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Art and masculinity in post-war Britain

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DOI:
10.4324/9781003084686

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Document Version
Peer reviewed version

Citation for published version (Harvard):
Salter, G 2019, *Art and masculinity in post-war Britain: reconstructing home*. Home, 1st edn, Routledge.
https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003084686

Link to publication on Research at Birmingham portal

Publisher Rights Statement:
This is an Accepted Manuscript of a book chapter published by Routledge in Art and masculinity in post-war Britain: reconstructing home on 14th November 2019, available online: http://www.routledge.com/9781350052727

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Introduction: 'Shaken by The Spirit of Reconstruction'

In a journal entry on 15 March 1946, the artist Keith Vaughan (1912-77) faced the end of his time as a conscientious objector in the Non-Combatant Corps during the Second World War and prepared for a return to civilian life:

> *The day before demobilisation:* Rapid disintegration of personality. Integrity melting like ice in the sun. All poise, stature crumbling away… Furious grappling to retrieve the fragments of lost personality. Despair as the roots are slowly drawn after five years in the warm earth… Final dissolution in panic and self-pity. Womb-defence mechanism. Head under bed clothes. Childish oblivion. Have lost the scales of balancing gains with losses.[1]

The war had been relatively kind to Vaughan after a traumatic start. He made the torturous decision to register as a conscientious objector in the aftermath of his brother Dick's death, who was killed in action with the RAF in May 1940. He was called up not long after on 2 January 1941. He found, however, that the all-male camps in which he was stationed – working on the land from 1941 at Codford in Wiltshire, before moving to Eden Camp, a prisoner of war camp near Malton in Yorkshire – allowed a sense of companionship that he had struggled to find as a homosexual in London in the 1930s. Though the work could be dull and friendships disrupted when companies were routinely broken up, the war gave

[1] Keith Vaughan, Journal 31, 15 March 1946, Tate Gallery Archive, TGA 200817/1/31.

Vaughan a sense of security and even community; in an entry from Codford in July 1942, he simply states, 'I have returned home, not left home'.[2]

Though Vaughan's words reflect a wartime experience that was relatively atypical, they are striking for the way in which they convey a more general sense of the disorientating transition from war to peacetime. They express, in part, the shift in behaviour and routine that this necessitates, the uprooting of an established way of living, and its psychological effects. This new post-war moment is one of uncertainty and discomfort. It brings an end to the home and community that he had found and requires, as a result, a renegotiation of selfhood. Vaughan also finds himself struggling with the question of time. In one sense, this is a moment of return – his 'grappling to retrieve the fragments of lost personality', shattered and discarded somewhere before war began – but it is also likened to a retreat into immaturity (to the womb or a head under bedclothes in 'childish oblivion'). In a journal entry on the previous day, Vaughan had referred to this moment as 'the angst-producing twilight time between actuality and memory, the present and the past'.[3] This is a moment of transition that poses a series of questions that Vaughan, as well as others emerging from the war, would have to face: about re-establishing home after six years of destruction and disruption and about negotiating a sense of selfhood after the upheaval of war, within a reconstructive moment of both trauma and optimism, memory and hope.

[2] Keith Vaughan, Journal 12, 19 July 1942, Tate Gallery Archive, TGA 200817/1/12.

[3] Keith Vaughan, Journal 31, 15 March 1946, Tate Gallery Archive, TGA 200817/1/31.

Vaughan's diary entries attest to some of the ways in which war and its aftermath shaped and unsettled definitions of home and masculinity in post-war Britain. In the ensuing years, these categories – personal, emotive, and highly uncertain – became central to his art. This book examines the work of six post-war British artists, including Vaughan, whose works were informed by the recurring memories of war and the disorientating task of reconstruction. It traces how all of these artists alight on, and intertwine, the themes of home and masculinity in their artworks, revealing, in the process, insights into the subjective experiences of these themes in the post-war period. The artists are chosen and organised here in a way that their works present instances of the negotiation of home and masculinity from the small scale of the domestic interior to increasingly larger scales of public spaces, communities, migration, and the nation. This is intended to develop an increasingly broad, complex picture of how these categories were encountered, lived, and contested at this time. It is not, as a result, a full picture of post-war British art or a comprehensive social history of post-war home and masculinity. Instead, it responds to the specific representations of home and masculinity to highlight the varied, subjective experience of these categories in this unstable post-war moment.

The artists in this book are not usually discussed in relation to one another in literature on British art. Five of the six artists here could all be described as figurative (in that their work represents the human body and its spaces), though all are more readily associated with very different groups or movements: John Bratby (1928-92) with the Kitchen Sink Painters, Francis Bacon (1909-92) with the School of London, Vaughan with Neo-Romanticism, Francis Newton Souza (1924-2002) marked by his race and birthplace in Goa as a postcolonial artist, and Gilbert & George (1943- and 1942-) with the turn to

conceptualism and performance. Victor Pasmore (1908-98), meanwhile, embraces non-representational art, relief construction, and town planning. Uncovering thematic connections between these artists can deepen an understanding of post-war British art.

Home remains a notoriously difficult thing to study, for both historians and academics addressing contemporary homes, as it is a private space, with its routines difficult to capture and its emotions and resonances difficult to express. This book argues that artworks provide one way of understanding the experience of home. In one sense, artworks might provide moments where supposedly dominant or given ideas are undermined or re-imagined. This is something like Raymond Williams' suggestion that art might allow the representation of previously excluded or ignored experiences or, perhaps, 'the articulation and formulation of latent, momentary, and newly possible consciousness'. Similarly, Kobena Mercer has framed art as a 'countercut that punctures openings' in social ideas and forms that appear fixed and, in doing so, calls our relationship to those supposed fixed ideas into question.[4] In another sense, art's complex relationship to history – how we might recover art's history or what role art might play in the writing of history – is potentially productive. In her work on British modernism, Lisa Tickner considered art as a 'critical condensation of modern experience' though, inevitably, an imperfect one.[5] Stuart Hall, too, reflected on the

[4] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 212 and Kobena Mercer, 'Stuart Hall and the Visual Arts', *Small Axe* 19, no. 1 (2015): 82.

[5] Lisa Tickner, *Modern Life and Modern Subjects: British Art in the Early Twentieth Century* (London: Yale University Press, 2000), 211-2.

difficulty of 'thinking about the relationship between the work and the world'.[6] Both Tickner and Hall underlined the losses, the incompleteness, the lapses that happen in the movement from experience to representation, and then interpretation.[7] We are left to work with the 'elasticity' of history, as Tickner puts it, between the moment of a work's inception and the 'continuity of interests… whereby the work reaches into the present and comes alive for us through our own investments in the past'.[8] To argue that artworks might offer a means of understanding home and masculinity in post-war Britain, then, is to argue for an understanding that is always going to be incomplete. What art and artists might offer, however, may be moments of illumination, reflection, negotiation, even contradiction, on the historical categories of home and masculinity, made visible to us and illuminated by our own concerns and questions, looking back from their futures. Works of art – though they come to us as finished objects or completed performances – are formative, made in process, the products of their presents. They might, as a result, hold or set down, just for one moment, the instability of home, identity, and the sense of living in the time of reconstruction. They might even, as José Esteban Muñoz has suggested, offer moments of 'anticipatory illumination', building on the present and what has been lost of the past in order to imagine, perhaps, a world – a home – to come.[9]

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[6] Stuart Hall, 'Black Diaspora Artists in Britain: Three 'Moments' in Post-war History', *History Workshop Journal* 61, no. 1 (2006): 23.

[7] Tickner, *Modern Life* and Hall, 'Black Diaspora Artists', 23.

[8] Tickner, *Modern Life*.

[9] José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009), 64.

This topic offers a different approach to the study of British art after 1945. This is an area that has been formed by studies that focus on individual artists or movements, and this book is intended, in part, to move beyond a tendency towards movement-focused studies.[10] There are notable exceptions that take on the period in thematic terms, focusing on areas like the politics of realism, the nuclear threat, landscape and national identity, and migration.[11] A focus on the intersections between reconstruction, home, and gender is a

[10] For important, influential studies on particular art movements in this period, see Alastair Grieve, *Constructed Abstract Art in England after the Second World War: A Neglected Avant-Garde* (London: Yale University Press, 2005), Anne Massey, *The Independent Group: Modernism and Mass Culture in Britain 1945-59* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995) and *Out of the Ivory Tower: The Independent Group and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), David Mellor, *A Paradise Lost, the Neo-Romantic Imagination in Britain: 1935-55* (London: Lund Humphries in association with Barbican Art Gallery, 1987), Frances Spalding, *The Kitchen Sink Painters* (London: Mayor Gallery, 1991), and Brian Wallis, *This is Tomorrow Today: The Independent Group and British Pop Art* (New York: Institute for Art and Urban Resources, 1987).

[11] The key thematic studies on British post-war art are Lisa Tickner and David Peters Corbett, eds., *British Art in the Cultural Field, 1939-69* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012) and Margaret Garlake, *New Art New World: British Art In Postwar Society* (London: Yale University Press, 1998). On realism, James Hyman, *The Battle For Realism* (London: Yale University Press, 2001) and Juliet Steyn, 'Realism Versus Realism in British Art of the 1950s', *Third Text* 22, no. 2 (2008): 145-56. On the nuclear threat, Catherine Jolivette, ed., *British*

new thematic approach here. At the same time, this book is intended to work across disciplines, and is heavily indebted to work in history, literature, and social and cultural geography. My intention is to speak to those disciplines too, underlining the importance of art as a rich visual methodology for thinking about the historical, gendered experience of home and its reconstruction, and for thinking about the relationship between history, culture, and subjectivity more widely. This is not to instrumentalise art, but is an attempt to speak of its resonances, contradictions, and possibilities – to think about art objects, but also about their histories, written and emerging, and their complex positions within these histories. Throughout, artists are brought into dialogue with contemporary literary figures, some active in Britain, others elsewhere, and this is intended to reflect the ways in which

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Art In The Nuclear Age (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014). On landscape and national identity, see David Peters Corbett, Ysanne Holt and Fiona Russell, ed., *The Geographies of Englishness* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2002) and Catherine Jolivette, *Landscape, Art and Identity in 1950s Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009). On migration, Leon Wainwright, *Timed Out: Art and the Transnational Caribbean* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011); Simon Faulkner and Anandi Ramamurthy, eds., *Visual Culture and Decolonisation in Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009); Lizzie Carey-Thomas, ed., *Migrations: Journeys Into British Art* (London: Tate, 2012); Shulamith Behr and Marian Malet, eds., *Arts in Exile in Britain 1933-1945: Politics and Cultural Identity* (New York: Rodopi, 2005); and Cheryl Buckley and Tobias Hochscherf, ed., 'Special Issue: Transnationalism and Visual Culture in Britain: Émigré and Migrants 1933 to 1956', *Visual Culture in Britain* 13, no. 2 (2012). On art in London in the 1950s, Martin Harrison, *Transition: The London Art Scene in the 1950s* (London: Merrell, 2002).

these artists worked. Some produced their own writing that actively engages with ideas in their artworks (Bratby in his novels, Souza in his essays, and Vaughan in his journals, which he styled after those of André Gide), others make explicit reference to literary sources in their interviews and artworks (Bacon, famously, made reference to a number of literary influences, and I explore Proust in relation to his work here, while Vaughan also turned to Gide), and others used words and literary forms alongside their artworks (understanding Gilbert and George's *Underneath the Arches*, for instance, relies heavily on the invitations and statements they made alongside it). This book is both an attempt to reflect the porous boundaries of creative work in this period, as well as encourage a dialogue between academics and researchers working in these areas currently.

The remainder of this introduction first seeks to outline and define the two key categories of this book: home and masculinity. It then outlines the methodology that will be used for exploring these categories in the works of the six artists in this study by demonstrating how British post-war reconstruction was a moment of particular temporal instability. Finally, it gives an outline of the chapters of the book.

Home

In post-war Britain, home was resonant with the anxieties of war and central to hopes of reconstruction; it was the concept that would, according to Lynda Nead, 'repair the damage

of war'.[12] During the war, home had been the locus of disruption and destruction: families and households had been broken up as many men left for military service, women entered the workplace, and children were evacuated from major cities, while over two million homes were destroyed by bombing and many others damaged. The reconstruction of home was, in one sense, a huge public, nationwide undertaking, formulated in universal, rather strict terms through social policy and government legislation (often developed under wartime conditions in the early 1940s).[13] The British government faced, most pressingly, the task of replacing the homes that had been destroyed or damaged since 1940 (Labour's Ernest Bevin famously promised 'five million homes in quick time' during the 1945 election). Town planners and property developers sought to rebuild war-scarred or overcrowded towns and cities, while working within the limits of austerity and the preferences of a public who, by and large, favoured traditional housing over modernist design; progress was slow, particularly in the years of austerity immediately following the war.[14]

[12] Lynda Nead, *The Tiger in the Smoke: Art and Culture in Post-War Britain* (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art/Yale University Press, 2017), 251.

[13] Stephen Brooke, *Reform and Reconstruction: Britain After the War, 1945-51* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

[14] On post-war housing, see Nicholas Timmins, *The Five Giants: A Biography of the Welfare State* (London: Harper Collins, 1995), 139-47; David Donnison and Clare Ungerson, *Housing Policy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982), 14-47; and Peter Hennessy, *Never Again: Britain 1945-51* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1992), 163-74.

Home was also part of the more general rhetoric of reconstruction in post-war Britain in more symbolic terms. This was encapsulated by the Festival of Britain, a nationwide event intended to reflect on national achievements and identity after the war and boost recovery and morale after a period of austerity. It was shaped by optimistic expressions of unity and group identity, including appeals to home, on individual, community, and nationwide scales that were echoed in the displays of the Festival's centrepiece at the South Bank Exhibition.[15] In *Family Portrait*, a film produced for the Festival by director Humphrey Jennings, the narrator Michael Goodliffe framed the nation in familial terms over footage of photographs in a family album:

> Perhaps because we in Britain live on a group of small islands, we like to think of ourselves as a family, and of course with the unspoken affection and outspoken words that all families have. And so the Festival of Britain is a kind of family reunion, to take a look at ourselves – to let the young and the old, the past and the future, meet and discuss…[16]

Post-war home, then, was the focus of the physical and symbolic construction of the nation. Despite its disruption and destruction during wartime, it was being imagined as something

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[15] Becky E. Conekin, *'The Autobiography Of A Nation': 1951 Festival Of Britain* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003) and Ian Cox, *The South Bank Exhibition: A Guide To The Story It Tells* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1951).

[16] Humphrey Jennings, *Family Portrait: A Film On The Theme Of The Festival Of Britain 1951*, 1951, Wessex Film Productions, UK.

that could offer continuity and stability in a moment of uncertainty. The reconstruction of home, however, was also a personal task, negotiated by individuals on much smaller scales – Vaughan's journal entries that opened this chapter attest to fears and possibilities of this moment of change. If we can define post-war home, it is most productive to work between these two spheres of reconstruction – the personal and the public. This echoes recent scholarship on home that frames it as both public and private, an open, unstable, and fluid space, where social forces and social relations intersect and are negotiated.[17] But more specifically than that, post-war home is an ever-shifting entanglement between public and private, made particularly fraught by home's centrality to war and reconstruction. The parameters of home shift across this book – from the domestic sphere, to the body, the street, the group, the community, even the nation – but this, as the artworks attest, is the nature of home under reconstruction in Britain: the subjective search for belonging within the shifting limits of post-war society, a range of attempts to locate home between the dominant public ideals and personal experience. It is in these home spaces that emerging questions of identity and subjectivity begin to pull at the certainties of public reconstruction.

[17] Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling, *Home* (London: Routledge, 2006), 27. Post-war homes are defined in these terms in Claire Langhammer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History* 40, no. 2 (2005): 341-2 and Graham Crow, 'The Post-War Development of the Modern Domestic Ideal', in *Home and Family: Creating the Domestic Sphere*, ed. Graham Allan and Graham Crow (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989), 14-32.

The home's central position in post-war reconstruction meant that what were perceived as older ideas of home acquired particular significance and resonance. The home of post-war reconstruction was conceived in highly gendered terms, based around small families and long-lasting marriages. This can be attributed to a desire to both re-form the family after its wartime disruption and look to the reconstructive future.[18] In general, a reversal did occur as those men who were able returned to work and women stepped back into the home, though this was far from a clear-cut return to pre-war values of the nuclear family. Many women continued to work, for example.[19] However, the policies and structures of the welfare state conceived of the family as split in gendered terms: it assumed that men would take on the role of breadwinners and women would take on the role of housewives and mothers, paying social security and benefits along these lines and privileging these respective roles, particularly with respect to women.[20] The ideal of the companionate family, based on a harmonious partnership between husband and wife, emerged, and was propagated by contemporary sociological studies like Michael Young and Peter Willmott's reassuring 1957 portrait of working-class communities in *Family and*

[18] As Nead puts it, setting up home after the war 'carried the weight of the future of the nation', 248.

[19] Elizabeth Wilson, *Only Halfway To Paradise: Women in Post-War Britain, 1945-1968* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1980), 41-59.

[20] Stephanie Spencer, *Gender, Work and Education in Britain in the 1950s* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 22-48, Denise Riley, *War In The Nursery: Theories of Child and Mother* (London: Virago, 1983), and Elizabeth Wilson, *Women And The Welfare State* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1977).

Kinship In East London.[21] In practice, these ideals appear to have had some kind of impact on the way individuals lived and conceived of their homes, though they remained ideals: a significant degree of negotiation in relation to these emerging norms was desirable and necessary for many people. Chapter one and chapter five, on John Bratby and Victor Pasmore respectively, focus on how artists responded to these particularly influential ideas of home for both families and communities.

Built into these gendered assumptions or ideals about home are, inevitably, assumptions and ideals about sexuality. The home imagined in reconstruction Britain was a heterosexual home, built around the nuclear family. This formulation was, in part, informed by the increasing influence of psychoanalysis in Britain, which placed the home and family relationships at the centre of the development of adult sexuality and personhood.[22] These formulations did not consider the possibility of a queer home – a home that may not conform to the relationships and spaces of the heterosexual family. In the immediate post-war years, queer men, in particular, were considered corrupting and disruptive figures who operated in the unruly public spaces of the city. Gradually, a form of 'respectable' homosexuality emerged in the lead up to and in the wake of the Wolfenden Report, which was the product of a committee on homosexual offences and prostitution that first met in

[21] See Michael Young and Peter Wilmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1957), and its critique in Wilson, *Only Halfway*, 62-68.

[22] Juliet Mitchell, *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), 228-31 and Eli Zaretsky, *Secrets of the Soul: A Social and Cultural History of Psychoanalysis* (New York: Alfred A Knopff, 2004).

1954. It eventually led to the passing of the Sexual Offences Act in 1967, which legalised homosexual acts in England and Wales between two men over the age of 21 in private. The home, then, became the default space for queer acts and lifestyles; queer respectability came with the mimicry of heterosexual domestic life.[23] However, for many queer people, a private domestic space of their own was unattainable, and remained open to intrusion and observation. The home has, historically and still today, been an ambivalent space for queer people: a site of selfhood and relationships, but also mired in expectations of 'normality' and subject, potentially, to the public gaze.[24] In response, queer homes have been conceived in ways that expand normative definitions of home – into spaces outside of the domestic interior (Matt Cook tells us that, for poorer queer men in 1950s London, ''being at home' did not necessarily mean where these men slept') or through relationships that reach beyond the nuclear family.[25] Such set-ups and experiences are the subjects of chapters two,

[23] On the immoral queer man in public space, see Richard Hornsey, *The Spiv And The Architect: Unruly Life In Post-War London* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2010) and Frank Mort, 'Scandalous Events: Metropolitan Culture and Moral Change in Post-Second World War London', *Representations* 93, no. 1 (2006): 106-37; on the partial legalisation of homosexuality and domesticity, see Matt Houlbrook, *Queer London: Perils and Pleasures in the Sexual Metropolis, 1918-1957* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 195-218 and Matt Cook, *Queer Domesticities: Homosexuality and Home Life in Twentieth-Century London* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 144-48.

[24] Cook, *Queer Domesticities,* 10.

[25] Cook, *Queer Domesticities*, 143. On the relationality of queer home, see Kath Weston, *Families We Choose: Lesbians, Gays, Kinship* (New York: Colombia University Press, 1991,

three, and the conclusion, which focus on Francis Bacon, Keith Vaughan, and Gilbert & George respectively; they explore these artists' highly individual representations of queer homes, shaped by enduring memories of war and negotiated from within the strict parameters of post-war reconstruction.

The certainties of the public reconstruction of home was also simultaneously shaped and contested by post-war migration. Migration fundamentally undermines a sense of home as one secure, stable location in that it requires individuals to negotiate the identities, spaces, relationships, objects, and memories of home across locations. Home is movement here – it is 'lived in motions' as Anne-Marie Fortier has put it, between locations, and between present and past, in a way that might further upset notions of the stability of the time and space of home.[26] Migrants had a presence in Britain for hundreds of years prior to the post-war period, but their visibility and number grew in the years following the arrival of the SS Empire Windrush in 1948 when people from the former colonies were encouraged to make the journey to Britain to take up jobs required for post-war reconstruction. Like those who sought to make queer homes in this period, migrants, both from the Commonwealth and elsewhere, faced a great deal of marginalisation, discrimination, and even violence in their negotiation of their new home. They arrived as British subjects – the British Nationality

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Judith Butler, 'Is Kinship Always Already Heterosexual?', *Undoing Gender* (London: Routledge, 2004), 102-30, and Elizabeth Freeman, 'Queer Belongings: Kinship Theory and Queer Theory', in *A Companion To Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Studies*, George E Haggerty and Molly McGarry, ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), 295-314.

[26] Fortier, 'Coming Home', 420.

Act of 1948 created the status of 'Citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies' – though the enactment of increasingly restrictive legislation on immigration from the early 1960s onwards began to formally create exclusions around a citizenship that had been unofficially eroded since they arrived.[27] Migration also had an impact on British conceptions of home. As migration increased, 'the colonial frontier came 'home'', in Bill Schwarz's terms, placing the empire at the heart, uncomfortably and quietly, of the metropole and seemingly spreading disorder within what was imagined to be a previously ordered national home.[28] The negotiation of the migrant home within the anxieties of the national home is the subject of chapter four, on Francis Newton Souza.

[Figure 1 here]

Post-war home was a space of imagined stability, continuity, and social limits; it was also a space where these ideas might, necessarily, be negotiated, contested, and remade. I have suggested that we might frame this complexity by working with a sense of post-war home as forming in the space between public reconstruction and personal reconstruction. Within this framework, the artists in this book represent home in terms of the body, the

[27] On migration and citizenship, see Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Connected Sociologies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 154 and Randall Hansen, *Citizenship and Immigration in Postwar Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[28] Bill Schwarz, ''The only white man in there': the re-racialisation of England, 1956-1968', *Race & Class* 38, no. 1 (1996): 73 and *Memories of Empire, Vol.1: The White Man's World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 12.

household, the group, the city, and the nation, often operating across more than one scale at once. This disparity attests to necessary variety of negotiating the reconstruction of home in post-war Britain, an experience that might be contradictory, unstable, and imbued with both elements of constraint and possibility. For instance, in Francis Bacon's *Two Figures*, 1953 (figure 1 – I discuss this work at length in chapter two), queer intimacy is made viscerally public in a work that seems to both inscribe and flaunt the limits of home. In this minimal, boxy, seemingly windowless interior, one man straddles the other, their bodies in movement as the bedsheets fall to the floor beneath them. The painting, in its depiction of two men having sex on a bed in an interior, represents a moment of disintegrating boundaries – between two bodies, merging in intimacy and in motion, between the public gaze and a home's private space, as well as, at a moment when homosexuality was illegal, between an audience of witnesses and a criminal act. Bacon's thin streaks of paint fall across the image like a translucent curtain as if to underline this. As my chapter on Bacon will explore, his paintings do not necessarily seek to define a stable sense of queer home prior to the partial decriminalisation of homosexuality in 1967; instead, they present home as drifting across anonymous, distinctly unhomely domestic interiors and hotel bars, marked by fleeting moments of intimacy and, potentially, violence. What Bacon's painting makes visible are the workings of the construction of home, for queer men at this moment but also more widely. It conveys, instinctually, this space of home as both private and public (rather than as somewhere completely detached from the public sphere); we see and feel how it is formed, delineated, and negotiated in relation to wider, often repressive social forces as we watch these two men have sex. It contains, too, the sense of how home might be found at

the intersection between physical locations (not necessarily the house) and a set of emotions and practices.[29] It also speaks of how home might be encapsulated in a moment of intimacy, how our body and other bodies and their closeness might constitute it or, perhaps, threaten or disrupt it; how home might take in the interior, or the more anonymous spaces of the city, or beyond. *Two Figures* is instructive here as it encapsulates how we can conceive of home in post-war Britain as it is encountered and set down by the artists in this book: as constituted between public and private experience, defined in relation to subjective experience, and constituted in and through spaces that might gesture to the domestic while also occupying, appropriating, or being shaped by public space. The boundary that *Two Figures* straddles, this book argues, illuminates the shifting limits and possibilities of home in post-war Britain.

If this section has outlined a distinctly complex picture of post-war home – as imbued with a spirit of timelessness, hope, and rebuilding, tightly limited in terms of gender, sexuality, and race in societal imagination, but open to making and negotiation by individuals within these limits – then Bacon's art, and the art of the other artists in this book, speak of how we might understand home within this context. These artists share an awareness of the unsteady constitution of home in post-war Britain. They are also all united by their awareness of how the lingering memories of war and temporal instability of reconstruction shape homes in this period, as I will argue later in this introduction. In this context, art becomes not a document of homes from this particular historical moment, but

[29] Blunt and Dowling, *Home,* 1-3.

a means of encapsulating, working, or negotiating its fluidity, the complexity of home's limits and potential under reconstruction all at once.

Masculinities

This book also explores the negotiation of masculinity from within and in relation to post-war home in Britain. Post-war Britain sees the emergence and solidification of a number of categories of masculinity that developed as part of the aims, legislation, and anxieties of the reconstructive project. The strictly gendered ideals of the post-war welfare state that had sought to shape imaginings of home also called into being and solidified a normative category of heterosexual masculinity.[30] This was a masculinity that was rooted, in part, in the home, as husband, father, and breadwinner; Lynne Segal has noted an emerging post-war idea that men were supposed to be part of the home but that their role within it, in all likelihood, would not involve 'women's work' of housework and childcare.[31] This was not a complete break with some conceptions of pre-war masculinity – Alison Light has argued that the inter-war years saw a move away from heroic, masculine public rhetoric towards a conception of Englishness (and gender) that was more inward-looking, domestic, and private – but these attitudes appear to have been refocused around a type of familial

[30] On the shifting and historically-contingent category of 'the normal', see Peter Cryle and Elizabeth Stephens, *Normality: A Critical Genealogy* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

[31] Lynne Segal, *Slow Motion: Changing Masculinities, Changing Men* (London: Virago, 1997), 1-25.

masculinity after 1945, constructed through the welfare state and government legislation.[32] At the same time, this developing connection of masculinity to the home was seen as conformist and met with resistance from some men, just as, outside of the family, the rise of mass culture, consumerism, and an increasing 'Americanisation' of British culture were interpreted as threats to male individuality as well as contributing to a perceived feminisation of society in general.

Concurrently, a sense of traditional masculinity – rugged, individualist, heroic – retained influence, largely due to the enduring cultural memory of the male combatants in the Second World War and continuing national service, which reinforced certain ideas about what masculinity should entail. Sonya O. Rose has demonstrated that the ideal wartime masculinity in Britain was one of the soldier-hero, which could assimilate certain anti-hero characteristics (kindliness, good humour) as a means of distinguishing itself from the hyper-masculine German other without sliding into effeminacy.[33] There were, inevitably, wartime masculinities that deviated from or intermingled with this temperate masculinity: increasing instances of wartime homosociality, both on the frontline and at home, which could reproduce dominant masculine ideals while also, as figures like Vaughan knew, offering moments of potential and failure, as well as the public prominence of female masculinity, as women took on work in factories, on the land, and in non-combatant roles in the military,

[32] Alison Light, *Forever England: Femininity, Literature, and Conservatism Between the Wars* (London: Routledge, 1991), 8-10.

[33] Sonya O. Rose, *Which People's War? National Identity and Citizenship In Britain 1939-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 151-96.

which both extended and troubled traditional gender divisions.[34] This intermingling of masculine ideals and instability would resonate in the years after the war, as demobbed men returned, with relatively little fanfare, to civilian lives.[35] In the years that followed, the shadow of the atomic bomb appeared to have eradicated the need for individual male heroism once and for all, just as Britain's status on the world stage was beginning to decline.[36] Wartime masculinity was the shadow and the prelude to the newly forming category of heterosexual, familial masculinity.

Heterosexual masculinity emerged alongside (and was frequently defined in opposition to) other emerging categories of masculinity, particularly queer masculinity. Homosexuality was developed and defined as a social category in the campaigns for legal reform (such as in the 1957 Wolfenden Report) and in the human sciences' focus on it as a 'social problem' to be studied and solved, and had become the focus of national scandal and

[34] On wartime homosociality, see Emma Vickers, *Queen and Country: Same Sex Desire in the British Armed Forces, 1939-45* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 50-74; on women in wartime, see Rose, *Which People's War?*, 107-50 and Virginia Nicholson, *Millions Like Us: Women's Lives in War and Peace, 1939-1949* (London: Viking, 2011).

[35] Alan Allport, *Demobbed: Coming Home after the Second World War* (London: Yale University Press, 2010).

[36] On anxieties around masculinity in post-war Britain and the US, see Segal, *Slow Motion*; James Gilbert, *Men In The Middle: Searching For Masculinity in the 1950s* (London: University Of Chicago Press, 2005); and Michael Leja, *Reframing Abstract Expressionism: Subjectivity and Painting in the 1940s* (London: Yale University Press, 1993).

police arrests in the post-war years (where queerness was framed as at worst, a sign of national weakness and decay, and, at best, an affliction).[37] At the same time, migrant masculinities were perceived to have a growing presence in British society. Their otherness was perceived as a threat – resulting in outbreaks of violence from the 1950s onwards and increasingly strict immigration legislation after an initial period of openness – and they were expected to engage in the thankless task of assimilation.[38] The presence of black migrants in Britain – framed as 'strangers' by contemporary race relations scholars – was used as a means of securing the imagined community of the nation, while also giving rise to a 'recharged' definition of whiteness, with white masculinity becoming activity, control, and refusal in the face of black presence (and white women as victims and prey to black men).[39] Both migrant and queer masculinities were means of defining what white heterosexual

[37] On the repression of male homosexuality, see Houlbrook, *Queer London*. On the homosexual as a social being, see Chris Waters, 'The Homosexual as a Social Being in Britain, 1945–1968', *Journal of British Studies* 51, no. 3 (2012): 685-710 and, in the US, Margot Canaday, *Straight State: Sexuality and Citizenship in Twentieth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

[38] Avtar Brah, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (Routledge: London, 1996), 23-5 and, more generally, Peter Fryer, *Staying Power: The History of Black People in Britain* (Pluto Press: 1984, London) and Colin Holmes, *John Bull's Island: Immigration and British Society, 1871-1971* (Macmillan: Basingstoke, 1988).

[39] Chris Waters, ''Dark Strangers' in our Midst: Discourses of Race and Nation in Britain, 1947-1963', *Journal of British Studies* 36, no. 2 (1997): 207-38 and Schwarz, 'The Only White Man', 73-4.

masculinity was not. What is crucial here is that, in the flux of the post-war period and the drive for reconstruction, these categories of masculinity were emerging, being articulated, but also subject to contestation and negotiation by individuals.[40] The art in this book's case studies engages with this ever-shifting and fraught network of emerging post-war masculinities and finds artists grappling with these developing categories of gender.

The relationship between emerging categories of masculinity and home was a concern in British culture. For example, the broadcaster and author Kenneth Allsop identified the figure of the male dissentient writer in his survey of the new literature and culture in 1950s Britain. He compared the dissentient writer with the ideal male citizen of the post-war welfare state and framed both in relation to the home. The ideal male citizen was a:

> £16-a-week steady, pipe-smoking artisan with a safe job in the local works, a New Town house with a primrose front door, an attractive wife and two 'kiddies', and a life well balanced between the TV set and the neatly-tended garden.

This is a life of predictability and conformity, taking in many of the trappings and archetypes of post-war reconstruction. This way of life was also largely that of many of the dissentient writers that were the subject of Allsop's study. However, he emphasised that they had the ability or the potential to deviate from it. In doing so, they stepped off 'a warm, well lit

[40] On the relationship between ideal – or hegemonic – masculinities and other masculinities, see R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005).

stage, where the convection fire burns brightly and the 'contemporary' armchairs form a tight, safe circle, into the outer darkness'; at this point, he becomes 'one of those lost souls in search of his cards of identity'.[41] There is a complex and sometimes contradictory interplay of ideas about masculinity and home here. There is, at first, the idea of the private sphere of the home as encouraging conformity and safety, with familiar implications that it is a feminising space. However, there is a lack of the supposedly masculine public sphere that would provide an alternative – the dissenting writer steps out of the home into 'darkness' and finds himself 'in search of his cards of identity'. Allsop implies that the home is the crucial space for masculinity in post-war Britain. But the uncertainty here is striking: there is a nod to the safety and conformity of the idea of familial masculinity but it is presented as a stage on which to act, a fiction, and there is a gesture to the idea of public, individual, non-familial masculinity, but this has no substance and is represented by only darkness. Here, the gendered spaces around which home may more traditionally have been constituted are presented as porous and inherently unstable. Additionally, it is the creative individual and creativity itself that offers if not a complete escape from this – that darkness, as I have suggested, seems to offer little in terms of an alternative – then at least a recognition of its limits, a pushing of its boundaries or spaces, and a possibility of deviation and difference. This is to push slightly further than Allsop may have intended, but it highlights an apparent self-consciousness about the inherent instability of masculinity in relation to home at this historical moment in Britain and posits culture – more specifically,

[41] Kenneth Allsop, *The Angry Decade: A Survey of the Cultural Revolt of the 1950s* (1958; repr. Wendover: John Goodchild Publishers, 1985), 204.

art, for our purposes – as crucial to thinking and understanding, if not solving, the dilemma of post-war masculinity.

[Figure 2 here]

Masculinity's unsteadiness and art's ability to address this unsteadiness – to make it visible rather than fix or document it – are the focus of this book. The artists here follow, in their own ways, Allsop's very vivid sense of the relationship between masculinity and home as a space of masculinity's negotiation. For example, John Bratby's *Three Self-Portraits with a White Wall*, 1957 (figure 2 – I discuss this work in detail in chapter one) finds the artist in the kind of domestic space described by Allsop. Bratby's home is visible in the reflections of the mirror (moved across the wall three times to create the three self-portraits), where you can see furniture, a large bay window, and a single lightbulb hanging above the artist's head. In the left mirrored image – secured carefully in his son David's cot – Bratby presents himself comfortably as the artist and family man, looking relatively cosy in a jumper, smoking a pipe, and in the act of painting. This is countered by the more unruly images in the centre and on the right, where he presents himself as red faced, smoking furiously, and tucking and untucking his shirt in what feels like a very self-conscious reflection on self-fashioning. Furthermore, in the image on the right, he bends his leg which, along with his right arm, appears to almost break out of the mirror's frame. This feels like a visual echo of Allsop's description of the dissentient writer stepping off the 'well lit stage' of the home. Bratby's painting, however, is more than a convenient illustration of Allsop's concerns. It is a work that actively reflects on the performance of masculinity within the post-war home, in Bratby's shifting, anxious, unsteady self-representations that underline its dependence on

spaces, objects, clothing, and their signifiers. It appears to embody, at once, masculinity's limits or ideals, as well as a very conscious sense of the anxieties that this position might create. As my chapter on Bratby will explore in more detail, his art concerns itself with his self-image, the relationship between male subjectivity and the home, and the figure of his wife, artist Jean Cooke, who bears the brunt of Bratby's self-fashioning and violence. Through works like *Three Self-Portraits with a White Wall*, we might witness masculinity's fragility at this post-war moment, its constant construction under its own gaze that also seems to tear it apart, and its uncomfortable relationship to its own emerging ideals.

Bratby's painting, as well as Allsop's text and the other representations in this book, betray a sense of the historically shifting and inherently unstable categories of gender and sexuality. This conceptualisation of gender and sexuality – that gender, and masculinity specifically here, is best understood through performativity and its inherently unstable nature – has been most influentially formulated by Judith Butler and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.[42] This book takes up masculinity in these terms and examines its representation in post-war British art. The analysis is attentive to both moments when these representations may 'congeal' (to use a term from Butler) into the appearance of naturalness or normativity, or moments of slippage, failure, anxiety, overlap, and

[42] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble* (1990; repr. London: Routledge, 2006), Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985, repr. New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (1990, repr. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008).

disruption.[43] It takes as its focus both masculinities that appear to adhere to an emerging kind of heterosexual norm in the post-war period (Bratby and Pasmore) as well as masculinities that were pushed to the margins (in queerness for Bacon, Vaughan, and Gilbert & George, and migration for Souza). In doing so, it explores how these masculinities relate to each other, operating in a messy, overlapping coexistence rather than a stable binary. Masculinities, in the post-war period, respond to competing ideals, but they fail, they deviate, they turn to violence, they imagine, tentatively, other ways of being. This is not, of course, unique to the post-war period in Britain, but I have sought to be attentive to how masculinity's fraught instability might be heightened in the period after war. In this way, I respond to some of the ideas of Kaja Silverman, who examined marginal masculinities in the post-war period in America that deviate from what she terms 'the dominant fiction' and that represent a 'collective loss of belief' in its terms in the aftermath of conflict.[44] While this book does not build on her psychoanalytic work specifically, it does seek to highlight moments where artworks speak of masculinity's fragility and potential in a post-war moment.

In the case studies of individual artists that follow, I explore art as a sphere for the negotiation and representation of emerging, varied categories of masculinity and their contradictions in post-war Britain. My focus on the relationship between art and masculinities is one of surprisingly few studies in this area and it remains a fruitful and

[43] Butler, *Gender Trouble*, 45.

[44] Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (London: Routledge, 1992), 2-3.

necessary area for art historians to address.[45] Art history continues to deal extensively with male artists, largely due to the structures and exclusions of the canon, and there is a need to interrogate and understand the constructions of masculinities by artists as a way of reflecting on how this might shape artistic production and our understanding of it. More broadly, the study of the relationship between art and masculinity can underline the power of representations in the construction of masculinity, as well as its reformulation and contestation, for scholars and audiences beyond art history. As a result, I conceive of artists as bound up in social and cultural history, rather than as exempt or extraordinary. At the same time, it is worth underlining the complexity and nuance with which we need to treat artworks in order to reach this understanding and the benefits for historical and theoretical thinking to which this can lead. Artworks are unstable spheres where we might read the inscription and negotiation of gender, its ideals and limits, their failures and possibilities. Bratby's unsteady self-representation and his tentative, anxious bending and shifting of both his selfhood and his self-imposed frames underline how we might think art in relation

[45] Some notable studies of art and masculinity in the twentieth century include Amelia Jones, ''Clothes Make the Man': The Male Artist as a Performative Function', *Oxford Art Journal* 18, no. 2 (1995), 18-32, Amelia Jones, 'Dis/playing the phallus: male artists perform their masculinities', *Art History* 17, no. 4 (1994), 546-84, David Hopkins, *Dada's Boys: Masculinity After Duchamp* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), Natalya Lusty and Julian Murphet, *Modernism and Masculinity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), and Lisa Tickner, 'Men's Work? Masculinity and Modernism', in *Visual Culture: Images and Interpretations*, Norman Bryson, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith Moxey, ed. (London: University Press of New England for Wesleyan University, 1994), 42-82.

to masculinity in relation to home – as a sphere of its stability and flux, its possibility and impossibility.

The time of reconstruction

My definitions of home and masculinity have emphasised their particularly shifting, unstable nature at this post-war moment. In this section, I seek to account for this instability by expanding on the unsteady, non-linear time of reconstruction in post-war Britain. This has already fed into my definitions – home as containing echoes of war as it reforms, masculinity defined as much by imaginings or visions of its past as the new categories of masculinity that emerged post-war – though this section will underline how post-war home and masculinity were fundamentally shaped by the time of reconstruction. In the process, it also outlines methodologies for approaching the unsteady time of reconstruction and its effects on home and masculinity through art.

The post-war period has been consistently figured as temporally unstable or non-linear, where the boundaries between war and its aftermath might be experienced as blurred or even as collapsing entirely. Frank Mort, for instance, finds a 'dynamic push and pull of the past and the future' in his study of post-war Britain.[46] Lynda Nead has focused on the temporal instability of the post-war period too, exploring the haunting, disruptive conflation of past, present, and future in bombsites, and tracing how the Great Fog of

[46] Frank Mort, *Capital Affairs: London and the Making of the Permissive Society* (London: Yale University Press, 2010), 10.

December 1952 was linked in the British cultural imaginary to Victorian fogs and plunged post-war society into 'a world of uncanny time and space'.[47] More generally, the unstable temporality of war and its aftermath has been the focus of trauma theory. Cathy Caruth has, influentially, conceptualised trauma as inherently belated, forgotten or ignored at the time but experienced again and again afterwards.[48] Trauma, in the way it is manifested through memory, dislocation, and turbulence, disrupts our sense of linear time (acting like a spectre, a haunting) and even our conception of history.[49] The post-war period was one that was framed by the British government as a return – to norms of gender and of home, and the roles that they demand of individuals – or a new beginning; in reality, however, the events of the war – whether experienced directly in service, on the home front, or at a distance – had lasting material and psychological effects. Few artists in this book experienced the war directly (Bacon served as an air raid warden in London, Vaughan served in the Non-Combatant Corps as a conscientious objector, and Pasmore was conscripted briefly, before also claiming CO status) and there are few direct responses to the trauma of the Second World War to discuss here. Instead, it is the rippling, unsteady time of wartime trauma that is my concern, in a way that echoes Petra Rau's suggestion that the return 'home' can be an

[47] Nead, *The Tiger in the Smoke*, 28, 51, and 56-7.

[48] Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (London: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4-5.

[49] Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 15-16.

extension of the conflict that has supposedly ended.[50] The memories of the relationships, separations, violence, and upheaval of war lingered and recurred in the decades after its end.[51]

The work of the artists in this book speak of the lingering power of war. The violence of war recurs, in various forms, in the work of Bratby, Bacon, and Pasmore. The threat of wartime displacement and homelessness continues to trouble and drive Vaughan, Pasmore, and even Gilbert & George (born 1943 and 1942 respectively). The end of empire and the emergence of mass migration – a less immediate impact of war and its aftermath, but no less seismic – is negotiated by Souza; here, other, related traumas and violences recur and return home to Britain, while the everyday traumas of racism make their mark on individuals.[52] War's memories, however, intermingled with futurity – hopes, possibilities, and new or re-beginnings. Caruth conceives of trauma as future-oriented too, framing it,

[50] Petra Rau, ed., *Long Shadows: The Second World War in British Fiction and Film* (Evanston: North Western University Press, 2016), 15-6

[51] The memory of the war and its enduring, changing mythological power has been a focus in Angus Calder, *The Myth of the Blitz* (London: Pimlico, 1992), Mark Connolly, *We Can Take It! Britain and the Memory of the Second World War* (Harlow: Pearson, 2004), Rau, *Long Shadows*, 15-6, and Marianna Torgovnick, *The War Complex: World War II In Our Time* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

[52] On the temporality of post-colonial trauma, see Stef Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing: Trauma Out of Bounds* (Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke, 2013), 32. On the contradictory presence and absence of empire in British post-war memory, see Schwarz, *Memories*, 8-10.

appropriately for a study of home, as a 'departure'.[53] If the trauma of the destruction or disruption of home brings a return of the past, it also necessitates movement – be it physical or psychological – and an awakening that looks forward. This was a response that drove the artists in this book, such as Victor Pasmore:

> Today the whole world is shaken by the spirit of reconstruction … In painting and sculpture, as also in architecture, an entirely new language has been formed bearing no resemblance at all to traditional forms.[54]

For Pasmore, the trauma of war necessitated a futurity that became central to his turn to an abstract art that would explicitly address reconstruction. His words give this introduction its title, reflecting the way in which, for all the artists here and across the population more generally, the reconstructive moment seemed to require some kind of response.

This book argues that home was the space where the time of reconstruction – an unstable intermingling of past and future – was encountered and negotiated. Home had been the space of the initial ruptures of war. For the sociologist Richard Titmuss, home's wartime disruption threatened the stability of family life and the development of children; he also imagined it as the space of wartime 'strain', where 'many private terrors must have been stifled in the darkness'. He noted that, by November 1940, six out of ten Londoners avoided public shelters and chose to sleep in their own homes during air raids. This could

[53] Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 24.

[54] Victor Pasmore, 'Abstract Painting In England', *The Listener*, 13 September 1951, 427.

partly have been a result of government reluctance to encourage the use of public shelters on a wide scale, for fear of encouraging a shelter mentality, but Titmuss also implies that the home was something of an anchor for coping during wartime.[55] In one sense, it allowed a certain independence and consistency: the threat of bombing could be built into the daily routine with the knowledge that the 'safety valves' of evacuation, public shelters, and trekking to the countryside in the evenings were there if necessary. In another sense, it allowed people to retain the very support structures that the government and others feared disintegrating. As Titmuss put it,

> A threat to society implies a threat to the family, and when the physical hazards of air attack were present, families naturally tended to close their ranks. Staying at home, keeping the family together, and pursuing many of the ordinary activities of life made adjustment easier. Men and women clung to these things, for they symbolised normal life, and helped them to minimise the abnormal situation.

Just as the home had shown its fragility in wartime, it was also perceived to have demonstrated its resilience and social usefulness in the face of strain.

The home is the space where the ruptures of war are negotiated long after war's end in psychoanalysis, which became influential in post-war Britain and can assist in understanding the relationship between post-war home and the time of reconstruction. The

[55] The Blitz as a domestic experience is echoed in Tom Harrisson, *Living Through the Blitz* (1976; rep., London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 37 and 67-8.

theories of Melanie Klein – broadly, that the human psyche achieves an integrated, relational ego through a fraught relationship with the mother's body in infancy and that this can set children up to form relationships with other members of their family, friends, partners, and communities as they move through life – were particularly important. As historian Eli Zaretsky has demonstrated, Klein's ideas on the relational ego, focused around maintaining interpersonal relations and, by extension, wider interconnected communities, found resonance in a British society that was already concerned with questions of rupture and connection, as a result of the suffering and trauma of war, and the efforts by citizens to 'pull together' in the face of attack. Additionally, her focus on the mother clearly echoes the focus of the policies of the welfare state in the war's aftermath. Klein's ideas were taken up by British psychoanalysts like John Bowlby and D.W. Winnicott in the reconstruction period; her cultural influence, it is worth noting, was achieved by the mediation of her ideas through two prominent, mainstream post-war male figures. They adapted her thought, shifting her emphasis from the development of an independent psyche and personal life to focusing instead on how analysis and the role of the mother could bring about social integration.[56] In Bowlby's work, good mental health was the result of 'a warm, intimate and continuous relationship' between mother and child; he warned that deprivation could lead to delinquency and have other repercussions for mental health.[57] Winnicott, meanwhile,

[56] Eli Zaretsky, ''One Large Secure, Solid Background': Melanie Klein and the Origins of the British Welfare State', *Psychoanalysis and History* 1, no. 2 (1999): 136-54, and, more generally, Zaretsky, *Secrets*, 2004.

[57] John Bowlby, *Child Care and the Growth of Love*, Margaret Fry, ed. (London: Penguin, 1965), 77.

echoed Bowlby's emphasis on the importance of familial relationships for satisfactory selfhood and wider social belonging, emphasising the importance of the role of the 'good-enough' mother and arguing more generally that 'the essential of a democracy really does lie with the ordinary man and woman, and the ordinary, common-place home'.[58] These ideas gained a significant amount of currency and popular appeal – both men were regularly involved in broadcasts on the BBC, for instance. They also demonstrate the extent to which the fears and trauma of wartime – of family breakdown, destruction of homes, and their psychological and social effects – fed into conceptions of home and selfhood in the reconstructive period.[59] For this reason, this book adapts psychoanalysis as a framework for examining the art of Bratby and Pasmore in chapters one and five. Both artists engage with and interrogate the ideals of home and identity in the post-war period, as well as their lingering anxieties. British psychoanalysis – a discipline that dwells on the perpetual present of past experience – offers a historically-appropriate means of tracing the time of reconstruction in the home in their work.

If psychoanalysis is one method of conceiving of the time of reconstruction and its relationship to post-war home, then queer theory also offers other possibilities of

[58] Winnicott, *The Family and Individual Development*, 160, and, on the good-enough mother, 16-19.

[59] Kaja Silverman has argued that the temporal disruption and devastating effects of the war in America caused a loss of faith in the 'dominant fiction' of masculinity, which required a period of reassurance and 'binding' to reinforce its terms: Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 54-65.

understanding here. For some queer theorists, thinking about queer time has been a way of conceiving of queer experiences, while also thinking about the rich potential of temporal disruptions. Elizabeth Freeman, for instance, has argued for a conception of queer time that works differently to the normativity of state-sanctioned time, made up of rhythms or timings reinforced by capitalism and social institutions that shape bodies and experiences. She views queer time, instead, as allowing 'a different articulation between past and present, body and collectivity' that might open up new possibilities and ways of being.[60] It is possible to conceive of the time of reconstruction in Britain after the Second World War as a queer moment – as operating in a temporality that can be considered queer (where the rhythms of state-sanctioned time are interrupted and disturbed, by war and by individuals), as rich with the potential for new conceptions of home and masculinity, but also, almost inevitably, open to failure. Caution is required here in order to avoid imposing contemporary conceptions of identity and queer experience more generally onto the past. Laura Doan has warned that queer histories can become (perhaps unintentionally) embroiled in a kind of queer genealogy, where the roots of present identities are found in the past in an attempt at summoning a sense of queer belonging across time.[61] With this in mind, framing the time of reconstruction in broadly queer terms need not be an

[60] Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2010), 1-19. See also, for example, Jack Halberstam, *In A Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (London: New York University Press, 2005) and Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*.

[61] Laura Doan, *Disturbing Practices: History, Sexuality, and Women's Experience of Modern War* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2013).

anachronistic projection of contemporary theory into the past. But I want to hold onto this sense that the period of post-war reconstruction in Britain offered tentative queer potential, which was perhaps unsayable, ungraspable, maybe not even entirely knowable. It is a way of speaking of the openness of the reconstructive period within the very limits of its heteronormative, patriarchal, temporally-linear structures, of the different rhythms, interruptions, possibilities that might be enabled or imagined from within them. This is not to set up an opposition between ideals or norms of home and masculinity and queer conceptions of home and masculinity – instead, it is to account for the messy, fluctuating nature of post-war reconstruction, the solidifying *and* shifting categories of home and masculinity in this context, and the disruptive potential contained, expressed, or negotiated in the artworks produced in this extended moment.[62]

The queer time of reconstruction is most explicitly addressed in this book in the chapters on Bacon, Vaughan, and Gilbert & George (chapters two, three, and the conclusion respectively), where representations of emerging queer approaches to home operate within the temporal complexity of the post-war period. But, more broadly, queer theory's concern with instability is instructive as a means of being attentive to the negotiation of home between public ideals and private experience for all of the artists in this study. It offers not

[62] Cryle and Stephen warn against this tendency in queer theory, *Normality*, 6-7. Conceiving of queer as a disturbing or disruptive process is advocated by Doan, *Disturbing Practices,* viii-ix, and developed in Matt Houlbrook, 'Thinking Queer: the Social and the Sexual in Interwar Britain', in *British Queer History: New Approaches and Perspectives*, Brian Lewis, ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 134-64.

necessarily a strict theoretical structure, but it can inform a way of thinking about the relationship between home, the time of reconstruction, and artworks. It allows us to be open to the frequent instances of slippage in the representations in this book, where they make visible moments of potential, deviation, tension, or failure in their engagement with home and masculinity. It is a means of underlining how particular ideals and categories of home and masculinity were called into being in the post-war period by the state, and remaining attentive to their power but also the ways in which they were shifted, negotiated, and lived. And it is a way, too, of conceiving of and thinking through post-war reconstruction more generally: as something that was framed in linear terms in government policy – as war, then recovery, and which built state-sanctioned time into its structures – but which was, in reality, a complex, continually unfurling and faltering process that contained the lingering effects of war or even its return as well as the desire for a future. In suggesting that queer theory might inform a conceptualisation of the time of reconstruction, I am not suggesting imposing queer readings on all of the artists across this book. Instead, I am suggesting that an attention to irregularities, interruptions, deviations, and failures can be a helpful way of reading these artworks, with an awareness of the productive tensions that might be glimpsed, tentatively, incompletely, in the art of this period.

To work with the unsteady time of reconstruction and its effects, then, is to look with an awareness of art's fluid and often contradictory relationship to the negotiation of the unstable, emerging categories of home and masculinity in post-war Britain. In the chapters that follow, I analyse the artworks with a focus on how they engage with and are shaped by the time of reconstruction, drawing on psychoanalysis and queer theory where methodologically appropriate, but also remaining attentive to how they represent the

temporal instability between war and its aftermath that these methodologies have enabled me to define here.

Overview

This book's broad timeframe – stretching from the war and its aftermath in the 1940s to the early 1970s – is intended to reflect the enduring, changing nature of reconstruction and the legacy of the Second World War. It also pushes against a general tendency, frequently contested by historians, to think about the post-war years as distinct decades, with the 1950s as 'austere' and the 1960s as 'swinging', and so on.[63] It also joins more recent studies in literary studies and history that have undermined the sense that cultural production in this period was rooted in apathy, insularity, and consensus.[64] In this sense, this book

[63] This progression is implied in the focus of David Kynaston's series of books on this period, moving through *Austerity Britain, 1945-51* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), *Family Britain, 1951-57* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), and *Modernity Britain, 1957-62* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013). Similarly, see Dominic Sandbrook, *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain From Suez to the Beatles* (London: Abacus, 2006), though the sixties is presented as a decade of conformity and conservatism in Dominic Sandbrook, *White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties* (London: Little, Brown, 2006).

[64] Nick Bentley, *Radical Fictions: The English Novel in the 1950s* (Oxford: Lang, 2007), Alice Ferrebe, *Literature of the 1950s: Good, Brave Causes* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), Peter Hennessey, *Having It So Good: Britain in the Fifties* (London: Allen Lane,

contributes to an ongoing reassessment of culture in Britain after the Second World War, through its specific focus on art, home, masculinity, and reconstruction. Within this broad timescale, the artists have been chosen not because they might form a comprehensive picture of attitudes to home and masculinity in the post-war period (it is not possible to create such a picture). Instead, their work provides a series of subjective reflections on the negotiation between public and private possibilities of post-war home and masculinity in Britain that move from the small-scale of the interior outwards. Together, they suggest that post-war home was defined not through the ideal stability of the household, but the very permeability of its boundaries, spatial, temporal, or both, and the possibilities and difficulties of that state. This book begins with the domesticity-focused representations of Bratby, which engage most explicitly with the post-war ideals of home and masculinity while revealing their fraught, anxious foundations. It then moves through a series of chapters – focusing on Bacon, Vaughan, and Souza – that address representations that make visible the processes, possibilities, and difficulties of making home in terms of marginal categories of masculinity. These artists embrace non-domestic spaces and, increasingly, the male body as a means of defining and negotiating homes that come up against the limits of public reconstruction (and, inevitably, breach those limits). This book then turns to Pasmore, whose work seeks to construct home on the broadest scale yet – the community and, more generally, the nation – and illuminates how questions of home drove reconstruction in these large-scale terms. It then concludes with Gilbert & George, whose work both attests to the enduring influence of war and reconstruction on categories of home and masculinity,

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2006), Mort, 2010, and Gill Plain, *Literature of the 1940s: War, Postwar, and 'Peace'* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

while bringing us to a moment – twenty-five years after the war's end – where we can reflect on what art can tell us about the negotiation of these categories across this period. As they illuminate home's widening spheres in post-war Britain, these chapters are all linked by an attention to the unstable time of reconstruction, as I have framed it, and the enduring ways in which war shaped home and masculinity long after its end.

Chapter one begins in the home of the nuclear family and the domestic sphere with John Bratby, and explores how his art engages with the emerging post-war ideal of home in Britain at this moment. Bratby is our starting point as his paintings focus overwhelmingly on the domestic interior and explore the construction of post-war home from within these traditional parameters. His paintings become spheres where emerging definitions of masculinity – from the companionate masculinity of the nuclear family, to anxieties about conformity, and individualistic artistic masculinity – were negotiated. His representations of his wife Jean Cooke are addressed as a way of understanding how he defines masculinity through an unsteady and potentially violent relationship to femininity. Kleinian psychoanalysis is used here as a means of understanding Bratby's representations in terms of contemporary discourses around the family and gender in Britain. This chapter also reflects on the challenge of engaging with artworks that refer to domestic violence perpetrated by the artist himself. Psychoanalysis is used here to read Bratby's paintings as making visible the enduring presence of war in post-war home and masculinity, and as highlighting the temporal instability of reconstruction that, in Bratby's work, threatens to engulf these post-war ideals.

While Bratby's representations of home found public ideals coming apart in the private domestic space, chapter two explores how Francis Bacon's representations traverse these boundaries freely. As homosexual subjectivity was emerging in post-war Britain just prior to partial-decriminalisation (in which homosexual relations were legalised but only for couples over the age of 21 in England and Wales), Bacon's art suggests that queer home might be found in unhomely or public spaces (rather than a single, private interior) and in transient moments of intimacy and contact. In this chapter, then, Bacon's art posits post-war queer home between the domestic and spaces of queer intimacy, and this definition of home is one forged in terms of emerging homosexual subjectivity. I begin by placing Bacon's reflections on home in the context of queer historical scholarship, arguing that his unhomely vision of home can be considered as a response to post-war queer experience, before exploring Bacon's *Man In Blue* series as representations of queer public intimacy and its processes in this context. I argue that this public intimacy is crucial to understanding Bacon's representations of queer home, built around his personal conception of 'drift' that might speak productively of the negotiation of queer home more widely in the post-war period. Finally, I take up the intermingling of violence and intimacy in Bacon's *Figure In A Landscape*, 1945, and find, in ways that echo Bratby, the violence and spectres of war returning in and helping to form a representation of queer home in Bacon's terms. Here, the legacies of war and the time of reconstruction shape Bacon's representations of queer home, and Bacon's representations point to the queer potential of the time of reconstruction.

Chapter three focuses on Keith Vaughan who, like Bacon, makes visible how queer home had to be negotiated across and between public structures and private experience in

the post-war period. Vaughan's focus, however, is on the male body – on the memories of relationships and bonds that it holds and on the communities of home which form around it. If post-war queer home, as Bacon attested, is necessarily permeable, transient, and drifting, then Vaughan's response is to find the stability of home – and, inevitably, its transience – in the male body. The bulk of this chapter focuses on Vaughan's painting *Assembly of Figures I*, 1952, which brings together four individual male figures into a disjointed, strange group in an outdoor, indeterminate space. The painting is read as an instance where the memories of transient and now lost homes formed in pre-war and wartime circumstances are restated on canvas and made visible again, and it attests to how the experiences of war fundamentally shaped Vaughan's negotiation of post-war home through the male body. The chapter goes on to explore how Vaughan adopted the mythological figure of Theseus (via André Gide's 1946 novel *Thésée*) as a figure of queer potential. His painted ruminations on this theme are considered as works where Vaughan imagined that the joys, struggles, limits, and deviations of post-war queer home could speak – falteringly and quietly – to the possibilities and aims of reconstruction in Britain more widely. Finally, I consider how Vaughan's *Lazarus*, 1956, might speak of the difficulties and possibilities of post-war queer home that is built on memories, of war and lost relationships.

Chapter four turns to the work of Francis Newton Souza and argues that, like Vaughan, he locates the question of home in the male body. While Vaughan utilises the male body to reflect on home's stability and loss, Souza allows the male body to register the multiple spaces, experiences, and anxieties of home that are the result of migration into a British society that was still recovering from war. Souza's art, in a break with the other artists in this book so far, does not register the legacies of war and its shaping of home

explicitly. Instead, his images of male bodies undermine the certainty of reconstructing home, exploiting the temporal instability of this moment and allowing it to be troubled by legacies of empire and increasing racial tension. The chapter begins by addressing Souza's self-portraits. These works depict the artist as tense, mute, and afflicted by arrows, and are read as works that deal with questions of assimilation and translation that had to be negotiated by migrants seeking to make a home in Britain at this moment. It then turns to Souza's *Crucifixion*, 1959, placing it in the context of contemporary racial tensions as well as the enduring violence of colonialism and its aftermath to consider how Souza allows the male body to embody the experience of violence and suffering of homes across time and space. Finally, it is argued that Souza's art and writing exhibits an awareness of the inherent instability of masculinity in post-war Britain, and that this instability seeks to complicate and undermine the assumptions of public reconstruction. The migrant home in post-war Britain, in Souza's art, finds some kind of definition in the male body, which bears its histories and negotiations.

If Souza's negotiation of home through the male body serves to trouble the assumptions of public reconstruction, then the work of Victor Pasmore – the subject of chapter five – finds this public reconstruction faltering. This chapter begins with Pasmore's controversial Apollo Pavilion, constructed in 1969, and argues that the Pavilion is a monument to the anxieties about the destruction of home in wartime Britain, built nearly twenty-five years after the war's end. The chapter begins by tracing how Pasmore's paintings of the 1940s and 1950s responded to home under threat. In Pasmore's art, that home stretches from the domestic sphere to visions of the national landscape. The chapter then explores Pasmore's work at Peterlee that led to the construction of the Pavilion,

tracing how this retained the methods and concerns of his works that responded to war. I return to British psychoanalysis to understand how the wartime experience of home under threat influenced the construction of the environment at Peterlee. At the centre of this is the Pavilion, which stands, at the end of this chapter, as a flawed vision of a form of public reconstruction that sought to make home on a community scale while grappling with the unsteady time of reconstruction.

The conclusion turns to Gilbert & George's performance *Underneath The Arches* in a railway arch near Limehouse in East London in 1969 as a way of reflecting on the continued centrality of memories of war and reconstruction for the categories of home and masculinity in Britain, nearly twenty-five years after the war's end. It unpicks how their performance enacted a temporal complication that brought memories of wartime – particularly of destruction of home, homelessness, crime, and homosexuality – back to a space of reconstruction. It outlines how the artists' strange vision of home in this work – as homosocial, stripped of the material culture of home, and formed, simultaneously, by loss and hope – is both a deeply personal response by the artists and a way of conceiving of the negotiation, challenges, and possibilities of post-war home in this book as a whole. Overall, this book argues that the works of these artists – Bratby, Bacon, Vaughan, Souza, Pasmore, and Gilbert & George – were informed by recurring memories of war and the disorientating task of reconstruction, and that they can enable an understanding of how war and its aftermath shaped the negotiation of home and masculinity in post-war Britain.