

INTRODUCTION

dominance of patriarchal culture, more spaces are being made by feminism, both in high and popular culture, for representations of the female body that express women's identities, desires and needs. This project of self-definition is a critical aspect of the politics of the women's movement, and the slogan of the 1970s, 'our bodies our selves', needs to be continuously re-examined and pursued.

Having reached the end of this particular piece of work, I am still impressed by the immensity of the subject and the diverse areas of contemporary and historical culture that are opened out by study of the female nude. So, although it is a conventional qualification, I feel compelled to say that I view this book as a contribution to a much larger and ongoing debate, rather than as a final or conclusive statement about the subjects raised here.

As with most academics in the current political climate, I have found the most difficult aspect of work on this book to be finding the time to spend on it. I am therefore extremely grateful to the Leverhulme Trust who awarded me a grant in order to work on the book for six months in 1990. My thanks also go to all my colleagues in the Department of History of Art at Birkbeck College who continue to create a supportive environment for research which respects the diversity of approaches now represented within the discipline. Laura Marcus and Tag Gronberg have offered really helpful criticism and comments, and I am grateful to them for reading various parts of this text. But above all, my thanks go to Steve Connor, without whom . . . without whom this book could not possibly have been finished; thank you for endless patience, intellectual and emotional support and childcare!

Part I

THEORIZING THE FEMALE NUDE

1 FRAMING THE FEMALE BODY

At no point is there a plane or an outline where the eye may wander undirected. The arms surround the body like a sheath, and by their movement help to emphasise its basic rhythm. The head, left arm and weight-bearing leg form a line as firm as the shaft of a temple.

(Kenneth Clark, *The Nude*, 1956)¹

Any structure of ideas is vulnerable at its margins. We should expect the orifices of the body to symbolise its specially vulnerable points. Matter issuing from them is marginal stuff of the most obvious kind. Spittle, blood, milk, urine, faeces or tears by simply issuing forth have traversed the boundary of the body . . . The mistake is to treat bodily margins in isolation from all other margins. There is no reason to assume any primacy for the individual's attitude to his own bodily and emotional experience, any more than for his cultural and social experience.

(Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 1966)²

This permanent requirement – to distinguish between the internal or proper sense and the circumstance of the object being talked about – organizes all philosophical discourses on art, the meaning of art and meaning as such . . . This requirement presupposes a discourse on the limit between the inside and outside of the art object, here a discourse on the frame.

(Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, 1987)³

These three statements have been taken from works published over a period of three decades and from three distinct academic disciplines (art history, anthropology and philosophy), but here they are placed side by side because, in their diverse ways, they seem to unravel an aesthetic that has structured the representation of the female body in western art since

THE FEMALE NUDE

antiquity. They speak of outlines, margins and frames – procedures and forms that regulate both the ways in which the female body is shown and the proper conduct of the prospective viewer. Kenneth Clark describes the achievement of the Capitoline Venus in terms of containment. The arms 'surround' and enfold the body, and the planes and surfaces of the marble itself seem to emphasize this act of enclosure. Clark's range of images is significant. The pose is likened to a 'sheath'; it has become a covering for the body and is as regular and structured as the column of a temple. It is almost unnecessary to point out the phallic connotations of this language. For Clark, the female body has been shorn of its formal excesses and, as Venus, has been turned into an image of the phallus. The transformation of the female body into the female nude is thus an act of regulation: of the female body and of the potentially wayward viewer whose wandering eye is disciplined by the conventions and protocols of art.

With the quotation from Mary Douglas, the move is from the particularities of the female nude, that is, a cultural commodity, highly formalized and conventionalized, to the more general issue of the body and its boundaries. Douglas examines the cultural links between dirt and disorder or formlessness and analyses the rituals of cleansing and purification that control this threat. Hygiene and dirt imply two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a transgression of that order. All transitional states therefore pose a threat; anything that resists classification or refuses to belong to one category or another emanates danger. And once again it is the margins, the very edges of categories, that are most critical in the construction of symbolic meaning.

From this position, it is not so far to Jacques Derrida's 'discourse on the frame'. In a radical dismantling of Kantian aesthetics, Derrida problematizes the philosophical concept of the disinterested aesthetic experience by focusing our attention not on the object of contemplation but on its boundary. The frame is the site of meaning, where vital distinctions between inside and outside, between proper and improper concerns, are made. If the aesthetic experience is one that transcends individual inclination and takes on a universal relevance, then without the frame there can be no unified art object and no coherent viewing subject.

In this section I will draw on the work of writers such as Douglas and Derrida in order to make sense of the female nude and its symbolic importance within the western tradition of high art. I will argue that one of the principal goals of the female nude has been the containment and regulation of the female sexual body. The forms, conventions and poses of art have worked metaphorically to shore up the female body – to seal dividing the inside of the body and the outside, the self from the space of the examination of art. For if, as Douglas suggests, the body's boundaries

FRAMING THE FEMALE BODY

cannot be separated from the operation of other social and cultural boundaries, then bodily transgression is also an image of social deviation. The general movement, then, is from the specifics of representing the female body to more general structures of values and beliefs. To take up Derrida's point: the definition of limits and frames determines not simply the meaning of art, but meaning as such.

'The chief forms of beauty are order and symmetry and definiteness.'⁴ In statements such as this, Aristotle set out the classical ideal of unity and integrity of form which has had a lasting and powerful influence on western culture. It can be traced in the language of aesthetics and art criticism; it lies at the heart of much art education and it structures legal and ethical discourses on art and obscenity. What seems to be at stake in all these discourses, and what all these areas have in common, is the production of a rational, coherent subject. In other words, the notion of unified form is integrally bound up with the perception of self, and the construction of individual identity. Psychoanalysis proposes a number of relations between psychical structures and the perception and representation of the body. Here too, subjectivity is articulated in terms of spaces and boundaries, of a fixing of the limits of corporeality. Freud relates the structure of the child's ego to the psychical projection of the erotogenic surface of the body. In a footnote to the 1927 English translation of 'The Ego and the Id', Freud states that:

The ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly those springing from the surface of the body. It may thus be regarded as a mental projection of the surface of the body, besides . . . representing the superficies of the mental apparatus.⁵

The female nude can almost be seen as a metaphor for these processes of separation and ordering, for the formation of self and the spaces of the other. If the female body is defined as lacking containment and issuing filth and pollution from its faltering outlines and broken surface, then the classical forms of art perform a kind of magical regulation of the female body, containing it and momentarily repairing the orifices and tears. This can, however, only be a fleeting success; the margins are dangerous and will need to be subjected to the discipline of art again . . . and again. The western tradition of the female nude is thus a kind of discourse on the subject, echoing structures of thinking across many areas of the human sciences.

The general points that are being made here can be specified and pinned down through a more detailed discussion of individual texts and images. Three further examples illustrate how the relationship between boundaries and the female body is given representation. In a painting of the virtue *Chastity* by the sixteenth-century Italian painter, Giovanni Battista Moroni, the allegorical figure holds a sieve on her lap, the symbol of her

THE FEMALE NUDE

purity and inviolability (Plate 1).⁶ The sieve is filled with water and yet no liquid runs out, for chastity is watertight; it is impenetrable and allows no leakage. The miraculous water-filled sieve is a metaphor for the ideal, hermetically sealed female body. The boundary of the body has been made absolutely inviolate; it has become a kind of layer of armour between the inside of the body and the outside. Of course, there is something worrying and incomplete about the impermeable sieve as a figure for the virtuous woman. If nothing is allowed in or out, then the female body remains a disturbing container for both the ideal and the polluted. Although the impermeable boundary may go some way towards answering fears concerning the female body, the problem does not go away, but is simply contained, staunched, for a while.

Woman is able to stand as an allegory of Chastity by displacing the worrying connotations of yielding and porous skin or oozing gaps and orifices on to the clear outline and metallic surface of the sieve. There are other ways in which this desire for clear boundaries and definitions can be satisfied. The female body can be re-formed, its surfaces reinforced and hardened, by bodybuilding. Lisa Lyon won the first World Women's Bodybuilding Championship in 1979. About a year later she met the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe and posed for a series of pictures which were published as a book called *Lady: Lisa Lyon* in 1983.⁷ Now, bodybuilding is a mixed blessing for feminism. On the one hand, it seems to offer a certain kind of liberation, a way for women to develop their muscularity and physical strength. It produces a different kind of female body-image which could be seen to blur the conventional definitions of gendered identity. But on the other hand, this revised femininity seems simply to exchange one stereotype for another – one body beautiful for another, possibly racier, image of woman which can easily be absorbed within the patriarchal repertoire of feminine stereotypes. What is interesting in the present context, however, is the way in which both Lyon's bodybuilding and Mapplethorpe's photographic techniques are articulated in terms of bringing the female body under control. In a foreword to the book Samuel Wagstaff describes the compatibility between the photographer and the model:

Of course, Mapplethorpe always makes it more difficult for himself by deliberately framing everything and everybody in the same strait-jacket style – the world reinvented as logic, precision, sculpture in obvious light and shadow.

I don't suppose he would ever have taken a second exposure of Lisa if her classicism and ideals of order had not been a match for his.⁸

The images of Lyon are presented in terms of 'logic', 'precision' and 'order', pointing, quite knowingly, to the act of regulation that has been

FRAMING THE FEMALE BODY

undertaken in this work. In his search for a language to convey the effect of the images, Wagstaff hits upon 'straitjacket style', that is, a style that is concerned with holding down, with control and containment – an allusion not at all unlike Kenneth Clark's reference to the body as 'sheath'.

In many ways, the visual appearance of Mapplethorpe's monumental black-and-white photographs accentuates this aesthetic control of the female body (Plate 2). The hard edges and stark chiaroscuro of the images transform the body into sculpture – an effect that is intensified by the use of graphite on the body which subordinates modulations and details of the body surface to matt articulations of form and volume. Both model and photographer are seen to collaborate in this ordering of the female body. Both are referred to as classical sculptors in their search for a physical and aesthetic ideal: 'his eye for a body [is] that of a classical sculptor in search of an "ideal"', and she is 'a sculptor whose raw material was her own body'.⁹ The sculpture metaphor is one that emphasizes the projection of surfaces, the building and moulding of form. Together, Lyon and Mapplethorpe turn the raw material of the female body into art. And it is a double metamorphosis. Lyon describes herself as a performance artist; through bodybuilding she turns herself into a living art object and the process is then repeated as Lyon's body is captured in Mapplethorpe's photographic album.

Lisa Lyon has been 'framed'. By contouring her own body she turns its surfaces into a kind of carapace, a metaphorical suit of armour. But what may start out to be a parody of ideals of masculinity and a claim to a progressive image of femininity is easily reappropriated. Rather than transgressing sexual categories, Lyon simply re-fixes the boundaries of femininity. The surface of her body has become a 'frame', controlling the potential waywardness of the unformalized female body and defining the limits of femininity.

The 'framing' also occurs at the level of the formal constraints of the medium. Lyon is contained in the frame of Mapplethorpe's photographs – the disposition of light and shade, the surface and edges of the images. In other words, the act of representation is itself an act of regulation. And finally, Lyon is framed in the sense of being 'set up', offered as an image of liberation and revised femininity, whilst actually reinforcing the place where femininity begins and ends. Her power is contained by convention, form and technique; she poses no threat to patriarchal systems of order.

Paradoxically, Lyon's body is seen to have been both built up and honed down, added to but also reduced to its bare essentials. In his introductory essay to the collection, Bruce Chatwin comments: 'it was obvious that her body was superlative – small, supple, svelte, without an ounce of surplus fat'.¹⁰ Her body has apparently reached the highest or utmost degree of contained form. How strange that a body that has been built up through exercise and weight training is praised for being 'small'. Strange, that is,

THE FEMALE NUDE

until we recognize that what Chatwin is admiring is the transformation of the female body into a symbol of containment. The aesthetic that is represented by Lyon's body is the now familiar one of boundaries and formal integrity.

Within this aesthetic, 'fat' is excess, surplus matter. It is a false boundary, something that is additional to the true frame of the body and needs to be stripped away. The categories 'fat' and 'thin' are not innate and do not have intrinsic meanings; rather, they are socially constituted, along with definitions of perfection and beauty.¹¹ Social and cultural representations are central in forming these definitions and in giving meaning to the configurations of the body. Over the last decade, for a woman to be in 'great shape' is to be firm, trim, fit and healthy. This in turn is seen as a quest for freedom, a way of realizing her true self and potential. As Michel Foucault has shown, in the modern period the body has become a highly political object, a crucial site for the exercise and regulation of power.¹² In this context, power is constituted both through the production of knowledge concerning the body and through self-regulation, through the individual exercising control over the self. The operations of power are thus not simply coercive, exercised from elsewhere over the individual, but are also self-regulatory and organized from within the subject. The complex relationship of the body and power is clearly demonstrated in the configuration of the female body produced by the workout ethic and aesthetic. Here, the female body, trimmed to its essential outline, promises new freedom and a healthy sexuality. The rigours of the workout signal both the need to conform to social ideals and the force of self-regulation, the exercise of power over oneself. 'I like to be close to the bone.'¹³ Jane Fonda's declaration can come as no surprise; being 'close to the bone' means being closer to a bounded, structured form that is devoid of excess, that represents the true, integral self. This ideal of closeness to the bone also means that two dimensions of the idea of the bodily frame converge; the epidermal surface that is the body's *outside* frame tightening around the skeletal frame that forms the body's *inside*. Again, form and identity, visual representation and psychical structures overlap precisely on the issue of spaces and boundaries.

The common factor in all of these matters is the female body as representation, with woman playing out the roles of both viewed object and viewing subject, forming and judging her image against cultural ideals and exercising a fearsome self-regulation. My third example of the primacy of boundaries in social configurations of the female body is anorexia nervosa.¹⁴ Here again, the body is seen as image, according to a set of conventions, and woman acts both as judge and executioner. But rather than anorexia being seen as a distortion of physical needs, it can be posed as a confusion of psychical perceptions and, more exactly, as a

FRAMING THE FEMALE BODY

excess matter deposited over the surface, the form of the body. The goal is to get rid of that surplus and to reveal the essential, core self – to get back to the original boundaries.

Woman looks at herself in the mirror; her identity is framed by the abundance of images that define femininity. She is framed – experiences herself as image or representation – by the edges of the mirror and then judges the boundaries of her own form and carries out any necessary self-regulation. The watertight sieve of the allegorical figure of Chastity; the sculpted body of the female bodybuilder; and the struggle over the body's boundaries conducted by the anorectic – all these cases illustrate the ways in which the female body is imaged in western society. The formless matter of the female body has to be contained within boundaries, conventions and poses.

This point is given a striking visual form in Albrecht Dürer's *Draughtsman Drawing a Nude*, 1538 (Plate 3). Here a partially draped female model lies on a table opposite the draughtsman. They are separated by a framed screen which is divided into square sections. The artist gazes through the screen at the female body and then transposes the view on to his squared paper. Geometry and perspective impose a controlling order on the female body. The opposition between male culture and female nature is starkly drawn in this image; the two confront each other. The woman lies in a prone position; the pose is difficult to determine, but her hand is clearly poised in a masturbatory manner over the genitals. In contrast to the curves and undulating lines of the female section, the male compartment is scattered with sharp, vertical forms; the draughtsman himself sits up and is alert and absorbed. Woman offers herself to the controlling discipline of illusionistic art. With her bent legs closest to the screen, the image recalls not simply the life class but also the gynaecological examination. Art and medicine are both foregrounded here, the two discourses in which the female body is most subjected to scrutiny and assessed according to historically specific norms. Through the procedures of art, woman can become culture; seen through the screen, she is framed, she becomes image and the wanton matter of the female body and female sexuality may be regulated and contained.

The distinctions between inside and outside, between finite form and form without limit, need to be continuously drawn. This requirement applies to representations of the female body in high and mass culture. It extends to the way in which the categories of art and pornography are defined and maintained. In nearly every case, however, there is a point where the systems break down, where an object seems to defy classification and where the values themselves are exposed and questioned. If you know the terms of the debate then they can be played with, disrupted and this opens up the possibility for challenging and progressive representations of the female body. These are all issues that will be examined in the following

pages. But firstly, what are the terms of the discourse of high culture and who sets them?

2 A DISCOURSE ON THE NAKED AND THE NUDE

To return to a text that is located securely within art historical discourse: Kenneth Clark's *The Nude* was first published in 1956 and is currently sold in its eighth edition in paperback. The subtitle of Clark's book is *A Study of Ideal Art*, which adds an important qualification to the main title and also points to a fundamental tension in Clark's treatment of his material. On the one hand, this is a highly selective survey. Clark is concerned with a specific classical and idealizing tradition of representation; but within the book this particularity gains the force of a general cultural norm against which all other modes of representation of the nude (Gothic, Baroque, non-European) are categorized as transgressive, as a cultural 'other'. Clark's text now stands as a monument to official culture; it is regarded as the classic survey of the subject and there have been curiously few scholarly attempts to revise or rework it.¹⁵

In his lifetime Lord Clark held almost every influential public position within British culture: Director of the National Gallery, Surveyor of the Royal Collection, Chairman of the Arts Council, Chairman of the Independent Television Authority and so on. Publicly, his reputation was largely established by his television series *Civilisation* which was broadcast in Britain in 1969-70 and sold throughout Europe and North America. Although his contribution to art history may now seem to have been overtaken by more recent developments in the discipline, the continuing healthy sales of his books should prevent us from dismissing his work too precipitately.¹⁶ The significance of *The Nude* now lies partly in the fact that it has remained one of the only serious major surveys of the most central subject within the visual arts.

The Nude traces the history of the male and female nude from Greek antiquity to European modernism. Throughout this narrative Clark wrestles with the competing drives of sensory and contemplative pleasures, trying to hold them together in a balanced combination, without allowing either impulse to dominate judgement. He puts it this way:

The desire to grasp and be united with another human body is so fundamental a part of our nature, that our judgement of what is known as 'pure form' is inevitably influenced by it; and one of the difficulties of the nude as a subject for art is that these instincts cannot lie hidden, as they do for example in our enjoyment of a piece of pottery, thereby gaining the force of sublimation, but are dragged

into the foreground, where they risk upsetting the unity of responses from which a work of art derives its independent life. Even so, the amount of erotic content which a work of art can hold in solution is very high.¹⁷

Clark's words illustrate the difficulties that the nude presents to connoisseurship. Although loosely based on a Kantian aesthetic of 'pure' form and disinterested appreciation, this critical framework appears inadequate when considering the visual representation of the body. Clark evokes the process, postulated by Freud, of sublimation.¹⁸ Freud drew upon this notion to account for human activity that is apparently unconnected to sexuality but is assumed to be motivated by the force of sexual drives. These drives are sublimated in that they are turned towards a new non-sexual aim, such as artistic creativity. According to Clark, however, sexual instincts cannot (and possibly should not) be displaced in the creation and contemplation of the nude. The process of sublimation in this case is incomplete, for the originating sexual drives remain apparent and are part of the viewer's responses to the image. Nevertheless, Clark seems unhappy with the responses that are stimulated by the nude; they are 'dragged' into the open and 'risk upsetting' the kinds of reactions that may be more appropriate to a work of art. In the end, Clark leaves us with a kind of chemical compound, in which the 'erotic' (a carefully selected term that designates a kind of sexual content that is free of any connotations of the pornographic) is left bubbling away but in constant danger of boiling over. The pure and independent aesthetic experience is thus seriously compromised by the nude. If the transmutation of sexual drives into artistic creation is impossible then the nude also presents the risk of too much sex – too much, that is, for art. The triumph of a 'successful' representation of the nude is the control of this potential risk.

So far, I have been using the ungendered category of 'the nude'; this is to follow Clark's form, but it soon becomes obvious that in his general comments on 'the nude', Clark is frequently assuming a female nude and a male viewer. At a critical point in Clark's conceptualization of the subject, the category of the female nude loses its specificity and takes on the symbolic importance of the high-art tradition of 'the nude'. It is in the process of dropping the gendered prefix – the moment when the female nude becomes simply 'the nude' – that the male identity of artist and connoisseur, creator and consumer of the female body, is fully installed.¹⁹ Thus, in his discussion of the sexual feelings evoked in the appreciation of 'the nude', Clark refers to the work of Rubens and Renoir, two artists renowned in art history for their female nudes. More than this, Rubens and Renoir stand for a particular kind of depiction and treatment of the female body – painterly, gestural, specialists in female flesh. The universal sexual 'instincts' to which Clark alludes are evidently based on those of the male,

female body, but instead to open up the constituency of those who are involved in drawing the lines and framing the definitions. It is an ongoing struggle, but the proliferation of media in the 1990s and the emergence of new producers of and audiences for images suggest not only that the struggle will be a complex one but also that there will be more spaces opening out for feminist voices to be heard and for feminist images to be seen.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1 I am thinking here of articles such as Wendy Leeks, 'Ingres Other-Wise', *The Oxford Art Journal*, 9:1 (1986): 29–37; Carol M. Armstrong, 'Edgar Degas and the Representation of the Female Body', in Susan Rubin Suleiman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1986): 223–42; and Eunice Lipton, 'Women, Pleasure and Painting', *Genders*, 7 (Spring 1990): 69–86.

PART I THEORIZING THE FEMALE NUDE

- 1 Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study of Ideal Art* (London: John Murray, 1956): 79.
- 2 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966): 121.
- 3 Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. by Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987): 45.
- 4 Aristotle from *Metaphysics*, Book XIII, in Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns, eds, *Philosophies of Art and Beauty: Selected Readings in Aesthetics from Plato to Heidegger* (New York: Random House, 1964): 96.
- 5 Sigmund Freud, 'The Ego and the Id', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, trans. and ed. James Strachey, vol. XIX (London: Hogarth Press, 1961): 26.
- 6 This painting is also illustrated by Marina Warner in *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1985): fig. 69. Her chapter 'The Sieve of Tuccia' is an excellent account of the imagery of the female body as vessel or container.
- 7 For feminist responses to the book see Silvia Kolbowski, 'Covering Mapplethorpe's "Lady"', *Art in America* (Summer 1983): 10–11, and Susan Butler, 'Revising Femininity? Review of *Lady: Photographs of Lisa Lyon by Robert Mapplethorpe*', first published in *Creative Camera*, September 1983, reprinted in Rosemary Betterton, ed., *Looking On: Images of Femininity in the Visual Arts and Media* (London and New York: Pandora, 1987): 120–6.
- 8 Samuel Wagstaff, 'Foreword', *Lady: Lisa Lyon by Robert Mapplethorpe* (New York: Viking, 1983; London: Blond & Briggs, 1983): 8.
- 9 Bruce Chatwin, 'An Eye and Some Body', *Lady: Lisa Lyon*: 9, 11.
- 10 *Ibid.*: 12.
- 11 These issues are discussed in Nicky Diamond, 'Thin Is the Feminist Issue', *Feminist Review*, 19 (Spring 1985): 45–64.

THE FEMALE NUDE

- 12 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. by Robert Hurley (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981).
 - 13 Jane Fonda, as quoted in Diamond, 'Thin Is the Feminist Issue': 56.
 - 14 For important discussions of anorexia nervosa see Sheila MacLeod, *The Art of Starvation* (London: Virago, 1981); Susie Orbach, *Hunger Strike: The Anorectic's Struggle as a Metaphor for Our Age* (London: Faber & Faber, 1986); Susan Bordo, 'Reading the Slender Body', in Mary Jacobus, Evelyn Fox Keller, Sally Shuttleworth, eds, *Body/Politics: Women and the Discourses of Science* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990): 83–112. In the following brief discussion I will not cover the question of anorexia nervosa as a form of protest or its clinical aspects but will concentrate on the issue of female body image.
 - 15 There is, of course, John Berger's revision of Clark's arguments in *Ways of Seeing* (London and Harmondsworth: BBC and Penguin, 1972) which is discussed below.
 - 16 For details of Clark's early influences such as Roger Fry, Bernard Berenson and Aby Warburg, as well as of his later career, see the two volumes of his autobiography *Another Part of the Wood* (London: John Murray, 1974) and *The Other Half: A Self-Portrait* (London: John Murray, 1977).
 - 17 Clark, *The Nude*: 6.
 - 18 For a definition of the Freudian concept of sublimation see J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Hogarth, 1973): 431–3. Freud was drawing on the concept of sublimation within chemistry which describes the conversion of an object from a solid state to vapour.
 - 19 The designation of the female nude simply as 'the nude' is now a cultural norm. Most mainstream books on the visual arts with the phrase 'the nude' in the title only discuss and illustrate images of the female nude. The supposedly neutral category of the nude now describes the female nude and it is more usual for a discussion of the male nude to have to be specified as such: cf. Margaret Walters, *The Nude Male* (New York and London: Paddington Press, 1978).
 - 20 Clark, *The Nude*: 1.
 - 21 Berger, *Ways of Seeing*: 54.
 - 22 See T.J. Clark, 'Preliminaries to a Possible Treatment of *Olympia* in 1865', *Screen*, 21:1 (Spring 1980): 18–41. The argument is elaborated in *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and his Followers* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1985): 79–146.
 - 23 T.J. Clark, *Painting of Modern Life*: 131.
 - 24 Clark, *The Nude*: 34, 37.
 - 25 Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies. II. Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, introductory essay by Jessica Benjamin and Anson Rabinach, trans. by Chris Turner and Erica Carter in collaboration with Stephen Conway (Oxford: Polity Press, 1989).
 - 26 The two Venuses are discussed in Plato's *Symposium*; see Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939): 142–3. For an excellent study of the renegotiation of the two Venuses in eighteenth-century aesthetics see John Barrell, 'The Dangerous Goddess': Masculinity, Prestige, and the Aesthetic in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain', *Cultural Critique*, 12 (Spring 1989): 101–31.
 - 27 For a definition of the sublime in terms of awe and fear see Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), ed. J.T. Boulton (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958) esp. Part II.

NOTES

- ‘Section 1, ‘Of the Passion Caused by the Sublime’ and Section II, ‘Terror’.

28 *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990): 13.

29 The following discussion of Descartes is highly abbreviated but for a fuller consideration of the implications of Cartesian thought from a feminist viewpoint see Susan Bordo ‘The Cartesian Masculinization of Thought’, *Signs*, 11:3 (Spring 1986): 439–56.

30 On the gendering of binary oppositions in the *Meditations* see Jacquelyn N. Zita, ‘Transsexualized Origins: Reflections on Descartes’s *Meditations*’, *Genders*, 5 (Summer 1989): 86–105. See also Alice Jardine, *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985): 72–4.

31 On the ‘masculinization’ of science see Evelyn Fox Keller, ‘Feminism and Science’, *Signs*, 7:3 (Spring 1982): 589–602 and also by Keller, *Reflections on Gender and Science* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985).

32 For a helpful summary of Kant’s *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement* see Roger Scruton, *Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982) on which the following discussion is based. For views on Kant’s notion of the aesthetic see Salim Kemal, *Kant and Fine Art: An Essay on Kant and the Philosophy of Fine Art and Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) and Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*: 70–101.

33 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Aesthetic Judgement*, trans. by J.C. Meredith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1911): 90.

34 The aesthetic of the sublime and its reworking within postmodernist philosophy is considered by Dick Hebdige in his fascinating article ‘The Impossible Object: Towards a Sociology of the Sublime’, *New Formations*, 1 (Spring 1987): 47–76. For an excellent discussion of eighteenth-century notions of rhetoric, propriety and perspective as strategies to regulate the disruption threatened by the sublime see Peter de Bolla, *The Discourse of the Sublime: Readings in History, Aesthetics and the Subject* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

35 Peter de Bolla discusses the connections between this description of sublime experience and certain figurations of male sexual arousal and fulfilment in *Discourse of the Sublime*: 57.

36 Quoted in *Pornography: The Longford Report* (London: Coronet, 1972): 99–100. There is an interesting example of this distinction between art and pornography in James Joyce’s *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916). The novel presents a dramatized version of Joyce’s own early aesthetic. In one passage Stephen Dedalus discusses the function of art with Lynch, a fellow undergraduate. The discussion is provoked by the fact that Lynch has scrawled graffiti on the bottom of the *Venus* of Praxiteles. Lynch argues that his action was stimulated by desire, Stephen replies:

The feelings excited by improper art are kinetic, desire or loathing. Desire urges us to possess, to go to something; loathing urges us to abandon, to go from something. The arts which excite them, pornographical or didactic, are therefore improper arts. The aesthetic emotion . . . is therefore static. The mind is arrested and raised above desire and loathing.

(Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960): 204–5.

37 Lacan’s formulation of the relationship between the perception of tactile information and visual perception is discussed in Elizabeth Grosz, ‘The Body of Signification’, in J. Fletcher and A. Benjamin, eds, *Abjection, Melancholia and Love: The Work of Julia Kristeva* (London and New York: Routledge, 1990):