

# **Towards a Morphology of Devotional Materialism**

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# **Introduction**

## Abstract

This thesis seeks to establish a morphology of devotional materialism defined as occupying a third space between sacred and domestic objects. This morphology is constructed of four stages and thus four chapters: Procurement, Accumulation, Display and Inheritance. By means of visual and written work in addition to analysis of texts from philosophical object studies, feminist scholars to art historians and studies specifically on sectarianism in Scotland as well as documents from the Scottish Government, this thesis finds this morphology exists to maintain a specific type of sectarianism specifically in Scotland.

Key words: Devotional, Materialism, Sectarianism, Catholic, Scotland, Metaphysical, Object, Gender, Feminised, Domestic, Spaces.

Division in Scotland has been studied at length. Our literature and visual culture responds to a so-called Caledonian Antisyzygy, a personality trait of a nation defined by its polarised people: from Jekyll and Hyde to Celtic and Rangers; from Catholic to Protestant; from East Coast to West Coast; from Highlands to Lowlands; to the methodical Robert the Bruce and the impulsive warrior William Wallace.<sup>1</sup> In the West of Scotland specifically, the people are famous for their welcoming attitudes yet sharp tongues and ready fists, as defined by Glaswegian comedian Kevin Bridges' famous *Bus Stop Joke* in 2011: 'Glasgow was recently voted Europe's murder capital, but also voted the UK's friendliest city in the same week. We got wur act together pronto. Ye might get the shite kicked out of you, but you'll

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Caledonian Antisyzygy*. In *Complete Poems: Volume II*, ed. by Michael Grieve and W. R. Aitken (Manchester: Carcanet Press Ltd, 1994), pp. 1052–1053.

get directions to the hospital.<sup>2</sup> One must wonder how does such an antisyzygy persist? Surely no one wants to hate their neighbour or seek out their own isolation within an otherwise welcoming community. Whether it's at football games, in schools, in religious places, in homes or on the streets, this antisyzygy persists and dominates throughout Scottish life and culture. How can we promote a healthy culture if people are excluded? Throughout the early 2000s Scotland's philosophers and sociologists studied a normalised and infamous antisyzygy: sectarianism, Scotland's shame.<sup>3</sup> With the aim of identifying the source of this normalised hatred, studies investigated sectarian singing at football games, the men of the Orange Order and Green Brigade, and how this persisted specifically amongst young men in schools and during their adolescence. Yet, sectarianism persists. If we asked the sizeable portion of the population of whom have not been socialised to enjoy violence and football, we could develop a clearer and more accurate view of how and why this division exists and persists. If you haven't noticed that all the examples so far have been men, you haven't been paying attention.

The majority of studies on sectarianism have concerned men, males, boys, and masculine presenting people and people socialised as men. In the 2010 study *Gangs, Sectarianism and Social Capital: A Qualitative Study of Young People in Scotland*, both genders are interviewed although gender-specific issues such as inter-religion misogyny are not highlighted or addressed with interviewees as they are in Sara Lindores and Akwugo Emejulu's work.<sup>4</sup> In *Shipyards and Sectarianism: How Do Mortality and Deprivation Compare in Glasgow and Belfast?* both women and men are taken into consideration,

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<sup>2</sup> Kevin Bridges, 'Bus Stop Joke!' *Michael McIntyre's Comedy Roadshow*. Performed in Glasgow (2011).

<sup>3</sup> Devine, T, and James Mitchell, 'Scotland's Shame? Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland', *West European Politics*, 2001, 216–23

<sup>4</sup> Ross Deuchar and Chris Holligan, 'Gangs, Sectarianism and Social Capital: A Qualitative Study of Young People in Scotland', *Sociology* (Oxford), 44.1 (2010), 13–30.



although within the sphere of shipyards – a historically male-dominated space and career. Women throughout the piece are often tagged on as an afterthought, giving the impression that under some gender-equality guideline the study had to be altered to include them. Although the study contains multiple graphs about male versus female mortality rates and causes, the conclusion has no mention of women, and the footnotes show that non-men have been tagged on as an afterthought: Footnote ‘h’ reads: ‘The gap in male life expectancy at birth between Northern Ireland and West Central Scotland increased from 1.3 years in 1982-1984 to 3.3 years in 2003-2005. A similar widening gap was shown for females.’<sup>5</sup> Where the sentence pertaining to males is detailed and complete with locations and specific years, the sentence pertaining to women is almost a footnote within a footnote. It will not come as a surprise that this piece includes the very small declaration: ‘Ethical approval: None sought.’ in its final pages.<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, the piece exploring sectarianism transmitted through music in Scotland in relation to the 2017 OBFTC Act, Stephen Millar’s *Let the People Sing? Irish Rebel Songs, Sectarianism, and Scotland’s Offensive Behaviour Act*, fails to mention anyone other than men once.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps this is unsurprising as we know from academic criticism, that using football games as a basis to study sectarianism is flawed because women are less likely to suffer from football-related sectarianism than they are from other forms.<sup>8</sup> We also know from statistics from the Scottish Government regarding action taken under this Act, that only 2%

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<sup>5</sup> P. Graham, David Walsh and Gerry McCartney, ‘Shipyards and Sectarianism: How Do Mortality and Deprivation Compare in Glasgow and Belfast?’, *Public Health* (London), 126.5 (2012), 378–85.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*, p. 384.

<sup>7</sup> Stephen R Millar, ‘Let the People Sing? Irish Rebel Songs, Sectarianism, and Scotland’s Offensive Behaviour Act’, *Popular Music*, 35.3 (2016), 297–319.

<sup>8</sup> Sara Lindores and Akwugo Emejulu, ‘Women as Sectarian Agents: Looking Beyond the Football Cliché in Scotland’, *The European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 26.1 (2019).

of people charged under this Act have been.<sup>9</sup> The excuse that these authors – who are all men – were blissfully ignorant of types of sectarianism that did not affect them is absolutely null and void. It is academically irresponsible to bypass non-male issues within the sphere of sectarianism. Unfortunately, the aforementioned texts, along with so many others, have fallen into the absolutely avoidable, but all too comfortable, default ‘he’, otherwise known as ‘the male-norm’ in feminist literature.<sup>10</sup>

In the spirit of including women, femmes and non-men in such a study, and writing a piece with the ethos that inclusion provides the most informed analysis and therefore the optimum outcome for any study on a whole nation, I will be using terms such as “women and femmes”, “non-men” and “those socialised as female” as I am concerned with the effects of sectarianism and its offshoots on people brought up with the expectation of their continued femininity, which includes non-binary people and femmes as well as cis and trans women (who will both be referred to as women throughout the piece), as well as trans men, nonbinary and gender non-conforming peoples who may have previously been socialised as female. Only with the utmost inclusionary language and attitude can we seek to find an answer to our issues; using language that benefits divisionary attributes will not help us explore or eradicate our antiszygy, nor our sectarianism.

From decades of feminist theory and study, we know that people socialised as female were raised, by and large, to consider the domestic space as their arena for livelihood and purpose.<sup>11</sup> So if this group is potentially resigned to one space, how do we study their contribution to sectarianism or the effects of sectarianism on them? Not a group especially

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<sup>9</sup> *Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill*, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> Susanne Bruckmüller, Peter Hegarty, and Andrea E. Abele. ‘Framing Gender Differences: Linguistic Normativity Affects Perceptions of Power and Gender Stereotypes’, *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 42.2 (2012), 210–218.

<sup>11</sup> Barbara Welter, ‘The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860’, *American Quarterly* 18.2 (1966), 151–174.

known for their singing of sectarian songs, involvement in sectarian violence, participation in Old Firm or football events, this study explores the alternative avenues that women and femmes have found and been socialised to adopt as their veins of distribution of such cultural antiszygy and sectarianism.<sup>12</sup> Although it is acknowledged that non-men can participate in the singing, the violence and the football-going, these activities are typically attributed to men, boys and people socialised as male and statistics show that non-men by and large are outnumbered by CISgendered heterosexual men in these activities.<sup>13</sup> Through analysis of various texts such as Jean Baudrillard's *System of Objects*, Pierre Bourdieu's *Distinction*, as well as various feminist texts such as Barbara Welter's *Cult of True Womanhood*, in addition to devotionally inclined pseudo-religious studies such as *Sacred Places, Domestic Spaces* by Mary Ellen Konieczny, and multiple studies of specifically non-male centred sectarianism by Sara Lindores, I will track and investigate how sectarianism is taught to non-males, and distributed henceforth.

As women have been confined to the domestic – physically, emotionally, culturally and often financially – for generations this was their only leverage power and cultural currency, the only thing they could weaponise or control.<sup>14</sup> Even in the 20th and 21st centuries, some women and femmes have been unable to secure a bank card, a bank loan, a job, a house, or even file for divorce or have issues such as domestic violence and marital rape legally acknowledged as criminal.<sup>15</sup> It is unsurprising then that such persons would seek power outwith the normalised means such as the traditionally male realms of the financial, including owning and developing properties, investment and employment, to procure control

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<sup>12</sup> Lindores and Emejulu, p. 3.

<sup>13</sup> *Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill*, 2017.

<sup>14</sup> Angela Y. Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (London: Women's Press, 1981), p. 46.

<sup>15</sup> *Women's Aid* (2019). <<https://www.womensaid.org.uk/womens-aid-responds-to-judges-comments-in-court-that-it-is-a-fundamental-human-right-of-a-husband-to-have-sex-with-his-wife/>> [accessed July 2022].

and oftentimes power in their lives. As philosophers and critical thinkers such as Jean Baudrillard and Sianne Ngai have acknowledged, the materials we own, accumulate and display say much about us and reflect our class, gender performance, down to the economic climate we exist in; this paper explores the procurement, accumulation, display and inheritance of objects of devotional materialism and their function in the household and it's morphology.<sup>16</sup>

With regards to the effects of sectarianism on this group, we turn to the individuals of the group's commonality to seek an explanation or source. Barbara Welter explains in her text *The Cult of True Womanhood* that people socialised as women are often confined to the domestic space in order to provide a home and familial legacy for their male counterparts - whether that be a husband or family.<sup>17</sup> I will be using texts from agents of feminism, such as gender theorist and feminist Judith Butler, who examines the intersections, oversights and performances of law and person; to other persons such as Angela Davis, specifically with her text *Women, Race and Class*, which offers an antiracist, socialist historical account of misogyny, racism, and classism, and details their intersections while providing an unapologetic investigative insight into the function and functions of white supremacy. I also explore texts by lesser known academics such as Sara Lindores and Akwugo Emejulu with their work on sectarianism in Scotland outwith its effects on men, centring feminised issues within sectarianism that often go unnoticed; as well as those who centre the relationship between gender and domestic in their work such as Barbara Welter with her piece *The Cult of True Womanhood* and Mary Ellen Koniesczy who intersects the domestic, the gendered and the devotional.

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<sup>16</sup>Baudrillard, Jean, *The System of Objects*. (London: Verso, 1996) p 16

<sup>17</sup> Welter, 151-174.

We know that for decades the confinement or designation to the domestic space has been studied and criticised by feminists as a means of control by the patriarchal systems felt globally, especially in the global west where Catholicism is one of the major religions.<sup>18</sup> When we combine the three branches of our issue here – the confinement, the religious and the search for a means of control – we arrive at an often overlooked little niche studied formally as devotional materialism.

Like the duality of the domestic space, sliding on a spectrum between public and private, devotional material can function as both sacred object and art object. The latter depends on the owner's perception, faith and relationship to their background or potential diasporic qualities. In any case, a religious object falling to devotional status is a demotion because although, as stated above, devotional status can sometimes incorporate a sacred element, this element is not crucial to its objecthood or function in the way a religious object demands to be used, presented or acknowledged in its sacredness.<sup>19</sup> Although the functions of religious and devotional objects can intersect, the duality of the latter dissolves the absolutive tendencies of the sacredness of the object – meaning it can never be in the same category as an absolute religious object. For instance, the Eucharist is unleavened bread for most of its life before it transforms into the body of Christ.<sup>20</sup> The Eucharist is a religious object, never devotional, never decorative: its sacredness denies the sliding scale we see above in favour of transubstantiation in absolute binary: it is bread; or it is the body of Christ. Due to the religious and religious-adjacent nature of this morphology, I have chosen not to

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<sup>18</sup> The Global Catholic Population. In *The Pew Research Centre*. February 2013. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2013/02/13/the-global-catholic-population/#:~:text=A%20century%20later%2C%20the%20Pew,distribution%20of%20the%20world's%20Catholics>. [accessed July 2022]

<sup>19</sup> Jane Garnett and Alana Harris, 'Faith in the Home: Catholic Spirituality and Devotional Materiality in East London', *Material Religion*, 7.2 (2011), 299–302.

<sup>20</sup> *King James Bible*. (Luke 22:19).

include studies pertaining to Object Orientated Ontology as it is a secular school of thought and therefore does not fully encompass the religious and social gravity of the topic at hand.

I will go on to explore the dual identities Catholic women, femmes and those socialised as women adopt in their lives when navigating sectarianism and religion, which mirrors this duality in object and in domestic space. When we look at one of the few studies on sectarianism which centres people socialised as women, we come to hear that like the objects discussed within this thesis, these individuals begin to be traded and treated as accessories to a man's life much in the way an object is in their own.<sup>21</sup> Even with male members of the church, they are men or they are monks, clergy, priests etc. When women are nuns, they still experience the same misogyny and often sexualisation that they would have had they been laypeople.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the dualities in Catholicism are interesting due to the faith's reputation as an absolutist religion with little room to manoeuvre or negotiate; when in fact what we find is that it is built culturally, canonistically, and materialistically on its ability to adopt such dualities. Even in canon, Christ himself was fully human and fully divine, but never solely human or solely divine.<sup>23</sup> Throughout my research and writing, I have found this framework persists throughout the faith and throughout the faith in Scotland.

Devotional materialism is a branch of religious studies and studies within feminism and metaphysical materiality. Konieczny explores and defines the term in *Sacred Places, Domestic Spaces: Material Culture, Church, and Home at Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Brigitta*, an article wherein she investigates the procurement and display of religious and religious adjacent imagery and objects. She concludes that the function of such materialism was defined by their owners as spiritual rather than religious and notes that the owners often

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<sup>21</sup> Lindores, Sara, and Akwugo Emejulu, 'Women as Sectarian Agents: Looking Beyond the Football Cliché in Scotland', *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, 26.1 (2019), 39–53

<sup>22</sup> Tom Hayes, 'A "Jouissance" Beyond the Phallus: Juno, Saint Teresa, Bernini, Lacan', *American Imago*, 56.4 (1999), 331–55.

<sup>23</sup> *King James Bible*. (John 10:30).

applied the aesthetic – sometimes with some magical thinking projected onto the objects – rather than the religion or theology.<sup>24</sup> Konieczny goes on to state that for these reasons, this materialism cannot be explained or defined as religious per se, because it does not exclusively or consistently attain to ideas of religion, Christianity, Catholicism or the attached theology; rather it is a devotional materialism due to the owners' projections of ideas of safety, comfort and aesthetic value onto the objects. One could argue that safety, comfort and aesthetic value could be obtained also from religious objects or a religious materialism; this, while it may be true, fails to acknowledge the key separative ideals of religious and devotional materialism. Devotional materialism allows an object – or rather the owner of an object – to cherry-pick what to project, or what to receive, from an object. As there is no guideline or centuries old book to tell an owner what they should specifically feel, receive, or enjoy from an object – as there are for how they should feel, receive or enjoy the religion itself – they are free to create their own projections and functions for that object. This means this devotional materialism is not necessarily religious, although it could be adjacent to religiousness, the fact that it can have a dual function of religious or non-religious, means it could never be solely religious and sacred objects are always sacred and have no duality.

With a religious materialism, the function is prescribed: this crucifix will protect your home and all in it; this portrait of Madonna and Child will remind you of original sin and that God gave up his only son to die for your sins; this Holy Font should be kept in your porch to bless all those who enter your sacred space made sacred by the presence of Holy Water, made Holy by the Priest who blessed it, made a Priest by his call from God to become a Priest.<sup>25</sup> Even during the Renaissance we see this with chests (*Cassoni*) and ornate religious

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<sup>24</sup> Mary Ellen Konieczny, 'Sacred Places, Domestic Spaces: Material Culture, Church, and Home at Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Brigitta', *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 48.3 (2009), 419–42.

<sup>25</sup> Timothy Kelly and Joseph Kelly, 'Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Gender Roles, and the Decline of Devotional Catholicism', *Journal of Social History*, 32.1 (1998), 5.

decoration being installed in homes with the religiously prescribed function of potentially conceiving the next Christ.<sup>26</sup> One could argue the latter suggests religiously-attuned egotisticalism given that the Virgin Mary was only able to conceive the Christchild because of her sexless, sinless life. Throughout this piece, as I use the chapters of Procurement, Accumulation, Display and Inheritance to understand the morphology of devotional material, I will be using specific case studies such as the case of Santo Nino in the Philippines, and cases pertaining to the Madonna and Child throughout the United Kingdom and Ireland, amongst many more, to trace this morphology and its functions in the lives of the people of Scotland.

Both my visual and written work is concerned with how these material objects are used by the group concerned – people socialised as women who also partake in the Catholic Church, whether habitually or culturally – and how these objects are used to their own advantages and disadvantages, and why. For my study I will separate my discussion into four chapters: Procurement; Accumulation; Display; and Inheritance. These chapters will be separated by Interludes which contain Art Writing and visual documentation of my work, the aim of this to explore the morphology of devotional materialism visually and artistically as well as in academic writing. The visuals included punctuate the thesis in addition to providing a palette cleanser between chapters, each object documented will illustrate the themes to come. These chapters and interludes will track the morphology of these objects, their functions and received projections in that time. For this I will be cross-referencing religious texts, texts from religious journals and historical texts of religious journals, as well as academic works concerning materiality and the significance of our objects, in addition to

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<sup>26</sup> Nutt, Rachael G., "What You Look At, You Make: Menstruation and Fertility in Italian Renaissance Art" (2017). UVM College of Arts and Sciences College Honors Theses. 38.



the social etiquette of materiality and the domestic, which will be informed again by a series of feminist texts and studies, in particular ones which concern both the feminist and the sectarian, as mentioned above. The aim of this thesis is to track the morphology of devotional materialism, specifically within Scotland. However, I do hope that this piece can foreshadow a future where non-men's interactions and relationships with sectarianism is studied and taken more seriously. If we want to live in a fairer, safer Scotland, this work must be done.

# **Chapter One: Procurement**

*Chapter Synopsis:*

*To understand devotional objects morphology we must understand what necessitates this morphology's existence. In this chapter I will explain why and how these objects are procured and to that end, discuss why they are procured. Feminised sectarianism will be a key point in understanding why this type of sectarianism must function within the unsaid and unheard if it wants to survive. To this end, I will be exploring Judith Butler's Antigone's Claim as well as Bruno Latour's Actor Network Theory in addition of other philosophical, sociological, and feminist works to extrapolate and explain that through the agency acquired by these objects through the devotional projections of oppressed groups such as non-men, the objects are able to absorb sectarian values through their host's othering of adverse objects, and thus also the adverse object owners.*

Within misogyny, women are prosecuted twice: once as a person, once as a woman. Of course this prosecution positively correlates with the number of marginalised identities a person holds, for instance a Black trans woman who is working class and disabled would be prosecuted far more times and far more heavily than a middle class able-bodied white woman. Throughout millennia this has been feminist theory writers such as Angela Davis, with her text *Women, Race and Class*, as well as Audre Lorde, and her *The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House*, and Kimberlé Crenshaw's decades of work on intersectionality, with works such as *On Intersectionality: Essential Writings*, feminists have been studying this double and triple prosecution: where it stems from, why it happens and what sustains it. Gender theorist and feminist scholar Judith Butler notes this phenomenon

within her critique of the ancient play, *Antigone*, in her *Antigone's Claim*.<sup>27</sup> Davis, Lorde, Crenshaw and Butler are key figures to draw from here as they represent and study a feminised practise which can give us insight with reference to this morphology, as to why this cycle would have to operate underground in order to survive; additionally, all these scholars work with ideas of hope and speculative thought outside the realms of the law or legal code.

In Sophocles' play, King serving as regent Creon shows multiple times throughout the play that Antigone's crimes are worse due to her womanhood, even chastising his son for 'fighting her side, the woman's side'; as being 'treacherous' on behalf of, or in agreement with, a woman is worse than male-centric, or default ideas of, treachery.<sup>28</sup> Worse than breaking the law or defying orders, is being a woman who breaks the law or defies orders, this constituting at least double prosecution, made worse by the social and societal implications of a man being disobeyed by a woman. This is especially potent as Creon has benefited from the system which does not recognise Antigone as a person within the law; as Butler points out, as a product of incest, Antigone and her siblings are canonically outwith the law, leading to her brothers' fight for kingship while Creon slips in as King regent.<sup>29</sup>

Sophocles paints for us an image of paternalistic Thebes where society has outlined a role for a woman as fundamentally an asset of the domestic and an accessory to her male counterparts (a brother, a husband, a father, an uncle – never to herself) but this societal standard does not exist for CIS men.<sup>30</sup> When Antigone breaches this social code – which has become, in turn, legal code – she is prosecuted twice: as a criminal and as a woman; the latter could be argued to be an appendage of the former, as in, a criminal who has breached the law

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<sup>27</sup> Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (Columbia University Press, 2000). p. 10

<sup>28</sup> Sophocles, trans. by Robert Fagles *The Three Theban Plays* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), p. 97.

<sup>29</sup> Butler. p. 19

<sup>30</sup> Sophocles, p. 35

and in doing so has forced the law's hand to remove the paternal "protections" in place to buffer such persons (i.e., those assigned female at birth) from their own agency. These protections, depending on the society at hand, could include the notion that someone perceived as female lacks the agency to commit crime and should therefore be considered ill-informed and biologically – regardless of biological status – ignorant regarding her criminal action, or that she is fundamentally her father or husband's property and therefore is protected by her paternally-placed transactional value as damage to or misplacement of her (for instance, prison or capital punishment) would detrimentally affect her associated male counterpart, who is innocent (at least in the case of *Antigone*). In the example of *Antigone*, the main character is painted within the society as ungrateful for the law's paternalistic infrastructure and ill-informed regarding the consequences of their own actions and agency.

Similarly, within the sphere of sectarianism, despite the importance placed on the Virgin Mary, both Catholicism and Protestantism are paternalistically inclined. Both Christendoms have functioned as patriarchies for centuries, despite some Protestant sects recently allowing a person other than a cis male to become a pastor.<sup>31</sup> Conversely positioned from the time of Thebes and Sophocles, cis women – not necessarily nonbinary/GNC\*, femmes or trans women – are now recognised within the law as their own agents and individuals; however, conversely to *Antigone's* reality – where the social code became the legal code – the legal code in Scotland at the time of writing has not yet fully absorbed in the social code. This means that although the law recognises CIS women as individuals and potential agents of breaching the law (regarding sectarianism, for instance), socially such persons are not seen as capable, or are seen as lacking agency, and so experience the same paradoxical existence as *Antigone* and as noted in *Antigone's Claim*.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Gaye M. Bammert, 'Narrating the Church: Protestant Women Pastors Challenge Nostalgic Desire', *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion*, 26.2 (2010), 153–74.

<sup>32</sup> Butler. p. 20

In 2011, the Scottish Government introduced a law intended to criminalise and punish sectarian behaviour. The act named *The Offensive Behaviour at Football Games and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act*<sup>33</sup> aimed to tackle sectarianism at what was largely believed to be a hub, if not a primary source, of sectarian behaviour before its repeal in 2018. Interestingly, the repeal was largely on the basis that the Act represented ‘the infringement of human rights and freedom of speech’ of the accused and ‘targeted football fans’, which could in turn damage the already unsteady relationship between Scottish football fans and police.<sup>33</sup> Although this Act was intended for all football fans, which we know are a mix of genders, the people accused and fined for this Act were overwhelmingly male, a 98% majority.<sup>34</sup> Lindores and Emejulu explain this further in their exploration concerning feminised sectarianism and how women and femmes are being allowed to fall through the cracks.

Following the online hate campaigns, attacks on football supporters and death threats sent to the then Celtic football manager, Neil Lennon, in 2011, the newly formed Scottish National Party (SNP) government passed the controversial Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Scotland) Act (Scottish Parliament, 2012). At the time, it was noted by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2011) that the Equality Impact Assessment carried out prior to the implementation of this

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✧ Offensive Behaviour at Football and Threatening Communications (Repeal) (Scotland) Bill, 2017 can be referred to as its initials (OBFTC).

<sup>33</sup> OBFTC, p. 9.

<sup>34</sup> OBFTC, p. 12.

\*GNC is an acronym for “Gender Non-Conforming”, which can come under the nonbinary umbrella (which in turn can come under the transgender umbrella term); however, those with such identities can reject one and embrace the other at their own discretion.

new legislation included provisions for all the ‘protected characteristics’ (e.g. race, ethnicity, class, religion, disability and sexuality) except for gender (Scottish Government, 2011).<sup>35</sup>

As shown above, this legislation allows people to fall through the cracks on account of their gender, and as has been explored previously in this piece, the majority of the people unrecognised by this law are women and femmes, given that only 2% of the people arrested under this legislation were non-men. In such studies that neglect women, girls and femmes, the idea that these groups only exist as accessories to the main focal point of masculinity is constructed, conflated, perpetuated and, in this case, legislated, even if unconsciously. It is also irresponsible as an academic or lawmaker to argue that “sectarianism is X” without exploring all other avenues, especially those which we know from academia have been systemically and historically unrepresented. It is unclear that sectarianism only comes from actor/action “X” if this source is the only avenue that was pursued. Of course, I am using source “X” to mean the typical male-centric sectarianism which the OBFTC outlines. Sociologically it is unacceptable, academically it is lazy and legislatively it is a shocking oversight and socially it is irresponsible. As demonstrated above – a non-legislative document – there are sources that document and categorise feminised sectarianism so, to not only leave these unused but to opt to use instead research that distinguishes and documents typical male-centric sectarianism and present the latter as the default or typical is sexist, misogynist and deeply irresponsible law-making.

To explore this feminised sectarianism, we must investigate the sites of allowed femininity within these religious spheres, the margins in which women and femmes have been assigned to exist, and from there trace the morphology of their agency within such

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<sup>35</sup> Lindores and Emejulu, p. 3.

sites.<sup>36</sup> This means that to explore how women and femmes can be agents of sectarianism and divisionist means, we must explore the domestic spaces assigned to the group and investigate what within these spaces could be used as actors of sectarianism or weaponised on behalf of the restoration and preservation of the agent's religious group through usage of the attached values. Here we arrive at the morphology of devotional materialism; where the subliminal and ubiquitously benign are weaponised and deliberately placed within the functionality of preserving a specific set of values. Another function is to “other” objects not included within this specific sphere of functionality, and consequently the other-object-owners are othered, and become understood as opponents passed down from generation to generation. Through objects we inherit, the people who own the othered objects are inherited as potential suspects of the converse and thus agents of potential damage to anything from lineage, offspring and social spheres. This is integral for studies on how non-men experience sectarianism. As Jane Bennett writes in *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*, we should use ‘How would political responses to public problems change were we to take seriously the vitality of non-human bodies?’ as a guiding question.<sup>37</sup>

In the few sectarian-centred studies that have included women, the idea that reemerges continuously is that a woman's agency within the arenas of sectarianism and Catholicism or Protestantism is still only in the avenues which lead to their male counterparts. For instance, in *Women as Sectarian Agents: Looking Beyond the Football Cliché in Scotland*, Lindores and Emejulu interview women about sectarianism and its effect on their lives, and the interviewees respond overwhelmingly that sectarianism has affected who they married in the sense that a marriage to someone outside their faith would be

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<sup>36</sup> Eleanor Alexander, ““Woman's Place Is in the Tea Room”: White Middle-Class American Women as Entrepreneurs and Customers’, *Journal of American Culture* (Malden, Mass.), 32.2 (2009), 126–36.

<sup>37</sup> Bennett, Jane, *Vibrant Matter: a Political Ecology of Things* (Durham, N.C: Duke University Press, 2010) p 3



scrutinised in addition to the scrutiny around how to raise their children in a mixed-faith household (also known as a ‘mixed-marriage’).<sup>38</sup> This is another example of sociality and law following each other. In the Catholic Canon, Laws 1124-1125, there is documentative legislation regarding mixed marriages (law 1124) detailing the many extensive administrative tasks and performative measures a couple must take – even that the non-Catholic party must vow not to ‘pervert’ their spouse and potential children with their non-Catholic faith before they can marry.<sup>39</sup> Canonistically, this book (law 1099) was amended by Pope Pius X in 1917 and remained that way until its repeal in 1945; this amendment details the cases where annulment within a mixed marriage specifically was an option, including where there was risk to children or deceit was involved, meaning consent to marry was made under false pretences – the former potentially evocative of the above point wherein a non-Catholic must vow to raise the marriage’s offspring within the Church, to a standard of Catholicism not explicit within the guidelines (something intra-Catholic marriages are presumed to do and need not specifically vow to do).<sup>40</sup> This social and canonical issue led to some of the interviewees converting to their husband’s faith to install a sense of a family unit, distanced from the idea of two units coming together.<sup>41</sup>

Some participants also revealed that the sectarian social pressure exerted by female family members would not only be confined to the choice of partner, but might also extend to choices over where the marriage ceremony would take place. Laura described how certain Protestant family members’ feelings

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<sup>38</sup> Rome. *Catholic Canon Law*. (laws) 1124-1125. Written documents of Catholic Canon law written by Gratian in 12th century and promulgated by Pope Gregory IX in 1917.

<sup>39</sup> Rome. *Catholic Canon Law*. (laws) 1124-1125.

<sup>40</sup> Archdiocese of Santa Fe. *Explanation of Grounds for Annulment*. 2021.

<<https://ourdomesticchurch.org/blog/explanation-of-grounds-for-annulment>> [accessed July 2022].

<sup>41</sup> Lindores and Emejulu, p. 11.

were so strongly against mixed relationships that they had actually refused to attend her cousin's wedding ceremony which took place in the Catholic Church.<sup>42</sup>

In this example, the problem for the sectarian agent is the site of otherness: for a Protestant woman, it is a Catholic church. The interviewees' female Protestant family members were mobilised by sectarianism. The issue may be because of the knowledge of Canon Law 1124 wherein a Protestant (or non-Catholic) must vow not to interrupt the upbringing of their Catholic children within a Catholic marriage with their Protestantism (or non-Catholic faith).<sup>43</sup> Presumably, Laura's cousins would have attended the wedding had it been held in a Protestant church. The issue highlighted by Laura regarding her family's absence at a wedding in a Catholic church, was not the ceremony but the Catholic church as a place of ceremony – regardless of ceremonial or Catholic Mass status.<sup>44</sup> As seen in other studies that concern feminised sectarianism, here we see a clear connection (whether positive or negative) between women, sectarianism and church spaces. Here we see the need for this morphology: it must be introduced into the domestic and private space in order for it to affect the children of the marriage, especially a mixed marriage where fears were rampant about the non-Catholic spouse perverting the minds of the offspring with non-Catholic ways - conversely to what was promised in their vows. This leads us again to the paranoia of Catholics, suspecting non-Catholics of wrong-doings even when the latter party promised before God to do right. Procurement at this stage is essential to the start of the single and

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid. p, 11

<sup>43</sup> Rome. Catholic Canon Law. (Laws) 1124-1125. Written documents of Catholic Canon Law written by Gratian in 12th century and promulgated by Pope Gregory IX in 1234 - 1917.

<sup>44</sup> 'Catholic Wedding Q&A' 2017. Catholic Wedding Help. <<http://www.catholicweddinghelp.com/questions/wedding-form-options.htm>> [accessed July 2022].

group morphological stages: it interrupts a potentially fairly non-denominational domestic life and childhood with objects that are stagnantly ubiquitous until considered otherwise. Once the seed has been planted, the remaining three stages of Accumulation, Display and Inheritance can follow in the singular sense (meaning happening to a single person), before multiplying to a group sense at least in the final stage, if not before that, when the children and grandchildren of the marriage and Catholic faith will decorate their homes with such objects through nostalgia, guilt, inheritance, aesthetic, whatever the case may be- until again these benign objects spring to life with the host's magical thinking.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Subbotskiĭ, E. V. (Evgeniĭ Vasil'evich), *Magic and the Mind : Mechanisms, Functions, and Development of Magical Thinking and Behavior* (New York ;: Oxford University Press, 2010)

*Procurement interlude*

*As the first stage, communicating Procurement was paramount in my visual work. Some of these frames had to look like they'd been recently bought or especially bought for the space.*

*The large black frame gave a largely modernist feel, it also looked like - if I was the homeowner - that it was a good aesthetic investment because this style has been consistent in issues such as Architectural Digest for some time, so if I was trying to communicate my own aesthetic desires while balancing issues of class or financial burden as well as the items given to me by other, this would be safe bet.*

*This big back frame represents a lot in my work. The big black frame represents the femme in the domestic space balancing the desires of those around her leading to her own desires often being dwarfed or sidelined. It was also quite a big size but, in my opinion, is the most dismissable of the frames. Taking up the most space becomes a compromise, and the tax paid for demanding to take up space is to be deemed the least interesting visually.*

*The more garish frames are at least visually and texturally interesting. They cast interesting shadows from the grooves and indentations made with mass-manufactured nostalgia. They juxtapose personal nostalgia with mass manufactured experiences which turn into mass experienced souvenirs. The big black frame is so out of place because it is competing with generations of lessons on the aesthetic of the home. The big black frame is the person in the space, trying to put their own mark on the space - fill it with their own stuff and being so easily out-shouted by these kitsch nicknacks that represent something so much bigger than one frame, one experience, one generation, one person.*

*The big black frame had to be included in the piece to show some attempt of peoples to make their own mark on their homes. Putting up some aesthetic fight and showing the velocity of this devotional materialism, adapting and warping itself however it needs to to stay in space.*

*This shout of 'I am here! I live here! This is my stuff too! This is my space too! I am a person! I am not just a mother or a partner or a daughter or a sister!' had to*

*be there to show how easily some crappy niknaks can dwarf it so easily. The procured items (the baby boy frames, the wedding frames) has to be kitsch as fuck. They had to be garish and awful and something your grannie would buy, because your grannie did buy them.*



Figure 1  
Kaitlin McGroarty. Father, son,  
and the big black frame. August  
2022. 243.84 cm x 286 cm

*Your grannie. Yours.*

*Any attempt at an individual's personal touch would have to be obliterated by the passive aggressive, patronising procured items that reassured the others in the house: 'dont worry shes not going to run away, she needs to be here: shes the mum, the sister, the gran, the daughter or the oldest daughter or the only daughter she's bound to us, to this space and to you!' :))))))))*

*Almost like these people bound to the domestic space would at some point be absorbed into these objects and*

*create a 5th dimensional morphological Ursala-ean  
little mermaid style.*

*The baby frames are specifically only baby boy frames.  
As much as we pretend, Scotland is still a largely sexist  
country (shown in the first chapter with the framework  
of Antigone's Claim slotting perfectly into the OFBTC  
act). We see it online in gender reveals where dads  
storm off shouting that they wanted a boy, we know it  
from baby clothes that sexualise baby girls and make  
smaller clothes from them than boys of the same age.  
This isn't a specifically Scottish issue, it's a global issue,  
but therefore it does take place in Scotland which is  
where my thesis is concerned.*

*The baby frames had to be included because of the  
emphasis on becoming part of the church, but also in  
the ties that motherhood and childbirth create for  
people capable of childbirth and the domestic space.  
These ties almost form an unbreakable umbilical cord  
that will inform your every decision the same way a  
normal umbilical cord feeds your every cell.*

*I also wanted only baby boy frames because I didn't  
want to include any images in the frames or the*

*wallpaper but wanted to somehow include the Madonna and Child references because they are so influential as we see from many studies on devotional materialism.*

*This influence and the emphasis on motherhood and sonhood means that neither can complain because 'are you saying i'm a bad mother?' or 'are you saying he's a bad son?' It is another element of the gift economy.*

*The gift of catholic guilt. Before you start, I'm also aware there are studies that 'disprove' Catholic guilt, but I dont think these studies acknowledged the Catholic Catch 22 : never complain about being Catholic to non-*

*Catholics. We learn this from the othering of other objects owned by other people and the strong familial boundaries placed between public and private space.*

*We've been trained for this, you'll no catch us out with a skinny article wee man try again next time.*



# **Chapter Two: Accumulation**

Chapter Synopsis:

*This chapter explores why this procurement continues into the second stage of accumulation. The continuation of this cycle after the initial stage is crucial as it allows the person experiencing the cycle to develop their own tastes within it and begin to convince themselves of their own agency within it. Through analysis of the sacraments and the non-male experience of the sacraments, this chapter explores why non-men seek this devotional materialism. "Accumulation" establishes the control and agency sought by these women, femmes and people socialised as female, in a Catholicism that they can never experience every Sacrament of despite lifelong worship.*

One may ask, if the argument is that a relationship persists on the basis of a transactional social capital, after a while one party must realise that social capital can only go so far and surely financial capital would be more beneficial and therefore preferred. If one would like to see more decoration in a church, why not donate money or the materials? The answer is that the appeal of that social capital – especially historically – provides a capital adjacent to financial capital and is stimulated by the facade of control. Non-men have historically been denied financial capital, or at least find it harder to procure due to the many roadblocks they face compared to their male counterparts.

We can use something recent, such as the 2022 overturning of *Roe v. Wade* by the U.S. Supreme Court, as an example. Denying people capable of childbirth the right to an abortion has a fundamental ripple effect which will undoubtedly affect their financial circumstances. Those with this right removed risk relying on public funding, food stamps or their male counterparts – whose bodies and reproductive rights are not infringed by the

overturning – to account for the expenses of food, childcare, utilities and hygiene products, for example. Even in the instance where the person could live comfortably without the financial aid of a governing body or a husband or partner, many of the consequences of pregnancy and childbirth can be fatal or detrimental enough to render the birthing parent unable to work and therefore dependent on aid.

The idea that women, femmes and those with uteruses’ oppression – especially culturally, socially and financially – is a thing of the past is a massive and dangerous oversight, as well as being factually incorrect. The control over what to put in a house or how to decorate a room could well have been the only control these parties had in their lives.<sup>46</sup> Often expunged from their families – especially in the case of a mixed marriage – and reliant on their husbands or partners for financial sustenance while providing round-the-clock childcare, these women and femmes find control and currency within the sphere they are allocated and its attached prospects: the domestic space and devotional materialism.

The domestic is an unshared space, insofar as there is a clear hierarchy with the mother or matriarchal figure controlling the objects in the house, and thus collects social capital for their decoration both socially as well as religiously. Procuring cultural capital as the decorator, she has established herself as a good mother, wife and homemaker by way of her devotion to God and Christian values displayed in her home and has displayed such assets to herself within the prescribed gender-appropriate realm. The decorator’s expression could also be chalked up to a gender or class performance, as noted by Bourdieu in *Distinction* and Baudrillard in *System of Objects*. Additionally, from Welter’s text *The Cult of True Womanhood*, we know the inclination to perform gender or class as a woman within a domestic space is default as a performance of ‘true womanhood’ – separate from gender, as

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<sup>46</sup> Welter, p. 151–174.

\*Eileen’s last name is not provided, and “Eileen” is possibly a pseudonym to protect the interviewee’s privacy although this is not specified within the piece.

gender can be self-identified, womanhood within this context is prescribed socially and often by male counterparts, specifically a husband.<sup>47</sup> This womanhood (and its attached claims such as good homemaker, good mother, good wife) can therefore be revoked by the latter party, and is thus an ongoing performance of obedience and conformity to the systems which necessitate and facilitate the prescription and prescribers.<sup>48</sup> Although it should be noted that one can experience womanhood and enjoy the aesthetic of devotional material – as seen in Ngai’s 2015 text *Our Aesthetic Categories : Zany, Cute, Interesting* – within this context we must take into account the presence of the Church and inherited religious and devotional beliefs, which cannot and should not be understated as through this materialism the presence of the Church becomes omnipresent in the home.<sup>49</sup>

*For many believers, particularly women, the home is the preeminent symbol of Christian faith. It is perhaps the primary medium for conveying an individual’s or family’s religious beliefs. Moreover, the home is the site for the Christian formation of children, the building of family unity, and the daily manifestation of divine blessing.<sup>50</sup>*

Studying these objects and our relationship to them is a restless endeavour if we do not note why and how they come into our belonging. In the Catholic faith, these objects are given as celebratory gifts of milestones or events, sometimes as favours marking what is

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<sup>47</sup> Welter, p. 163.

<sup>48</sup> Welter, p. 163.

<sup>49</sup> Sianne Ngai, *Our Aesthetic Categories: Zany, Cute, Interesting* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2015).

<sup>50</sup> David Morgan, *Visual Piety: a History and Theory of Popular Religious Images* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), p. 158.

referred to as Sacraments within the Catholic faith, or sometimes even extra-religious socially engaged events surrounding the celebration.

As David Morgan notes above, the home is a symbol of the Christian faith, and as noted previously in this thesis, people socialised as female have been typically reared primarily as care-givers and homemakers in general, although within the Christian faith, specifically for Catholics, religious piety through these feminised avenues is also taught as necessary. Through this socialisation of domesticity and piety – both of which must be able to be proven at any time – devotional materialist tendencies are born as devotional materialism is the intersection of domesticity and piety wherein both ideals become performance. These performances are not singular, and similar to Inheritance which will be touched on later; Procurement is a site of belonging if it is given through the form of gift, and a site of attaining if one buys the object for oneself. All sacraments can be sites of gift-giving, although not necessarily inheritance – and thus are all sites of Procurement, Accumulation and by necessity Display.

The sacraments in the Catholic Church are seven milestones performed, encouraged and regulated to an extent within the faith; these include: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Anointing of the Sick, Matrimony, and Holy Orders. Baptism is the ceremony where one, typically an infant, is welcomed into the Church via holy water, Catholic mass and “the word”. Following this entering, a confirmation is where the baptised person confirms their commitment to the Church and its teachings. After a person is confirmed, they may receive the Eucharist, this is unleavened bread and wine which transform through Catholic transubstantiation into the body and blood of Christ that the participant consumes. A Reconciliation follows, although sometimes Reconciliation comes before receiving the Eucharist to divulge the participant of sin before receiving the body and blood of Christ, wherein a person performs their “first confession” and begins the lifelong habitual ritual of

confessing sins to priests and Church elders in a small specific ceremony. The ceremony of Anointing the Sick is also known as someone's "Last Rites"; this usually happens on a person's death bed and is to assure them a safe and confirmed passage to the Kingdom of God. Matrimony is the sacrament of marriage, wherein two (cisgendered heterosexual) people commit themselves to each other and the teachings of the Church in front of the congregation (usually specifically invited friends and family) and the eyes of God. Holy Orders are a sacrament that not everyone will or can experience or attain: Holy Orders is the sacrament in which men are ordained into priesthood or become a deacon, which is someone with similar liturgical powers to a priest but who can still be married before their entry into the Church, otherwise they must maintain celibacy.<sup>51</sup> Women cannot experience this sacrament, even in sisterhood or as a Mother Superior; women's places in the Church are limited in terms of promotion as well as hierarchy. (Within the Catholic Church, transgender and nonbinary persons are not recognised as their self-identified genders or nongenders. The Catholic Church espouses the position of scientifically incorrect biological essentialism, although states that it does not encourage the bullying or misgendering of such persons.)<sup>52</sup> In the same vein, a woman can be raised and baptised Catholic, be devout all her life and exercise all sacraments available to her, yet a man can be baptised and receive all sacraments in the space of 10 years and, in theory, become Pope, whilst the woman cannot despite having devoting all her life to her faith. Women are expected to give their lives to the Church, their family, their husbands and fathers without expecting anything in return. Expecting such could be punished as gluttony or vanity and seen as a woman getting above her station.

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<sup>51</sup> Robin Gomes, 'Pope: "Deacons are the guardians of service in the Church"'. *Vatican News* (June 2021)

<<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-06/pope-francis-audience-rome-diocese-permanent-deacons-humble-serv0.html>> [accessed July 2022].

<sup>52</sup> Tom Nash, *The Church's Position on "Transgenderism"*. Catholic.com (2022)

<<https://www.catholic.com/qa/the-churchs-position-on-transgenderism-0>> [accessed July 2022].

Material culture in the Catholic Church can be in part attributed to this limiting double standard. As discussed previously, the domain assigned to women, femmes and those socialised as female is typically the domestic sphere, meaning the devotional realm within which they can be promoted without limitation or male-regulated supervision or intervention is limited to the domestic sphere, whereas CIS male counterparts can exercise all seven sacraments if they should like to

Baptism is when a person is first formally welcomed into the Church, this usually includes a mass and one's parents pick godparents for the child who will step in as guardians should one's legal parents become unable to parent through sickness or death. In Matthew (28:19) Jesus is described as being baptised in the River Jordan by St. John the Baptist (Jesus's cousin) by being placed in the water and blessed by John.<sup>53</sup> In more modern times, the river is replaced by a font in the church, St. John is replaced by the chapel priest and, although adults or older children can be baptised at any age, baptism typically takes place when a person is an infant. In order to proceed with and receive the other sacraments, one must have been baptised. As Helena Słotwinska writes in *The Pedagogical and Religious Dimensions of the Rites of the Sacrament of Children's Baptism*:

Baptism, the foundation of all Christian life, the gateway to the life in the Spirit and the gateway to other sacraments, frees the baptized from sin, making them children of God and members of Christ, and instills them in the Church, and so we become partakers in her mission.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> King James Bible. Matthew (28.19)

<sup>54</sup> Helena Słotwińska, 'The Pedagogical and Religious Dimensions of the Rites of the Sacrament of Children's Baptism', *Religions* (Basel, Switzerland), 13.6 (2022), p. 512.

Slotwinska also goes on to state that parents of the baptised do not need to have been baptised or even Catholic themselves and in recent years the Catholic Church has seen a rise in children from unbaptised parents becoming baptised themselves, curious as one of the pillars of baptism is for the parents and godparents to promise to raise the baptised person within the Catholic faith.<sup>55</sup> This uptake could be due to familial pressures, for instance a Catholic grandparent's pressures to baptise the child, or for sociological pressures, such as attainment into a Catholic school.– following on from the trend of gender-reveals etc. – and on the priest's part, there is a pressure to baptise anyone, regardless of their parentage, according to scripture.<sup>56</sup> As mentioned above, according to the Catholic Canon 1124-1125, one cannot be married in a typical Catholic wedding mass (another sacrament) if one is not baptised, and the ceremony must be amended to the marriage of a Catholic and a non-Catholic person.<sup>57</sup> Typically, when the baptism is complete, the priest announces that the participant is officially a part of the Church and the congregation breaks into applause that can sometimes last for several minutes. In the Catholic faith, baptism is necessary as a sacrament but also as protection from eternal damnation – as mentioned above it is the beginning of one's life as a Catholic. Baptism is also the beginning of a person repenting for original sin – original sin is derived from penile/vaginal intercourse and is sinful regardless of the person's marital status, and although it is also encouraged between married couples in the church, the original sin persists.

It is custom at a baptism to give gifts. As the participant is being welcomed to the community by the congregation, some gifts such as the "Christening Piece" are given to members of the Church who are not being baptised that day.<sup>58</sup> A Christening Piece could be

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 512.

<sup>56</sup> Rome. Catholic Canon Law. (laws) 1124-1125.

<sup>57</sup> Rome. Catholic Canon Law. (laws) 1124-1125.

<sup>58</sup> **2. Used absol., with the omission of any complementary phr., in *specif.* senses: (1) a piece of bread and butter, jam, or the like, a snack, usu. of bread, scone or oatcake, a**



native to Scotland although this is not confirmed.<sup>59</sup> Although it is referred to as a Christening Piece, rather than a Baptism Piece, it persists amongst Catholic congregations also, as Christening is usually a term denotative of a Protestant equivalent of a Baptism, the cross-over of terms could be linked to cultural intersections due to mixed marriages or people of both faiths living closely together; however, this is unknown. A Christening Piece refers to what is usually two digestive biscuits – quite cheap plain biscuits, popular in the United Kingdom – buttered with a silver coin inside (although earlier reports suggest it could have contained half a sixpence in earlier times). The Christening Piece is given to the first child the godmother sees on the day of the baptism – typically this child cannot be a relation to the godparent or the to-be baptised child and must be a member of the opposite sex, for example, if a baby boy is being baptised the godmother would hold the baby and the Christening Piece and try to find a little girl to give the piece to. Interestingly, this practice is said to be a specifically Scottish ritual, dating from centuries ago when new mothers would present a silver coin to the “wee folk” (or “changelings” as they were sometimes called) to satiate them so they wouldn't try to swap their baby with a baby changeling (which would typically wreak havoc).<sup>60</sup>

Not unlike a religious artefact such as the Lindisfarne Gospels, this Christening Piece or other folk-centered objects can function as the bridge between two worlds. The Lindisfarne

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**sandwich (Sc. 1881 A. Mackie *Scotticisms* 45).** "Piece *n.1*". *Dictionary of the Scots Language*. (Scottish Language Dictionaries Ltd., 2004)  
<[http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/piece\\_n1](http://www.dsl.ac.uk/entry/snd/piece_n1)> [Accessed 1 Aug 2022].

It should be noted that “*piece*” is a Scottish word that can mean “sandwich”, but can also mean “small meal” or “treat”, like in the Scottish “*play piece*”, meaning a small snack eaten at play-time in primary school. This is also seen in “*bride’s piece*” during the Sacrament of marriage, which is a small snack or meal provided by the bride’s family during a Catholic wedding day, because Catholic weddings can be long.

<sup>59</sup>No author available. ‘Down Memory Lane: Mystery of the Christening Piece’. *Daily Record*, 2008 [accessed July 2022]

<sup>60</sup> *Daily Record*, 2008.

Gospels were illuminated manuscripts, designed to convert the pagan masses of Britain from their pagan ways, into the light of the Christian God.<sup>61</sup> Christianity was famous for the Word of God, so powerful it could impregnate a virgin, however the problem in insular Britain was that the literacy rates were very low, so the Word would have to wait. The Picture came first and served as something familiar enough to lure pagans in but rooted in Christianity enough that it would still serve the monks who made it.<sup>62</sup> This morphology of devotional materialism functions in a similar way, especially with features such as the Christening Piece. Folk tales and rituals rooted in Scottish myth or heritage and reappropriated through this morphology, and through the channels of devotional materialism are transformed into suspicion and Catholic guilt.

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<sup>61</sup> Tilghman, Benjamin C, 'Pattern, Process, and the Creation of Meaning in the Lindisfarne Gospels', *West 86th*, 24.1 (2017), p 6

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p 8

*Accumulation Interlude*

*Oh thats nice its just like grans  
 Wouldn't it be nice to match mums  
 We just picked this up on holiday  
 From one a they wee stalls  
 It'll match the curtains  
 It'll go with that big candle  
 A will so use it!*

*Once the procurement process has seeped into us and  
 The pattern has started like a little bug or infection its wheels  
 Become our wheels and they start turning*

*Stuff we never wanted that we now have*

*Penetrates our drywall with a nail from the box you don't know  
 When you bought or got or had or have  
 Hammered in to keep a picture frame that wasn't your taste but now is  
 Up on your wall in your house*

*Gathering dust and resentment in parallel*

*Like a haircut you think you should have because your of age  
 Or shoes you bought even though you'd like higher ones*

*Or the skirt you got even though you'd like shorter ones*

*"She's sumbdy's mum fur fucks sake!"*

*Sharp tongues and little jabs that  
keep you in line and in the shape you're meant to be*

*Higher necklines because you don't  
need anyone swatching your tits when  
you're genuflecting.*

*Longer sleeves at twenty seven degrees  
because tattoos although ink are a sin  
(?) and  
opinions aren't allowed in church*

*When we accumulate objects  
We are not collecting; we are  
continuing.*

*Continuing patterns and cycles,  
collecting affords us far to much  
agency*

*These little things little trinkets  
whatever*

*Sacred, devotional, domestic*

*They have the brains*

*They've been distilled with the stuff*

*The magic the poison the whatever it is*



Figure 2.  
Kaitlin McGroarty. *Why the Fuck  
do I have this?* August 2022. 14.8  
x 21.0 cm

*Someone doon the line telt them:*

*“Here they’re no gawny want you so you’ll just need to exude something to trick them  
because we cannae get our claws in any er way”*

*I write this like im speaking like Elaine C Smith*

*in a one woman show monologing*

*in the steamie or something*

*It's the only way I've seen it done*

*N am continuing it*

# Chapter Three: Display

Chapter Synopsis:

*“Procurement” shows us how this morphology begins, “Accumulation” studies the individual choice to continue its cycle, “Display” explores the decorative choices made in the domestic space. Using case studies from across the globe, the same phenomena is found again and again. Devotional material displayed in a way to control the domestic space and assert “domestic authority”. At this stage, performance is crucial and the women, femmes and people socialised as women often begin to position themselves as objects of the domestic in their pursuit to perform domesticity and piety through the display of such objects.*

When we consider this alongside our already established realities of non-men being confined to domestic spaces, the connection between women, femmes and the sanctity of spaces emerges. As discussed in *Women as Sectarian Agents: Looking Beyond the Football Cliché in Scotland* by Lindores and Emejulu a link was found between women and ‘feminised sectarianism’ expressed through boundaries concerning non-Protestant spaces. In addition with Garnett and Harris’ *Faith in the Home: Catholic Spirituality and Devotional Materiality in East London*, as well as Konieczny’s *Sacred Places, Domestic Spaces*, we encounter pieces that look at different countries, different eras, and different people of different denominations and backgrounds: all found a link between women and femmes, the domestic and devotional materialistic sectarianism.

In Konieczny’s *Sacred Places, Domestic Spaces* she centres non-men, and explores the symbiotic relationship between domestic space and sacred space. In the study, the findings showed that participants who belonged to churches that were less decorated inside had homes which were overtly decorated with devotional material; the converse was also found in groups where their church was very decorated, as the congregation’s homes in such

cases were found to be less so.<sup>63</sup> This establishes a relationship of compensation and reciprocity between domestic site and religious site and at the very least affirms a bridge of devotional material between the two. Interestingly, in Konieczny's study, the findings show that the homes of parishioners compensated for the excess or dearth in material; rather than being a mutually reciprocal relationship, the women and femmes belonging to the parish were compensating for the behaviour of the church they belonged to.<sup>64</sup>

Garnett and Harris' *Faith in the Home: Catholic Spirituality and Devotional Materiality in East London* explores the domestic spaces independently from their sacred counterparts.<sup>65</sup> Within the piece, Garnett interviews women from East London and explores their relationship to devotional materialism. Once again we see the frictional issue of mixed marriages crop up as a source of familial divide and spurring the creation of an individualistic devotional style, for example, in the case of Eileen – the 74 year old interviewee – who has both Catholic and Protestant inherited objects in her home. Within her parent's mixed marriage, she speaks of her mother seeking 'domestic authority', noting:

(we) always had a statue of Our Lady in the corner ... And every time there was fights Mum had to throw something at this thing and it would all get smashed up and he'd mend it all together again and stick it back.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Konieczny, p. 419–42.

<sup>64</sup> Konieczny, p. 419–42.

<sup>65</sup> Garnett and Harris, p. 299.

<sup>66</sup> Garnett and Harris, p. 300.



Within Eileen's childhood household, this devotional object, intended to be a source of comfort and – as discussed – a religious guideline for mothers and women through the Virgin Mary's exemplary life, had been transformed into a yardstick measuring the volatility of her parent's relationship while the Virgin Mary herself is seen as 'the expression of orthodox faith' according to Timothy Kelly in his piece *Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Gender Roles, and the Decline of Devotional Catholicism*.<sup>67</sup> This interaction between Eileen's mother\*\* and the statue also informs the reader – and the witnessing child – that this statue interrupts the matriarch's control and influence – or 'domestic authority' – in the home which in turn interrupts her relationship within her own domestic space and her own devotional material.

More interesting still, is the advice that Eileen's mother gave her during this time: 'your house is your altar, Eileen.'<sup>68</sup> As per Catholic canon, the house cannot be an altar, as in Catholicism this construction can only be housed in a church or sacred space, which furthers the case of Eileen's mother's relationship between herself and her domestic space through the ownership and display of devotional materialist objects, in addition to her dismissal of her husband's devotional objects.<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, as brought up by other scholars as well as Garnett, the duality of the domestic space is to function as both public and private space; this paradox is paralleled by even the phrase "Virgin Mother", which is often used to refer to the Virgin Mary.<sup>70</sup> Garnett writes:

Distinctions of private and public spaces are blurred through

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<sup>67</sup> Kelly and Kelly, p. 5.

<sup>68</sup> Garnett and Harris, p. 300.

<sup>69</sup> Julius Bautista, 'On the Personhood of Sacred Objects: Agency, Materiality and Popular Devotion in the Roman Catholic Philippines', *Religions* (Basel, Switzerland), 12.7 (2021), p. 462.

<sup>70</sup> Garnett and Harris, p. 300.

this performance of piety.<sup>71</sup>

Eileen's mother attacking the statue is a clear indication that in that moment the domestic space was a private space, when her father repairs the statue, the domestic space can return to being a public space. Eileen's mother noting that 'your house is your altar', whilst habitually destroying objects unaligned with her religious views in her own household could demonstrate to us that Eileen's Protestant mother considers the Catholic devotional objects abstractly from *her* house, although to keep up appearances they must remain in the space for public viewing.

Whilst Eileen's mother's physical action differs from the typical psychological or verbal feminised sectarian action we see in studies such as *Women as Sectarian Agents: Looking Beyond the Football Cliché in Scotland*, because her physical or violent action was towards an inanimate object, it still exists outside the typical default of sectarian physical action – 'default' here referring to categorised as male, as per the oversights made by the OBFTC. Additionally, in case studies of domestic devotional materialism, and specifically with the case of anthropometric statues, Julius Bautista discusses the Santo Niño statue popular in the Philippines in *On the Personhood of Sacred Objects: Agency, Materiality and Popular Devotion in the Roman Catholic Philippines*, where he notes:

The scholar Bruno Latour extends this discussion of tactile transferability into the concept of agency by positing the notion of Actor Network Theory, central to which is the process by which agency is "distributed" by both human and nonhuman entities who channel a "networked intentionality" in the course of

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<sup>71</sup> Garnett and Harris, p. 300.

\*\* Eileen's mother is nameless within this piece, so unfortunately can only be referred to via her relation to Eileen.

their interaction with one another (Latour 2005)... Secondly, the [Santo Niño] is not simply a symbolic representation of the divine but, as an anthropoid image with human features, is believed by devotees to have an autonomous intentionality...<sup>72</sup>

Bautista here explains that the effects caused by an inanimate anthropoidal object can be just as real and tactile as those from a real human being. Here we see the intersection of the two texts: Eileen's mother physically attacking an inanimate statue because of what it represents but also because it is an actor of a network that opposes her own (Catholicism and devotional Catholic material alien to her in her own home), and the case of the Santo Niño statues where the inverse is felt and the residents of the Philippines had to eventually be warned about venerating a statue rather than the God for which it is an actor.<sup>73</sup> If we consider Eileen's father's statue of the Virgin Mary an extension of God, or the Virgin Mary herself, we can conclude that she is attacking the statue because of its relationship to the Catholic faith, and her interacting with the object is based on it being an active agent of this Catholicism, and we can conclude that this is a sectarian attack aided by the effects of devotional materialism. Although a physical attack, Eileen's mother's actions still fall outside the categories outlined by the OBFTC due to her attack being on a non-person (regardless of the statue's supernatural or actor-agency) although still being 'threatening behaviour' and are well within the 'feminised sectarianism' defined by Lindores and Emejulu due to being in the intimacy of the domestic space and characteristically passive aggressive, as Eileen's mother is attacking the object in place of the person (Eileen's father).<sup>74</sup> Eileen's father, as Eileen notes, would '... mend it all together again and stick it back..'. Eileen's father is performing a

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<sup>72</sup> Bautista, p. 461.

<sup>73</sup> Bautista, p. 465.

<sup>74</sup> Lindores and Emejulu, p. 4.

ritualistic action: in the same way Eileen could use the brokenness of the object as a yardstick for how volatile the home environment was, as we see how these objects secure multiple functions within the domestic space as well as within the minds of those who share the space. As mentioned in Garnett's work, as well as in Kelly's, Welter's, Konieczny and Alexander's, the emphasis within the domestic space is the duality of being both public and private space, highlighting the significance and cruciality of studying the display of devotional material to trace the morphology through its domestic function and actor-agency.

Finally, Eileen's mother's aggression toward the Virgin Mary, a figure who, as noted above, was idolised as an example to women and mothers, is significant as – as far as we know – Eileen's parents were never physically violent with each other, only through the channel of this devotional object. Eileen's mother's aggression towards the piece is her admittance that this piece has some effect on her household and is perhaps a rival for her as a mother figure, which could be especially irritating given that Protestants do not share this veneration of the 'Queen of Heaven'. This idea of Mary as an exemplary woman, as venerated by Eileen's dad, the owner of the object, and the associated religion, almost inflicted a feminised sectarianism onto Eileen's mother as she had an unconditional – and arguably unearned – place in Eileen's mother's home (or altar), distressing Eileen's mother's 'domestic authority', which perhaps made her feel like an unwanted rival to her own femininity, motherhood and her own religious and devotional beliefs. As Elizabeth Brunner notes in *Impotence, Nostalgia, and Objectification: Patriarchal Visual Rhetoric to Contain Women*, within a patriarchal society – or religious system(s) – womanhood or femininity and power seldom go hand in hand; she writes, "women cannot be powerful without being threatening".<sup>75</sup> With this in mind, we can conclude that Eileen's mother was inflicting a

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<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth Brunner, 'Impotence, Nostalgia, and Objectification: Patriarchal Visual Rhetoric to Contain Women', *Visual Culture & Gender* 8 (2013), 31–45 (p. 34).

feminised sectarianism redirected toward this statue, fuelled by societal and religious pressures, encouraged by her husband's veneration of the statue-woman, who – as Brunner notes – could not “appear powerful without appearing to be threatening” as per the disjunction of women and power within patriarchal societies, especially within a complex combination of religious structures such as a mixed marriage, putting more pressure on the maternal figure to assert some dominance in the sphere she was societally confined to: the domestic.<sup>76</sup>

As established, devotional material can be a weapon of feminised sectarianism, and the domestic site a marginal space societally delegated to feminised persons.<sup>77</sup> If we follow both these conclusions we arrive at the interdependent relationship between those who receive social capital through objects and those who distribute social capital to maintain this relationship in order to sustain social circumstances, while the distributing body relies on its in-house infrastructure to sustain the legal circumstances – “legal” used here in reference to in-house Christian “law” such as commandments, Canon etc. This is almost parallel to the relationship of legal code and social code cited above in the text much explored by feminist scholars: *Antigone*.

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<sup>76</sup> Brunner, p. 34.

<sup>77</sup> Lindores and Emejulu, p. 11.

Display Interlude

*Outwith the oohs and aahs of the  
gift economy, display is the most performed element of this  
morphology.*

*Where do these objects get placed? Where are they homed and housed?*

*At whose eyeline? At whose  
displeasure?*

*Near a window so the neighbours know you're wee man  
tied the knot?*

*Next to the telly so they're in full view?*

*What other objects are next to them?*

*Is the wedding photo next to your single daughter to give her a hint?*

*Is the baby scan next to the engagement photos so everyone knows  
you've got one of each which is basically one whole anyways.*

*For anyone*

*not fully absorbed into this cycle,*

*still writhing and retching under its clutches,*

*the display can be very telling of this power struggle.*

*This morphology always pertains to a power struggle.*

*Between*

*private and public*

*domestic and domesticated*

*church and home  
masculine and feminine*

*mine and ours*

*is and was.*

*In my visual work I  
traced and tracked this by  
allowing cracks and bumps and bubbles  
to form in the wallpaper  
suggesting a movement and an agency,  
the cracks and bubbles roughly parallel the changes in decor.*

*The objects can be traced iconographically as they  
are almost chronological;  
symbols of the time or the decade,  
visibly aged, decayed or plateaued.*

*Peppering this chronology of frames  
are small escape attempts.*

*Visible attempts of the woman in charge  
trying to find out who she is outside  
mother, sister, daughter, granddaughter, helper, lover, whatever.*

*On the middle wall, a glittery wallpaper is laid on the wall  
broken half way over the wall  
but there nonetheless.*

*An attempt, a conversion, a compromise.*

*Two small, but very important frames live there.*

*A a small velvety red frame and*

*a beigey brownny sequined one.*

*Both characteristic of the 1990s grunge-ish*

*goth-ish era.*

*one might even say*

*catholic- adjacent.*

*Velvet texturally exists in the cathoic*

*church,*

*sequins don't really but pageantry does*

*not the same but a close cousin.*

*These frames are a chronological and*

*biological*

*artefactual proof and evidence*

*of the last reach outside the cycle.*

*Velvet and the sequins*

*both characterise 1990s spirituality*

*which often challenged catholicism*

*and mainstream christinaity in favour*

*of "golden rule" chrtistanity or*



Figure 3.

Kaitlin McGroarty. The 'You Tried' Frames. August 2022. 10.5 x 14.8 cm, 14.8 x 21.0 cm (right to left)



*“Charmed” and “buffy” like  
mysticism.*

*Like anything they died  
down.*

*A phase that the morphology had to  
wait out like  
a patient mother and a stroppy teenager.*

*But these frames are  
important  
none the less.  
Every attempt important.*

*These attempts are joined by the big moderny black frame  
that becomes dwarfed by the two baby boy frames casting their eyes down upon these  
attempts.*

*Forever jailed by the tether they have to motherhood and sonhood.*

*Inside the Virgin Mary’s clasped hands  
they live in the crevices and rolls of her palms.*

*In the Pieta they live in the folds of her dress.*

*In he tears  
in her sinless body  
in her shadow  
they are imprisoned.*

*These little frames are very important.*

*Nameless but*

*They tried.*

# **Chapter Four: Inheritance**

**Chapter Synopsis:** *In the chapter “Inheritance”, the need for this morphological stage is explored. Its importance and placement in the morphology of devotional materialism is investigated and highlighted. Inheritance is examined as an action in itself, as well as a necessary tool of this morphology. The change in context of an inherited object versus a procured object is discussed and established, before the inherited object’s new agency is established also. Through examples of typically inherited found material and immaterial objects, Inheritance is discussed as the final stage of the morphology of devotional materialism and established as arguably the most important.*

In this thesis so far we have discussed the context of devotional materialism in Scotland, precluding the procurement, accumulation and display of such objects. In order to conclude devotional materialism’s morphology, the inheritance of such objects must be investigated. When such objects are inherited, their life cycle starts again, although with slightly different context. These inherited items are not bought or exclusively sought out by their new owners, they are gifted. With a gift comes a sentimentality that leaves one inclined to keep the piece and display it, this is made worse if this inheritance was made via legal documents such as a last will and testament - even if on an unregulated basis; for instance, whenever the gifter is in attendance. If the gifter has passed, there is always the fear their attendance in the home may be less sporadic.

Inheritance can occur in the site of the sacraments such as the procurement and accumulation can. A wedding ring, engagement ring, veil or dress can be inherited for your own wedding or engagement: reciting “with the ring, I thee wed..” while now keeping your grandparents' marriage in mind as you marry your partner with their rings. Rosary beads can

be inherited for a first confession, promising to “abstain from Satan and all his ways” whilst now also remembering their previous owner’s dedication to Catholicism and their avoidance of Satanism in the 1990s.<sup>78</sup> Names can be inherited whether at birth or in a reconciliation or communion, obviously a last name is inherited from someone, a first or middle name, a communion name can be inherited from sibling, an aunt, a parent, a grandparent: taking their name as you vow to walk in the light of God and now also your Uncle Danny’s communion name who also chose Saint Nicholas for a laugh and then got stuck with it.

The inheritance of objects is crucial in devotional materialism’s morphology because it secures the lifespan of the object, through this aforementioned sentimentality which could cause guilt if the object is not displayed, and through the tradition of this gift economy. Furthermore, inherited objects carry their instructional function from person to person despite the change in context from a procured object to an inherited one. The Madonna and Child portrait still functions as an example to the mother and son, the holy font still functions as a reminder to practise ritual for protection, the rosary beads still function as a material token of your eternal original sin and your need for penance through ritual prayer. If the function remains, then it stands to question why would the gifter repurpose an old object, when they could procure a new one. The answer is that an inherited object, while context is changed: a culture remains attached.<sup>79</sup>

As the inheritance stage of this morphism is the final stage, it brings with it the greatest attempt to control. Through this gift economy, a person can leave an object to a family member and rely on this gift economy to ensure the object is displayed and perhaps inherited again one day. To this end, objects can span generations, establishing a connection that may not have existed otherwise between two people born decades apart.

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<sup>78</sup> Cleary, Sarah, ‘*Better the Devil You Know: The Myth of Harm and the Satanic Panic*’, *Gothic Studies*, 24.2 (2022), 169

<sup>79</sup> Timothy Kelly and Joseph Kelly, p 7

Inherited objects while their original function is maintained, they grow a secondary function which is to sustain its own life. By gifting or inheriting an object, the culture is inherited and therefore remains in the private space of the domestic, where its primary instructional function can occur, assisted by its new context as a non-procured, hereditary object, perhaps even achieving heirloom status. As established throughout this thesis, the devotional object is a tool used to shape the values and actions of those around it, specifically in a domestic space; the inherited devotional object is the eyes and ears of the deceased, functioning as a portal used for supervising the lives of the giftees: to throw out that Book of Hymns with the non-existent spine and pages either yellowing or missing, would be throw out Auntie Sandra. And you wouldn't put Auntie Sandra in the bin, now, would you?

Inherited devotional objects bring with them a secondary case of procurement. The procurement of the next generation's religious upbringing. In houses all over Scotland you will find non-denominational families with devotional objects. This could be a Christmas tree, wedding clothes, baptismal gowns, names, rings, bibles, candles, books, all this in attempt to sequentially secure the devotional immateriality of inherited thought, value and sociological behaviour: of which these objects function as procured items to perform; and as inherited objects to maintain. Devotional materialism can be seen in action with particular reference to Christmas trees, perhaps they are no longer religious objects representing God's evergreen love for us, their meaning has been morphed into a capitalistic and materialistic one centring family time and material possessions. Although, the tree is still in the home. The retains its status as an icon of Christmas which in itself retains its status as the day of the birth of Christ. Both are acknowledged as religiously acquired objects but venerated as devotional objects. The demotion from religious to devotional object has meant the tree has stayed in the home, kept its name in our mouths, kept its baubles in our lofts until December comes and we perform its dual status once again.

Given that my work specifically looks at Scotland, we must now establish a need for this inheritance to take place. Why are there so many sites where inheritance can occur? These sites provide a cultural infrastructure using a gift economy to preserve and maintain this morphology and the desired values, personal characteristics and rituals attached. The existence of such an infrastructure suggests there is reason to believe these desirable traits would not survive alone. In Jean Baudrillard's *System of Objects*, the philosopher notes that one avenue in which, particularly new homeowners or couples, acquire home furnishings is via inheritance.<sup>80</sup> Within devotional materialism's morphology, the final stage of inheritance is largely an issue of class. Those with less financial power may rely on this gift and inheritance economy. Differing from an inheritance in a will, say, these gifters are still alive and will most probably want to come to see how you have utilised their gift in your private space.

An interesting thing to note at this juncture is that the studies on sectarianism in Scotland mentioned at the start of this thesis (page 9), social class is featured as a key factor in the redistribution of sectarian attitudes. Following the morphology of devotional materialism, this would make perfect sense. The objects are inherited and as discussed before, the values and attitudes come with them. It would also make sense, with particular reference to male-centric sectarianism and sectarian studies of this nature, that these inherited objects – or any devotional material – is rarely noted. Usually in these studies, more metaphysical objects such as songs and slurs are attributed to spreading or inheriting sectarianism, with Stephen Millar stating these song's purpose is to

...promise to provide such an identity, and conceives of it 'as an effort to "crystallise and secrete" models of masculinity which restore a sense of ontological security to

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<sup>80</sup> Baudrillard, p 19

young adult males uncertain about their place or role in society'<sup>81</sup>

Where these people socialised as men are being promised an identity, people socialised as women are assigned one. The studies done on rebel sectarianism from a male perspective often account for songs, rather than tangible objects. Here Millar describes these songs 'crystalising' models of masculinity and therefore making the transition from metaphysical sonic object to tangible object through the 'crystalising' process, whereas devotional objects seek to start as objects and become the metaphysical: they want to become values, 'catholic sensibility' and 'domestic authority'.<sup>82</sup> It is therefore coherent that these two mechanisms of sectarianism have been running in concentric circles, one morphing from the tangible to the intangible while the other does the reverse; one occupying the external space, one occupying the domestic space.

It would also make sense in reference to Millar's quote regarding these songs attempting to build a 'model of masculinity'. It could also stand to reason that this model has to be constructed in the external space such as a street, football match etc, because the internal space – or domestic space – is so preoccupied with maintaining the example, through object and inherited thought, or model of femininity, meaning those who identify or were socialised as male leave the domestic space to express and find their masculinity.

As this morphology of devotional materialism has been established to have been designed to occur in the domestic, and the domestic established as a zone where non-men are assigned and therefore able to weaponize the space and its contents, it would make sense that these objects are not accounted for in studies where people socialised as women are not

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<sup>81</sup> Millar, p 303

<sup>82</sup> Greeley, Andrew M., *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California, 2000) p 175  
Garnett and Harris, p 299



accounted for; because – as this morphology would prefer – devotional materialism, the domestic and the feminine go hand in hand in hand, meaning this morphology is able to go unnoticed for the mainstream studies of sectarianism which are typically male-centric.

A dominant culture need not be so precautionous, because it sees itself reflected back in the world. Ironically, however, in a survey taken by the Scottish Government in 2015, it was found that:

*'30% of people in Scotland think of themselves as Protestant and 15% consider themselves to be Catholic. Another 15% think of themselves as Christian, but neither Protestant nor Catholic, while 3% say they are Muslim and 1% identify with another religion.'*<sup>83</sup>

Although this statistic includes more than the Christian binary of Catholic and Protestant, it assists this thesis in establishing that within this binary, Catholics in Scotland do not hold the highest population percentage per faith. This is significant because this lack of numerical power could hold an explanation as to why Catholic devotional material persists in Scotland- an attempt at exerting dominance or claim via material objects, where numerical or legislative power lacks. Any need to obtain and maintain a devotional materialistic domestic culture must be born from this detrimental lack in power outwith the household. If what is being taught in schools, universities, spoken of in the news or popular media, legislatively decided upon in parliament differs from the values and beliefs a person or a family holds, or

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<sup>83</sup> Scottish Social Attitudes Survey 2014: Public Attitudes to Sectarianism in Scotland. Scottish Government. Published **20 February 2015**  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-social-attitudes-survey-2014-public-attitudes-sectarianism-scotland/pages/5/#:~:text=2.11%20When%20asked%20about%20their,1%25%20identify%20with%20another%20religion.<accessed March 2022>>

what would be the desirable value for their children to hold - then these groups are experiencing a power imbalance.

Many of the texts I have explored and borrowed from in this thesis mention the divide between public and private space in the domestic space: how behaviour changes, how objects have a function pertaining to each space, how etiquette or display of objects or persons changes depending on which space the domestic space is functioning as at that time.<sup>84</sup> Those experiencing this power imbalance can utilise this spatial duality when in “mixed company”.<sup>85</sup> Around non-Catholic friends or those whose sectarian affiliations are not obtainable, the Madonna and Child portrait above the fireplace is an object of aesthetic pleasure, an art object. Around family or parish members, it is a beloved sacred object, venerated frequently.

Cynthia A. Hogan’s *The Crucifix and the Art Gallery: An Odyssey from Religious Material Culture to Fine Art*, explains how the removal and thus decontextualisation of religious objects can ‘disseminate’ religio-social infrastructures and disband religious populations.

During the French Revolution, agents working under Napoleon’s aegis removed Roman Catholic implements and materials from ecclesiastical contexts... religious and ritual artefacts have been quietly yet purposely transformed into secular objets d’art.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Brunner, p 31-45.

<sup>85</sup> Lloyd, Katrina, and Gillian Robinson, ‘Intimate Mixing - Bridging the Gap? Catholic-Protestant Relationships in Northern Ireland’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 34.12 (2011), p 2134

<sup>86</sup> Hogan, Cynthia A. 2021. *The Crucifix and the Art Gallery: An Odyssey from Religious Material Culture to Fine Art*. *Religions* 12: 537. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070537> <accessed April 2022> p

Removing objects from their sacred spaces is only partially effective, when the objects are removed from their categorisation from religious objects to *objets d'art*, the religion and its related objects are disrespected and commodified: demoted from relic to object. No longer sacred, they can hang on anyone's walls. This method of sacking religious sites and confiscating religious objects with intention to demote them in their objecthood was and is still used as a means of control over people in towns, villages, nations and religions. Centuries on from the French Revolution, we see these objects in homes across the world - often removed from their religious categorization and placed into a medium space: not domestic, not religious; but devotional.

As seen in Jane Garnett and Alana Harris' *Faith in the Home Catholic Spirituality and Devotional Materiality in East London*", the statue of the Virgin Mary was a site of religious difference for Eileen's parents in their mixed marriage, and therefore inherited by Eileen as a devotional object rather than a religious object.<sup>87</sup> Eileen the interviewee describes keeping the inherited object despite its' reminder of her parent's physical fights and volatile marriage, and displaying it in her garden alongside material tokens of Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions.<sup>88</sup> Eileen's inheritance of the object has allowed the object to survive and maintain a place in the domestic space, although her inheritance has fractured its' religious connotations, demoting it to devotional art object.<sup>89</sup> Eileen describes enjoying the object aesthetically, and playing with the notion that she brings some kind of spiritual agency or protection to the house or garden, but denies any outwardly religious feelings or performing any religious ritual attached to the object. Where the object's religiosity has been reduced, it develops devotional qualities in order to sustain its life, possibly with the hope that if the object is inherited enough times, its religiosity will be recognised or reciprocated one day.

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<sup>87</sup> Garnett and Harris, p2

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid* p2

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid* p2

### **Inheritance interlude**

*Visually, I emphasise the role of inheritance in the morphology of devotional materialism. Inheritance is crucial to the cycle as the final stage which also becomes the first stage, and thus the morphology of this materialism. Just like that greek iconography of that snake eating its own tail, or when you tuck an ankle sock inside itself to perform neatness in a drawer that is filled with socks you haven't touched in two years.*

*Inheritance's function is contingent on people's observance of the 'Catholic sensibility' and 'domestic authority' these objects try to influence our lives with. Its role in the morphology of devotional materialism is like when relay runners in the olympics are all really fast, but the last one knows they're the fastest n they let you know about it. They're firing past everyone with that silly wee pole in their hand. When their team wins it'll be because of the fourth runner, much like inheritance. Without anyone to start the morphology again it just dies. All that for nothing. You can't make your family think the way you do, but if you surround them with the same things you're maybe in with a better chance.*

*People's adherence to these rules is paramount, and through the gift economy and guilt mentioned throughout my written work, these rules are able to wriggle into people's lives even if they have no intention*

*of following them. "We just need to get in the door," think these objects, "then we can work our magic."*

*I purposely chose quite garish frames to use for the space. Frames such as the two pictured with yellowing glass, clearly juxtaposed to the rest of the wallpapered white space. For eagle eyed viewers, these could reference the 2006 Smoking ban giving rise to vernacular such as "patch" to mean pie or*

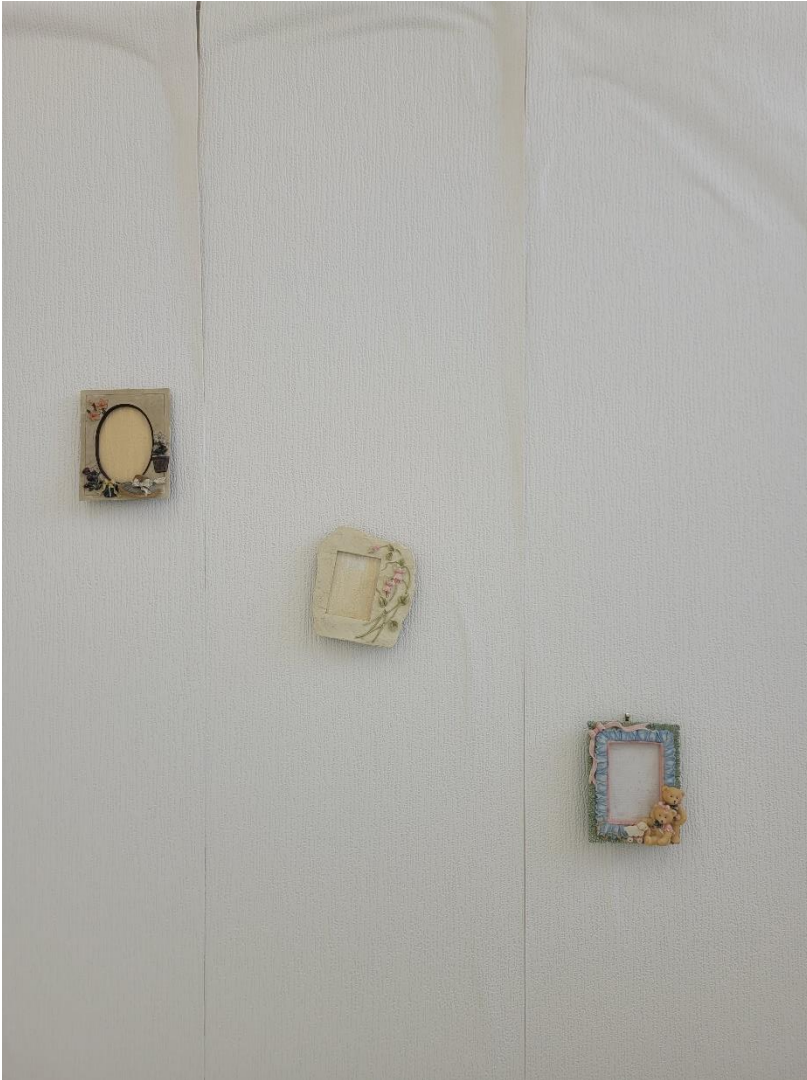


Figure 4.  
Kaitlin McGroarty. Smokey Joe  
Frames. August 2022. 15 x 21  
cm (each)

*dingy- a cornerstone in recent Scottish history. Having lived somewhere else and in a different time, they don't fit in with the rest of the frames in their new homes.*

*The uglier the frames, the stronger the guilt. These frames had to be so ugly - but crucially, still quite small*

- they had to dwarf any frames that might speak to a desired aesthetic. For example, the big black one. They had to be kitschy enough to shout over the top of that without even trying, but small enough so as to discourage the buying or procuring of items that might speak to one's own tastes rather than the pre approved devotional tastes. These wee scrubby things pull all the attention from the nice stylish black frame so why even try? And just like that, you're not an individual with choices, desires, needs, wants, whatever. You another link in the chain waiting to leave the same frames in your will to the next unlucky fucker.

# Conclusion

Through visual and written investigation, I have constructed four stages of the morphology of devotional materialism: Procurement, Accumulation, Display and Inheritance. My research and work, both visual and written, take issue with the fact that so much of the work done about sectarianism in Scotland is male-centric, thus allowing non-male persons to slip through the cracks. In the interest of inclusivity, I used phrases and words such as women, men, femmes, mascs, people socialised as female, those socialised as male, non-binary persons and gender non-conforming persons amongst other gender inclusive phrasing in order to include the whole scope of peoples that are inherently affected by this phenomenon.

The morphology of devotional materialism is fundamentally an object study, whilst also fundamentally a piece adjacent to a sociological study, occupying two spaces as devotional materialism itself does. Using texts such as Jane Garnett and Alana Harris's *Faith in the Home Catholic Spirituality and Devotional Materiality in East London* as well as Mary Ellen Konieczny's *Sacred Places, Domestic Spaces: Material Culture, Church, and Home at Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Brigitta* and Julius Bautista *On the Personhood of Sacred Objects: Agency, Materiality and Popular Devotion in the Roman Catholic Philippines*, I was able to define what devotional materialism meant and established it as a third space accompanying domestic and sacred materials. Similar to Jesus Christ himself who was 100% divine and 100% human but never solely divine or human, devotional materialism can be 100% domestic and 100% sacred, but never solely domestic or solely sacred, although it can occupy a third space which functions as an entry point as mentioned in the object study of the Christening Piece. I also used these texts to situate Scotland's relationship with devotional materialism and its morphology within the sphere of Catholicism, academically building on my previous visual work as well as hopefully providing some insight into a corner of research that is abandoned in comparison with studies on sectarianism within male-centric spheres.



These case studies also provided a springboard for me to consider Scottish materialistic phenomena in case studies such as the aforementioned Christening Piece in addition my visual work with frames and wallpaper which reflect the class based materialism found in Jean Baudrillard's *System of Objects* as well as in council estates across Scotland. These frames and their reflections provided a visual accompaniment to the panopticonal effect provided by such sectarianisms, where both sides – Catholic and Protestant – need the other in order for themselves to function as prisoner or guard depending on the specific outlook or argument which is being driven.

The morphology of devotional materialism is constructed of four stages: Procurement, Accumulation, Display and Inheritance. Each of these stages is crucial to the survival, dexterity and adaptability of this morphology of which exists and survives in order to preserve the values, characteristics, rituals and religious welfare of the next generation.

Procurement is paramount to the morphological process as it serves as an entry point. Familiarity is key and the gift economy is often the functional mechanism with which such objects are procured. Crucially, as objects are procured their attached values also make their ways into our lives. As seen in the case study of Laura in Lindores and Emejulu's *Women as Sectarian Agents*, Laura's aunts refused to interact with the site of her mixed marriage wedding because it was a Catholic Church. In this case study we find that 'feminised sectarianism' was enacted as Laura was receiving scrutiny from her Protestant family members, something which the law surrounding sectarianism would not have recognised as sectarian. In this way, I compare women, femmes and those socialised as women who experience sectarianism with Sophocles' *Antigone*, using Judith Butler's *Antigone's Claim*, as such persons are being persecuted by some parts of the law but are not fully recognised as agents in other parts, as explained by Butler.

Accumulation is also crucial to the survival and functionality of this morphology. In the Accumulation stage, the person experiencing this morphology is now convincing themselves of their agency within it. They may choose objects in line with such a devotional materialism and even believe it to be their own tastes. This stage is crucial to the morphology as a whole because of the façade of control we feel as consumers, although as stated in this chapter and its accompanying interlude, we are being consumed by such a morphology. The decision to continue this process of morphology is key to its survival, as it cannot survive on velocity alone.

In the third Chapter “Display”, the object mobilizing the person is discussed with reference to Eileen’s mother’s physical attacks on it, however in Procurement, the person mobilises the objects when we consider the magic thinking bestowed onto a crucifix or some rosary beads. Display, as discussed in the chapter and interlude by the same name, is important for the spread of this morphology, displaying such objects normalises them and therefore their attached values. In this chapter, the case study of Eileen and her mother in Garnett and Harris’ *Faith in the Home: Catholic Spirituality and Devotional Materiality in East London* is explored. The display of the statue torments her Protestant mother so much, as Eileen shares, because it disrupts her mother’s ‘domestic authority’, a small and sometimes the only authority that some women are allowed, which is discussed in absence of this case study in the first chapter with reference to the Roe v Wade 2022 repeal. The display of the anthropomorphic statue challenged Eileen’s mother’s authority and, more importantly, as a Swedish Protestant, challenged her views on the Virgin Mary and Christianity and threatened her as the person on top of the domestic hierarchy in her house. Display is a crucial stage because it establishes this hierarchy.

In Inheritance, the final stage is described as also being the first stage. Inheritance is often how objects are eventually procured, it is also sometimes a site where the objects may

lie dormant for years waiting to be re-procured or re-inherited for another chance to channel the values attached to them. Within the inheritance chapter I also confront two concentric circles of morphologies: a masculine-centric morphology that seeks to transform the metaphysical into the physical; and a feminine-centric morphology which seeks to transform the physical into the metaphysical. These cross-overs mean these two morphologies may not make sense to persons concerned with the opposite party, however, as I note in the chapter, not understanding is no reason for non-men to be left out of conversations regarding sectarianism altogether.

To conclude, devotional materialism is defined as a third space between sacred objects and domestic objects, it may take the form of either, its morphology seeks to maintain it's survival. In this survival, the attached values of 'Catholic sensibility', 'domestic authority' and sectarian thought can be distributed throughout the four stages of this morphology: procurement, accumulation, display and inheritance. Conversely to what might typically be shown as a sectarian agent, the morphology of devotional materialism is primarily concerned with those socialised as female as it attempts to reinforce gender roles and inflict a feminised sectarianism rather than what we may typically think of as sectarianism which is often male-centric displays of violence at football games. This thesis and the accompanying visual work has been committed to centring non-males in the study of sectarianism as well as providing an object study in this area of research. It is my hope that this thesis foreshadows an uptake in similar research so Scotland can become a fairer place, where all genders are included in these conversations around sectarianism and politics.

# References & Illustrations

### Illustrations

#### Figure 1

Kaitlin McGroarty. Father, son, and the big black frame. August 2022. 243.84 cm x 286 cm

#### Figure 2.

Kaitlin McGroarty. Why the Fuck do I have this? August 2022. 14.8 x 21.0 cm

#### Figure 3.

Kaitlin McGroarty. The 'You Tried' Frames. August 2022. 10.5 x 14.8 cm, 14.8 x 21.0 cm (right to left)

#### Figure 4.

Kaitlin McGroarty. Smokey Joe Frames. August 2022. 15 x 21 cm (each)

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