounds a year, so they quite liked that. So, I suppose they didn't discourage me and they didn't, did, think there was anything wrong with going to university, because I did grow up with my grandparents and not my parents, I think that that did colour my thinking, thinking that I could do whatever I like. It's a shame that one person in that house did not have a bit more of whatever so that I could have been a bit more informed, maybe. I remember reading something in the school books that I thought was a bit racist when I was about 16 and so I went into the local library to look it up and the librarian nearly boxed my ears. She said that that's not for a schoolgirl in a uniform that's for the over 18s. "Get out, get out now". (Laughing) but I said that it was in my history book. I've only come to look it up. "I know you sort. Get out". Yer, so they were very, it was very puritanical in PLACE. You know I've had various careers. I did volunteer work for the museum, the London Museum. It was great sitting down by the museum on the bank by the River Thames. That was between the first job and the next job. I got something like £3 a day, that paid for my transport and brought me a ticket for a week that would let me go all around London. So I would bring my packed-lunch and my pen and paper and sit in my hut and record all the findings and them went off to the museum. (810)

Interview 3: Diana

This interview is for my PhD, the context of which I explained in the information sheet I give to you and again on the telephone, when I set up the interview. It is entitled: policy dividing practice: an exploration into the subject positionings of the female learning support assistant in post compulsory education, as they practice their art/craft in spaces of the everyday.

You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know.

00.1 Interviewer: Can you tell me about your work and objects that are of significance to you?

002 Diana: Well I want to talk about my work, the first body of work, which was done in the last couple of years, where I was exploring abstract expressionism and the sublime. I'm quite interested in Marc Rothko and his paintings and the way he works. Err they are very intuitive paintings, they come from an experience and feeling, there is no plan in these painting they can start off, if I've had a hot stone massage or if I've had a walk in the park and then they just come from a feeling I've had that I just translate. In doing those, err sometimes they come through directly as I feel the experience and I try to translate that into an image, whereas sometimes as in Plato's Atlantis it begins as one thing and then it changes so it began as leaves blowing in the park, which I drew, then it slowly changed and started to go into a portal and then I started discovering things about the things I was painting, so they are very unconscious thoughts coming through. Err they are a body of work, and the, this, this one here, I can, number one, it's that one with the red, I call Epiphany, and it's that moment when everything makes sense, and everything just explodes in front of your eyes and you can see everything and it is bliss, and then with no. 2, that is the green one, this one is called Overflow, and this is just when the whole of nature is just saturating my entire being and just washing over you and washing everything, washing the negative away. And then this one is called Beyond Space and Time, and this is just, well it just is what it's called really. It just allows you to drift into a different space and time of meditation, where you get little sparks, little ideas, just little realisations that just becomes little thoughts of realisations, where you are having little conversations with yourself. And then finally is the small painting and that's called Molecular

Crystals. Err it's molecular crystal formations, and this is biomorphic forms that you find in nature and crystal formations that occur naturally under the microscope and all forms of nature that they reoccur, so that's, that's another conversation that I'm having about, you know? What is life?



Where do we all come from? What is the intelligence you find behind the creator? It is almost a secret geometry of all that patterns that occur in nature. So that is that body of work.

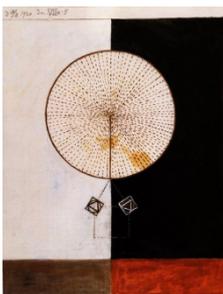


4.10 Interviewer: I feel that there is a connection with what you are saying and the exhibition we went to in the holidays.

(Georgiana Houghton (1814-1884) was a Spiritualist medium who, in the 1860s and 70s, produced an astonishing series of abstract watercolours. Detailed explanations on the back of the works declare that her hand was guided by various spirits, including several Renaissance artists, as well as higher angelic beings).



4.16 Diana: I absolutely loved that exhibition it absolutely blew me away and also the work of Hilma Af Klint (Sweden - 1862-1944 - artist and mystic whose paintings were amongst the first abstract art. She belonged to a group called 'The Five' and the paintings or diagrams were a visual representation of complex philosophical ideas), 'cause she did séances with five people and so she felt that she was connecting directly to an alien source, and that really fascinates me and that came into this painting here. And so these painting I've entitled Conversations with Self, but ultimately they were to explore the craft of oil paints and see what oil paints can do. I also work I think in what you could say is, a Renaissance way where I build up in layers, so the layers and glazes, and layers and glazes, upon layers and glazes, as many as I can get to try and get the depth into the work.





5.14 Interviewer: Ok so can you elaborate a little – was it a new medium for you?

5.15 Diana: well yes, I had painted in acrylics and I had worked in layers with acrylic paints, but they're dense opaque and you don't really, well it wasn't really working and you don't. Well what I found was that I was trying to make the acrylic paint look like the oils. So I thought that I would just experiment with the oils, but the thing with oils that I found was that, it, they are so long to dry in between, so these have taken me a couple of years to produce (pointing to the first body of work). But since producing these I have done more and more research into the materials and now have found mediums and glazes that dry overnight, which is the new painting that I am doing (Daughter with Octopus), so err that, that the oil painting for me are absolutely

magical – they are, they're a magic in their self, where I am sort of lost in the craft of what they can do, so the next painting is The Tree of Truth, which is the one I've done since I've separated from my partner. And that when I, that was an experience I had when I had a hot stones massage, again where I just looked up and I saw all the underside of the red tree, and the red from the red tree just fell into me and washed straight through me. It was like letting go of all that anger and pain. So I wanted to, it wanted to interpret that in a painting, and I had a photograph of myself, where I had taken myself looking up at a tree, quite a while before and I thought that that would be quite a nice way to be in this image in. So I done that, but she was meant to wear clothes, but it didn't work with clothes, and then when I felt, when I



decided to do her naked – I think that all art is therapy and all art is expressions of the self, so when she came through naked I thought that was quite relevant to what I was going through. I felt quite vulnerable and alone, and quite exposed to the world and so to immerse myself in nature, and looking up, it was, I was surrendering to a higher being, to guide me through nature, and that's what that painting's about. And then as I was thinking about the letting go of everything that I had, I began to look at

shadow work, and shadow for me was something where all the pain was, so once I actually visualized someone's shadow as an octopus tentacles, sort of wrapping themselves around the

person. And strangling that person and in my mind's eye, to help that person, I had to unwrap the octopus tentacles. That's why I thought I would do a painting of an octopus, but then, the more I sat with that feeling and the more I sat with that idea, err I thought is it an octopus, is it a tree's roots, what is wrapping itself around me, what is strangling me, what is that shadow? And as I started to make peace with me own shadow I began researching the octopus. And the octopus in history, like in Hokusai, when it is all over the woman, it has always been perceived as an evil entity, like a Medusa, like the tentacles are evil and strangling you, and like in the case of Hokusai, it's raping the woman. But some people even think that that's an interpretation and that's not actually what he's saying. So the more I researched the octopus, and watched documentaries and read books on them, the more I, I, found out that she is actually, she is nature's most beautiful mother and she has 50 – 10,000 eggs. And she will even eat her limbs to keep those eggs alive, so she will protect those with her life. Oh God it's a bit emotional now

10.10 Interviewer: Yes, it is emotional (we had tears in our eyes). Can you expand on that emotion?

10.11 Diana: Well yes, well I'm in the psychological space of the mother – it gets a bit heavy, but I will go through it. So, the eggs become the symbol of all the children that haven't had their mothers and then the octopus turns, it's like society has demonized the octopus and it's because she is nature's most beautiful mother, if she had a baby, she would do anything to defend it. To show the octopus in a really beautiful way, as a loving mother, to me is like re-empowering the woman, so in a way it kinda has got a feminism sort of attachment to it, that would actually, what we demonize it is what we see as the dark shadow of the self. The shadow of yourself doesn't have to be a bad thing, it's just something we have to be aware off. And not let it entangle us, but actually let it, you know, like, free us. And when I was painting the background I used a, I really love a pre-Raphaelite, as you can see in this painting I hope that once the eggs get pushed back in about 20 or 30 glazes this really does begin to take on that look. It's got that aesthetic feel. What do you think?

12.08: Interviewer: Yes, I can see the influences you mention, specifically the Renaissance, particularly Leonardo.

12.20 Diana: Do you think? Yes, especially the technique with the glazes. I wanted to romanticize it a bit, which is where I thought Pre-Raphaelite, but I do agree with you. The waves on the left and the rocks on the right are taken from the paintings of the siren, where the mermaid is enticing the sailors to his death. Again, the woman depicted is evil and using her sexuality, as evil, whereas the sexuality of the woman is loving and caring and nurturing and coming back to the octopus. I used my daughter; she was the model for that, so in a way that was a nice link, but it is just a conversation that I'm having with myself for my own healing, and that's what that painting is about. It's interesting because when I first showed it was working, someone said to me that it has got a darkness to it, and that was quite, for me that was good, because it has a darkness to it, but in some ways, I'm trying to transform the dark into light. I err (pause).

14.13 Interviewer: Well the darkness is fading in the painting.

14.22 Diana: Well, it's got a lot more work it's nowhere near finished with the glazes.

14.35 Interviewer: Yes, and with the hints of white and gold at the top in her hair.

14.40 Diana: Yes, well the gold in her hair, well it links with the, it is referencing the ctenophore, err I can't really say it the ctenophore, the shell ancestor of the octopus that looks like a squid is coming out of it. They are known to be over 5,000 years old and also recent studies have shown that with the octopus the DNA is not even thought to be of this world it is thought to be an alien DNA. Yeah, they can't match this DNA to anything else. And then people, that have observed octopuses, they have got like really high intelligence. They have got then in a tank and they, the scientists, look at them and they come up they are curious and they come and their eye comes up, looking like a 4ft TV screen and it goes like and oblong then it looks and then it goes back down. So, it's quite a shy and for such a shy sort of massive, delicate, it's such an injustice; it's terrible. I think it's because of the tentacles, like the Medusa, the things that are going to wrap around you and strangle you and so I think that's how it's come about. People have sort have seen it as an alien creature of the deep; it's that they don't recognize them, it's so unlike the human that they just fear it, about what it is. And I think that is how it has come about. I think that this is how artists have always depicted the octopus – like quite a demonic one. Although as I say with Hokusai it is not to clear, it was his interpretation of it, that the octopus is making love to the woman, although it does seem a bit not right, it's all over her isn't it.

15.39 Interviewer: Well yeah, but then again

15.40 Diana: Well yeah, it could be passion, like a passionate thing, all, all these tentacles are like this phallic symbol, but I do think it is directly linked to this Medusa, where they don't really know what it was, I don't really know if you get poisonous octopuses in nature I'm not really sure, but yeah they are fascinating – I wasn't really into them at all.



16.01 Interviewer: Oh, so you have learnt everything you are discussing specifically for your project then?

16.10 Diana: well yeah, because when I paint, I like to throw all the rule books out. So in the body of work, because I haven't painted for quite a few years, although I have done a few commissions, I haven't painted for myself, I was trying to work very much for, I don't know what other artists have done this, err, Kin, you know he paints to music.

16.15 Interviewer: Oh Kandinsky?

16.16 Diana: Yeah, I paint with music, but I just wanted to err, go very much with a feeling, so I don't plain colours, I just choose whatever colours I was drawn to really intuitively. But when I go into portraiture I can't do that. It's a lot more fixed, a lot more set, you know. I wonder in time if the portraiture, whether the portraiture would be able to break those boundaries, and be able to work very intuitively with it, but at the moment when I go to portraiture it goes a lot more tight. It feels a lot more fixed. They're a lot more rules I've got to follow. And then the conversation becomes more illustrative because I'm trying to stay within. I feel like it's playing with every brushstroke, whereas with the, the abstract expressionism, I feel that I'm really free. But that was very interesting this painting on the right, 'cause this started off, this is the Plato's Atlantis, cause this started off as just leaves blowing in the wind as an experience. And I started painting it, but I wasn't happy with it so for months and months, and then as I started going into this, it became an eye and then it became very Turner inspired and err I love the way I've done a bit of the research on Turner. I went to a few exhibitions and love the way that he went out err on the boat and he experienced it, so I feel like that he has painting a through experience. So that he took himself out in the storms and tired himself to the (laughing) and I felt that that was what I was trying to do. So, I work very much in the Turner way, but then there was a portal that started to come in and then when I



looked at this portal err I found this picture of the eye of Africa, which is a, you can only see it from satellite. Its call the Richat, the Richat something. (The Richat Structure, also known as the Eye of the Sahara) You can only see it from satellite and its basically like a crater in the earth that looks like an eye, this is what I've painted and that actually links to Plato, because in Plato, his definition of

Atlantis he gives exact measurements of the inner circle, the water, the earth in the middle, which is where all the elite lived and the, the water around which is where the people serving the elite were and the ships and the supplies and everything else and then the next plot of land was all the military and the next was the water again where the ship would come in and then around that was the expanse of space that stretched off for hundreds of miles and I've done it in the same as Plato's Atlantis is three stripes of earth getting smaller and so it's a bit like the pyramid of power, but it's in a circle and then the expanse of space that stretches out outside of the circle the last bit of land is where all the people gathered and that is where everybody gathered hundreds, thousands of people gathered from all around the hierarchy, but what happened in Plato's Atlantis is that overnight this huge tidal wave, this tsunami just washed away, over, just took it all out. You know my, I'm very much a conspiracy theory with the illuminati and the pyramids of power and then I felt, well it started off as just a swirl of leaves and then it started as an experience and the, the swirl of leaves took me into this conversation that I felt that it wasn't of me it was something else trying to talk to me about Plato's Atlantis and about the power and what I was trying you know what I experiencing, you know, other things I was questioning at the time, and you know, Plato's measurements were .5 of a kilometer out on this so if you take the satellite view today and you put it against this his ancient writings were .5 of a kilometer wrong. They say that he took it from a sire 200 yrs before him, taking his writings and then he translates them. It was basically, I think, Plato saying that you know all civilizations have destroyed theirself through too much power. You know the Easter Islands was basically destroyed 'cause they cut down all the trees, and we will

destroy ourselves if we continue to destroy the earth. I think Plato was talking about this Atlantis, it is almost like this mythical place, it could have been so beautiful, but it was built on power, but the power was at the centre and went out. You could say that that's life itself, but that's a misuse of the power and it was overridden; the law of nature took it out, so that's like his message to society. So I think that in my artwork; it's the job of the artist, they used to say that the job of the artist was to stand on the edge of two worlds and communicate what he sees. I think that, that is just a fantastic way, cause when I paint I go into a zone and the zone always takes me back to nature, it takes me back to space to be in a different world, you know music can transport me there and the work can transport me there and actually it's the letting the self go, all the time so it's, I do feel like Maggie Hamlin, that painting can be a battle ground. Like you can be winning one minute, but for me the art of the painting is to continually let go to, let go, let go and the second that I start, although the portraiture, the second I try to start to control it too much I have to walk away and let go, cause that's when it starts to go all wrong, so it's like in the moment, in the moment, in the moment. So it's like it is a spiritual experience when you paint.

24.50 Interviewer: Ok so how does that work in painting each one, separately or combined?

24.53 Diana: No, no I work on them individually, I would because it takes a day to dry I would ideally love to get another easel to work them. I think that is possible, to try to live off of it I would have to. I do have the space and I recently just got some prints done. Yeah so I going to get those, yeah I might go and get those framed today, to see how they look in frames. But it's getting the work out there. I approached two galleries. But I'm quite happy to keep these as an exhibition, but realistically I'm skint. I've just got to sell the work – I'm like any struggling artist; I can't even sell a print at the moment (both laughing). You know, but the good thing about the prints is that I can print them as I need them. I don't have a huge outlay; I just need to see what they look like for myself – so that what's the work's about. And I have no idea what the next painting is going to be about. But because I think that I am going back into portraiture, I think I'm going to leave my, I'm going to use my three daughters as my muses. So I've got my daughter who's very much always around horses, so I can see a painting coming into being about that and she was born in a teepee and it was a very wild night and stormy so all of that. So there's movement in that, with my other daughter, who is very beautiful and all that with big eyes. She's a real nature freak, like a child of nature, so I see that as her face and then you know the Sledge Hammer video with all the fruit and everything I see that, all these animals almost dancing around her. So I'm just going to go into my own daughters and paint their personalities and then I think I'll be back where I initially was; I didn't paint for 25 yrs, but when I did, I got portrait commissions. And then I broke away from that to try to do my own work on the sublime, but I've come back the portraiture, 'cause it's what I really love. So, I suppose after doing the one of my daughter, the one of the other daughter and then my youngest, I'm very much back over to the people wanting a portrait of their own. But I see myself a very much a conceptual portrait artist – it's not enough for me just to paint the person, there has to be some sort of meaning behind it. So, you know like with John, there was, you know, when I painted his ex-wife and is son, there was that concept; there's got to be a concept there, yeah. Err well there that was your first question (laughing)

27.51 Interviewer: I know and we are only doing an hour (laughing). Ok so the next was is about the most significant events and spaces; or you can leave that one until you have made the mindmap/timeline/collage, wherever you want to make.

27.55 Diana: Err, yeah OK, yes, I will leave that one then

28.20 Interviewer: Ok then well the next question, you have kind of answered it a bit in the discussion so far, but can you describe the roles that make up your life, currently and in the past?

28.31 Diana: Yeah, I, before children I was just a free spirit, so I was a daughter and a sister and then obviously with my children I've become the mother, err I was always the artist and the poet actually. That's the thing I was really into when I was a child actually and then I was a banker, which wasn't me. Err I was a shop assistant. Even in the bank I managed to work my way up into a creative assistant so that I became a creative or I got the most creative role that you could get in the bank. But it was still the other side of the agency, as we used to pay the agency 24m a year, so I could never get to that point. I was a market trader. Is this what you mean?

29.29 Interviewer: yes whatever you feel is relevant

29.30 Diana: well it is a sort of entrepreneur. Having had children, running a market stall, deciding what to sell, and started that and get that up and running and I've been a a traveler, got rid of the job and got a one way ticket to India and just travelled. I've been like the adventurer the explorer; err then I became the down to earth – (laughing), when I married. Like with Tony, when I married Tony he was like a rock; and someone had to keep me down while the children grew up, cause by the time I met Tony my kids had five different schools, and I've been out of, well this goes back to the other question that I'd been out of an abusive relationship to another abusive relationship, in a refuge and then I got out so he was the person that was going to keep me grounded and safe, while they grew up and then that happened and now I'm back to being a free spirit. And I am a learning support assistant because I think that when I was young I was not encouraged to do my art; I was told by my parents that 'Oh it's too competitive, or you're not that good.' And cause I didn't have that and I found it – I was a hairdresser and I found it a lot later, a cook, so I found it a lot later in life. I think that's why I wanted to go and help people who find themselves in the art arena. To encourage them to sort of have ownership of that. Yeah. ...

31.21 Interviewer: Ok so how to you feel in those roles in the spaces?

31.29 Diana: So a a mother; I feel that I'm the last legs of that in terms of them growing up and them finding their feet, so I'm the absent mother at the moment – you know the one that's got to stand back a little bit at the moment to let them make their mistakes and fly through them. And then as the LSA, at the moment I still feel like there is a place for me, but then if it does all shut down then I'd have to really see what that would be, cause I feel that college work is me being of service to others, whereas my art work, where it could be of service to you or anyone who wants a portrait, and so it's very much a service to myself. So I feel that that like, I'm giving back to the world.

32.51 Interviewer: so with your work then how do you feel if someone wants to buy it, how do you feel about relinquishing that object?

32.54 Diana: no that's different; I don't have an attachment at all. I do understand Rothko putting your art out into the world and that is like your baby and it's like you need to make sure it's going somewhere safe. I don't necessarily like to think that I am going to sell my work to someone I didn't like or that I feel that he was going to lock it away, if say that was the case. And you know I would like to exhibit the work. The ego would like to exhibit the work and have all this, be quite professional and have conversations about all this and I having a conversation, and I could extend my knowledge of that. The reality is that I've got to sell it to make money. I'm not precious about it. And I don't feel like that there is a limited supply, I feel that there is more inside me and I've not got to worry that nothing else is going to come out (laugh), so I'm not really attached to it in that way. I'm quite happy to sell it. But I have the perfect way to sell it, well whatever happens first, I can't control it

34.00 Interviewer: so in terms of a space in which to work, how do you find the home?

34.22 Diana: well err it provides a cave – to immerse myself in, to shut the world out and to just to sit in my space – I have to do that. Being married or rather not being married, but being separated has allowed me to do that, wrapped up in his emotions or your kids emotions has not allowed me to do that, cause then I'm not in the zone, I'm all over the place. So actually being on my own going through all the pain of that and actually the loneliness of all that, the days are long. You know that helps me immerse myself in my art.

35.00 Interviewer: So what is important to you the physically of the space or the emotional space?

35.10 Diana: Well with the physicality of the space it is really important to go somewhere where the light is better, you know I've always wanted to live abroad, but I've never really made it. I would love to have windows from floor to ceiling, in a really high space, like really, flooding in, cause I can only work with painting so many hrs a day before the light cripples me - I can't work in the dark. And then if I take a painting outside then other people are in my space you know and then it's not a solitary process then. So ideally I'd love to be somewhere beautiful. Well I do this and I open that and I let the light flood in. But I don't feel m really painting, I'd love to be out in nature, solitary. So I was watching the Georgia O'Keeffe documentary the other day and it was absolutely fantastic. I can't wait to go and see her exhibition, I'm saving that up – I can't afford it at the moment, I'm just wanting, I'm just waiting, and Paige wants to go, as well; she likes her work, but it's 15 quid each, maybe 18 cause she hasn't got a student card yet; cause it's on til October I might go when we join college and then that might give her something for her journal. So, by the way, she's in nature, isn't she? She just immerses herself, it's that having no telly, just cause here I will paint and then in the evening I will go out for a walk and then I might go met a friend or family and then I will go and walk, and then inevitably end up stuck in front of the telly. I might watch lplayer arts documentary or look on YouTube for painting techniques or sometimes just watch a film. Do you know what I meant? But ideally I'd like to let all that go and just work really intuitively.

37.46 Interviewer: It is difficult when you don't have the right environment.

37.47 Diana: Yeah, I need what is it? A rich philanthropist – I'm working on that at the moment. I've got someone in mind (joking – laughing). But they might ask for sex and I don't really want to do it!

38.04 Interviewer: So are you advertising these on your website.

38.07 Interviewer: well no, but I have a Facebook page that I've just set up. Err no bids yet. I think with my work you have to see it. And I think that once I get those prints – I'll show you those prints in a minute. The prints, as they are, are beautiful, but once I show you in a frame and on the wall, so I think that I need to frame them, put them on the wall, photograph them and then like advertise them in a space. I'm not, I'm not trying to get, trying to get to inside myself to a point where if I sell them it's great, if I don't sell them it's great. I'm not going to go get depressed if you don't sell them, you know if no-one wants your art, you know you are like the struggling artist, but I'm trying not to get into that, if I do or if I don't, it's got it's natural progression. I'm hoping that I'm going to make some money out of it. But I don't expect to make it straight away, as I know that it's a long slow process and really I haven't painted for 25 yrs and I've only been painting in the last five years. So I might need another 10 yrs of work yet, before they start becoming, I'm still an amateur, really; I'm just playing with it. So yeah it would be nice to make some money out of it. Err I have approached 2 galleries and I think that, well I have got that in my favour, when I said that I setup a market business, as I had to go and get the business for that market stall and I had three kids and I had to go and wheel and deal. And maybe go get some portraits framed and maybe go to Nucleus and the other local galleries, and say would you like some of these framed to display these

39.48 Interviewer: yes there are lots of galleries in Rochester

39.50 Diana: Did you watch that Georgia O'Keeffe, documentary?

40.00 Interviewer: I may have done. I've seen so many and I watched the film.

40.10 Diana: I think that is what I watched. The funniest thing for me was when she said that how she got her work, she went to this guy that she completely admired and ended up having the affair with, and she err she took a roll of her work and she just went in and said do you want to see what I've got under my arm? (laughing) and I just loved that. I wish I could do that, to have something, you have got to stand out haven't ya?

40.40 Interviewer: Well I love your work, specifically the one on the right (Tree).

40.42 Diana: Well that was my first, I reminds me of an artist I used to work with, I have an original on my wall

40.45 I would love to see it. Well the other questions were about your schooling but you could do that in the mindmap if you prefer?

40.50 Diana: well I'll just tell you that I was only ever good at art, well that and English, err and my art teacher was so lovely that she said that I want you to go to art college, so I said that I don't think that I would get the qualifications and she said that you can come to me after school and I will help you with it all. But I didn't and I ended up going to college, Orpington College and doing a caring course and taking art as an A Level. And she came to see me, I don't

know if she was visiting the college but I was doing a big mural with all the other artists on the canteen wall, we did a big unicorn and a castle in the canteen space. And she said how is it going and I said that it's going alright and I said that I really love my art and she said to me that you will never be happy until you do something creative. So I did have that little support from her but I never, I should have gone to art college. She, I think, that's why I help the kids now. You know that's the link. It's nothing to do with the qualification, them getting the qualification. It's them acknowledging that there is a creative side inside them that will help them in their life. Like art is an expression, so that if you can express yourself through your craft you can truly be who you are. And if you are truly who you are then that's your gift to the world. That's your blessing isn't it? So even if that translates into one of the greatest artists, or architect or the greatest painter of all time then ... You know sometimes I wonder if I'm a bit of a philosopher, so I am philosophising about what is life where do we come from, what are we doing here, you know?

Interview1 – MSc transcript

- 001 Interviewer Introduction to the interview:
- This interview is for my dissertation entitled "Care in the Private and Public sphere". You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know.
- 010 Interviewer Can you tell me any pertinent events/conversations that have happened in your life to influence your career pathway?
- 015 MS I watched a film entitled 'Precious', and it was in the extras on the DVD which talked about mentoring and that's how I ... decided I would go for the Learning Support Assistant's job.
- 027 Interviewer I see, so how long ago was that?
- 028 MS That was about 3 yrs. ago so I was about 43
- 032 Interviewer Beginning with your childhood, what was your school experience like? Did you have a positive or negative experience? And can you explain.
- 037 MS It was a negative. It was terrible. I hated school; the only thing I was good at was art. And when being given this information I just couldn't get it. Em .. I don't know whether I was slightly dyslexic, but I just couldn't get this information. So basically if I liked the teacher I liked the subject.
- 053 Interviewer Did anything at school influence your career/qualification choices?
- 055 MS Er well, I didn't get many qualification, but art did and I suppose English did influence my choices
- 061 Interviewer So do you think you were steered towards typically gendered subjects or not really?

- 065 MS Em I was – I wanted to do art but I was told that I had to do computer studies, so I was never allowed to pursue it to college er, because there was ... there was a culture I think at the time that there was no money in art, there's no money in that to do a job. So I ended up pursuing, although I didn't go all the way in the caring profession
- 079 Interviewer What were you doing in the caring profession?
- 080 MS Well I done a course that incorporated care in the community, but I didn't complete that.
- 084 Interviewer Why was that?
- 085 MS Er, well I was doing art as an A level there as an extra, but I just got too behind in my course work.
- 091 Interviewer Were you a mature student when you were doing that?
- 092 MS No, I was still 16-18. I then got a job in an art shop so I suppose I was still trying to get back to that type of career
- 098 Interviewer Did the Careers Advisor influence any of your decisions?
- 100 MS No careers advice, only from my Art Teacher, who said that I should go to art college, and she would support me. With all the other grades and studying I would never be happy if I didn't do art. But that's the only conversation I've had but that's not really a careers interview or advice.
- 117 Interviewer So is there anything else that you would like to add about your past schooling experiences?
- 119 MS Em, only that I didn't really have any direction (pause) I wanted to go to art college but I was talked out of it by my mum and dad. It wasn't a real profession; it wasn't a real job; it was a hobby. I wasn't good enough, do you know – like you are good, but not that good. It is very competitive, so everything was talking you out of it really.
- 138 Interviewer Can you just extend your last answer by adding anything you feel is relevant, when considering if there is anything else you would like to mention about your home life influencing your career choices?
- 142 MS Em (pause) I didn't really connect with my parents when I was younger – I was a teenage rebel. There was a lot going on (pause), so that when I left school my mum got me a job in the bank because that's what she wanted me to do, so he pulled all the strings to get me in there 'cause I would never have got in the bank; I didn't have the qualifications.
- 161 Interviewer So you went to the art shop to the bank?
- 162 MS Oh err, I went from the art shop to the bank – yer and then in the bank I worked my way from machine room to cashier to advertising. I got into the

advertising that was a conscious decision to get into a creative section of the bank and I became like a TV Production Assistant. It's funny when you say it – it's like as I'm telling you it sounds really interesting and like you can see .. you don't really think about it do you? You just do it

- 180 Interviewer So have you ever considered an atypical area of study or job choice?
- 181 MS When I was younger I had (pause) I thought about becoming a combat soldier; I thought that sounded quite good. But I was a bit of a tomboy, so (long pause)
- 194 Interviewer So why did you not do that then?
- 195 MS Just, just didn't. I think I was trying to run away from, from everything. Then I did a market trading job. I set up all that up, but er (long pause)
- 201 Interviewer What were you selling?
- 202 MS I sold crystals, drum and head stones, ruzlas and pipes and things like that. I set it all up and you know you have to be a bit of a Rottweiler to get your pitch. It was a bit male dominated in that respect you got to really err (long pause)
- 209 Interviewer So to clarify then – art shop, bank, market stall?
- 210 MS Then I became a hairdresser. I retrained as I had actually done a hairdressing course when I was 14-18, no 13-18 when I was still at school as a Saturday job, so I revisited that. Got qualified then I got this job.
- 225 Interviewer How did you fund the retraining for the hairdressing? Was it free?
- 226 MS Yes because when I left my children's dad I was in a refuge, so then I was a single mum, so I was within the criteria to go back to college. I studied one day a week for 2 years; my NVQ 1&2 in hairdressing. So I basically went back to age 14, or you know what I could have done hair dressing when I left school but there was no money in it – like £30 per week, but that just seemed so awful, but then the art shop paid only £40 per week, but it seemed a lot more and it was in London – so by the time I had paid my fares there wasn't a lot in it really.
- 241 Interviewer Do you think gender played a role in your career choices?
- 242 MS Emm, not in the hairdressing as all of those places were dominated by men, so no
- 244 Interviewer Do you think your class played a part in your career choices?
- 246 MS Yes I think it did. We didn't have any money and 'cause I wasn't doing very well at school I didn't get any private tutoring, so I would, so that will have had an impact
- 253 Interviewer Do you think financial issues played a part in your choices?

- 255 MS Yes when I left college all I wanted to do was to earn money. That's why I left college really 'cause I got behind and also I wanted to just grow up.
- 257 Interviewer And what about now? If you had the funds would you retrain?
- 258 MS Well (pause) I have been considering this in quite depth, for quite a few months now and at the moment if I was to pursue my art and had the money to so a week's training here and there I possibly would do it but I have considered counselling courses, I've considered, and even if I had the money, with those sort of courses I would have to consider do I actually want to do an academic, you know with all that written. Possibly not. I would hope to develop my skills and then naturally progress towards a better paid job when I feel that my experience would support my new role, when I no longer have care commitments. There is always a small fear of change however the long summer break enables me to pursue other activities. I would at some point like to map out a career path but am at the moment uncertain in what area to specialize. I do feel that my job choices have matched my creative personality and desire to help people-I like to challenge myself and have tried to re-educate myself later in life. This has opened up many doors for me. Finding the 'perfect job' is a working progress and to date I am happy with my achievements and success. I do not necessarily need to measure my success on the size of my pay packet I like to feel that I am still learning. I have always taken on challenging roles and am happy to strive to learn more skills.
- 300 Interviewer What other issues have played a part in your career choices that you would like to mention?
- 302 MS An abusive relationship played a part as I had to give up my market stall, so emotional issues and after that it was confidence because even as I trained as a hairdresser I shook so much, I could only freelance as when I worked in a salon you know I was having to take a bottle of calms just to, every time just to get into work, so I did suffer from a lack of confidence
- 319 Interviewer So do you think that has had a bearing on your art career?
- 320 MS Yes, but I think my art is coming back
- 321 Interviewer How have these life experiences influenced your career as an LSA?
- 322 MS Err, Err I am or I now consider myself to be an artist. I feel it has helped me inspire young people to achieve their dream and be creative. I want to inspire people to not stop being creative, so if they are in an art uni like they are not there for nothing. It doesn't matter what they do with it as long as they recognise that they are creative, as I am creative, I can encourage
- 333 Interviewer Do you think you will continue with this career, as an LSA?
- 334 MS I think in some way, cause even if I carried on painting, at some point I would like to teach what I know through – or show people, may be at an adult

education centre, or something or a few small classes, I like, I used to do an art club with the school. I like passing on that knowledge of – cause I'm self-taught, it's err, yer I like to sort of work with other people. It's giving back. It's part of that giving back isn't it? It's like I work all through the winter to pay the bills and then in the summer is the time I can concentrate on the painting. That was always the plan and that's what's happening now after three years, so it took three years to achieve that but I think that if you don't come out then you are very isolated; I feel that you have got to come out anyway because you have got to feed into the painting, you might need to go and study a plant or go and, you know you need that outside influence don't you?

350 WS No

351 Interviewer Well thank you so much for your time and I will be contacting you to agree the transcript and possibly follow up with another interview.

Knowledge

Lifetimes travelled, spun from spiders web,
Descended on earth, to learn and to grow.

Ancient knowledge, shrouded in centuries of mystery
Your words, they speak into my soul, a path unfolds.
I see the Rainbow Bridge.

Daydreamer, life giver, believer in destiny's unknown.

We seed, we sprout, we root, we grow.
We think, we search, we seek, we grow.

We scream, we shout, we cry, we grow.
We laugh, we smile, we hug and grow.

Within the depths of darkness, yet still life grows.
Side tracked, betrayed, down trodden, we grow

We kneel, we pray, surrender ourselves to grow.
Fall away from faith, yet still we grow.

Eternal, omnipresent and transcendent.

The LSA

In essence you are already it,
I'll show you, in my own special way.
Equipping you with the tools that you'll need to succeed.
Take them from me, they are a gift,
My pleasure, all yours.

Creativity flows through your veins
Don't ever doubt it, believe in your abilities.
Be the very best that you can be
Never give up, I will not give up on you
All I ask is that you try.

Push past your boundaries,
Allow yourself to become inspired.
Focus, meditate and be driven,
by your own passion for life.

Do not sleep, wake up!
Your time is now,
To overcome your fears of failing,
You have the strategies, methods and techniques
All packed in your creative satchel.

Learn to know yourself well
Trust your own talents
To correct, design and remake
Mould yourself into being
Become the artist, change the world.

Interview 5: Mary and Martha

When I arrived to interview Mary, Martha was there. She is a colleague and also a close friend of Mary's, from the traveller community, so I interview her as well.

Introduction to the interview:

This interview is for my PhD, the context of which I explained in the information sheet I gave to you and again by text, when I set up the interview. It is entitled: policy dividing practice: an exploration into the subject positionings of the female learning support assistant in post compulsory education, as they practice their art/craft in spaces of the everyday.

You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know. Mary showed me around her home and the spaces in the home, that are used as a studio/library. I took photos as I went along. She had some of her artwork laid out in the lounge where I conducted the interview. The interviewee asked me to turn the recording off just after halfway through to discuss issues with transgressive practice and challenging the reproductive nature of the academy. She explained how she felt let down by her line manager when voicing her concerns about the low level ability of her student on the course – she was told it was about the funding, by her Line Manager and not to concern herself with the students' academic abilities. After this she asked me to turn off the recording. I asked her if I could use the data in this transcript and she agreed.

0.30 Interviewer: So, tell me about your artwork? You can do it in whatever order you like; you could start with the two pictures that you have over there if you like, but I might just take some notes, so I remember which ones they are.

0.39 Interviewee: Mary: Ok. So, these were taken from doodles that I did as part of my degree project. So, we had to take some concept doodles and we had to blow them up and print them for the final show for New Designers. So, err they were literally just doodles, blown up and then hung on the walls at New Designers. And then they got spotted by somebody to be published by someone at New Designers, who took my details; and they were the ones that commissioned me to do the children's books. So, they are my favourite pictures 'cause I actually got somewhere, just because it's quite distinctive



1.31 Interviewer: so, what degree were you doing?

1.36 Interviewee: Mary: computer animation, which I did quite recently – I finished in 2014, and an access course at The University.

1.55 Interviewer: Ok so can you take me through your history, so from school then?

1.59 Interviewee: Mary: OK well (long pause) traveller, traveller kid, showman kid; so I didn't really settle in at school, as I was travelling around, in and out of different schools, so I didn't do great at school, took the first job I could get. Got a job at 16 and had umpteen different types of jobs, mostly care working, whatever. I've always worked. I had my first son at 18 and then went back to work. I had my second son, where I then home schooled my boys, as I did not want them in and out of school. I worked part-time until David decided that he wanted to go to school when he was 11. He decided that that was what he wanted to do, so he settled down at secondary school and then I had nothing to do. So, I err started the Access Course 'cause Nikki talked me into it. So, yeah Nikki told me it was good. 'Cause me and Nikki have been best friends for about 20 years, so she talked me into doing the Access Course and so that's what I done. She did hers first.

3.29 Interviewer: So, what did you specialise in?

3.30 Interviewer: Mary: I did 3D in my rotations; I didn't know what I wanted to do. But I was thinking that I wanted to do the theatre degree, 'cause I've done a lot of circus stuff, a lot of sound engineering and stuff, a lot of lighting and production and designing, set design and that sort of thing. So, it would have been nice to learn about that. So that was my sort of aim to be able to do that. So, the Access was to be able to do that. But then I looked into the course and I realised that it was really like that I thought, and I wouldn't have learnt anything that would have helped me in the job market, as I've already got City and Guilds in Rigging and Sound Engineering, so it wouldn't have given me anything more valuable in practical skills that I haven't already got. So, I hunted around to see what other courses to do, so they said come and do animation there will be lots of drawing and not too much animations (laughs). I'd never switched a mac on. But the course was great: I learnt loads, absolutely loads. I had a great time: it was a great course. Totally changed, the theory, totally changed my outlook on life.

5.05 Interviewer: can you explain that?

5.11 Interviewee: Mary: well it was all the feminist theory and the contextual, looking at how they are placed in the home and in society, where they are being pushed this way and that way. I just found it really fascinating considering my background. The Showman's Guild of Great Britain is the only Guild in that it still does not allow women in, to vote. They don't allow women as members, only as associate members. So, I err had membership through my parents and then when I got married, I, my ex-husband he got membership through me, so he could be a voting member, but I couldn't. And now that we're divorcing, I'm back to being an associate member. So, I err, err that is sort of ingrained still in Britain today there are still places where they do that.

6.21 Interviewer: so, would that affect you in any way in terms of employment?

6.22 Interviewee: Mary: no 'cause it doesn't really work like that, the pitches are passed down from generation to generation, so there are a lot of benefits. So, I lived on showman sites as a kid; so, it was a big one where I lived. So, they are really fiercely protective over their rights; so, when, if, you needed help with anything, we would help each other, very community based. So up 'til then, when I did the course, I hadn't really thought about it. I hadn't thought about it

'cause it's always been that way. So, I started to question everything, why is this like this? Why are they allowed to do this? Why are people so much taking it for granted, 'cause we are all brought up the same? This is what happened with Trump. People just don't know where they are heading. They just don't see it. That's what happened with Brexit. This area here voted for out, for Brexit; I was surprised as it is so multicultural, but I think more that the multiculturalists didn't have a vote. I don't see why they would vote against it. The park is spotless, the food shops are cheap cause they are Polish, vegetables are dirt cheap.

8.09 Interviewer: so how did you get into doing the LSA job?

8.10 Interviewee: Mary: I just stayed on and didn't go (laughing). I literally didn't go, I camped out – the end of the course was looming, and I passed and I didn't know what I wanted to do. And I didn't think I was ready to go and err, as I said I was friends with Nikki and Diana and Erin, as they were already LSAs and Una and they said there was space for another and so went and saw Sally. She said there was space and offered me a job and I said, 'oh yeah', but that was before the cuts, just. I was, I think, the last one in, actually. So yeah, I went and had a chat with her. I got offered the job, and I said yes.

9.21 Interviewer: so, you got your commission of the books and now you are working on that too?

9.31 Interviewer: Mary: so, I started on the books at the end of 2014, so about a year and a half, I did one series, well no I did half of one series, and the other half is in the balance cause of the changes in education. They call it philosophy, but actually it's quite religious and the more in-depth it gets the worse it gets. It's quite a problem, and there were some other issues. It was meant to be quite of sort of multicultural, the characters in it are supposed to be quite multicultural, and they asked for something, quite quirky people, multicultural, quirky. Err quite generic in colour, but very Afro-Caribbean. (showed me the images on her laptop and I took some photos). This is the sketch of the final outcome and the sketches are coloured in.





11.45 Interviewer: so, what has happened them (with the commission)?

11.49 Interviewee: Mary: well it went in and then it just came back several times, because they didn't want someone quirky and multicultural, as it turned out. But what they wanted was ... Everytime time I've done a commissions, it is they know what they don't want, but they don't know how to say it. So what they actually wanted was a white girl with blonde hair, quite petit in Doctor Martins or converse boots and a green dress. So having gone through all that and spending all that time, that is what they wanted. No, I was really depressed with the whole thing. They did six, six chapters 1-6. And chapters 7-12, I am hanging about waiting for the go-ahead, but they didn't ... The first one they had, they changed it. So it is about two children, who go into a magic library and question all different people, really, about different things; and they get whisked off into different places to see what they, well. You can do a lot with it, really. But actually it, they're just, just, so err, sort of ridgid about what they would learn about RE, in their schools. They would wear these sort of hats and go and do this and this. But it was just so prescriptive; it was just horrible. But it could have been really good. And I really liked it when they told me about it, it really sold itself to me, but actually they didn't want what I thought they wanted at all. So err, yeah, they have hassled about doing any more; it's not what I wanted. They did pay me, yeah so (showed me the images).

14.29 Interviewer: You are a drawer?

14.30 Interviewee: Mary: yeah I've always been a drawer, a doodler. You can see in the image she's not like blonde, but she could be, everyone could read into her what they wanted, so she could be, but that's not what they wanted. If they had only told me it would have been so much easier. (shows me her images, prolific amount)

15.20 Interviewer: so do you sit and sketch all the time?

15.27 Interviewee: Mary: I've done less in the last couple of years; I used to I used to draw everything. But the students just kill me, and by the time I get home. (shows me the images)

15.58 Interviewer: so did you go to a school regularly when you were a child and get your qualifications?

15.59 Interviewee: Mary: well off and on. I went to the same secondary for 2 years and then we moved and then I err. Then I went to three, just in winter. I went to the same one for two years and then I went to that one just in the wintertime where I did half a year in, half a year out up 'til juniors. And then I went to 3 different juniors; it's not the best way to, err. Well yeah, I did get French and German. I got an A and a B. I picked up languages really quickly; I found it really easily. My mum and dad are really good at languages; they speak 7 languages between them; so it's always been picked up. I got art and design and art and textiles and I got good grades for both of those. I did get English, I got a C.

17.24 Interviewer: Did you get maths Martha?

17.25 Interviewee: Martha:(whisper) I didn't get maths and I still haven't got maths and apparently I'm not supposed to, so the teaching and the job (she is studying for the PGC), so I'm pretending. When they asked for it, I said that I don't have the certificates for it anymore. (Mary was still showing me her work on the PC, I asked her to email them to me. She had a version with her name as the watermark) I do have a version with my name not all over it.

18.15 Interviewer: I don't mind if your name is all over it. Although it will identify you.

So how have you done the colours, are they watercolours? (I decided not to include the images due to confidentiality)

18.16 Interviewee: Mary: well the donkey was water colour, the girl was photoshop colour. So, I did it a few different ways. That's the new girl and that's how it ended up. They wanted steam-punk, but then it turned out that they didn't want steam-punk. But that's not steam punk (showed the image). They didn't really know what they wanted. I think that they actually did know and when they see what they don't want (showed me the images throughout this part of the interview and emailed them to me)

20.03 Interviewer: Martha, can I just ask why you decided to do the PGC?

20.06 Interviewee: Martha: well there are no jobs. I knew that and I would have to go. And I was thinking about what I should do and then I saw it advertised and thought I could do the PGC. And so I applied for that and so did Diana as well, and she actually went and enquired about that and how we would get on it. But they didn't want any more LSAs and apparently I was the last one; there are only two. But just after I started they were really anti LSAs and they weren't going to take anymore: "don't tell any more about it". So Diana missed the deadline. Well the first thing someone said to me was when I went to the campus on the first day. I sat next to a woman who was head of the library at that campus and she said to me that, 'oh I'm surprised you're there doing it, as I thought that all you LSAs would be gone at the end of the year'. I said well that is the reason I am on it, as I want to do something. Anyway, I thought

that I might get it and then go back into traveller education and do something with it like that. I'm not really sure at the moment. A lot of it is sort of supporting with schoolwork and coping. (pause). It does feel like they are trying to close the place down. Well with the courses it feels like they are not going to put any money into it. It feels like it's all going to go over to the other campus. That's what I think. Fashion Design will go. I feel it's, just disintegrating. Animation, they will do at another campus, although the animation course is brilliant, but they will push for that to go there. They are trying to make Paul go over there now; he is holding on as long as he can. They keep pushing him to go, but he's staying as long as he can. They also want him to put a computer games course on the side of his. He has already got a full-time job as it is. They just keep pushing, do this, do this, do this, you can run this. So that there is no one to run it. So he is under pressure not to stay, and then with all the internal progression students, it is just more stress. So they are sending him off abroad to do talks and then trying to make him do a second course. Then Nikki said that this was how it was at the campus they closed recently. Stopped resourcing, stopped replacing people. So yeah.

25.09 Interviewer: so, how would you both describe the roles that make up your life, so err both then in the past, and now (pause). So, in terms of how you identify yourself.

25.21 Interviewee: Martha: (long pause) well, I err am a mum I suppose, (very long pause) an LSA (sounded out the syllables), a free-lance illustrator, that's an artist (whispering). I was having that conversation recently, but I never think of myself as an artist. I was talking to Nikki about that the other day.

25.41 Interviewer: Why not?

25.42 Interviewee: Mary: I don't know; I couldn't work it out when I was talking to her. I don't class myself as an artist – I put illustrator. I don't know; I don't know why. Diana paints, she calls herself an artist, so does Nikki.

26.25 Interviewer: Yes, they do and also using the term creative

26.30 Interviewee: Mary: Yes, maybe we have just spend too much time at The Uni. Yeah, so I'm that person, that creative person (sarcastic). I still do the festivals in the summer so I'm a festival manager; I still do that anyway, taking the kids and then I walk my dog. I was a home educator. So lots of balls, juggling, that seems a lot.

27.21 Interviewer: yes it is, certainly multitasking (laughing). So I just want to relate those roles to the spaces in which you perform, the roles.

27.29 Interviewee: Mary: What do you mean the physical spaces?

27.30 Interviewer: Yes

27.33 Mary: in my old house, I haven't been here very long, so in my old house I had my own studio room, it was just the box room really, but I just decorated it out nicely. It had a drawing board in it and that's really nice and in this house it's sharing with the bedroom. So I'm sharing the space, and that's why I haven't done so much work I think. 'Cause it's just not, everything is just piled up with clothes; whereas the other room I could just walk in and close the door and it was my space and everything was just where I'd left it. I had a huge desk and a drawing board and loads of bookshelves and everything. Now everything is just split up around, the books are down here, the desk is upstairs. It's kinda split up. I could work at the table but I just haven't. I only moved in in January and then I worked away all summer and then through May to September, and the time has just gone. So I haven't had time and I've only just decorated in

here. Decorated the bedroom, so now I feel a bit more like using it, and so now I can make more of a start in there.

29.09 Interviewer: Ok and the space of work?

29.10 Interviewee: Martha: I love my job but the situation at the moment is dire isn't it? 'Cause they've (management) just punched and pushed and pushed. I've had so many issues. I expect Robin has told you: having a tutor, not having a tutor, having a technician not having a technician, not having enough computers, not having enough of this. The students that need continuity the most, have well, and then there is the feeding into animation, where they will have no support at all. Paul will go ballistic, when he gets this lot, who will apply. So there are at least 3 or 4 students that had support that do not have any at all now.

30.37 Interviewer: well it's one less, as Evelyn (student) has left.

30.39 Interviewee: Mary: well that's a shame cause she would have been really good; she just needed some support for the first few weeks and she would have been alright. She just needed someone to talk to. I don't know what's going to happen. The first three weeks I did go down and chat to her, but there was just too many. I can't cover for people that are meant to be doing the job, and if there are too many students that are leaving then they might look at why. But then they might think that they can't keep their students and close it down. And we don't seem to have had any trouble getting agency staff in, so, but they seem to have trouble keeping them once they have got them. So the other campus has got agency LSAs, so they are using some of them.

32.22 Interviewer: can you both explain if you have advised the student against the norms or ethos of the academy?

32.38 Interviewee: Martha: all the time. For example, I have pushed students away from particular courses to other courses. A couple of times I have had out right rows with tutors and managers over people going onto courses, like Donna. I had an absolute outright row over that (are you still taping this? (yes but I can cut this all out if you prefer) No it's ok. Mark and I went to a meeting and although we had talked about it before he said that we will go in and say, 'cause I'd working with him in maths, before, for a year, so I had a good knowledge of his ability. And he did not know that there was a 100cm in a metre; and he wanted to do a degree in computer animation. I was saying that illustration or something would be better than computer animation, as it's technical as well as artistic, so it's double. So we went into this meeting and I said all this; and I had only just started as an LSA so I was in my first year. And so I already felt that I was not qualified to be in there, but I would now. I would actually. Well I felt under qualified to be there, to say what I felt, but they didn't care. And they just said, well it just comes down to money; and then Mark said that it all just comes down to money. I was quite upset about it for ages, and quite upset with Mark. I just felt totally unsupported and I was going in there to say what I felt. And can you turn it off now?

34.59 Interviewer: yes, I will turn the tape off now, just hang on.

Interview 6 – Prue

This interview is for my PhD, the context of which I explained in the information sheet I give to you and again on the telephone, when I set up the interview. It is entitled: policy dividing practice: an exploration into the subject positionings of the female learning support assistant in post compulsory education, as they practice their art/craft in spaces of the everyday.

You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know. She signed the consent form and we began by being shown her artwork, but I couldn't look at the artwork and record at the same time. So, we decided to arrange another day to print the work at the uni and Prue discussed the pieces from memory. She then showed me her beauty therapy salon.

00.1 Interviewer: Ok so can you tell me about your work?

00.2 Interviewee, Prue: so, this is the work from my final major project. It was really deep, really, do you know what I mean? It was kind of about that sort of alter ego, you know that everyone, you don't think you're got one, but everyone has, because you look a certain way, to look, feel presentable in the mornings. And if you didn't feel that, and then people also would say that, as I interviewed loads of people; and say you know I'm fine; I'm never like that. Well your hairs done, your make-up's on, why are you dressed in that way and all this? Well, 'cause you are then accepted into society, or, you know. So, it was very kinda deep. So that was for my FMP for my Foundation Degree. So, it was shown in the FMP, that was part of it; I was doing an installation. For the installation, I think they were in the sewing rooms now, but they used to be our room and we, I think Diana helped me, but we completely blacked the whole room out; so, it was pitch-black, like no light what so ever, and I had a black light in there. And my FMP was literally hundreds of my face (laughing) made out of, (pause). It was put on a, I made a mould of my face, like a death-mask, almost, And then err, I used err, you know, like gauze, gauze stuff and PVA glue and then really moulded hundreds of my face and then stuck it all together and hung it from the ceiling. And it just like draped on the floor and it was just, it was like the only way I felt I could materialise this voice, do you know what I mean? So, people would go in and have to view it in the dark and so it kinda looked like it was in wispy smoke, sorta thing, very odd. But I got a really good mark for it; I got a distinction. I think I done really, really well. And the film was part of it, as well as that was because I done a lot to it 'cause you had a lot of little projects, like you do. I had a lot of little projects and so I just incorporated that and then you revisit it don't you? Or whatever the ones you like and at the time a lot of my tutors were saying that's really interesting like you can go, like everyone seemed to be really interested in that, especially. I did a lot of a big project on you know the beauty, the multi-million-pound industry that is, and it was just along the lines of that really. That was how it all evolved into that, you know? It was strange but, yeah. So that's that and there are some pictures on that.

2.15 Interviewer: I'll get the pictures at the end. Ok, so talk me through it: you did your foundation degree at The University, what were you doing before that?

2.22 Interviewee, Prue: Before that I had a baby so, I hadn't worked for five years. So, when I had my son in 2003, I err just felt the need to do something creative. 'Cause all of a sudden I was 24 and still young myself, having John at 24 in 2003 and then I literally went to Green Street I think it was, at the time, in GHI, it was the Adult Ed Centre and just kinda went, I just kinda went. I don't know what I wanna do, but I just wanna do something creative. Chucked a prospectus at me and said have a look in there: so, I had a look. And I think it was

something in between the ceramics and pottery or creative glass which included stained glass and glass resin and I thought oh that sounds interesting, and so I picked that one. I had a really amazing teacher called Sam. He was just incredible, err, so I had never done it before. And before that I'd like of always done, well I've always loved art. So my GCSEs I got GCSE A* in Art. Then I left, and I did window dressing from school, ABC then, now The University. So, I did that for years and I did the windows there, and went to FGH when that opened, as a Visual Merchandiser, up there. And then went back to the Adult Education Centre and did my A Level. But I know about the Adult Ed, and so I kinda thought that, when I had John. I thought I need to do something. So, I did that for a year and got a City and Guilds in that. It was just a random, just a random thing, you know? And then I suppose I was, by the time he got to 5, I was getting itchy feet again. And thinking I wanna do something, well I'll just go and do a degree. Yeah, so I did the same thing; contacted The University and they kinda of, I think I just spoke to someone, and they said, well come in and we'll send you what we do. You can pick something and that's when I got introduced to Tom, who at the time was the course creator. And went in and had an interview and I had enough (qualifications), he said that I got my GCSE A* and, err, you've got an A Level in your Art and you've just got this C&G in Creative Glass, so you've got enough points to just come straight onto my course and that's how it happened. So, I ended up doing the Art and Technical Practice and that's how I ended up.

5.12 Interviewer: Oh, I see. So were you doing that with Diana?

5.13 Interviewee, Prue: Well yeah, but Diana, originally it used to be a part-time course, so, Diana was in her second year when I joined. But I was, they were kinda piloting it, as they wanted to do it as a full-time course to see if people could do that in a much shorter time. So with me, and I think there was about 12 of us; we were the first kind of people to ever do it. And then of course it was unfortunate, kinda, Tom left, and then it all kinda went a bit wrong. It was brilliant, that first year; it was 2008 to 2009, was amazing; it was so good and then Tom left and it all collapsed. So, basically, what happened was that after that year err it was weird 'cause I kinda caught up with Diana. Then 'cause she had 6 weeks to do her models or whatever, we only had like 3; so we were just you know? Honestly, Bev I remember I had a five-year-old and I was sitting up 'til 2 – 3 in the morning to get these things done, but I just loved it. It was so good, err and then it was such a bomb-shell when we came back, we, I did the summer school which was life-drawing; Tom was there, never said a word. I knew things were going downhill because of little things he was saying, but, they were taking his budget away and things like that so you kinda got a little bit of a flavour, that summat wasn't right and he looked really stressed, like really stressed. And I really, really got on well with him and Matt, Matt R. He did all the lectures; he was amazing; it was (pause). So, I would go into my tutorial with Tom and Matt; and you know, if you wanted to do a project, and you thought this was a bit dry, and you thought you know I can't; literally, you would go in a room with them two and within 15 mins you would come out brimming with, I've just got to go and research this person, and that person. And I feel so much better and I'm loving this project. It's just such a shame that they have lost people like that, you know, it really is. And then and then what happened was we came back and no Tom, and it was literally a bomb shell; he's gone, he's left. But because Tom was the creator of the course, he wrote the brief, with Matt, he did a lot and also Tina. She used to come in and do lectures with Matt. Err, she was a lot more err, sort of involved in the academic side of it then. It wasn't so much of what she does now. But err, yeah it was really, really good. We were just all shocked, we were just all err 'No no, this just can't happen'. Such a good, it's so good like how can The University have lost him, cause he's so good and he was, I think, he had a bit of a breakdown, to be honest, I think. I spoke to Matt, and Matt was like yeah, he's not (pause). I think he had a bit of a sort of a breakdown. And err I

think he moved onto ZYZ College and did the A Level Art there, or degree art there, or something like that there. And Matt kept in contact with him. And then err, so our choices were basically, in a nutshell, our choices were, you could either move on to another similar course, applied art, which in my, in my eyes, it wasn't similar. It was, it was very, well it was ceramics, you know it was more ceramics. This is what I loved about the art and technical practice, it was everything rolled into one course. It was literally, you could use, you had no boundaries, on that course you could go into model making, woodwork, sewing, err jewellery, you could use everything, photography, the lot. That is why I picked it and that is why a lot of people picked it, as it is just such a variety. Err, so they said right you can go into applied arts and I did go and have an interview with Donna, and Tom was very kind and said a lot of really nice and positive things about me and said you know, take her on, she's done good and she will work. And Donna said well look I've got no problem if you want to join, then you can come now, but there was something in my gut telling me and I didn't want to do that course. I hadn't signed up for that course, and in the end I, I thought no I'm going to ride it out, at least get all my modules, and get everything passed off, and at least I'll come out with a foundation degree. And then at a later date I could just do the third year and just do the dissertation side of it all, and that was the plan. Me and Diana decided that we would do that, so we then spent the second year just getting through it, but The University, literally, was just putting in people, just all odd tutors, that would just, you know who ever they could get basically, and there was one tutor who was, who came, you would never know who they were going to be. There would be one, one week, and this tutor came and his name was Chris, and he was a young guy, I can't remember his second name and I did not hit it off with him at all. You know you have gone from, I felt I'd gone from this really nurtured, intelligent err environment with Tom, and they know you and they know your work, and they really understand you and how you tick, to a bloke who just used to just paint portraits who came in, was not the creator of the course, didn't love it, wasn't his baby and was just basically there for the money and it wasn't, and well it was just really difficult. And there were times when I nearly threw in the towel, there was just so many times, but I thought no, I got to, I think, I would. I don't know whether you have spoken to Diana about it, but she said the same as me. We were really angry, we got really, really anger about it and I was like, no you're not - I'm getting this and you are giving me that *foundation* degree, I've paid for it and I'm getting it. And that's how we went. Then after that Diana went straight in and got the job. I didn't; she wanted me to do it. So she did an extra year than me and I left and went and did voluntary work in the school; did voluntary and when we graduated in 2010 she was like come and do this interview and I was like no no, I promised my friend I would go and do some voluntary down at school in the Wells. Did that, did that for about six months and err by which time, then Diana was saying oh you know like there's a job at work, come back you'd be really good. You know you are like really knowledgeable. At that time, I did know, I knew loads of the technicians, I knew lots of the people in there and I'd been a student, so, I said alright I wrote this letter, and Diana helped me and I, we wrote this letter together to Corrine, and I had that interview and that's how I ended up getting that job there. And it just went from there and it just, I loved it, it was like being, it was just like being at uni, another time, that's what it was like. It was fantastic and luckily for me which was again a fluke, I'd been given two students on product design, which was very similar to Art and Technical Practice. So, I just felt absolutely at home and Matt was there as well, and then so, yeah, Matt and I were really good friends. It was great, really great, you know. And then on Product Design they have some really fantastic, yeah you know, Robin was there, and Donna, cause Donna was, yeah product design and applied arts worked together a lot. I felt, yeah again that it was a little family, a little family of people, and then there was Nick, ceramics Nick was involved in all of that, and I felt, yeah it was brilliant; it was just absolutely brilliant. We

had a really good time and I think that was why, err, I think my student Sonny done so well. Because, he well you know, whenever he needed help, I'd go, well, come along, let's just go and see, so and so, and he'd (tutor) go yeah alright come on Sonny. And they would help him, they would really help him. And err, it was like that they we would err, I'd kinda, I kind of know there was boundaries, but we did nurture him, and kinda, 'cause he was my, err, kinda, guy I was supporting. And they knew I was supporting everyone, was kinda helpful cause they kinda remembered. Even Mark, who is now in the computer room, used to be a technician who was helping me do my project, so yeah 'no worries, I'll help you'. So yeah, I worked, it really worked.

14.50 Interviewer: So how do you feel now, about (pause)?

14.51 Interviewee, Prue: Devastated, yeah, devastating. Yeah for some reason I still feel a loyalty to the place. Isn't that bizarre? 'Cause you know me, you know at that point in my life as well, when I went there I'd just got divorced. So, I was going through a really awful time in my life. I know it's a cliché and you know, the same old record, but I err, it really was a therapy, and I had Jane and I would see her (the counsellor) and it, do you know what, it, I felt like it, you know my husband now would say, do you know what finished it? Do you know what, what this is? It's like an attachment to this job, and like you don't understand: it got me through a really awful time in my life and like that's why I err have always had that. I don't know, I've known The University for almost ten years of my life now, from 2008 to now, that's why I feel that. But Bev you know you're there, you know it's just, I've got, it's just there is nothing left for me there now and I really feel like that and in product design Robin moved up to another college, and he's still doing it, but he's up in that college. But I bumped into Brian, who is doing it, and it is so sad 'cause it's just winding down. And I'm like 'where you gonna go Brian?' 'Nowhere, I'm just gonna leave, because I can't just go to another college'. He does two days or three days there and he's got his own studio and he's actually a working artist. But the place is just losing, losing, all these really incredible people that do it (raised voice). Bev, I drive from here every day right. I put my child in nursery, I swear I have done it for the love of the place, I have done it for the love of the place. My husband has said to me since last year, 'what are you doing. We are not, you are not making any money out of it. Literally what are you doing?' 'You just don't understand, I love what I do. I love my job, I love what I do, I love the people that I work with. That's why I do it. It's more of a job, satisfaction. You know, it's not the money; it's not about the money'. But err yeah, unfortunately now I've got to that point where it's really impossible, it's just impossible. There's no decent tutors, that's honestly what I feel, if I'm being totally honest. Well look at Matt he was fabulous, gone, virtually. They are just losing, all these people and he used to do it for the love 'cause he wasn't paid no money and he was working out of hours for no money. He was driving up and sitting. Because you care about your students, you genuinely care about your students and how they are getting on. You want them to do well and that's it, that's the bottom line really. So (pause).

18.16 Interviewer: Ok, so tell me about what you are doing now?

18.17 Interviewee, Prue: so, now I've decided that I've always got to be creative. So, it's a bit weird actually, because it is quite linked to what I did at university isn't it? It's that thing about beauty, all about how people look and err yeah so, I'm, now I've decided to run my own salon doing eyelash extensions, which is pretty hard going actually. You think ah what, that, it's easy, but I had to pay 500 quid and I had to study for 6 months. I've done a course that started at ten in the morning to ten at night and then I had to submit four case studies to be qualified in it, have it judged, with feedback and marked. But I done it. I done it at night. I done it at night, as well as looking after my three-year-old and my son, and my step-son every other

weekend. So, I did it in the hot, in the summer holidays, studied and studied and studied. It's quite technical, it's all about lengths and weights and you're using both hands, so yeah. So, it's literally, I have to practise an hour a night, cause it's all about muscle memory, really, so err I guess very much like, almost, I liken it to hand sewing beads on. Very, err that intricate, that kinda of work. So, like after two hours, I've got a headache and you're like so tense and my eyes, yeah I've got a, err, I'll show you I've literally got a pair of glasses: I don't wear glasses, but I've got a magnifying pair and I've got 1.5 strength, so I can really see and I've bought a really, really expensive light, 300 quid. And it's basically like daylight, so you can really see what you are doing, doing, yeah, so that's what I'm gonna do. Yeah, I mean I'm lucky enough, I'm blessed to have a husband where I don't need to work, well he said 'well you don't need to work'. Well I wanna work, that's me and I wanna do something, to work around the kids; well my son's 13, so it's not too bad now. But I've got a 3 yr old, so I want that and you know that is part of the reason really. Cause the student I've got at the moment is so wishy washy. He just doesn't let me know whether he's in, what he's doing, and I keep trying to explain to him that it's not his fault and I understand that he has autism, he has but just to let me know because, I said to him I have to, you don't realise I have to get up at 6.00 in the morning and I have to make, I have to get my daughter ready, I have to drop her off, I have all these things before I get here and then you're not in, and then 'by the way I'm not in'. You've got to tell me, like I know that you're supposed to tell me 24 hrs, but when does that ever happen? I drive all that way, you know sort Molly out for the day, you know, I've got things to do. My husband has got his own business and I work for him as well, like I do a lot of the interiors, as he does up houses and I do the interiors for them, as well as doing that for two days. And I don't think like he, he doesn't see that. You know, just one text, just a text at like 6.00 the night before, like I'm not coming in, are you going to be coming in? I feel like I'm chasing him all the time, I'll be texting him, 2 or 3 texts, can you get back to me? Are you going to be in tomorrow? Are you going to be in?

22.47 Interviewer: yes, there is a tension between getting paid if they are not in.

22.49 Interviewer, Prue: yes, it is really, really difficult, you know because you don't want them to get into trouble, 'cause it's like 2 or 3 strikes and they are out and so you then feel that you are put in a position that, is a really, really awkward position. Then that it's almost like, you know, do I whistle blow this student and it's gonna hurt him, it's gonna hurt me and it's a very difficult situation to be in and at the same time I am a bit like I do everything by the book and that's why I'm always running up to Sally all the time cause I, 'you tell me what I should do Sally?' So, when we've going back this year and it's very much like, 'well you can't come to us any more with things and, but you have to. They are things that you have to go to a manager, your line manager, a face that you can say: 'look 2 mins of your time, do I press that or do I not press that?' It is, it is that isn't it? Yeah, I don't wanna get him in trouble, yeah, you tell me what do, I do. So, I'm finding it is getting more and more and more of this, Bev. And I'm thinking that this is so stressful. I've fallen out of love with it. I loved that place, I just loved it, but I just don't want to be there anymore and he's just gone into the second year. So that's it really in a nut-shell, isn't it? And people have left, haven't they? They have taken redundancy. I just feel like all the real, almost like the people that have been there, like the heart of the place, they are like the furniture, they are part of the building, they have, those people that you never ever thought would leave are going. That to me, that is, has been my flag, and well it's time to go now. That's how I feel, err yeah because I could stay. I mean I could stay a bit longer and do another year there and stay 'til May. But why when I've got a really flaky student, that just doesn't, you know I'm driving up and down the motorway, I'm only doing 2 days and quite a lot of the time he's like, well I'm not coming in. And the lecturers and the tutors are like very wishy-washy; when I look back, my student is on photography, and

they're like too new, I don't know if you know them, they're two new, they're all new. A guy called Thomas and a woman called Elaine, and they are literally, I couldn't believe it, I went in there the other day. And you know I'm like you, I've been there; I've been there for years. I've been there as a student and I've met a lot of academics and I've sat there; you make notes and you are, you know, you are aware of what's good and what isn't. And I've sat there with him, with my student, and like me he's gone through a patch where he's really struggling, this is a bit dry or whatever. But don't worry, let's go and see Thomas. We sat there, and I'm saying to Thomas, well, have you got any (ideas)? Well like Matt, would really have of, well the man was like an encyclopedia, literally reel off name after name, after name of artists and, and philosophers and you name it and so you would come out and your brain would be brimming with all these different people to research, and directions to go in. Well this bloke was like 'Well there is this, well there is this artist, err, but I can't remember his name and well err'. And I'm sat there like that, I'm sat there like that, (rolling eyes and looking angry) going. And then I'm saying to him, well what about that artist that photographed like that food and what was his name and I'm looking on my phone and I'm thinking, I'm just the support worker; you are the point, you are their tutor, there first point of call, and you're sitting there scratching around for people's names and books. Oh yeah there was a book on it, but I can't remember the title of that book. Do you know what he did? He said he should look into film and started showing him *Singing in the Rain* and I'm thinking well what's that got to do with anything, when my student was doing something about dioramas, looking into dioramas, and I'm like *Singing in the Rain*? And so 'cause they don't know any better, Bev they, just think it's normal; they just think it's right don't they? So, we end up leaving that room, researching to help him, to give him something to take home and research. Like how Matt or how Will or how Donna, she was fantastic or Robin, all of them, great ones, you remember how great they were. And so, you try, and so that, and I just felt like I'm flogging a dead horse, in a nut shell. I am. Hence, my notice going in last week. I'll work 'til Xmas. I am very passionate, that's the trouble. Yeah, 'cause when I left to have Molly, emm, of course I had to go off on maternity leave and of course I had Sonny. This should probably go off the record (I can take it out if you prefer?). No, it's fine; he, but in a nut shell, M took over and within a week I had Sonny on the phone, please come back, please come back. That year I supported him from home. Yeah, on the phone, told him what to do, where to go, what to do, who to see. Not with his work, but when he was struggling because he couldn't bear Ann. Going from, I guess, from someone who was just there, to totally wanting him to do so well, to someone who just, someone sitting in the corner reading a newspaper. And he said, 'but I can't deal with it, I would rather do it on my own'. And do you know what? 'Cause Tracey the other week said, 'cause he'd text me'. M supported him, so did Daphne, and they've all gone, 'he's totally useless'. But I work with him outside the uni. 'Cause it was like, people said it was like, whatever you did with him, although he suffers with autism, it was like you had a key, you've done something with him. And he, when I first, you know, Diana and that were warning me, you know he won't put a foot outside. By the end of it he was going to parties, he had a girlfriend, he started at the gym. He text me on my birthday, and I hadn't seen Sonny, for three years, but on my birthday he said 'it's your birthday, happy birthday, I just wanted you to know how I'm doing. I've got a little job. I'm not getting paid for it, but it's all thanks to you, Prue'. 'You, you have made my life'. How amazing is that? And that is why I did that job. And that's why I love that job so much. And yeah, his parents, 'cause he was an only child and his parents were quite, you know wrapped him up, which I quite understand. And he had outside, err, (help) from The University, he had special, you know through the council. And he wouldn't have any other support worker, so I, they, they the council asked me. They approached me, they wanted me, and they paid me separate from The University, to take him socially outside, which I did, which was hard going, 'cause I still had a five year old at the time. But it was things like I would take him, and like he did not know how to go into a shop and, but something, and things like that. And just real socially normal, to just be normal. So yeah, he's done amazing, just like flown. Yeah, I was really, really proud. 'Cause, yeah, I think Corrine was still there then. And I think I was one of those end of year

things, when we used to go in one of those big lecture theatres and they would say all the achievements? (yeah). Although my name wasn't mentioned, and nor was Sonny's I know it was us, because Corrine asked us both for a statement. And that was the statement and he was like when he first came to The University. He was like holding a piece of paper like that and it would say: my name was Sonny, I have autism, and he couldn't look at you. And he would be like please don't think I'm being rude, and he said that from that going, from that, to I go out, I go to parties. I even helped him, I would go, I would say to him. He would have days where he would say I'm not doing it today. Well if you want to get through your driving test you do this, you do three hours of getting on with this say Rhino or something, then we will spend half an hour going through your book. 'Cause he would have to do the test, you know the highway code. And he'd go well alright then. So, I would do that with him and so he got, and passed that, and he just got more confident, so it was like a real, all-rounder type of thing. Do you know what? It was bizarre that I ended up, at the time I felt like that I spent more time with him than I did with mum and my family. It genuinely was like that. You know and, in a way, I know there's boundaries, but he was like my mate at the end of it, he was. You keep in contact with the odd, yeah, the odd one and it was all highly. You know? I think he just. His parents were just like: 'you know he doesn't talk to us, he just like comes in and he just shuts off'. And I'm like 'he's not like that with me'. And it was so funny 'cause he was like, he had, well honestly, I, we would fall about laughing. And I was, what is it like with him, why do you just, you know, shut off like that? It is just like something inside and then gradually over the years we just, he got, he got, he overcome that. (Did you ever meet his dad)? No. His dad was odd, very, very odd. A very odd bloke, yeah, err. I wouldn't go, I wouldn't ever go into their house or anything like that unless that council woman was there. Err or if err I would never go in there, alone or anything like that. (pause).

36.20 Interviewer: So did you do GCSEs at school?

36.30 Interviewee: Prue: Yes, I went to school and got my GCSEs and what is now A grade, and did a GNVQ Intermediate in Art and Design. And then after that I got a job in a retail company, working as, I had already got a Saturday job and then I got a full-time job in there. And I begged I literally begged the art, the woman who ran the displays, to take me on. And I came to The University at that time and that was the year they stopped doing the window dressing. So, I was like oh, so I literally begged her, take me on. I said look I've just come straight from GCSEs and here is my portfolio. I will do whatever you want, I will make the tea, sweep the floor or whatever. And she said she would give me a chance and she took me on. There were only three of us and she was old school and she was trained at Harvey Nicholls. So, I yeah, this was old school, I mean I learnt, we (pause). Do you remember when they used to have every year, they used to have an animated window at Christmas? And it was so elaborate; and I was involved in that. And we used to do the window at the Central Hall. So, whatever was on at the Central Hall we did that so it was linked. Yeah, I was Snow White one day, one year on the float. (laughing) yeah. I loved it; we started the grotto in May. I mean it was amazing, the grotto was just fabulous. Then the cuts, the budgets, things go downhill, lose all the good people. I still speak to Liz who is now like the head merchandiser for Laura Ashley, I still bump into her over the years (pause).

39.10 Interviewer: So, what other roles are important to you in your life?

39.12 Interviewee, Pure: err well, being a mother, and that is probably the (emphasises) most important one. Err you know I've got two children with a massive ten-year gap. So that's kind of challenging. Also acquired a step son, every other weekend, so yeah. You know, well I was on my own for five years with my son. So yeah, it was just me and John. It was just me and him at that time; so, we were really close. I finally moved on and meet Tom, and so I then had

Molly. In a way it's worked out really well. 'Cause John's like a teenager now, and he's just, you. He loves Molly and sitting around with Charlie. So, it's worked out quite well really.

40.08 Interviewer: So how do you feel in the different spaces? Do you think they interact well together?

40.15 Interviewee: Prue: In spaces? What do you mean, as in work/home? (Yes). Yeah, I've always, always had this link, this creative link. This is the link between my job, my home, my business, what I do, even my husband and his business. I help, helped design, redesign all this kitchen together. Yeah, my husband runs an architect company as well, but he will ring me. So, he will say 'well what do you think about this'? So, it's really helped him, as well. So, we really get, well we really work well, as a team. So, he's the builder, he will come up with the structure and I will come up with the layout. I wish you've seen it with all me furniture in (moving to new house). I've packed it all away, yeah. So yeah, yeah you must come to the new one. We will be moving there in March. So, from here we're moving two roads up to the lady. Well the bloke, it's the lady who's buying this. We brought their house (laughing). Basically, they're second time marriage; they had a second home here, they both work in London and they both have really high-flying jobs. They had a second home here and they come from Essex. And that was their little second home and it was obviously a lot cheaper than this. But, so we were like, 'we'll need to rent somewhere, so tell you what, well we will just buy your house'. So we bought their house 'cause we need to go somewhere for 3 or 4 months. So, we are just going up the road there. And then we will move in like the end of March, next year. Yeah so, we did a swop, don't bother me though 'cause it's better than renting though. But that's the other thing we do though, we just don't do this. We've got student houses as well. In fact, we have just sold the one in ABA. 'Cause I just felt like the students there are just like, well it was good, it was good, and we sold that. Err it's not so lucrative and we've got some place over in BAB. Where we have got the students in, well it's got to be quite funky, they love it, it's a bit like this. Yeah, so yeah that's the link – creativity.

42.36 Interviewer: Yeah. So, can you explain if you have ever advised students against the norms of the academy? So, are there any instances where you've kind of gone against what is the institution of the university?

43.00 Interviewee: Prue: Yeah (sarcasm), yeah in a nutshell, do you really wanna know? Basically, speaking from experience, 'cause these things have happened to me, and it happened to me in product design. Where all the students, they would get in, and all the timetables would be literally changed. and at the drop of a hat. And you know these students have come from a really long way, from the other side of London, whatever to get there. And they would say, 'oh by the way we've not got tutorials today, sorry'. Well that's got to change, hasn't it? And there have been times when I've literally thought don't stand for it. 'Cause when I was here as a student you've got to get together and you've got to write a letter. And you've all got to send it into your head of year. So, they picked one person, you know one of the students to be the student rep, and then it has to go through all the proper channels. 'Don't moan about it you've all got to get it on paper. You've gotta do that. And so yeah, I have, I've done that. And I feel for them, I do. And with the product design, they ended up, they wanted this. Will went off, Will went off to have a baby, so he went off. And there was this one bloke, Mike, that was really good, really, really good and all the students liked him. But he was quite expensive. So, all of a sudden, Mike didn't turn up any more. And they got some other joker come in, who was useless and cheap. Yeah so, and I'm like well everyone, didn't know what to do. And I'm just like well, 'cause I'm been through it, I'm like, as a student. And I think that's why I got, I felt like saying I had a real affinity with these students, 'cause I've felt their pain, cause I'm thinking you know what I've paid all this money (laughing). In fact, I'd paid half of what they are paying. Mine was three theirs is nine. So that's why I'm saying don't stand for it.

And they'd all do it and sign it. And I think they managed to get a bloke, one day a week. They would pay one day a week for Mike. So it did work. So probably if they knew, if my boss knew that I would have got the sack. But you know, it, I love the place. And I cared about these students and I know I was supporting Sonny, but they were all my mates in there. You know they were all, they were all like, they were students and I was a member of staff but you just, if you're the same, on a level with somebody, they would just go 'any ideas about that?' and I go 'yeah' and so.

46.20 Interviewer: how do you feel about internal progression?

46.22 Interviewee, Prue: well internal progression, I think my notice might say it all really (laughing).

47.00 Interviewer: Did you put it in your letter of notice then?

47.15 Interviewee, Prue: No, no I did bother, who's gonna see it? No one's there. Well I mean Sarah is there, and I'm sure, so two of them internally progressed, but I think Sam came from a 6th form. But this is what I'm saying I feel like I've worked, I find it was so hard to find common ground. I feel that I don't know a lot about him because he just thinks that we all work for him. Yeah, and I feel don't get me wrong, I've dealt with some, did you ever meet Ben? (no, but I must have 'cause I've been there since you have) I've dealt with some real characters, oh god every other word was (mouthed 'fuck'). It was fuck this and fuck that. Ben's, 26 he was. Em, I know I struggled with him. It was like calm the beast. (laughing)

48.00 Interviewer: So, do you think that you might have stayed if there had been some kind of promotion?

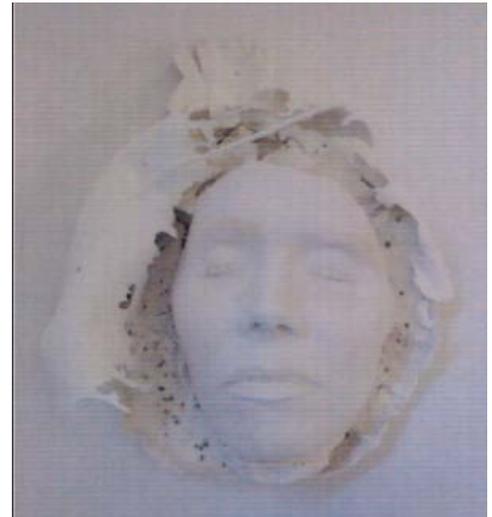
48.15 Interviewee: Prue: I think I would have stayed if I felt the heart and soul hadn't been ripped out of it. Meaning all the decent lecturers have gone, all the changes that they have made. I know it's awful, but you get that feeling of the Mary Celeste isn't it, jump ship, that's the feeling. That's the feeling, but no one's actually saying. But that's the feeling isn't it? That's the underlying, it's coming. You can feel it. So emm, yeah, I do, and it's the quality of student, I guess. Isn't it, it's the quality of student, as well?

49.00 Interviewer: Is that your husband coming back?

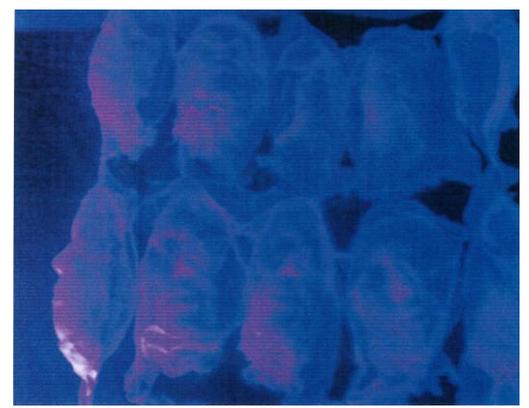
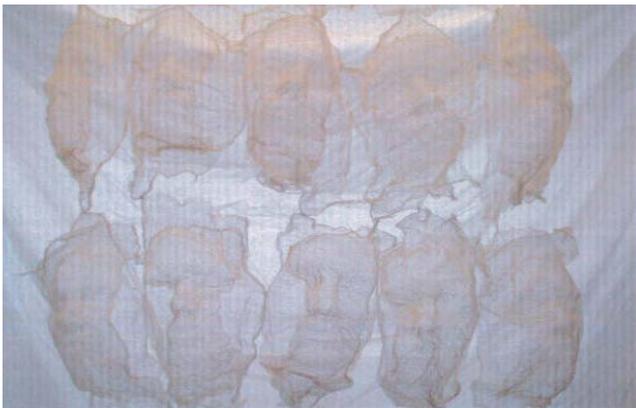
49.10 Interviewee, Prue: Yeah and my daughter.

49.20 Interviewer: Ok, let's finish then. Can you send me your images and your artist's statement?

49.25 Interviewee, Prue: Yes, off course.



Prue, (2007). Preparation processes: Thought Blanket, mixed media



Prue, (2007). Thought Blanket, mixed media

Interview 7 – Mia

This interview is for my PhD, the context of which I explained in the information sheet I give to you and again on the telephone, when I set up the interview. It is entitled: Making the invisible visible: To what extent is the positioning of the LSA in post compulsory education located in a space of resistance, transformation and or reproduction?

You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know. She signed the consent form and we began by Mia discussing the artwork/objects.

016 Interviewer: Ok so can you tell me about your objects?

017 Interviewee, Mia: the first thing I brought are these (laminated cards), 'cause these mean a lot to me. These are my speech therapy cards. I made them all myself obviously, but I couldn't have looked at them for a long time, but, yes it was paediatrics speech therapy, where I worked as an assistant. And so, but I did give speech therapy to children from 2 and a half, up to the age of five.

1.00 Interviewer: so oh, you could have supported RM then?

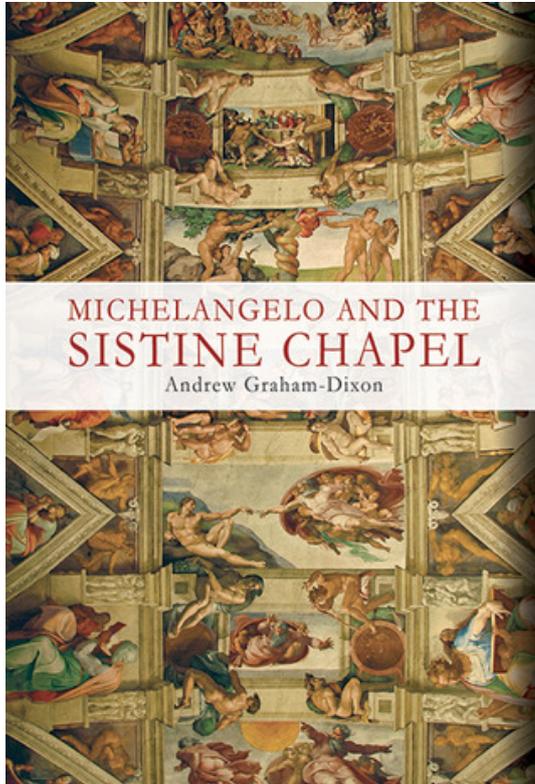
1.02 Interviewee, Mia: Well yeah, I know but mine was more, you know, well look these are vowels, ee ear, i b– u – s, my, m, i you know you join them up (showed me all her cards and explained some more of the phonetically constructed words). So, these are all vowels. I had thought that I brought more (sounded out some of the vowels on the cards).

3.10 Interviewer: Where did you learn to do all this; did you do a course then?

3.16 Interviewee, Mia: What happened was I went to art college originally and then when I had children, I needed to get a job that was in school hours. And err, I did a City and Guilds in Learning Support and then I did quality work in a primary school, while I did the City and Guilds and then from that, I didn't really think I wanted to work in a school. And so speech therapy just really appealed to me. I applied through the NHS and they taught you in the clinic, so I just went the RH in G clinic and I worked with a speech therapist and she taught me, as I went along, and then you get your own case load of students, clients, yeah. And then you do a six-week block with them and generally they make good progress. Then I just did simple phonology things with them that might, just, have a delay, they just like a delay rather than anything else. So yeah, so then I made all these, so I can use them and then I can take them wherever I went. I worked in PW and RH Health Centres and went between the two. So I would use all these and we would do a game, turn them over and they would say the words. So I would have to make games up as well, but it was quite some time ago now. So this would be the second stage with these (sounded out some of the blends on the cards). And then these would be the next ones. So you would turn that over and say the words and play the games. I thought these were the phonology ones, but I don't know where they are. These are my vowels and small words, aren't they? Then they would go onto sentences and things like that, and so yeah, and so that was one thing. So that was that. And I would draw them and colour them in. And then my second thing is this lovely book. My travel book, 'cause I love (sounded out all the letters) Italy and I love that classical art and I love the Sistine Chapel. Love it, I have a big picture on my wall of it. This is Andrew Graham Dixon's, yeah he is on the TV. So, really, I wanted to know all about the, to find out about what each little bit of the Sistine Chapel meant, cause its massive isn't it? You've seen it haven't you? (nodded). It's very big isn't it? (yes). And some of it has got a good, a sense of humour in it, hasn't it? Any so it's not all

completely serious. So, I got this 'cause I really like him and I watch all his programmes, I'm up to about half way through them, 'cause I really want to learn about every aspect of it.

7.10 Interviewer: oh yeah, there was that on BBC iPlayer, on Self-Portraits, with Michelangelo



7.15 Interviewer, Mia: yeah, they did, didn't they? He added the little bit, that bit

7.21 Interviewer: yeah did he add himself, as the frayed skin of the Saint Bartholomew? Isn't that Michelangelo?

7.25 Interviewer, Mia: yeah and didn't he fall out with someone and didn't he?

7.30 Interviewee: wasn't it the Pope?

7.33 Interviewee, Mia: yeah and then he did work for, oh I can't remember. Yeah so, how many things was I meant to bring, 'cause I got some pictures with me. I haven't done any art for all this time.

7.40 Interviewer: oh, so what did you specialise in at art school?

7.15 Interviewee, Mia: well I was a visual merchandiser, window dressing, I went to uni in London. But it was down the bottom. You go through the main entrance, but it was down the bottom. On the bottom floor, where you went in for the students for trades. You still went into CSM, but I did meet some art people, went to all the fashion shows and ate in their canteen and that.

8.18 Interviewer: oh, so did you do that from school then?

8.21 Interviewee, Mia: yeah, after school I went and did that for two years and then I did a bit of freelance window dressing; all around the K area and B area and then I think I had children from there. I didn't do a lot of it because saying it's the same as students nowadays, once you've done all the work, I would just basically, you know I went to Liberty's. Liberty's was always my favourite windows in London but if you got in there you would just pick up the rubbish for two years, same like any other industry, well you think you can do it all don't you? And this is my third thing.

9.02 Interviewer: Oh, this is nice.

9.05 Interviewee, Mia: Yes, it lovely, isn't it? Yeah, so when you said to bring in some objects, and you said to me are you doing anything creative, and I was thinking not at the moment as I just don't seem to have the time and I didn't think of what to bring in. But then I thought that this would appeal to me and so this is Jane Eyre in the book *Pride and Prejudice*, and she has picked out a character and drawn it and I think that's nice, yes something like that would appeal to me.

9.38 Interviewer: Ah so can you draw then?

9.40 Interviewee, Mia: Yes, well think I could do something like that, a water colour; it's like the pictures I've got in doors. Yeah, they look nice and yeah that's just one of them. I've got a set of them. But that's what, if I thought about art that's what I would do. That's my other glass thing, a Fornasetti Ortensia scented candle; it's so expensive, and my daughter bought me that. Yeah, I know it's very expensive. She got it from Liberty's. I love Fornasetti, 'cause I love the pastel mix with the modern really. It's a bit Eastern with the design and the lid. I will text you the images. So, yeah, they are the things that I love, 'cause they are the classic, that is what appeals to me. And I think it is 'cause I worked with the applied arts as well, so that's sort of a mixture and all that type of stuff, so that's what of appeals to me quite a bit so, yeah. I feel quite excited talking about that, 'cause I forget, though. I do love things like that, and I feel that I put it all on hold. You know? It's life. But I hope that I would really like to have that time, cause for me that is luxury, for me to be able to do that. I haven't had the time. So, I would think about, but there's always stuff to do isn't there? So, they're my things.

12.27 Interviewer: [We looked at the interview schedule and I explained my questions and the meaning of the thesis title]. So, can you describe your roles, both now and in the past?

15.19 Interviewee, Mia: Not just work? (No). First of all, I would say I'm a pair of ears. I would always say I'm a pair of ears, 'cause all I do is listen to everyone else moaning. Yeah, at home I listen to my son, not always moaning (laughing), but a lot of it is. Friends as well, I tend to attract a lot of people. You know what I mean? And then my son would moan. And my daughter would tell me hers and then my husband would tell me his. Do you know what I mean? So that's what I do, sit and listen. I don't even give advice, sometimes it's just that they can off load on me. I do that a fair bit and even at work it's like that with students. It's 24: 7. I really do feel like that. So that's one, a pair of ears. But then I'm a mother, a daughter, obviously with me mum. When they get older you need to look after them. A worker, I work with people. A wife, a friend, yeah, err. It sounds like I'm moaning (laughing).



16.50 Interviewer: Ok, so how do you feel performing those roles in the different spaces?

16.57 Interviewee: Mia, what you mean like relaxed? (yes). I generally do feel relaxed at work. I can listen to people at work and the staff and students, as it's different to being at home. That's my job. Half of it is just for the students to off load to tell you what they think, have a strop; you know, I'm not going to judge. It doesn't really stress me out that much. 'Cause it's work and when I leave work I'm ok, I don't take it home with me. You know there were something with Linda that got to me, they were very upsetting, 'cause she was being made to do things that were making her unhappy. So, I did take a little bit of that home. But at home I would get a little bit resentful, I would probably say. I need my own space. I want someone to say listen to me. That's how feel. It's nice to be needed as well, at home, though. I don't want them to be seeing anyone else, I suppose.

18.35 Interviewer: Ok, so what was your schooling like?

18.36 Interviewee: Mia, I hated school; really, really hated school. But in the infants, I remember crying. And then in the secondary school practically didn't go in, as I hated it so much. I really hated it. One thing was that I was painfully shy. And I had a biology teacher who picked on me practically the whole time, a young bloke. And he actually said, one day that this is an example of blood rushing to the surface, when he made me go bright red and he made me stand up and everyone look at me bright red. I was so painfully shy. So, I sort of played truant after that. I hated it, I hated it; really shy. I hated it. I got O levels, and stuff. I got 8 O Levels; I won't say I worked hard. And you know if I had that time again, I would have worked really hard, as I was really interested. So, then I went to college, and I loved art college, and it was like freedom to me, and like-minded people, as well I found. They were like me and I really felt like I fitted in. So, yeah.

20.00 Interviewer: Is that why you went to work at The Uni then?

20.05 Interviewee: Mia: Yeah definitely.

20.09 Interviewer: So how did you get the job there?

20.11 Interviewee: Mia: I think it was just advertised and my son and daughter both went there. And then looking at their work I was thinking I used to do things like that, and I really loved that. And then John said, 'well we do have helpers there in the class'. And I thought I'd love that. Being in a creative environment, still using my sort of teaching skills, so that's why I err, mainly because it was creative to be honest and it was going back to that. You know. So, I've done my speech therapy, my City and Guilds in Learning Support.

21.10 Interviewer: so, is there anything else that you might want to do now?

21.16 Interviewee: Mia: well I don't think that I want to go back to learning. I wouldn't say I'm a fan of learning. But I'm really into, well I'm not really into, but I've started to do yoga and I'm sort of into that fitness and spirituality, not like praying to fairies and stuff, but thinking about yourself, which is something I've never done before, 'cause I think we were brought up in a generation where you were told to stop being silly. And I remember that on the bus going home thinking that she really fancies herself, she really loves herself. But we were never really taught to love ourselves, I find. Whereas now things are different, I find. They are different aren't they, I tell my kids. So, this was all new to me. So that's about the yoga, cause that's all about loving yourself. So, I am kind of a lot into that at the moment. So, I would like to do some more of that and I would like start doing some drawing, doing some doodles; I don't want anyone judging me, sort of thing, so I wouldn't do them (exams), just do them on me own sort of thing.

22.34 Interviewer: did you know that Diana is doing a 10-week drawing course, down in the town in a local pub? She's hired a little studio, as well to teach.

22.47 Interviewee: Mia: yeah, I was thinking back to college and I really liked life drawing. To be honest it was one of my favourites. I mean I could do an evening class, but I just don't wanna do something where it's err, got an exam at the end. That's not so fun.

23.10 Interviewer: can you explain if you have ever advised the students to do things that were not part of the ethos of the uni? Or that you have done?

23.41 Interviewee: Mia: Well, I've not put ideas in people's heads, but like Linda and Jemima, who were both in applied art. They can't find a starting point. So, even if you go up there and try to find out what they are interested in, they can't. So, maybe I have done a bit more, a bit like you have, remember? (yes, well I came up with the whole concept, didn't I, and the rest) well you have to don't you, otherwise you will get nowhere? So, she couldn't find a starting point, even with Jemima; and then they just look at you, even when they have. I find I have to. I've not made it my work but, yeah, I've given them ideas, but you need to say, to get anywhere. But they did the actual making, but maybe with ideas, saying why don't you make it like, you know? (laughing together). We have to do that don't we, for their sake; otherwise they would be just sitting there doing nothing, with a blank page? I don't know. Yeah, it's mainly been things like that really.

25.18 Interviewer: did you ever go and support the maths and English groups then?

25.19 Interviewee: Mia: No not really. I didn't have to do that, 'cause this is my first time on FE. Yeah, I was always HE. Except when I was with Linda, because she had autism. I worked with a lot of children with autism in speech therapy. Yeah, I was mainly on fashion, wasn't I Bev? Yeah, I do like fashion, yeah, that is an interest. Yeah, I do like fashion, but not making. I know quite a lot of designers. I like fashion. So it's been, I felt that I have got a lot out of that job to be honest. I've felt like that I've learnt so much. Yeah, I've loved it.

26.46 Interviewer: maybe that was what inspired the interest in Michelangelo, or were you interested in that before?

26.48 Interviewee: Mia: yeah, I've always been interested in Michelangelo, but I think that was what brought it out. Going to all the lectures, learning about all that. They never had that when I went to college. They didn't have lectures, we didn't have to do that theory sort of thing, because it was a diploma. We did the history of art, they history of fashion. We had to learn things like that and a lot of it was physical making. Whereas now, a lot of it is sent to the shops, where a lot of them have branches, say like Selfridges for their window. Say somewhere like Liberty's or Selfridges have all my favourites, we would have to make say that they wanted a cupboard we would have to make a cupboard, put the shelves in, make the floor, everything was made from scratch. It wasn't produced for you. (almost like the theatre and film course). I did all the printing, inking. I forget I've done all this. Yeah, it is more physical, and I think that kind of appeals to me a little bit. Yeah it was making things as well, yeah making your own props. So, it was different to how they would do it nowadays.

28.29 Interviewee: Yes. They have taken out the making from the Theatre and Film degree at the uni. It is mostly design.

28.41 Interviewee: Mia: so, they give the manufacture the design and they make up the job then. So, if you give then the design then they will make it up for them. Yes, I think it is nice to make it up, I think, though if you are a designer then you need to know how it all works. Yeah, how long it takes and how much it's going to cost, yeah which bit goes next to that bit sort of thing. I suppose they will learn that though. That's the best part the making part, surely. Well it's just technology isn't it? Moving on. Well it's just the technology moving on. It's a shame really. But I think it will go full cycle as I think people will want handmade, like bespoke furniture, you know? It's tough though I think.

30.18 Interviewer: yes, you are right the students are talking about slow design and slow fashion. What you are explaining. Where mass production gives way to a more ethical design process.

30.27 Interviewee: Mia: yes, but it's very hard to make a living out of that. Yeah, unless you are well-known.

30.48 Interviewer: so, what do you think you are going to do; take the redundancy?

30.50 Interviewee: Mia: well as I only do one day a week, and they are dividing it by 52 weeks, my redundancy is going to be, well probably about £50 (laughing). Well yeah, I suppose I will have to want I? I don't think I will go in if I'm still with Jonny, oh no I'm not with him, am I? I'm with Connor. So maybe I will still do a Friday in the second year. But if I don't, I don't know really. I think err, I will do a bit more yoga. Maybe I will have the time to start doing a bit more, I don't think I will look for another job. I feel like I will have early retirement (laughing). That's the thing though my husband does like it; well that's the reason I do one day a week really, one I enjoy being there and two I want my own little bit of money, so that I'm not having to ask him. It's like can I have £20 and he's 'what do you want that for'. It's independence isn't it; its being able to go where you want, do what you want without someone going (pause). It is that and I think, well I don't know, I think I will see what comes up really. But I'm not overly bothered really. I think it's coming to a natural kind of ending really. It's been in our heads anyway; its been happening for a few years now; it's been a big shock for all of us. Do you know what's happening with Diana, Nikki and Cameron?

33.11 Interviewer: well Diana is hoping she can set up her own little projects, enough to make some money, which was why she started now. Nikki is doing bookkeeping for a make-up artist.

33.32 Interviewee: Mia: Oh, that so interesting.

33.33 Interviewer: Yes, she is doing one half days a week to start.

33.52 Interviewee: Mia: yeah, and then there's Prue, who has resigned, so she's gone to do beauty therapy and doesn't that suit her? And she will be so much happier doing that and there will be someone to take her student on. He is Autistic and a bit self-centred. Anyway, it suits her so much more; she will be so happy. You're not taking away what she has done, and she is young with a future, 'cause everything you've done you can use. In her new build she can have a salon. Well she moves ever such a lot, and packing up and moving is ever so stressful; isn't it? Shall we finish the interview?

38.01 Interviewer: Yes sure.

Interview 8 – Moira

Contacted the interviewee for the photos, but she has not got back to me. Did not feel it was appropriate to request the images too many times as she had left the uni and I am not in contact with her.

This interview is for my PhD, the context of which I explained in the information sheet I give to you and again on the telephone, when I set up the interview. It is entitled: Making the invisible visible: To what extent is the positioning of the LSA in post compulsory education located in a space of resistance, transformation and or reproduction?

You have been informed about the nature of this study and are willing to participate, should you wish to stop the interview at any time just let me know. She signed the consent form and we began by being shown her artwork/objects. The interview took place in my office at work, at Moira suggestion.

016 Interviewer: Ok so can you tell me about your objects?

017 Interviewee: Moira: [shows me an object of sailing memento] oh ok, alright. Well this one is really important to me. Well you know that my son is married now and has got a baby? But his girlfriend, she did leave him and packed him in and gave him a lot of, of heartache. And he was going off sailing and I was really quite worried about him and that he might jump off. I know it's silly, but he was away for six months and he did return home safely. Anyway, he brought this back from Singapore. And he gave me this to me, which I really love. And years ago, I was watching a film, and it was a lovely romantic thing and they were all so glamorous and it made you want to go and so from Singapore he got me this and he did come home safely. [she indicated for me to pick it up which it did. It was very heavy]. It is something that I have in my lounge. I really love that. [She took a photo]. I'm glad that he came home safely, 'cause you worry, don't you? I was so worried when she packed him in, 'cause she loves him to bits. Cause now they've got the baby. I have it on my window ledge in my lounge. I love that country. It felt like a love affair with that. You feel how heavy that is.

2.18 Interviewer: yes, it is, yes lovely.

2.33 Interviewee: Moira: And my other one. I have nieces and nephews, and one of my nieces, I was really found of one of them Sky, which Mia has met when, when she comes to stay and that. Anyway, her mum got me this which was I was so chuffed, as a little survival kit (it was a small bag of tiny mementos and a small card with a printed poem) that said 'if roses were flowers, I would pick you', because I've never has anything else like this. 'Smiling face with happy times we shared together, which reminded me of you'. Is that nice?

3.03 Interviewer: yes, it is.

3.04 Interviewee: Moira: Yes. So, I keep that on my fire place – I should really eat the sweets that are in it. So that's my two objects. I do have things of my daughters that she has given me but they are next to me on my bedside table. They are really treasured. They are things from Mother's Day and things like that. I love you mummy bears. I am quite sentimental, as you know, don't you? I like getting things from people. But like good friends or, you know what I

mean? Or aunts or mum, I love anything like that. That's why I get upset with people when they don't appreciate what we do. Yeah, so, I brought those in.

4.05 Interviewer: Yes, thanks for doing that. Ok so to my questions: so, can you tell me a little bit about your schooling? {she took the photo of the other object and put the items in her bag}.

4.26 To be honest with you it was a crap school, (pause) really rough, full of bullies (pause) a lot of disruption. But my brother and sister passed the eleven plus. And I feel like now that I should have gone too. So, I chose the nearest school, but there were bullies and they were so bitchy, it was so crap; you know, boys jumping out the windows. We had this beautiful linguistic lab for French lessons, you know we had this teacher, she was only about 23 and I was really loving it, really enjoying it and then they went out the window. I said if they don't want to learn then let them go because we are the ones that do. She said that they can't do that, so there was a lot of disruption.

5.16 Interviewer: So, did you get your O Levels?

5.17 Interviewee: Moira: Well, I did the CSEs. I got 5: English, maths, biology, geography and French, because I loved the languages.

5.24 Interviewer: OK can you just give me a brief history of what you did?

5.30: Interviewee: Moira: Yes, well, in those days there was no careers, just left us on our own so I went to night school, and did shorthand and typing, (pause) so bored. No one ever said to us what do you want to do, did they? (Interviewer: No and I did exactly the same as you). So, I just applied for an office job, but with the shorthand it was difficult as when I tried to read it back, to be honest I couldn't read it. You see I was good in college but when you go out into the real world, they speak so fast, don't they? And I didn't really feel confident.

6.28: Interviewer: And, so what did you do after that?

6.30: Interviewee: Moira: Well, I went to an avionics place, but I was so bored working in the typing pool that I then got a job as a receptionist for a newspaper office. It's not here now; it was the newspaper for the local area, so I was the receptionist there and then I had my son. I've done everything: cleaning, chef, Tesco stacking shelves, taxis, cleaner, anything I could do to get money. I did all different things for about five years to fit in with the children and then I got into the LSA. Ok, so that's how I started to get into that. I did it at the school first; so, what happened was that I ended up getting terrible repetitive stress syndrome in one of my jobs, where I keep putting my arm up and down and so I went to the doctor's to get sorted out and get some medication and he said that I have got to change my job and so I said that would be hard because I need all the school holidays off and somebody said that my sister who goes to the church that someone there knew my sister and they go to the same church. And she that, that Oh, if you are interested, she said that if you want to work in a school that we have triplets starting in September in a private school. She said that it would be quite a lot of support with the emotional, and I said that I have never done anything like that before and she said that it would just be looking after children. It would be no different, and so I just rang up the school and they said oh yes come for the interview and I did and I got the job. And while I was down there, they paid for me to do all of my teaching qualifications. And then I paid extra

to do like Asperger's and all that sort of thing and dyslexia and all those sorts of special needs sort of thing. I was there for five years and then they were going down to the senior school and then all of a sudden, I saw this job advertised, and I saw it was at the grammar school and it was for a cover supervisor. And it meant taking the class, the lessons, and it was at the grammar school. She said that you won't be taking the classes all the time. There will be other things to do and you would likely be doing admin and admin type of duties. So, I started and I was covering five lessons and that was a lot and even the teachers didn't get any breaks at all. So that was the grammar school. Now, the problem with cover is that you don't get any, (pause) well if you don't know their names it is difficult. You can't just say, 'Lily stop it! Can you? If you don't know their names, can you?' Right now, so then there is the register and it is now all computerised isn't it? And then again if you know your class, you just look and put the name in, but then when I call their names out some would be honest and then some would, would make it up (both laughing) and pretend to be someone else. And then if you put the name in wrong you would get in trouble with the women in the office. It was a nightmare and then it got to the stage where my stomach was churring before I would have to go in and it just wasn't being worth it. And the other girls would say the same and then it got to the stage where I then applied for another job during the holiday. And I got the job here and I have been here ten years. I just love to support. You would get in and they would have their feet up on the desk and you would say put your feet down and they would just glare at you. It's different in each school; sometimes you just have 12 in the class, they have small classes. The other thing with cover is that the teacher would just ring up in the morning and just say can you just do this and then you would get in there and the girls would say that they had done that before; it's boring Miss, well I would say this is what you have to do. But then they would change the lesson. So, can you see the difficulties which you have to deal with? You don't know if they are telling the truth or just trying to wind you up. Yeah, so when I started here there was a girl in FE, she was lovely she was and told her what they did and she said yeah that was what they did to wind people up. She said that it was nothing personal. It was just the way it was. So rather than getting supply teachers in, which would cost a fortune they would be paying a top salary. So instead we were on site; called in. Yeah, so they would always turn up late and I would ask why they were late. They would say I had to do my makeup; I've got self-esteem issues. I can't go out without my makeup on. (we laughed). They then had to go down to office to get a wipe and then wipe it all off; it was a nightmare. They used to say oh please Miss, but used to send them there otherwise I would have got into trouble. (laughing). It was funny in a lot of ways but in others it wasn't, I don't want to do something like that. No! They were really strict and the Headmistress in the interview said that you have to be nasty until Christmas, because if you are too soft then they will (pause). You have to be tough. But on your C.V. it does look good that you have worked at a private school.

13.48 Interviewer: Did you do any courses after the special needs?

13.49 Interviewee: Moira: Yeah, but I can't remember, I've done so many.

13.50 Interviewer: what about anything art related?

14.00 Interviewee: Moira: Well, just I do that at home. And I did attend a class on watercolours which I did enjoy. That I used to do on a Friday and I have a few pictures that I made. So, I am a bit artistic (would you be able to send me some photos of the painting your made?) Yes. Do

you remember that you put one up on your wall? It was of a farmhouse with a sheep. I've always done landscapes because I find it really difficult to draw people. So, for me it's always been landscapes, which I have to look at something. I'm not an actual artist. But I do like doing water colours though.

15.12 Interviewer: so, what do you identify as your roles?

15.13 Interviewee: Moira: Well, support; I've always liked support.

15.14 Interviewer: And outside of work?

15.15 Interviewee: Moira: I seem to be doing a lot of caring at the moment – what with my mum. And the kids and the running around.

15.25 Interviewer: And lastly, in The Uni here do you feel that you have done anything that might not be within the ways that The Uni might want you to be?

Interviewee: Moira: Err, well, I suppose with one particular student I suppose I did cross the line. But you had to, didn't you because she was crying all the time. Not anything sort of massive but yeah. You know you are supposed to let them get on with it aren't you? But, you know we both gave her ideas, didn't we? I suppose that would be (pause). Do you remember they used to make us sit out in the corridor because they used to make us want to do everything for them? More so with one of the students than the other. That's what we used to do didn't we? But not know, no. Because the students I support now are OK.

16.42 Interviewer: so would you say that with internal progress, you have ever advised the students against that?

16.49 Interviewee: Moira: Well, there was with one, because she wanted to go down to Bath. And she got turned down and to be honest I said to her that being here you know everybody. You know where the studios are and where all the workshops are and you wouldn't have to live away from home and I think she did go into halls as she did want to be away from home. So, I really pushed things. But I see that being away does give the student independence.

18.20 Interviewer: is there anything else you want to discuss? And can you send me the photos?

18.21 Interviewee: Moira: Oh yes, I will send the paintings and I did some acrylics. I can send some of them too. You know I've always enjoyed learning? What I'm going to do after this I don't know. I don't really want to go back into schools. You know there was some talk of supporting us with what to do with work experience but I don't know. I did take your advice though and I went to see the careers adviser and I am sorting out me CV. I'm going to sign up for the agencies too. But I like it here because it is close to home and then there is all the politics in schools, because they have got to be there. I remember one girl in the school that she said that she was going to marry a footballer. (Laughing). I said well what happens if he divorces you? She said well I would get half of what he's got Miss, wouldn't I? It was all the hair flicking and trying to get a footballer. And this is how they live now – it's all celebrity and a quick way to get money. I said that you need an education. She said I'm just going to the local comp. I said what would look better that or the grammar school on you CV? They don't

appreciate at that age what opportunities they have got. And they don't really listen to you, do they? And they have all got their mobile phones on. When I was at school you had a pencil and now, they have all those games under the desk. You try taking their phone; they hate you. It's horrible, but I had to take it off her. And I was allowed to get detentions and on a Friday, they had detention as I wasn't allowed to send them out. But they would say I can't do that Miss as I already have a detention with someone else. With the teachers they were OK because they knew that they could ring their parents. You can see the difficult position we are in? We had no authority but I didn't know that when I took the job. And there was no parking there either and that was getting to me. They all had massive 4 by 4s as they were all wealthy and that's why I got my little KA so that I could park as I didn't have time to leave the class to park. All these things you have to think about. And here there's nowhere to park but I can walk. But in the end I couldn't really cope with that job; but I will tell you who used to work really hard and that was the Asian girls. The English girls were all, and especially when they were with their friends they played up. I remember one girl she picked up her stuff and chucked it all on the floor and I told her to get out. But then the whole class changed and I thought that I would get a disciplinary. But the class completely changed and they settled down. The trouble with some of them was they got in on appeal and they had come from the really rough estate. They couldn't really cope, doing physics, chemistry biology, German, Latin and all the, and then they would play up. See this is what goes on in schools you see. So it was really difficult, but sometimes I had really lovely lessons. They were just really gobby and mouthy. The science lessons were the worst; they hated science. And then the teachers used to just change the lessons. I would just say oh go on the computer and look it up. But on the whole, we were supposed to give them the work. There was so much cover because the teachers were off with stress, and another thing – at the comp a C was great and at the grammar school it was bad and then if they didn't get an A* it was the fault of the teachers. It's too stressful so they go off. We would have meetings with the Headmistress and all she would be taking about is the tables. They have got to be the top and if they weren't the teachers would have to go. The Latin one went. They all want they to be someone; they have their little briefcases; they are children of doctors and you know? I supported a triplet with slight brain damage and they do all want to get A*. We had one lad who played about in every single lesson and he still got A*s He said to me that he never saw his parents; they were both doctors and he was brought up by a nanny and he had a swimming pool and the money. He didn't listen to any of the teachers. I didn't get an A* in anything. I did well in junior school and was in the top sets. That was the 70s, but I think it is worse now. You were quite when the teacher spoke but now kids will contradict everything, And, one thing about the private school is that the parents think they own you as they are paying. That is the down side of the private school. Yes, there are smaller classes but, yes that's the same with a degree. If you are paying you want a good service. But now in the private school they take anyone with, it they have wealth. It used to be doctors, lawyers and now it's anyone. Gypsies anyone, who can afford to, to, Indians and Asians. Looking back, I thought I was bettering myself by going there but now it's different.

29.55 Interview: well we all need a change.

29.56 Interviewee: Moira: Yeah, I know but I'm scarred, now. They are all jumping ship, now aren't they? But I feel like I'm getting old. I said to Mia, I can feel it now. I've been diagnosed

with arthritis, it's in my back and my hips. I couldn't do a caring job or a cleaning job. Maybe I could work in pre-school. A lot of it is wiping noses and tying shoelaces. Maybe I will do that. But it is our society today Bev, they all play up, don't they? I had one who would keep wearing corduroys into school and she wouldn't wear the correct uniform, you had to be smart in the grammar school. And that I thought was wrong as I wasn't a qualified teacher and I had to discipline them and this went on for months and then I decided to get another job. They should have had a proper teacher. I did have one student, who kept putting her feet on the desk and she wouldn't put them down and I asked her so many times and then she stood up and I thought OMG I'm not paid enough for this. But then I saw her in the centre once and she apologised to me. I did report her but the teacher didn't even have the decency to see her. So, at the time I did feel a bit scared about that. She was a big girl and I thought she was squaring up to me. So, I backed down.

35.03 Interviewer: well we do have to think about our own safety.

35.05 Interviewee: Moira: Well, they shouldn't have been putting their feet on the table in the first place. And those lessons are an hour and ten minutes. Sometimes I used to look down the corridor to see if there was anyone about. I felt like I need a panic button. They used to spend the lessons surfing the net. By the time I got to the back of the class, it was as if they hadn't done anything at all. They could have got more done with some TAs, as they could, they could circulate, but it's more difficult when you are on your own.

38.00 Interviewer: well, you can ask those questions next time you go for an interview.

38.09 Interviewee: Moira: Yes, I definitely will as cover is a difficult job. So, if you did give detention it would be us that lost out as it was in our lunch hour. You have to write the lesson on the board but they don't do it most of the time. You say this is what you have to do girls and then their faces are all like no I'm not doing that. Even now when I walk pass there sometimes I shudder. My son said to me you are not going to last mum. I said no I will be fine they are grammar school. Cause he knew and he was right. I was there for 2 years though. And then we had to invigilate the exams and they were all shouting and they supposed to be quiet. There were 80 of them and you had to shout at them to be quiet. As soon as they came into that building, they were supposed to be quiet. Ready to go into the exam. They used to come out screaming and I used to think that poor bus driver. How would you cope with that cause they are excited after they have come out of their exams. All they were talking about was boys. And I used to say is this not a hair salon, because they would all get their hairbrushes out. They have always got to have an answer. They start in year 7 and by the time he gets to year 8 they have been corrupted. (laughing). I started off my pension there and that is frozen and now this one is too. It's a strange time isn't it. Shall we stop now?

45.00 Interviewer: yes sure.