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FOUR TECHNOLOGIES OF YOUNG WOMANHOOD.

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Resurgent Patriarchies and Gender Retrenchment

Tonight I present an analysis of a new sexual contract (a cultural rather than legal phenomenon) currently being made available to young women, primarily in the West, to come forward and make good use of the opportunity to work, to gain qualifications, to control fertility and to earn enough money to participate in the consumer culture which in turn will become a defining feature of contemporary modes of feminine citizenship. A range of technologies are set in motion, so that these invitations to come forward, can be issued. They comprise various social and cultural practices, the distinguishing characteristics of which are the sense of movement, combined with that of putting the young female subject under a spotlight, and making her visible in a certain kind of way, hence my use, drawing on Deleuze of the term luminosity. The idea of a moving spotlight is apt in that it reflects something of Foucault’s panopticon, but instead of surveillance there is a theatrical or cinematic effect. I use the term ‘spaces of attention’ to examine how these luminosities operate in everyday life. And I ask the question: how do we account for the range of social, cultural and economic transformations which have brought forth new categories of young womanhood? If such changes find themselves consolidated in the UK (and elsewhere) in the last ten to fifteen years, what are we to make of the decisive re-positioning of young women this appears to entail? Transformations such as these tend to be seen as positive. Across the spectrum from left to right, the apparent gains made by young women are taken to be signs of the existence of a democracy in good health, But the feminist perspective I present here is alert to the dangers which arise when a selection of feminist values and ideals appear to be inscribed within a more profound and determined attempt, undertaken by an array of political and cultural forces, to re-shape notions of womanhood so that they fit with new or emerging (neo-liberalised) social and economic arrangements.
The girl emerges or comes forward across a range of social and cultural spaces as a subject truly worthy of investment. Within the language of Britain’s New Labour government, the girl who has benefited from the equal opportunities now available to her, can be mobilised as the embodiment of the values of the new meritocracy. This term has become an abbreviation for the more individualistic and competitive values promoted by New Labour particularly within education. Nowadays the young woman’s success seems to promise economic prosperity on the basis of her enthusiasm for work and having a career. The attribution of both freedom and success to young women, take different forms across the boundaries of class, ethnicity and sexuality, producing a range of entanglements of racialised and classified configurations of youthful femininity. From being assumed to be headed towards marriage, motherhood and limited economic participation, the girl is now endowed with economic capacity. Young, increasingly well-educated women, of different ethnic and social backgrounds, now find themselves charged with the requirement that they perform as economically active female citizens. They are invited to recognise themselves as privileged subjects of social change, perhaps they might even be expected to be grateful for the support they have received. The pleasingly, lively, capable and becoming young woman, black, white or Asian, is now an attractive harbinger of social change.

I examine this new standing of young women by considering four spaces of attention, each of which operates to sustain and re-vitalise what Butler has famously called the heterosexual matrix, while also re-instating and confirming, with subtlety, norms of racial hierarchy as well as re-configured class divisions which now take on a more autonomously gendered dimension. Defining such ‘spaces of attention’ as luminosities I will propose that these comprise first the fashion and beauty complex, from within which emerges a post-feminist masquerade as a distinctive modality of feminine agency. Second there is the also luminous space of education and employment, within which is found the figure of the working girl. Third, is the hyper-visible space of sexuality, fertility and reproduction from which emerges the phallic girl. Fourth is the space of globalisation and in particular the production of commercial femininities in the developing world. The sexual contract on the global
stage is most clearly marked out in the world editions of young women’s fashion magazines like Elle, Marie Claire, Grazia and Vogue from whose pages there emerges the friendly, but unthreatening, beautiful and somehow pliable, eager-to-please and bearing-no-grudges global girl.

**Shining In the Light: The Post-feminist Masquerade.**

Young women have been hyper-actively positioned in the context of a wide range of social, political and economic changes of which they themselves appear to be the privileged subjects. We might now imagine the young woman as a highly efficient assemblage for productivity. (This too marks a shift, women now figure in governmental discourse as much for their productive as reproductive capacities). She is thus an intensively managed subject of post-feminist, gender-aware biopolitical practices of new governmentality. What are we to make of this attention? Deleuze, writing about what Foucault meant by visibilities, suggests that these are not ‘forms of objects, nor even forms that would show up under light, but rather forms of luminosity which are created by the light itself and allow a thing or object to exist only as a flash, sparkle or shimmer’ (Deleuze 1986, p 52). This luminosity captures how young women might be understood as currently becoming visible. The power they seem to be collectively in possession of, is ‘created by the light itself’. These luminosities are suggestive of post-feminist equality while also defining and circumscribing the conditions of such a status. They are clouds of light which give young women a shimmering presence, and in so doing they also mark out the terrain of the consummately and re-assuringly feminine. The luminosity functions on the basis of the illusion of movement and agency, it seems as though young women are coming forward through choice and because all obstacles have been removed. The light simply picks up and traces these movements while bestowing on them a spectacular cinematic effect. Judith Butler has already conjectured that this patriarchal power (or The Symbolic) has been confronted in recent years by feminism as a political antagonism (Butler 2000). Butler’s analysis can be drawn on here to argue that this feminist confrontation has forced some adjustment on the part of the Symbolic. My point is that work and wage-earning capacity come to dominate rather than be subordinate to women’s self-identity, and this inevitably has a ripple effect within the field of power. The Symbolic is faced with the problem of how to retain the
dominance of phallocentrism when the logic of global capitalism is to loosen women from their prescribed roles and grant them degrees of economic independence.

The Symbolic is thus presented with a double threat, first from the now-outmoded and hence only spectral feminism, and second from the aggressive re-positioning of women through these economic processes of female individualisation. The luminosities of femininity provide the spaces for this authority to be exerted anew. The Symbolic discharges (or maybe franchises) its duties to the commercial domain (beauty, fashion, magazines, body culture etc) which becomes the source of authority and judgement for young women.). Because the commercial domain is now so dominant, as social institutions are reduced in their sphere of influence, we can detect an intensification in these disciplinary requirements and also we can perceive new dynamics of aggression, violence and self-punishment. I propose that a key containment strategy on the part of the Symbolic, is then to delegate a good deal of its power to the fashion and beauty complex where, as a ‘grand luminosity’, a post-feminist masquerade emerges as a new cultural dominant. The masquerade as defined first by Riviere in 1929 and then returned to by Butler in 1990/1999, has re-appeared as a highly self-conscious means by which young women are encouraged to collude with the re-stabilisation of gender norms so as to undo the gains of feminism and dissociate themselves from this now discredited political identity (see the attached ad for Grazia in the Guardian 17/1/06)? Riviere’s famous essay of 1929 is a piece of writing which feminists have frequently turned back to. As a psychoanalyst Riviere was interested in how ‘women who wish for masculinity may put on a mask of womanliness to avert anxiety and the retribution feared from men’ (Riviere 1929/1986 p 35 quoted in Butler 1999 2nd Ed p 65). Riviere understands womanliness and masquerade to be indistinguishable, there is no naturally feminine woman lurking underneath this mask.

I want to introduce the post-feminist masquerade as a re-ordering of the heterosexual matrix in order to secure, once again, the existence of patriarchal law and masculine hegemony. There is a useful slippage in Riviere’s account between the actuality of the masquerade as a recognisable phenomenon which she perceives in her female patients and their encounters, and images of femininity found in the cultural realm. This intersection between the styles of femininity Riviere observes in everyday life, and
those portrayed in feminine popular culture, permits me here to propose the post-
feminist masquerade as mode of feminine inscription, across the whole surface of the
female body an interpellative device, at work and highly visible in the commercial
domain as a familiar (even nostalgic or ‘retro’), light hearted (unserious), refrain of
femininity. It has recently been re-instated into the repertoire of femininity ironically.
This signals that the hyper-femininity of the masquerade which would seemingly re-
locate women back inside the terms of traditional gender hierarchies, by having her
wear spindly stilettos and ‘pencil’ skirts, for example, does not in fact mean
entrapment (as feminists would once have seen it) since it is now a matter of choice
rather than obligation.

This new masquerade constantly refers to its own artifice, its adoption by women is
done as a statement, the woman in masquerade is making a point that this is a freely
chosen look. The post-feminist masquerade does not fear male retribution. Instead it is
the reprimanding structure of the fashion and beauty system which acts as an
authoritative regime. (Hence the seeming disregard for male approval, especially if
the outfit and look is widely admired by those within the fashion milieu1.) It rescues
women from the threat posed by these figures by triumphantly re-instating the
spectacle of excessive femininity, (on the basis of the independently earned wage)
while also shoring up hegemonic masculinity by endorsing this public femininity
which appears to undermine, or at least unsettle the new power accruing to women on
the basis of this economic capacity. There are many variants of the post-feminist
masquerade (sometimes summed up in the word immaculate) but in essence it
comprises a re-ordering of femininity so that old-fashioned styles (rules about hats,
bags, shoes etc) which signal submission to some invisible authority or to an opaque
set of instructions, are re-instated. (eg Bridget Jones’s short skirt and flirty presence in
the workplace and her ‘oh silly me’ self-reprimands). The post-feminist masquerade
come to the young women’s rescue, a throwback from the past, and she adopts this

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1 This is a regular theme in Sex in the City, Carrie’s date may not care for her silly hat, which she
knows only fashion experts would appreciate. Thus the wearing or not of the hat provokes much self
reflexivity. Should she or shouldn’t she? Carrie tends to cling onto these seemingly ridiculous items,
as a mark of her own independent identity. But we (the audience) know that in the end these items
work to the advantage of her femininity. They actually make her more endearing to men. Their
excessive quality shows her vulnerability, and her child-like enjoyment of dressing up. If she gets it
wrong and she looks a little foolish, it is because she is still a girl, unsure of herself as she takes on the
mantle of womanliness. Indeed getting it wrong is a mark of her girliness, and this failing makes her
all the more desirable to men).
style (assuming for example the air of being ‘foolish and bewildered’ (Riviere ibid p 29) to help her navigate the terrain of hegemonic masculinity without jeopardising her sexual identity, which, because she is actually and legitimately inside the institutional world of work, from which she was once barred or had only limited access to, can become a site of vulnerability. Or else she simply fears being considered aggressively unfeminine in her coming forward as a powerful woman and so adopts the air of being girlishly distracted, slightly flustered, weighed down with bags, shoes, bracelets, and other decorative items, all of which need to be constantly attended to. the silly hat, the too short skirt, the too high heels, are once again means of emphasising, as they did in classic Hollywood comedies, female vulnerability, fragility, uncertainty and anxiety about the forfeiting of male desire.

Both Riviere and Butler refer to the sublimated aggression directed towards masculinity and male dominance in the form of the masquerade. Riviere uses words like triumph, supremacy and hostility to describe the female anger which underpins the façade of excessive feminine adornment, she pinpoints the fury of the professional women who perceives her own subjugation in the behaviour of her male peers. All of this gets transmogrified into the mask of make-up and the crafting of a highly styled look. This strategy re-appears today in very different circumstances. Women now routinely inhabit these masculine spheres, they now find themselves in competition with men on a daily basis. They take their place alongside men thanks to the existence of non-discriminatory policies, and more recently to systems of meritocratic reward as advocated by New Labour. The woman in masquerade wishes to have a position as a ‘subject in language’ (ie to participate in public life) rather than existing merely as ‘women as sign’ (Butler 1990/1999). It is precisely because women are now able to function as subjects in language (ie they participate in working life) that new masquerade exists to manage the field of sexual antagonisms and to re-instate women as sign. The masquerade functions to re-assure male structures of power by defusing the presence and the aggressive and competitive actions of women as they come to inhabit positions of authority. It re-stabilises gender relations and the heterosexual matrix as defined by Butler by interpellating women repeatedly and ritualistically into the knowing and self-reflexive terms of highly-stylised femininity. The post-feminist masquerade works on behalf of the Symbolic pre-emptively in the light of the possible disruptions posed by the new gender regime. It operates with a double
movement, its voluntaristic structure works to conceal that patriarchy is still in place, while the requirements of the fashion and beauty system ensure that women are in fact still fearful subjects, driven by the need for ‘complete perfection’ (Riviere 1929/1985 p42).

**Education and Employment as Sites of Capacity: The Visibility of the Well-Educated Working Girl.**

The luminosities of the post-feminist masquerade and the clouds of light bestowed on the figure of the young women by the fashion and beauty system are matched, if not surpassed, by (and frequently intersect with) the visibilities which produce the well-educated young woman and the working girl. Enormous governmental activity is put into making young women ready for work, and this requirement takes the form of urging young women towards agency across the whole range of talents and abilities (Rose 1999). The young woman comes to be widely understood as a potential bearer of qualifications, she is an active and aspirational subject of the education system, and she embodies the success of the new meritocratic values which New Labour have sought to implement in schools. This re-positioning is a decisive factor in the new sexual contract. The acquisition (or not) of qualifications therefore comes to function as a mark of a new gender divide. Young women are ranked according to their ability to gain qualifications which provide them with an identity as female subjects of capacity. (They can become obsessed with grades.). The young woman comes forward as someone with the capacity to transcend the barriers of sex, race and class. She will step forward as an exemplary black or Asian young woman on the basis of her enthusiasm for learning, her taste for hard work, and her desire to pursue material reward. Young women under-achievers and those who do not have the requisite degrees of motivation and ambition to improve themselves become more emphatically condemned for their lack of status and other failings than would have been the case in the past.
There is however a decisive shift in the transition to work for young women as their movement of coming forward finds itself coming up against the idea of social compromise. And the work of the spaces of attention seeks to manage processes of negotiation and compromise. I use this term social compromise to account for the way in which the new sexual contract operates in the workplace, setting limits on patterns of participation and gender equality (as forms of retrenchment) (Crompton 1982).

Rosemary Crompton focuses on women who are also mothers and their re-positioning in the labour market on return to work after the birth of children. The relevance of this work to the discussion here lies in the implicit abandonment of critique of masculine hegemony in favour of compromise. Young working mothers, it appears, draw back from entertaining any idea of debate on inequality in the household in favour of finding ways, with help from government, to manage their dual responsibility. This links with the previous discussion of the post-feminist masquerade as a strategy of undoing, a re-configuring of normative femininity this time incorporating motherhood so as to accommodate with masculine. In the social compromise there is then once again a process of gender re-stabilisation. Rosemary Crompton points to the significant rates of retention in employment or return to work shortly after having children by UK women. This corresponds with government’s focus on women’s employability and the transition to lifelong work for women as an alternative to traditional economic dependence on a male breadwinner. The compromise requires that woman play a dual role, active in the workplace and primarily responsible for children and domestic life (Crompton 2002). Instead of challenging the traditional expectation that women take primary responsibility in the home, there is a shift towards abandoning the critique of patriarchy and instead heroically attempting to ‘do it all’ while also looking to government for support in this Herculean endeavour. The transition to this feminine mode of activity comes into existence by means of a series of luminosities (the glamorous working mother, the so-called yummy mummy, the high-flyer who is also a mother etc) images and texts which are accompanied also by popular genres of fiction including best selling novels such as *I Don’t Know How She Does It* (Pearson 2003)

The UK government substitutes for the feminist, displaces her vocabulary and intervenes to assist working mothers who are coming forward, and to avert the possibility of critique by women of their double responsibilities and thus of possible
crisis within the heterosexual matrix. Government thus acts to protect masculinity hegemony by supporting women in their double role, while the media and popular culture endeavour to re-glamorise working wives and mothers through post-feminist styles of self-improvement, hyper-sexuality and capacity. This feature of the new sexual contract requires compromise in work as well as within the home. Despite the rhetoric of heroism in the combining of primary responsibility for children with maintaining a career, in practice the emphasis by various agencies whose subject of attention is the young working women entails the scaling down of ambition in favour of a discourse of managing following the onset of motherhood. In the light of these new responsibilities the young woman is counselled to request flexibility of her employer. Government is certainly not encouraging women back into the home after having children. The new sexual contract instead offers support and guidance so that the return to employment (often part-time) is facilitated in the form of a work-life balance. There is an implicit trade off, what the working mother now wants or needs from her employer is recognition of her dual role, and some degree of accommodation in this respect. The so-called work-life balance for women is now underpinned, in the form of better safeguards in law for part-time workers and also pension rights. At the same time the state makes it possible through these provisions for the husband to pursue his working life without female complaint. A decade ago Nancy Fraser argued that men must again become more accountable to gender inequities in the household, while what I have attempted to demonstrate here are the forces which prevail against this kind of expectation re-emerging as a possibility (Fraser 1997). Fraser also argued that the Universal Breadwinner Model increasingly takes precedence over the Caregiver Model which was associated with the older welfare regime which took into account women’s role as care-givers and the limits that role put on possibilities for economic activity (Fraser 1997). But what the social compromise now suggests is that the Universal Breadwinner Model requires of women a joint responsibility which also, more or less, guarantees subordinate status in terms of wage earning capacity in the realm of work and employment over a lifetime. At the same time the coming forward of women into work offers government the best opportunity of cutting the long-term costs of welfare.
Phallic Girls: Recreational Sex, Reproductive Sex.

The post-feminist masquerade, and also the figure of the working girl, are two of the means by which the new sexual contract, makes itself available to young women. Here I introduce a further figure, the phallic girl, and then in the final section, the global girl. Butler envisages the ‘phallic lesbian’ as a political figure who wrestles some power from the almighty Symbolic. In an interview Butler is asked if heterosexual women might also be able to pick up the phallus in this way and she responds that this might be an important thing to do (Butler 1996). But now, more recently, and within the terrain of western post-feminist culture, the Symbolic reacts swiftly to the antagonism which not just feminism has presented, but also which Butler’s lesbian phallus and queer theory per se present by pre-emptively endowing young women with the capacity to become phallus-bearers as a kind of licensed mimicry of their male counterparts. This also precludes any radical re-arrangement of gender hierarchies despite, indeed because of this ‘pretence’ of equality, that permits spectacles of aggression and unfeminine behaviour on the part of young women, seemingly without invoking the usual kinds of punishment. The phallic girl gives the impression of having won equality with men by becoming like her male counterparts. But in this adoption of the phallus, there is no critique of masculine hegemony. The ladette is a young woman for whom the freedoms associated with masculine sexual pleasures are not just made available but encouraged and also celebrated. She is being asked to concur with a definition of sex as light-hearted pleasure, recreational activity, hedonism, sport, reward and status. Luminosity falls upon the girl who adopts the habits of masculinity including heavy drinking, swearing, smoking, getting into fights, having casual sex, getting arrested by the police, consumption of pornography, enjoyment of lap-dancing clubs and so on, but without relinquishing her own desirability to men, indeed for whom such seeming masculinity enhances her desirability within the visual economy of heterosexuality. (The increase in aggressive behaviour on the part of young women, for example carrying and using knives and weapons, also the rise in bullying, can also be understood in these terms. This mimicry of masculinism disavows, and discounts as relevant or desirable the idea of a feminist critique.)
Female phallicism is a more assertive alternative to masquerade but it does the same kind of work of re-stabilising gender relations. Fearful of the threat posed to dominant heterosexuality by the loosening of the ties of dependency through access to work and employment, the apparently taboo-breaking phallic girl also emerges as a challenge, not only to the repudiated feminist, but also to the repudiated lesbian. By being able to take up some of the accoutrements of masculinity, the drunken, swearing and leering young woman who is not averse to having sex with other girls, demonstrates that within the presiding realm of Symbolic authority, all things seem possible. Consumer culture, the tabloid press, the girl’s and women’s magazine sector, the lad’s magazines and also downmarket or trashy television all encourage young women, as though in the name of sexual equality, to overturn the old double standard and emulate the assertive and hedonistic styles of sexuality associated with young men. This assumption of phallicism also provides new dimensions of moral panic, titillation, and voyeuristic excitement as news spectacle and entertainment. Under this pretence of equality which is promoted by consumer culture, such female phallicism is in fact a provocation to feminism, a triumphant gesture on the part of resurgent patriarchy. The violence which underpins the granting of freedom to the phallic girl warrants more detailed analysis. In coming forward and showing herself to be, in common parlance, ‘up for it’ the phallic girl as a luminosity also permits certain modes of ‘rollback’ of what have become established as feminist common-sense, to be made open to revision. Her unfeminine behaviour permits the re-visiting of debates on sexual violence and rape, if for example the girl in question has drunk so much she has no idea exactly what has happened, or if she has agreed to have sex with a number of men, but has not expected to be treated with violence or brutality. By endorsing norms of male conduct in the field of sexuality she removes any obligation on the part of men to reflect on their own behaviour and their treatment of women. The phallic girl, for example, the glamour model, who is perhaps now ageing, is expected to bear the brunt of masculine hostility when she is no longer so desirable. Young men’s hostility to women re-appears without rebuke, particularly in comedy and in popular culture.
The Global Girl

The figurations of the post-feminist masquerade and the phallic girl also mark out by subtle means processes of exclusion and re-colonisation. There are patterns of racialised retrenchment embedded within these re-configured spaces of femininity. The post-feminist masquerade does this by extolling the virtues of dissembled feminine weakness, and fragility. But playing at tradition in this way, adopting a style of femininity which invites once again a display of masculine chivalry, gallantry, power and control, resurrects norms of white heterosexuality from which black women and men have historically been violently excluded. The post-feminist masquerade as a cultural strategy for re-stabilising gender relations within the heterosexual matrix produces a new interface between working life and sexuality which is implicitly white and which assumes kinship norms associated with the western nuclear family. In line with the new ethos of assimilation and integration rather than the apparently ‘failed multi-culturalism’ of the 1980s and ‘90s, aspirant young black women are invited, as readers of magazines like Grazia or viewers of television programmes like Friends, or films like Bridget Jones’s Diary, to emulate this model, to write themselves into these scripts, without modification, without the option of challenge or contestation.

The global girl comes forward, primarily in the advertising images from fashion companies like Benetton, and also through the different editions of global fashion magazines like Elle, Marie Claire, Vogue and Grazia, which are customised from one country to the next, as emblematic of the power and success of corporate multi-culturalism. This envisages young women, especially those from Third World countries, as enthusiastic about membership of and belonging to, a kind of global femininity. The modernity of the global girl today is expressed in her new found freedoms, her wage earning capacity, her enjoyment of and immersion in beauty culture and in popular culture. She is pleasing and becoming and she does not wear
her femininity with the irony of her post-feminist masquerading western counterparts, nor does she display the aggression and sexual bravado of the phallic girls. Global girls are the fantasy constructs of threatened Western masculinity. They combine the natural and authentic, with a properly feminine love of self-adornment, and the playfully seductive with the innocent, so as to suggest a sexuality which is youthful, latent and waiting to be unleashed. While there is nothing so new in this racial fantasy these young women are now also envisaged as more active than passive. This marks out a subtle positioning, a re-making of racial hierarchy within the field of normative femininity. The idea of a sexual contract as a convergence of attentions, spanning a range of bodily activities, and permitting modes of coming forward on condition that any residue of sexual politics fades away, is also a western formulation addressed to those who are assumed to have full citizenship and the right to remain in the country of abode. In this contract economic activity is foregrounded and politics reduced to the margins of significance in favour of consumer citizenship. Those women who are excluded from this privileged model of freedom based on the state provision of education, followed by participation in training and in the labour market, are the subjects of different modalities of concern, prompting the deployment of more conventional technologies of surveillance. The space of attention which gives rise to this new figure of global girlhood expects her to buy into western styles of spectacular femininity as a means of enhancing her position in the international division of labour, and thus showing herself to be eager to succeed, uncritical and ‘bearing-no-grudges’. We could say that the young unmarried woman from an impoverished part of the world, has in the last twenty years become a subject who is re-designated, by means of what Spivak calls gender planning, as having even more capacity for work and labour than has been the case in the past. And for this reason there is increasing attention to her education and training which as Spivak also points out now entails various versions of US influenced neo-liberal pedagogy based round entrepreneurship. Spivak suggests that feminists look now at the values underpinning this new curriculum in the developing world which is preparing young women for mobility, and living apart from family and community. These dislocations for the poor and the not so poor, give rise to modalities of diasporic femininity which are analysed in depth in, for example the work of border theorists such as Anzaldua (1990) Brah (1996) Mohanty (2002) Lowe (2006), (Brah and Phoenix 2006).
In conclusion, in this presentation tonight I have charted the process of feminism being undone through high levels of intervention and attention being directed towards the young woman, whose significance in terms of wage earning capacity cannot be overlooked. A new sexual contract is issued to young women. It encourages activity concentrated in education and employment so as to ensure high rates of participation in the labour market, and likewise in consumer culture and also in the sphere of sexuality. These coming forwards however conceal seeming governmental inattention to women’s possible role in the political sphere. This instead is compensated for through the idea of consumer citizenship. These various luminosities have a kind of theatrical effect, they convey the impression that young women are now able to emerge unhindered and are able to make choices about how they wish to live their lives, they make it look as though young women are indeed empowered. Cultures of consumption underpinned by the vocabulary of ‘choice’ permit further eclipsing of and fragmentation of the social field. This theatrical effect celebrates the young woman’s appetite for work, and encourages spectacular consumption on the basis that she has worked to deserve such rewards. There is gender re-stabilisation in this orchestration of luminosities, young women can come forward on condition that feminist politics fades away, and the illusion of movement and success masks the subtle and the not so subtle re-instatement of sexual hierarchies.