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‘WONDER WOMAN  
HAPPY MAGIC FUN  
SWORD GIRL  
SEXY! SEXY!  
FIGHT! FIGHT!’

-A critical re-imag(e)ination of performativity, space and the body  
in contemporary mass culture via Gail Simone’s Wonder Woman.

**A Master’s Thesis for the Degree Master of Arts (Two Years) in Visual Culture**

**Gustav Thoreson**

Division of Art History and Visual Studies  
Department of Arts and Cultural Studies  
Lund University  
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Supervisor: Max Liljefors  
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## **Abstract**

‘WONDER WOMAN HAPPY MAGIC FUN SWORD GIRL SEXY! SEXY! FIGHT! FIGHT!’

In this thesis I explore the conceptual relationships between Parody, the body and space in via the writer Gail Simone’s version of the comic book heroine Wonder Woman. I develop a critical re-imag(e)ination of performativity, space and the body in contemporary mass culture via Gail Simone’s Wonder Woman. As the title suggests the thesis also elaborate on sexuality understood as a phantasmatic screen. I highlight the relationship between the Russian Linguist M.M. Bakhtin and the Belgian scholar Luce Irigaray’s concepts of mimesis and masquerade in order to unearth the conceptual separation that the parody achieves in the work of the Simone. I take Bakhtin’s idea of another’s speech and fuse it with Irigaray’s theories about the masquerade and mimesis. Two concepts that allow the body to be the operating crux of an advanced process where the concepts of space and sexuality can be described as intertwined. However first I explore the ideological driving force behind Wonder Woman’s creator W.M. Marston, and connect his intellectual project in the 40’s to Simone’s contemporary rendition of the same character. This connectivity then moves this thesis through the seemingly trivial kind of laughter produced by the parody as the operating concept in both of their work. Unveiling of the discursive regimes regulating, in this case – the Feminine. The Feminine, which is expanded on as a way to understand the projection of preformativity, this is in part put in to an understanding of using points in space as reference points for the hegemony. In where the mimicry of the feminine is used to expose a masculine phallogentric gaze. I also emphasizes the intertwined relationship and future potential of combining critical theory, in particular feminist theory, with the extensive work of M.M. Bakhtin who I would argue is largely over looked in contemporary research, and its implications on contemporary mass cultural objects.

**Gustav Thoreson**

### **Keywords:**

Wonder Woman, Gail Simone, Parody, the Dialogic, Masquerade, Mimesis, Luce Irigaray, Mass Culture, M.M. Bakhtin

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## Introduction

### *Mass Culture – a critical road into Comics*

Mass culture have always intrigued me, and many others, from Pokémon-cards to Eurovision song contest to low budget sci-fi television shows there has always been something that captivated me, not just on a concrete plane with all the glitter and exuberant shows, but a intellectual as well. Weird because mass culture and deeper meaning is seldom connected, usually it's described as a vulgar and superficial thing, and for a almost two centuries, western culture has really been divided in two cultures, firstly the traditional kind, what usually is refereed to as "high culture" or just simply "culture", and Mass Culture, manufactured wholesale for the market. A vulgar kind of entrainment for the masses, frowned upon by the producers and consumers of the "real" culture. By its nature mass culture resists exclusivity and acquired-ness, it is the products for everyone, and if particular taste does not suit you, there is another to fill its place.

On that line Mass culture has often just been defined by what it is not, its difference to "high culture", Mass Culture is not art, it's not intellectual and it is certainly not sophisticated. In spite though, Mass culture have developed new medias of its own, science fiction, soap operas, comic books and videogames are just a few of the examples of genres unique to mass culture. Advances in manufacturing technologies and the subsequent rise of capitalism paved the way for a brake down of the culture monopoly the upper class otherwise always enjoyed. However Mass culture began by, and in some capacities definitely still, borrow heavily from "high culture", but as Clement Greenberg pointed out in his text *Avant-Garde and Kitsch*:

The precondition of kitsch (a German word for mass culture) is the availability close at hand of a fully matured cultural tradition, whose discoveries, acquisitions, and perfected self-conscious kitsch can take advantage of for its own ends.<sup>1</sup>

In these ways Greenberg implies that by miming, or imitating "high culture" in some capacity can, as Greenberg puts it, mines the soil of the "high culture", extracting its riches and not putting anything back. However this understanding of what mass culture really is neglects the overlooking foundational structure of mass culture. It is indeed a

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<sup>1</sup> C. Greenberg, *Avant-Garde and Kitsch*, Partisan Review Dwight Macdonald, 1939, In *Popular Culture: a reader*, R.Guins & O.Z. Cruz (ed.), 2ed, Sage, Los Angeles

romanticized image of this dichotomy to believe that mass culture just mines steels from the “pure” culture. No mass culture is intrinsically imposed from above. It is, without any sugarcoating, a fabricated thing, only operational within a capitalist structure, where workers are given instructions by engineers, which are in turn hired by capitalists and businessmen. The consumer passively only has one of two options, buying, or not buying. Mass culture is consequently only the effect or result of a greater ideological justificatory system, however that’s not to say that objects and things created within this system are without meaning. Actually probably quite the opposite, Greenberg wrote his text in 1939, when the difference between high culture and kitsch arguably peaked, and where in a very high degree a political and social denominator. Today however it’s another story, the lines of mass- and high culture are not only blurred, but arguably non-existent, although stratification within the field still works as social denominator. Via the entry into postmodernity however, not only did the joke and the deadly serious, merge into the same, but the medium separation, which previously provided the classificatory means when sorting mass- and high culture are exchanged in to a discursive system of mass culture. Art, previously “high culture” is now arguably rather an institutional stratificatory denominator, rather than something ascribed to an object, like a painting. Arguably mass culture can even be said to not only have merged or that the lines have been blurred towards high culture, but that everything now is mass culture, at least in the field of cultural production. Instead “high culture” and especially art have transcended into an ideological system within certain institutions and social classes.

Instead style rather than genre seem to have taken the place as social denominator when the difference between mockery and praise is discursive and contextual. Mikita Hoy argues that mass cultural forms of culture, like magazines, soap operas, game shows and shopping sprees, are characterized by there self evident failure to “stand up” to conventional philosophical theory, but are instead valued for there capacity of breaking down in to infinite layers of dialoguing strata.<sup>2</sup> Meaning that in this light mass culture appears to be the reverse of high culture, its alter ego where pretensions of meaning, relevance and artistic meaning are made absurd by the parodic dialogue of vacancy anti-aestheticism. Hoy means that one cannot approach mass culture like conventional culture, but because it is an effect of a capitalistic system and a way of

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<sup>2</sup> M. Hoy, ‘Bakhtin and Popular culture’, *New literary History*, vol.23 no.3, 1992, p.775 Available from Jstore (accessed February 5, 2014)

justifying social order by style stratification, one must see the fragmented layers of play and parody. Because if Greenberg got one thing right, it is that it indeed seems as if mass culture has a talent for self-consciously taking advantage of its own form. And maybe it is this quality of self reflexivity and awareness of its own position, that have led mass culture to in the last couple of years develop, what I see as a new and peculiar, yet intriguing phenomenon. Namely a sort of schizophrenic rift, or quality in some mass cultural expressions, schizophrenic in that the hegemonic structures of say capitalism and gender are there, appealing the same old commercialization of an object, but simultaneously, and non-reductive symbolizing a resistance to that structure as well. Here the postmodern trait of merging the joke and the deadly serious, has perhaps been epitomized and concretely formed, and are similarly dependent on context and position to expose the veil of resistance. This resistance seems to be prominent in expressions where what is shown is parodied, a parody of the hegemony, the ruling class, and the power structures. Specifically this again seem to appeal to marginalized social groups, where the form of mass culture both can be exploited and parodied, whilst actually being mass culture. This dichotomy of actually being the same thing as what's parodied is indeed thrilling, but it rests on the receiver of the expression to be able to decode, or unpack the resistance imbedded in an otherwise generic capitalist expression. But it also demands that the sender, the performer or writer makes a conscious effort by putting this ember of resistance into the same expression that otherwise submits to the hegemonic structures.

This is why I've been intrigued by the comic book character Wonder Woman, who on the one hand is an expression of the hegemonic gaze, and in a large part is a sexualized object, but simultaneously on the other hand is something that challenges that very concept, and sometimes even succeeds in parodying what she is. Wonder Woman, and the people who write her, seem to be able to play with the preconceptions of her own character to in some ways masquerading as herself so to speak. What intrigues me is the fact that this is a hidden operation; the resistance is not located in either the actual expression in Wonder Woman, or projected just from the reader, but is created in dialogue between the two.

According to the feminist scholar Lillian S. Robinson, *The Jazz, The Movies and Comic books*, are the only truly American art forms, and at least the latter two are at the heart of

American mass culture. Robinson argues that they form a quintessence of American popular culture of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> Some might even entertain the idea that these have encapsulated American culture as a whole. True however is that this quintessence embraces a self-conscious appreciation of its own form. Constantly re-thinking its form, changing in accordance to the market. Comic books in particular embrace everything about a mass cultural medium. They are done in any flavor, or style imaginable so to appeal to as many as possible, emulating a choice that situates you in contrast to them that “choose” something else. However most notably they are a medium, purely devoted to entertainment, at least on this general level comic emerges as a unique medium in this respect. With this said what then could one learn from comics?

The first “real” comic book superhero, that wasn’t lifted from the pulp fictions, and who spawned the superhero phenomenon, *Superman* was published in 1938 in *Action Comics No.1* by *National publications*, which later became DC comics. Superman was a character created by two teenagers still in high school, from Cleveland, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster.<sup>4</sup> Soon after that, in 1939 Bob Kane created the *Bat-Man* (later Batman) and thus the scene was set for an explosion of comics as they infiltrated the core of American mass culture and just a couple of years later the first superheroine Wonder Woman appeared in *All star Comics #8* in December 1941.<sup>5</sup> Since then Wonder Woman has, with but a few very short exceptions been published for over 70years, and has since the beginning achieved wide spread popularity and notoriety as both a patriot and a feminist icon.

Wonder Woman has transmorphed through and with history for almost the entire span of modernity shaping her readers and being shaped by the transformation of society, and have even been a active pawn in the real American Feminist movement as a inspiration and ideological emancipator.<sup>6</sup> So therefor as one embark on the metaphysical surfacing of performative sexuality, the mass cultural product of the comic, and thus especially the in print of the feminine body, Wonder Woman stands out as both a object of the male heterosexual gaze, but also the beacon for a feminism that transcends the bounders of

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<sup>3</sup> L.S. Robinson, *Wonder Women*, Routhledge, New York, 2004, p.1

<sup>4</sup> *A Comics Studies Reader*, J. Heer & K. Worcester (ed.), University Press of Mississippi, Jackson, 2009, p.15-16

<sup>5</sup> W.M Marston [Charles Moulton] (w), P.G. Harry (a), *All Star Comics #8*, National Comics, New York, dec 1941

<sup>6</sup> G. Steinem, *Introduction*, in Chesler Phyllis, *Wonder Woman*, National periodical Pub., New York, 1972

sexualization. The title of this thesis, ‘WONDER WOMAN HAPPY MAGIC FUN SWORD GIRL SEXY! SEXY! FIGHT! FIGHT!’<sup>7</sup> comes from one of writer Gail Simone’s Wonder Woman books, issue #35 to be specific (see image-14 in appendix). In the book it’s a small post-it sign next to a vinyl figure (see image-13 in appendix) of Wonder Woman and the “real” Wonder Woman stands next to it, puzzled. However it outlines the approach that this thesis will have, and can almost be used to describe the method used. With this thesis I want to explore the intricate relationship between parody and sexuality, or more specifically, how the masculine sexuality on the Feminine body is parodied in Simone’s Wonder Woman, and what that parodying really does. The first part, WONDER WOMAN HAPPY MAGIC FUN shapes one of this thesis’s core arguments, that parody, is situated in accordance to a sexed site, which is ascribed magical, or Phantasmatic properties as a result of a Utopic idea about the body. The second part, SWORD GIRL SEXY! SEXY! FIGHT! FIGHT! implies the dichotomy between firstly sex and violence, which in turn is used as a trigger for fantasies with the readers, but it also summarizes the inane-ness of it all, the over exaggeration of sex and violence in order to create a site, and screen for fantasies, and in that ridiculous exaggeration, there is room for parody, which then unveils all of its own inadequacies. Especially the farcing SWORD GIRL SEXY! SEXY! point towards this insane intertwining of sexual fantasies, violence and the phantasm that is the Feminine in Simone’s Wonder Woman.

*Survey of the field, Problem and Relevance of the work*

On the topic of Wonder Woman and sexuality a few books and articles has been written, just to name a few there is Lillian S. Robinson’s *Wonder Women*, Kelly Stanley’s *Suffering Sappho*, or Brian M. Peters’s *Qu(e)rying Comic Book Culture and Representation of Sexuality in Wonder Woman*. Yet outlining a more general historic approach there is only Les Daniels well researched book *Wonder Woman: the complete history*. However Daniel’s history stops just short of including writer Gail Simone’s run on Wonder Woman in 2007-2011. A run that has since been celebrated as a reemergence of some feminist ideals, but Simone is also a writer known for her parodic fan fictions of comics.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #35*, DC comics, New York, Oct. 2009, [p.2]/1

<sup>8</sup> G. Simone, *You’ll all be Sorry!*, About comics, New York, 2009

Subsequently this thesis has three main points that make it relevant and attempts at describing this parodic distance in some mass cultural expressions. First of which being the intertwined relationship between Wonder Woman's dichotic sexuality and the formal linguistic tropes applied in mass culture allowing the parody to act as a potential resistance tactic against a hegemonic structure.

The second point being the exploration, application and widening of Bakhtin's dialogic discourse, and to apply it on images, something that is too seldom done. Especially helpful is the heteroglossal operative part in the dialogical that will open new ways of assessing and attacking images, but also to elaborate on the power of ideology seen through a intertextualized history, social strata and most vital for my analysis; parody and mimicry. Hopefully this will pave the way for developing new tools for the scholarly community for understanding and explaining comics and mass culture, as well as opening for a renewed interest in M.M. Bakhtin.

The third point being that I want to show that at their best, Superhero comics are a form in which some writers and artists are doing fascinating work, not in spite of their chosen form, but in a large capacity because of it. To show that a seemingly trivial form of entertainment like comic books can, and *is* the bearer of advanced theoretical, as well as ideological meaning and that mass culture can, under the veil of the fantastic, hide an ember of resistance towards a hegemonic structure. Thus this work intend to not only provoke anyone interested in the apparatuses and texture of mass culture and Wonder Woman but also show the importance of comics in understanding contemporary life.

#### *Research Question and Hypothesis*

In order to facilitate these goals this thesis aims to explore a mass cultural icon; Wonder Woman and her sexuality in relation to her body and to use it to telescope the contemporary sexual discourse one should first deal with the status of the Feminine, femininity, the image of women and the Utopic hegemonic gaze of sexuality. I have as mentioned above, observed a tendency for some mass cultural expression to embody a self parodic stance, something I find both intriguing, and have found have gone largely un-researched. To do this then I have separated Wonder Woman, as well as the body into three intertwined theoretical concepts, the first is the body as Language, which will first understand the body as part of a system of signs oriented inside a discourse. Then the body as Image will facilitate the female body as a sexed site, remarking upon the

difficulty of delivering the sexed body through discourse, and to show that the uncontested status of a sexed body within the heterosexual dyad secures the working of certain symbolic orders, justifying social order and that its contestation calls into question where and how the limits of symbolic indelibility are set. The third theoretical concept will approach the body as space, deriving connectivity between space and ideological strata. Consequently this thesis will hypothesize that parody not only is an apparatus for laughter of simple puns, but can be done in order to problematize the body and separate, or rather disjuncture *it* from discursive regimes. Achieving parody on *it* self, without diminishing the same. Hence this thesis asks, how can mass cultural expressions, like a comic book heroine could be used to problematize the concept of the feminine body and the hegemonic regimes regulating *it*? And how then, does this separation of body and regime correspond to the parody and the materialization of the regulative ideal of sexuality?

### *Theory and Method*

To answer the above question I have after a long search landed on the combination of the Russian linguist Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic, the Belgian writer, Feminist and Lacanian Luce Irigaray and the French philosopher Michel Foucault's writings.<sup>9</sup> I have concentrated in the places where these writers intersect, and I will use them terms of what makes them similar, and not linger on discussions about what makes them different. This thesis will then also be an elaboration of some critical theory, especially through the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek's contributions, applied intertwined in all these. Jacques Lacan of course being one of the intersecting points between many of these thinkers. Irigaray was even in fact one of Lacan's pupils, but was shunned because of her "radical" disagreements with Lacan and the status of women in psychoanalysis. Consequently I will, in this thesis apply a critical approach on

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<sup>9</sup> Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin's was born in Russia in 1895 and died in the Soviet Union in 1975, he spent a large portion of his life in exile, mostly in Kazakhstan, where he also did much of his writings, he also saw himself as a philosopher rather than a literary scholar, however his writings did not reach the West until the mid 70's (read more in Michael Holmquist's introduction to *The Dialogical Imagination*). At that time, in the mid 70's the French psychoanalyticist Luce Irigaray (born in 1930) wrote her most important contributions to Feminist theory, during the 60's Irigaray moved to Paris where she amongst other things studied under Jacques Lacan, Irigaray's research in part focused on a critique of Freudian psychoanalysis, a parallel between her and Bakhtin. In fact, I find it interesting that these two scholars both gained traction during the mid to late 70's, a fact that might tell the tale of the future more metaphysical connectivity's in-between the two.

not only psychoanalysis but post-Marxism and feminist theories as well. And by using especially Irigaray, I intend to not only bring her writings back out of the obscure, but applying them in new contexts and via new theoretical apparatuses thereby constructing a shard of new feminist theory. However it is important not to forget is that I must let the material itself tell the story, and I will use the empirical material to lead the theory deeper. Again a good example is the title, which I will come back to later.

But in order to understand and describe the regulatory ideals and to structure metaphysical concept so to describe the concrete things that make up the parodic, I will rely heavily on Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic, which allows for a non-reductive advancement of theoretical concepts. The dialogic is in contrast to "normal" logic, or even the dialectical logic, a conscious logic, not only actively correcting, silencing, and creating dialogue between utterances and orders, but actively situating things in dialogue, intertextualizing history, discourse and space, it is also intrinsically a cognitive logic. It's a logic based on the implicit associative and transcending nature of the mind and comprehensively elaborated on in the Michael Holmquist's translation and collection of Bakhtin's texts *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. I will also use texts from the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, as well as the French philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault. The American feminist theorist Judith Butler will also appear sporadically throughout the text. Thus this thesis has taken a step towards critical theory, a territory of contemporary philosophy that is most intriguing.

As empirical material I will use the writer Gail Simone's rendition of Wonder Woman and her run on the series between 2007-2011, in total 30 books, collected in five collections. I will not give a historicized retelling of her run, but instead use glimpses and passages from the books to illustrate the theoretical point at hand. However I hope that by using Simone's rendition of Wonder Woman I will be able to show how a writer, if aware, can use the hypersexualization of the body to expose regulative ideal of sexuality by the performativity of sexuality and that the actions of masquerade and mimesis can occur as operational acts inside a mass cultural expression.

### *Structure of the Work*

This thesis is an elaboration and a dive into a wide spectrum of theoretical apparatuses, but in order to understand the body as functioned and to unearth its potential I have divided this thesis into three theoretical concepts, but first in the first chapter, I will

elaborate on the ideological belief that spawned the comic book character Wonder Woman from her very conception, to show that Wonder Woman in a unique way is a product of an intellectual pursuit. The following three chapters will look at the body as the definition of sexuality through three metaphysical concepts, in chapter 2 the Body as a language will be elaborated on, in chapter 3 the Body as Image, and in the final chapter 4 the Body as Space.

Images will be collected in an Appendix in the back, and can advantageously be separated when reading the text so to have the images close at hand. I have also made the conscious choice to rather include too many images than too few, this in order to provide the reader with a greater insight into one; how comics look and function, and two; in order to convey the often advanced use of Parody at play in the image one must grasp the context in which they operate. For that reason I've also decided to, when showing images from comic books, always show one entire page of the book, so to get the context, but also because that is the way that they were meant to be looked at.

### *Referring to Comics*

When referring to comic books I will use the academic standard of doing so, however it may need to be specified for clarity's sake. Mainly because it is not very commonly done in academia, but also because the creation of comic books is a complex and highly collaborative effort, and where the true authorship is not as easily defined as in a literary work, so the order in which to credit contributors should be stated. For simplicity first credit to a story should consequently be given to the writer, followed by a (w), if the writer uses a pseudonym that will follow in square brackets. The visual part of the comic book is created mainly by the artist who is referred to like the writer followed by an (a), the penciller by an (p), and inker by an (i), in that order. Then the Publication Title should be stated, it's the publisher's official identifying information found in the indicia which is a section of the publisher's information, year of publishing, copyright and so on, usually found on the second page of the book. But if no indicia are found the cover title in square brackets may be used. If the volume is stated in the indicia it should also be included, but it is quite uncommon, if it is however, it's represented with a "v."

The issue number is vitally important and is also found in the indicia, and to avoid confusion it is referred to with a "#" followed by the number, some publishers and editions use "no." but for consistency we will use "#". After number the date should be stated, it's also found in the indicia and should contain month (abbreviated), (or season

or quarter if stated) and year. The page is referred to as normal with a lowercase “p.”, and is sometimes provided within the book, if not pages may be counted, using the splash page as page one, then the number included in square brackets. When referring to a specific panel it’s done using the page number followed by a “/” and the referred panel(s), for example “p.86/2-5” will refer to page eighty-six and panel two through five, panels should be counted left to right, top to bottom. For example:

Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #16*, DC comics, New York, Mar. 2008, [p.17]/1

## Chapter 1 – Molded out of Clay

“In the beginning there was *Wonder Woman*. And in the beginning of *Wonder Woman*, there was feminism.”<sup>10</sup>

The Superhero comic book character Wonder Woman is one of the best known and one of the most controversial characters in comic book history. Frederic Wertham stated in his 1953 book *Seduction of the Innocent*, that ‘homosexual connotation of the Wonder Woman type story is psychologically unmistakable’,<sup>11</sup> and that ‘For boys, Wonder Woman is a frightening image. For girls, she is a morbid ideal.’<sup>12</sup> But, the same character has also served as inspiration and beacon for female emancipation and has shown generations of readers the potential of female-power, self-resilience and the power of sisterhood!<sup>13</sup> However, at the same time as Wonder Woman has been the object of allure and the evoker of sexual fantasies, and together with the bondage-thematic and the allure of her own body, it is initially part of an intellectual project. A project of a matriarchic utopic vision of the future and the potential of American women, (yet a project, as we shall see) riddled with contradictions and pitfalls. That said, those mechanics may be the reason she is still around today, it has been over 70 years since the comic book first hit the stands.

In December of 1941 the Amazon princess and superheroine Wonder Woman first saw the light of day in the comic book *All Star Comics #8*. In the comics she is the daughter of the Queen of the Amazons and supreme ruler of the amazon sanctuary and explicit matriarchy *Paradise Island* Hippolyte, but eventually Wonder Woman is sent to the world of the patriarchy to do good.

Wonder Woman was an instant hit and the year after the first appearing in *All Star Comics no.8* Wonder Woman got her own separate comic book in the summer of 1942 with *Wonder Woman #1*. In that book we finally get to the origins of both the Amazons and Diana, and on the very first page in the book we are treated to:

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<sup>10</sup> Robinson, p.27

<sup>11</sup> K.E. Stanley, “‘Suffering Sappho!’ Wonder Woman and the (Re)Invention of the Feminine Idea’, *HELIOS*, vol. 32 no. 2, Texas Tech University Press, 2005, p.150 Available from EBSCO host, (accessed October 15, 2013)

<sup>12</sup> F. Wertham, *Seduction of the Innocent, which*, Rinehart, New York, 1953, p.92-93

<sup>13</sup> Steinem 1972.

Who is she? WHERE does she come from? How did she obtain her human yet invincible abilities?

These are the questions everyone is asking – for WONDER WOMAN has become the talk of the hour all over America!

With the beauty of Aphrodite, the wisdom of Athena, the strength of Hercules and the speed of Mercury, this glamorous Amazon Princess flashes vividly across America's horizon from that mysterious Paradise Isle, where women rule supreme."<sup>14</sup>

On the following pages the history of the “unconquerable Amazons” and their warrior princess Diana (Wonder Woman). The story starts with a tale of the war between Ares, the god of *war* and Aphrodite the god of *love*. Ares proclaims that ‘My men will rule with the sword!’ but Aphrodite counters with ‘My Women shall conquer men with Love!’.<sup>15</sup> But Aphrodite’s plan was foiled by the brutality of Ares swordsmen, who enslaved all Women and traded them as cattle (and apparently one goat would buy you 15 ‘beautiful slave girls’<sup>16</sup>). However, Aphrodite didn’t surrender, instead she molded in clay with her own hands a new race of “super women”, stronger than men, but also with the power of love; she named them Amazons. Aphrodite then gave her “magic girdle” to the Amazon queen – Hippolyte, telling her that as long as the Amazons leader wore the girdle, the Amazons would be undefeatable. Ares, furious by this deception, called on his greatest champion, Hercules to once and for all remove the Amazons. But, to his surprise Hippolyta easily defeated him in battle, with the help of the magic girdle.

On the next page, the defeated Hercules invites the Amazons to a feast for “reconciliation” but in reality he plans to make love to queen Hippolyta and steal the magic girdle. And so he does! Hercules then once again enslaves the Amazon women, but by the grace of Aphrodite they received the strength to break their chains. But as punishment for submitting to men’s domination, they were to forever wear the wristbands from the chains as a reminder of the treachery of men. Hippolyta then took refuge together with all Amazons on an isolated island, soon to be known as Paradise Island. In this paradise away from the world of men and the patriarchy, Hippolyta molds the shape of a daughter out of clay, which Aphrodite breaths life into – thus Diana is

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<sup>14</sup> Marston M. William [Charles Moulton] (w), P.G. Harry (a) *Wonder Woman #1*, DC comics, New York, summer 1942, [p.2]

<sup>15</sup> Marston, summer 1942, p2

<sup>16</sup> Marston summer 1942, p3

born! This all happens in five pages in the beginning of *Wonder Woman v.1 #1* but does in a concrete way elaborate on the ideological convictions that made the foundation and shaped Wonder Woman as a symbol. The fact that Hippolyte is fooled by a traitorous male sexuality and thereby loses the origin of her power – independence. Hippolyte then finally defeats Hercules, the avatar for the patriarchy, with the chains that he had enslaved them with, thus using the tools of oppression against the oppressors (see image 1 in Appendix).<sup>17</sup> There is of course also a strong ideological reason for the men to be associated with Ares, the god of war, and women to be associated with Aphrodite the god of love, adept to the essentialist ideas of sexuality at the time.

### 1.1 From Marston

In reality though, *Wonder Woman* was the brainchild of William Moulton Marston under the pseudonym of Charles Moulton. Marston was a Harvard psychologist with a Ph.D. in psychology and holder of a law degree. He was also one of the acclaimed inventors of the lie detector just three years prior to writing his first Wonder Woman story. Marston was born in 1893 and he was already 50 years old when he ventured into writing comics in 1941. A stark contrast to Joe Shuster and Jerry Siegel, who created the first real superhero comic Superman while still in high school in the late 30's. It may seem peculiar that Marston who was already a somewhat well known name for readers of the popular press, mainly thanks to his many books and articles, for him to venture in to this new and notably young and not so well renowned medium.

Les Daniels notes that many of Marston's colleagues were young and had grown up during the great depression with limited access to higher learning, thus the new industry around comics considered him "quite the find" as a well renowned and respected scholar both within academia but also in the popular society.<sup>18</sup> DC Comics publisher Jack Liebowitz even noted "[...]he wrote his own scripts"<sup>19</sup>, as if pointing at something unusual.<sup>20</sup> However to Liebowitz's defense, Marston was unique, not only because of his commitment to comics, but also in that he was one of the few intellectuals who was an outspoken advocate of the new developments in mass media, comics being

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<sup>17</sup> Marston M. William [Charles Moulton] (w), P.G. Harry (a) *Wonder Woman #1*, DC comics, New York, summer 1942, [p.6]/5

<sup>18</sup> L. Daniels, *Wonder Woman: The Complete History*, Chronicle Books, San Francisco, 2000, p.12

<sup>19</sup> Daniels p.11

<sup>20</sup> Daniels p.11

one of them. In 1943 Marston explained his fascination about comics in the *Phi Beta Kappa* society's publication *The American Scholar*:

This phenomenal development of national comics addiction puzzles professional educators and leaves the literary critics gasping. Comics scorn finesse, thereby incurring the wrath of linguistic adepts. They defy the limits of accepted fact and convention, thus amortizing to apoplexy the ossified arteries of routine thought. But by their very tokens the picture-story fantasy cuts lose the hampering debris of art and artifice and touches the tender spots of universal human desire and aspirations, hidden customarily beneath long accumulated protective coverings of indirection and disguise. Comics speak without qualm or sophistication, to the innermost ears of the wishful self. [...]

[...] it's the *form* of comics-story telling, "artistic" or not, that constitutes the crucial factor in putting over this universal appeal. The potency of the picture story is not a matter of modern theory but of anciently established truth. It's too bad for us "literary" enthusiasts, but it's the truth nevertheless – pictures tell any story more effectively than words.<sup>21</sup>

Marston recognized that the medium itself perhaps could be as important, if not *more* important than the message it conveyed, and that the real core of comics is the medium itself. He acknowledged the power of images and image-driven narratives as well as the fantastic-driven plots in comics. Thus he saw the potential for comics to actually drive through change and convey ideology to the masses. More specifically Marston must have seen comics as the perfect medium to pursue his own ideological project.

Marston a convinced feminist, or at least some have called him that, the American scholar Lillian S. Robinson notes that Marston today would qualify into an "essentialist" school of feminism, ascribing certain qualities to women and men separately, like love was something according to Marston, that were ascribed to women, whilst e.g. violence was ascribed to men. Though at the same time Robinson notes the quite peculiar form Marston's essentialism takes, or rather it's the peculiar ontological path that his feminist position occasionally took.<sup>22</sup> At large he took a feminist stance (at least from our position) not only because it was right or fair, but also because he was convinced that women simply was better and would win in the long run. It is fair to assume that Marston possibly just wanted to be on the "winning team" so to speak, however that does not take away from the sincerity and resolve Marston exhibited during his entire career.

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<sup>21</sup> Daniels p.11-12

<sup>22</sup> Robinson p.27

Marston had already in his first academic book in 1928 *Emotions of Normal People* started to develop what he called “elementary behavior units”; an attempt to avoid subjective descriptions of emotional states, particularly in regards to dominance, compliance, submission and inducement, later to be known as the DISC model. These power relations and the tension between them outlined Marston’s idea of human behavior.<sup>23</sup>

Marston’s book also explored a somewhat pseudo-psychology of men and women, concluding that a woman's body contained ‘twice as many love generating organs and endocrine mechanisms as the male.’<sup>24</sup> He was thereby convinced that women were the superior sex and that men *could*, yet more importantly *should* be subdued by the female sexuality and that sexuality essentially was a power relation between submission and domination. Marston ascribed certain essentialist power relations to men and women, taking the stance that women were by nature less combative and more inclined to peace and nurturance, while men conversely were prone to force and violence. Marston was convinced that women were less susceptible than men to negative personality traits like aggression, subsequently men were characterized by force, and women by love. Marston was not convinced that qualities such as domination or submission was either essential masculine or feminine attributes per se, on the contrary, he saw it as quite legitimate for both men and women to adopt either a dominate or submissive behavior, depending on the circumstances. Yet these qualities were still ascribed in relation to bodies and the supposed difference between them.

In *Emotions of Normal People* Marston elaborated and explained that if a ‘woman remained unfulfilled in the arms of her male lover, then the man should curb his own selfish desires for immediate gratification, and submit for domination.’<sup>25</sup> He then offers the advice, that the woman should get on top of her man and ‘initiate all the movements of both parties’<sup>26</sup>. Marston’s interest in traditional role-reversals was supported by his own

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<sup>23</sup> Ironically Marston developed the DISC model as a reaction to Sigmund Freud’s use of mythical allegorical imagery like the Oedipus, and an attempt to remove subjectivity from psychology. Paradoxically with Marston’s venture into comics he has become one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s foremost mythmakers and user of mythical and antique imagery via Wonder Woman. Daniels Les, p.13

<sup>24</sup> Daniels p.22 and Jennifer K. Stuller (Ed. Jodi O'Brien), *Encyclopedia of Gender and Society Wonder Woman*, SAGE Publications, Inc. Thousand Oaks, 2009, p.4

<sup>25</sup> G.C. Bunn, ‘The lie detector, Wonder Woman and liberty: the life and work of William Moulton Marston’, *History of the Human Sciences*, 1997 10: 91, 1997, p.104 Available from Sage, (accessed October 23, 2013)

<sup>26</sup> Marston Moulton William, *Emotion of Normal People*, Routledge, New York, 2002 (1928), p.335

“scientific”<sup>27</sup> discoveries and showed that ‘*women prefer captivating men, and that men prefer to be captivated*’<sup>28</sup> [original emphasis]. In Marston’s model men had developed a capacity for responding with emotion aimed at taking selfish advantage of e.g. women, and that whilst ‘women’s sexual emotions predominantly appear to be submissive, it actually consists, for the most part, of actively inducement emotions.’<sup>29</sup>

Hence, Marston’s feminism finds itself in a strange rift; on the one hand women being equipped with the tools to dominate and ultimately for real social and economical freedom, but it’s done on the expense of sexualization of the female body and a stencilized female sexuality. It appears to boil down to a reversal of sexual connotations; women would use the language and tactics of their oppressors thus “playing” submissive, but in reality dominating.

Marston’s ideas took form during the late 20’s where women actually were beginning to develop ‘both the power and willingness to support themselves’<sup>30</sup>, this beginning of an emancipatory development must have pushed Marston to sought out to liberate women all over America! Like a self-proclaimed white knight he first did this by writing a series of self-help books like *You can be popular* (1936) *Try Living* (1937), and *March on! Facing life with courage* (1939), he also wrote a novel; *Venus with us: A tale of Cesar* (1932).<sup>31</sup> But as already mentioned Marston also turned towards a “new” medium that made him not only quite unique within the intellectual climate of the time, but also somewhat of an academic maverick; he turned towards mass culture.

Marston had over the years transformed himself into a minor celebrity, in part by his self-help books and self-orchestrated publicity stunts, which in part landed him jobs as a consultant psychologist for the emerging big players in mass culture. One of them being

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<sup>27</sup> Its noted by several scholars (including Bunn and Daniels) that while Marston’s intensions might always had been to produce useable research, his constant drifting between academia, pseudo-phycology, publicity stunts and work of fiction blurred the lines between them. As Bunn points out, his fascination with domination-submission categories was neither a empirical discovery nor a philosophical project. Instead Marston seems to have bases his claims as much on stereotypes as in science. And as one venture deeper into Marston’s literary contribution, it becomes increasingly harder to distinguee his own sexuality from the alleged Science. See in G.C. Bunn p.93-94

<sup>28</sup> W.M. Marston, *Bodily symptoms of Elementary Emotions*, *Psyche* 38:70-86, 1929, p.86

<sup>29</sup> Marston, 1929, p.86

<sup>30</sup> W.M. Marston, *Emotion of Normal People*, Routledge, New York, 2002 (1928), p.394-395

<sup>31</sup> However *Venus with us* got a rather cold welcome from the press, the New York World Telegram wrote ‘it seems that Cesar accomplished his major achievements of conquering the world at such odd times as he was not engaged in conquering the women of Rome.’ And with chapters titled ‘*Ladies Night in the High Priest’s Palace*’ one can sort of see were the New York World Telegram was hinting towards. in Daniels p.19

at *Universal Pictures*, a job he got after a publicity stunt he pulled in the *New York Times* in 1928, where he combined his idea of “elementary behavior units” with a blood pressure test (his version of the lie-detector) in order to compare the personalities of blond, brunettes and red-haired women.<sup>3233</sup> The job at Universal only lasted a year but that is where he met fellow scholar and professor at Columbia University, Walter B. Pitkin.<sup>34</sup> Together they wrote the book *The art of Sound Pictures* (1930) where they amongst other things predicted that the use of stereo sound would become standard in a time where sound was a luxury, as well as foreseeing color photography as the new standard; even though it was only being experimented on at the time.<sup>35</sup> This venture revealed two things, first Marston’s ambition to intellectualize the emerging mass-culture as a potent and powerful medium, and secondly that he had the intellectual tools to do it. In *The art of Sound Pictures* he combined both his elementary behavior units with his blood pressure test, also concluding that certain colors would correspond to preferences, like the color blue would inspire feelings of dominance in men.<sup>36</sup> Even though the scientific heft of his publicity stunt in *The New York Times* was questionable, like in for example the “conclusions” he hinted towards what would become Wonder Woman, by stating that by giving her dark hair (which according to Marston’s findings) would make her more emotional and with a higher empathic ability. Wonder Woman also wears a blue skirt which according to his and Pitkin *The art of Sound Pictures* would inspire feelings of dominance in men. In a 1937 interview in the *New York Times* Marston anticipated that ‘within 100 years the country will see the beginning of a sort of Amazonian matriarchy’<sup>37</sup> and within 500 years ‘a definite sex battle for supremacy’<sup>38</sup> would ensue, and after a millennia ‘women would take over the rule of the country, politically and economically’<sup>39</sup>. And Marston was convinced that women could and would use sexual enslavement to achieve that domination, and that men would just happily submit. Here it perhaps becomes painfully apparent to what extent Marston leaned on a heterosexual hegemony

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<sup>32</sup> Bunn p.97-98

<sup>33</sup> Yes, he actually did that, his “conclusions” was to say the least stereotypical, e.g. *The New York Times* concludes from Marston’s stunt that ‘Brunets Far More Emotional. Psychologist proves by charts and graphs’. And whilst the scientific heft may be debated, it seems way more likely to be an elaborate publicity stunt; Marston again and again showed an extraordinary ability to induce both the press, and the reader.

<sup>34</sup> Daniels p.16

<sup>35</sup> W.M. Marston and W.B. Pitkin, *The art of Sound Pictures*, D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1930 p.241-244

<sup>36</sup> Marston and Pitkin, p.262-264

<sup>37</sup> Marston November 11, 1937, p.27

<sup>38</sup> <sup>38</sup> Marston November 11, 1937, p.27

<sup>39</sup> <sup>39</sup> Marston November 11, 1937, p.27

in his new world order, he also didn't seem to have imagined that power would corrupt women as well. Although perhaps touchingly naïve these notions later served as the core to Wonder Woman, he even makes her travel a millennia into the future to meet the female president of the United States; Arda Moore and help her uncover a coup attempt by a jealous male senator (see image 2 in Appendix).<sup>40</sup> In fact many of the ideas Marston had made it into the comics, pointing towards Wonder Woman being much more than a mass cultural entertainment machine for Marston, but a real platform for intellectual debate and exploration.

Whilst the film industry might in the end prove too big and rigid for Marston to really make an impact in the emergence of the comic books superheroes presented itself with new opportunities, and with the arrival of Superman in June 1938, and perhaps more importantly; the huge popularity it amassed very quickly, opened new doors for Marston. He soon however became the psychological consultant for the popular women's magazine *The Family Circle*, where Marston in October 1940 was the subject of an interview in the article *Don't laugh at the Comics*.<sup>41</sup> Wherein he first addresses the issue of parents and teachers working over potential harm 'assiduous' comic book reading and exposure to the extensive violence, however he offers a alternative view on it; 'When a lovely heroine is bound at the stake, comic followers are sure that rescue will arrive in the nick of time' and that 'a bound or chained person does not suffer even embarrassment in the comics, and the reader therefore, is not being thought to enjoy suffering.'<sup>42</sup> This again served to prove Marston's astonishing ability to nestled himself in to what he wanted, because it didn't take long before Marston was a member of the Advisory Editorial Board of the *Detective* and *All American lines*, the companies that would eventually merge in to DC comics (today a subsidiary of Time-Warner). A masterful manipulation indeed by Marston, whose articles wasn't really negative about comics, but just enough and rather pointed at certain soft spots. But that was enough for DC to hire him to make the 'critical' articles cease.<sup>43</sup> This bold move opened the world of comics to Marston and the

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<sup>40</sup> W.M. Marston [Charles Moulton] (w), P.G. Harry (a), *Wonder Woman* #7, DC comics, New York, Winter 1943, p.5A/7

<sup>41</sup> He was interviewed by Olive Richard, the pseudonym for Olive Byrne, Marston's longtime assistant, lover and mother of two of his four children. She is also alleged to be the direct inspiration for Wonder Woman, she even wore a pair of large Indian bracelets and had dark long hair – just like Wonder Woman! Marston and Bryne also had two children and lived together with him and Marston's wife Elizabeth Holloway, who also had two children.

<sup>42</sup> W.M. Marston, 'Don't laugh at the Comics', *The Family Circle*, Vol.17 No.17, 1940 p.10

<sup>43</sup> Daniels p.20

following year in 1941 he put forth the first script under the pen name *Charles Moulton* in *All Star Comics* #8.

In *The American Scholar* in 1944 Marston wrote that he by creating Wonder Woman wanted to ‘create a feminine character with all the strength of Superman plus all the allure of a good and beautiful woman.’<sup>44</sup> With comics it appears that he is truly able to realize his vision, which to all intended purposes culminates in Wonder Woman. An Amazonian superheroine to counter the ‘blood-curling masculinity’<sup>45</sup> but with the allure and excitement characterized by a classic dominatrix, Wonder Woman asserted her role as the captivator. Marston actuality expresses this line of thought in a letter to the pioneering comic book historian Coulton Waugh 1943:

Frankly, Wonder Woman is psychological propaganda for the new type of woman who should, I believe, rule the world. There isn’t love enough in the male organism to run this planet peacefully. Woman’s body contains twice as many love generating organs and endocrine mechanisms as the male. What woman lacks in the dominance or self assertive power to put over and enforce her love desires. I have given Wonder Woman this dormant force but have kept her loving, tender, maternal and feminine in every other way. Her bracelets, with which she repels bullets and other murderous weapons, represent the Amazon Princess’ submission to Aphrodite, Goddess of Love and Beauty. Her magic lasso, which compels anyone bound by it to obey Wonder Woman and which was given to her by Aphrodite herself, represent the love charm and allure by which she compels men and women to do her bidding.<sup>46</sup>

Marston’s resolve to create an alternative to the masculine violence saturated, male-dominated and naïvely masculine comic books of the day must be seen as the culmination of an intellectual project spanning well over 20 years until 1947 when Marston past away. But the legacy of his project survived but takes different shapes and transform thru time, however the dual origins of Wonder Woman both incorporating the comic book origins and Marston’s project is perhaps the most considered and self-referred to in comic book history.

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<sup>44</sup> W.M. Marston, ‘Why 100,000,000 Americans read comics’, *The American Scholar*, 13(1), 1944, p.42f

<sup>45</sup> Marston, 1944, p.42

<sup>46</sup> Daniels p.22-3

## 1.2 To Simone

We will, from here on, look at the writer Gail Simone's rendition of Wonder Woman to try and grasp what apparatuses are in play in the contemporary sexualized discourse inscribed specifically in the body of Wonder Woman. Simone was the main writer of Wonder Woman from 2007 up till 2011, writing issue #14-44, her run as main writer on Wonder Woman has been celebrated as a return of the feminist ideals that once sprung Wonder Woman in the 40's. Not to mention that Simone is one of the very few women that has written comics, let alone Wonder Woman. Simone is also known for her harsh critique of the comic book industry, and especially its reoccurring use of depowering, killing or injuring women as a plot device in comics. Simone coined the term, (and website with the same name) *Women in Refrigerators* to refer to this common trope in comics.<sup>47</sup> Simone is also known for her talent for parodying established characters, in her column and consequent book *You'll all be Sorry!* Simone intertwined parody and humor with serious social commentary, but especially commentary on the comic book industry.<sup>48</sup> Both in *You'll all be Sorry* and *Women in Refrigerators* Simone presented harsh critiques of the comic book industry, especially how women were portrayed, marginalized and de-powered. Funny enough it was presumably these critiques that landed her writing jobs at the Simpsons and later at the comic book publishing house Marvel Comic writing the comic *Deadpool*. After her work on Marvel Comics though Simone moved over to DC comics, where she wrote on several titles prior to Wonder Woman, including *Action Comics* #827-831 and #833-835, and her widely celebrated run on *Birds of Prey* #56-90 and #92-108.<sup>49</sup> Eventually though Simone got the job as main writer on *Wonder Woman*, replacing Greg Rucka. The similarities between Simone and Marston are here in many ways striking. Both Simone and Marston landed their jobs inside the comic book industry via their critique of it they also had a clear ideological ambition with their use of mass culture, and comics in particular, as shown in their previous works. And as this thesis soon will show, the use of the body and sexuality in order to create a phantasmatic site for fantasy and most importantly, parody and satire about not only the tropes of the comic book medium, but about the hegemonic regimes

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<sup>47</sup> G. Simone, 'Women in refrigerators', [www.iby3.com](http://www.iby3.com), (accessed April 7, 2014)

<sup>48</sup> G. Simone, *You'll all be Sorry!*, About comics, New York, 2009

<sup>49</sup> DC Comics, 'Talent directory – Gail Simone', <http://www.dccomics.com/talent/gail-simone> (accessed may 14, 2014)

in all mass culture. Its then noting short of fitting that we jump from Marston to Simone as we dive into the nature of the contemporary discourse of sexuality.

## Chapter 2 – The Body and Language, The Body As Language

Referring back to the title of this thesis, WONDER WOMAN HAPPY MAGIC FUN SWORD GIRL SEXY! SEXY! FIGHT FIGHT! this chapter will start by understanding Simone's rendition of Wonder Woman as not only the materialized form that sexuality might take, but also that it is the interpretations of the surfacing of ideological structures via Language and especially the fusion of language and ideology. Because not only is Wonder Woman in her own right an iconic figure and one of the most popular and sold comic books, she has epitomized a strong and independent woman for a large portion of this century. Here the formation of a visual Language that materializes the sexualization of Wonder Woman's body and correspondently also the incorporated use of that as a symptomatic language. Because as the chapter before outlined, from the start with Marston, Wonder Woman's body has been loaded with meaning. And in a large part made as a sexual body, women were after all, in Marston's ideological world, capable of twice as much "love" as men, and should consequently use that in order to gain power, and ultimately achieve the matriarchy. However one should be clear to point out that while the playful use of sex, and sexual awe in Wonder Woman stayed intertwined with Wonder Woman after Marston's death in 1947 the ideological ideals dissipated and left where a hyper sexualization, elaborated in Mitra Emad's text on Wonder Woman, bondage and sexuality, where Emad wrote that the[...]

[...]Hypersexualizing Wonder Woman's body assures that female power is reigned in, tacitly directing the primary purpose of the body decorated in nationalist iconography to be an object for male sexual pleasure.<sup>50</sup>

Wonder Woman has then quite symptomatically embodied a dichotic state of her sexuality, both as a sexualized object to look at and project phantasms, but still also as an icon for feminine emancipation as a lingering shadow from the Marston years.<sup>51</sup> This dichotomy was then quite established as Simone then took over from Rucka as writer on Wonder Woman. Consequently Simone negotiated Wonder Woman's sexuality and the feminine via the body of Wonder Woman, and its use in the comics as a sexualized trope

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<sup>50</sup> M.C Emad, 'Reading Wonder Woman's Body: Mythologies of Gender and Nation', *The Journal of Popular Culture*, Vol. 39, No. 6, 2006, Blackwell Publishing Inc., p.982, Available from EBSCO host (accessed October 17 2013)

<sup>51</sup> In fact in the 70's Gloria Steinem resorted into reprinting early Marston-era Wonder Woman in the then newly started *Ms.* magazine, the journal for the American feminist movement. Pointing towards the real-world impact and ideological strength of Marston's Wonder Woman had.

prominent in comics. And as mentioned above, Simone had a reputation for mastering irony and parody in mass culture, in this chapter then, one should start by focusing on Simone's use of Wonder Woman's body, creating a language, and also submitting to an already hegemonic language as a first approach to the function of a parody. Once again bringing the title of this thesis to mind, where words are materialized to ideology of the body, 'sexy' and Wonder Woman is inevitable intertwined, a fact Simone seems to have used to her advantage, as we shall see Simone simultaneously exaggerated and kept at a distance. However there is also a theoretical framework that has to be defined, thus a large portion of this chapter will be devoted to intertwining the theories of M.M Bakhtin and Irigaray, and also defining what the Feminine is and how it relates to the body.

### 2.1 *Fantasizes*

Simone seems to use Wonder Woman's body more daring and clearly sexualized than her predecessor, showing off her body from angles and positions situated as a site for fantasies in the psyche of the reader, whilst simultaneously colliding with the materialization of hegemonic ideological schemata. That is regulating the body so to uphold the hegemonic social order, thus by using a language, already provided by the normative ideals at work in society and which uphold the idea of social order – ideology, Simone makes Wonder Woman into a materialized system of signs of that order. This does indeed seem as a conscious tactic from Simone to create a character which both embodies a clear sexed body, and a re-appropriation of symbols of power and violence, see for example page 3 in *Wonder Woman #32* (see image 3 in Appendix), the dichotomy of violence on the one hand, and a clearly sexed angle, exhibiting the body, opens for a conscious play with both these symptomatic systems of symbolizing the body, two systems which in this thesis will be called the Feminine and the Masculine. In this image a lot of focus is placed on her body, symptomatically formatting systems of signs on a body, there is not only a coalition of masculine and feminine here, but of the body as a vessel for being and the body as something more distanced, as something that is an object.

However the dichotomy of masculine and the Feminine should not be confused with women and men necessarily, because these are discursive structures, which are preformed.<sup>52</sup> These conscious operations are in a large degree very much intertwined in the images following Simone's overhaul of Wonder Woman, but by parting them one has

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<sup>52</sup> G. Simone (w) A. Lopresti (p) M. Ryan (i), *Wonder Woman #32*, DC comics, New York, Jul. 2009, [p.3]

the potential to unravel the use of the body via language but also materialized as a language in itself. Consequently as Wonder Woman's body becomes a screen on to which two conscious operations - a site of fantasies of the normative gaze, the body is defined by the normative structures of the *sexed*. The sexed is in this context the process of not only having a sexuality, but being defined by sexuality, intrinsically – somebody else's. If then this creates a site of fantasies then this site does also seem to be sexed, i.e. something only understood through sexuality, and if then this indeed is the case, then Simone's Wonder Women does not only constitute a site where the body is the operating as a categorizing object, but that it has been charged, and thus only understood through sexuality. Thus Wonder Woman can be exhibited and *looked at*. If comparing the operation of looking like to the realm of performative sexuality then the equivalent hegemonic operation must therefore be to *look*, thus the performative action is one in which one submits to be looked at. Hence implicitly there is an voyeuristic implication of this operation, as the reader does not exchange gazes with what which is looked at, thus there is no mutual economy of looking, but instead a projection of how the body should look, a hegemonic language. Again referring back to the title and image 14 in the appendix, where Wonder Woman actual is deconstructed in to the essential parts, fantastic action to veil the sex, and then a site of magic. For fantasies are indeed a function of what we may call magic, illogical and ascribed to sites via magical surfacing, in these cases the sexed body is given magical appearance and consequently harboring a language for symbolic points of references (bodies).

## 2.2 Heteroglossia, Dialect and Language

Bakhtin define language very broadly, as 'any communication system employing signs that are ordered in a particular order'<sup>53</sup>. However Bakhtin differentiates between what he calls *Another's language*; a language one appropriates, yet are not your own at any level, and what he calls *social language*; a language particular to a specific discourse, strata or social group of society (e.g. professional jargon, children's language or feminine/masculine languages) these are also more prone to be symbols and systems rather than contextual semiotic signs, and finally what he calls *national language* which basically correspond to the

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<sup>53</sup> M.M Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, M. Holmquist (ed.), tras. C. Emerson and M Holmquist, Texas Uni. Press, Austin, 1981, p.430

vernacular understanding of semantic and grammatical language, e.g. French, English or Swedish.<sup>54</sup> However Bakhtin developed his theory on literature, adapting it to a visual material has its challenges, if we can talk about a visual language it will directly become apparent that it is intrinsically more abstract and contextually interchangeable.

Heteroglossia however should be seen as a much more all-encompassing way of intertextualizing speech-ness, it literary is translated into different-toughs-ness and is a state of understanding the intertwined-ness of language, heteroglossia allows for a presence of several language simultaneously, co-existing and interrelating, both between them, but also intertextualized. So in the context of Wonder Woman, with the understanding of heteroglossia, e.g. what we so far have called the Feminine and the Masculine can co-exist in the same utterance – her body. This semi-formal component in language in turn is the base condition governing the operation of meaning in any utterance, the term Bakhtin used to describe his version of the semiotic speech act, and it is that which ensures the primary of context over text. Its function gives meaning in any given social, historical or psychological condition by contextualizing a concrete symbol via the meaning dialogically inscribed in the subtle nuances in a dialect. Bakhtin describes heteroglossia as being:

At any given moment of its historical existence, language is heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given bodily form. These 'languages' of heteroglossia intersect each other in a variety of ways, forming new socially typifying 'languages.'<sup>55</sup>

Heteroglossia is a way of exposing the things we do not know, that we know. A pre-logical space of “instinct” but a symbolically articulated knowledge ignored by the subject or.<sup>56</sup> Here the utterance is inherently tied to a site – a abstracted clustering of ideas and ideologies where the utterance implicitly comes in to dialogue with what is around it, its sender, receiver, opposite and hegemonic structures. The Bakhtinian model specifically takes in consideration the way something is uttered, thus this enables a point of entry in to the utterance, or specifically the expression of the body in Wonder Woman. If we where to consider her body as a concrete utterance of a language (a language of

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<sup>54</sup> Bakhtin 1981, p.430

<sup>55</sup> Bakhtin 1981, p.291

<sup>56</sup> S. Zizek, *Event – Philosophy in Transit*, Penguin books, London, 2014, p.9

normativity?), and thus a system employing signs that are ordered in a particular manor, then her body can be read, at least on a theoretical level as a language in it self. Thus in large disconnecting the body from her “conscious” psyche so to speak, leaving the utterances of that language in “the mouths” of the users of the language, i.e. readers. According to Bakhtin the novelistic heteroglossia in literature is characterized via five forms, and compiled by Goldman as:

(1) "comic play with language"; (2) a tale told by a narrator who is not the author; (3) "character zones," or places of contact between the language of the author and his characters [...]; (4) "distinct character speech," or clear differentiation in the language used by different characters; and (5) "framing genres," or allusions to other genres to define the work.<sup>57</sup>

These five characteristics are indeed present in Wonder Woman and can be adapted in order to dissect different kinds of symbolic orders, which are materialized in a particular order. Heteroglossia is also imperative in searching for non-explicit statements and thereby observing the arguably more sophisticated apparatuses of humor and parody, both of which analyzes the embodied self-criticism of contemporary eloquence in characters, like Wonder Woman who’s body simultaneously is used and read in a wide spectrum of dialogized meaning.<sup>58</sup>

### *2.3 Dialogization*

The term Dialogizing was developed by the Russian Linguist M.M. Bakhtin and describes a variety of conceptual processes but which are most notable in “verbal processes” where the relation to other linguistic modifiers are most obvious. According to Bakhtin almost anything a word, a discourse, language or even culture constantly undergoes dialogization as it becomes revitalized, de-privileged and aware of competing definitions of the same thing. Consequently everything, as it comes into our awareness is constantly becoming. An un-dialogized language is consequently absolute and authoritarian as dialogization consequently is inherently social and in particular a cognitive process.

A language is revalued in all its distinctiveness only when it is brought into relationship with other languages entering with them into one single heteroglot unity of societal becoming.

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<sup>57</sup> Goldman L. Max, ‘Language, Satire and Heteroglossia in the Cena Trimalchionis’, *Helios*, vol.35, no.1, Texas Tech University Press, 2008, p.52, Available from EBSCO host (accessed May 15, 2014)

<sup>58</sup> Goldman p.63

Every language in the novel is a point of view, a social-ideological conceptual system of real social groups and their embodied representatives. Insofar as language is not perceived as a unique socio-ideological system it cannot be material for orchestration, it cannot become the image of a language.<sup>59</sup>

Most notably is that dialogization is a process similar to the dialectics, in that meaning is produced via the meeting, or simultaneous clash of several meaning structures, and via that a new meaning can be drawn out. However the dialogic differs in a key aspect, it is intrinsically not reductive; meaning is created, not by the reductive fuse, but in the space in-between. Thus the things that are dialogized exist simultaneously, and not reduced to a synthesis, in fact the dialogization creates something intrinsically other, in-between the clash of e.g. social languages. This creation of another space of meaning and the element of dialogization where it becomes aware about its own competing definitions does indeed need some level of consciousness, creating the space in-between. In par this consciousness in respects to Wonder Woman could be acclaimed to the writer, the other two the reader, but together they project another linguistic consciousness and outlining a phantasmatic frame around it. Wonder Woman's linguistic consciousness then ascribes her meaning, projected via dialogue. This dialogue between reader, writer and in effect character is not as concrete as one between to living people, rather it's a schemata to outline the nature of where and how meaning is created, and most importantly, that it is non-reductive, several competing definitions, not only does, but always exists in the same concrete utterance. This is how one should start to describe Wonder Woman's body, because it is indeed impossible to outline an essence from it, rather the fact that competing definitions exists, all at the same time, inside the same body.

This process is what creates the framework for the self-reflectiveness, a dialogue in the utterance about itself, dialoguing meaning towards e.g. lived bodies the discursive structures and that opens for we shall elaborate later as the masquerading, a concept borrowed from Luce Irigaray, however Irigaray's theories shall be elaborated on in another section.

The body thus presents competing meanings of a concrete utterance, in this case, Wonder Woman's body, between on the one hand being looked at as a sexualized object, and on the other hand as a strong and independent female role model does not reduce

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<sup>59</sup> Bakhtin 1981, p.411-2

each other, instead the dialogization allow us to look at them existing simultaneously. Take for instant the concrete example in *Wonder Woman #24*, where Wonder Woman is attacked by past version of herself, the Marston Wonder Woman, the 1975 television series Lynda Carter Wonder Woman and a few others (see image 4 in Appendix).<sup>60</sup> This is a concrete instance where compelling definitions of the same character [utterance] are compiled and competing for dominance. And are not only fighting for competing definitions, but are indeed in dialogue with each other, situating sexualization, violence, feminine and masculine languages in a dialogue forming a new structure incorporating all of these. In this particular instance the actual utterance is fragmented and Wonder Woman's own dialogized ideological, social, historical and sexualized strata has become aware and are made visible to the reader, yet this operation is always at work, inside her body.

In the Bakhtinian model the speech-act, or utterance as he calls it, is a conscious action, a performance where ideology and performativity conjuncts. In fact Bakhtin argues that the utterance exists in other people, before you put it [the utterance] in your own mouth, and consequently also making it yours, appropriating all other dialogized meaning. So the utterance is in a large extent an embodied experience, and as one utters a word, or applies a language, that dialogized space of meaning is made into your own.<sup>61</sup> Thus the sexed language in Wonder Woman is inevitably embodied and not only put in relation to the body as a language at a distance, but actually materialized in the body as her own.

As meaning is subsequently created on an other plane; dialogized with form and the contextual frame with which the utterance creates a narrative, social stratification, identities, values, boundaries and crossings, cultural classes of discourse and tools.<sup>62</sup> Thus a few words, a dialect, ideological schemata or some other language-coding put to use in the speech act provides a proper symbolic intervention, which then in turn transubstantiate the image to a phantasmatic appetences of meaning.<sup>63</sup> Bakhtin lends much of his understanding of the Utterance from Saussure's *la Parole* [speech act], but

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<sup>60</sup> Simone G. (w) Chang B. (a), *Wonder Woman #24*, Nov 2008, DC comics, New York, 2008, [p.24]

<sup>61</sup> Bakhtin 1981, p.327-8

<sup>62</sup> G. Deleuze, (1984/2006) *Cinéma et Pensée*, course 67 taught on 30/10/1984, *A voix haute*, In L. Philippe, and Benoît Tricard, 'The Bakhtinian Theory of Chronotope (Time-Space Frame) Applied to the Organizing Process', Oxford University Press, 2012, p.1 Available from EBSCO host (accessed February 5, 2014)

<sup>63</sup> S. Zizek, *The Abyss of freedom/ Ages of the World*, University of Michigan press, 4th ed. 2000(1997), p.58-59

the utterance is intrinsically situated outside, or in the space in-between the psyche and ideology. Bakhtin also develops Saussure's concept into a concept not only dealing with the verbal embodiment of the speech act but in the creation of a speech event, making the utterance specifically social, historical, concrete and dialogized on the lived plane as well as on a conceptual. In a visual medium such as a comic book each visual utterance, regardless how trivial it may seem, a living dialogical synthesis is constantly taking place between the inherent logic (psyche) and ideology, between the inner and outer, seen and unseen. In each speech act, subjective experience perishes in these discursive facts of the uttered word, and the expressed word is subjectified in the act of responsive understanding.

This is the instants where meaning is created and surfaces from ideology into the perceptible sphere. In this context, ideology should be seen as the system that justify social order, and as the utterance is an embodied experience when the utterance is made into your own when it is uttered, or in the visual language: depicted, the utterance intrinsically a surfacing of ideology and justification of an particular social order. Again going back to the example from *Wonder Woman #24* where she is made to fight versions of her self, the competing dialogized meanings of e.g. the sexualization of her body, and the clear bondage references is embodied via the utterance.

#### 2.4 *Another's Language and Parody*

In *The Discourse in the Novel* Bakhtin uses a passage from Charles Dickens's novel *Little Dorrit* to illustrate the parodic meaning of the hetroglottal tension in the "ceremonial speech", which in this case is intrinsically "not your own"-language, to show how ideology, and especially the hegemonic ideology surfaces, in the use of different-language-ness.<sup>64</sup>

The conference was held at four or five o'clock in the afternoon, when all the region of Harley Street, Cavendish Square, was resonant of carriage-wheels and double-knocks. It had reached this point when Mr Merdle came home *from his daily occupation of causing the British name to be more and more respected in all parts of the civilised globe capable of the appreciation of world-wide commercial enterprise and gigantic combinations of skill and capital*. For, though nobody knew with the least precision what Mr Merdle's business was, except that it was to coin

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<sup>64</sup> Bakhtin 1981, p.303

money, these were the terms in which everybody defined it on all ceremonious occasions, and which it was the last new polite reading of the parable of the camel and the needle's eye to accept without inquiry. (Italics added by Bakhtin to emphasize parodic stylization of the language)<sup>65</sup>

In this manner Bakhtin manages to describe the aware use of what he calls 'another's speech' by which without any formal markers in the text, be a sort of concealed form of parody. It is the inadequacy of embodying another's language in "your own" utterance that in par creates a rift, or space where the dialogization of the parodic meaning, co-exists with the "formal"-meaning, introducing another indirect discourse.<sup>66</sup> Meaning is thus created in the tension between the different kinds of speech, rather than as an effect of them.

As the understanding of both Language and Ideology becomes closer there seems to be a convergence between the two, they appear to actually be quite similar and one might describe ideology as a system of signs ordered in a system of ideas that regulates both vision and action and that has a strong hierarchical structure, structuring the order of words in order to be understood – thus as a language. There is also another point of connectivity between the two, both language and ideology regulate and transmits power and power relations simultaneously, thus not only structuring social order, via e.g. dialect of ideological strata like dress-codes but simultaneously transmit – signaling the position within social order to other participants. Yet both are in some ways also defined by their differences from other structures, what there are not, and sometimes what they almost are - their closeness, Swedish is considered Swedish as long as a utterance is similar enough to other utterances that is inscribed to that structure.

Not only are ideology and language a result of each other, as the parameters and formal restriction in large formulates the outlines of ideology, makes it communicable so to speak. Language is thus also formed by the form of ideology, as it is in the very nature of language that it excludes some people who cannot understand as well as restricting meaning, e.g. to use verbal language to describe a trauma is often both impossible and inadequate. Though ideology and language are also ontologically akin to one another as they not only could never exist independently nor can it be in a static relation. As the consciousness condemns ideology to the un-seen – the unconsciousness, so to justify

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<sup>65</sup> Bakhtin 1981, p.303, Original quote from Dickens Charles, Little Dorrit, Book 1, chapter 33

<sup>66</sup> Bakhtin 1981, p.303f

social order as a natural state, however in contrast to a traditional Marxist reading of ideology, where ideology is placed in the subconscious and drives social order, here ideology rather is a discursive structure made into a scapegoat for the social order. The Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek writes in *The sublime Object of Ideology*, that:

ideology is not simply a 'false consciousness', an illusory representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as 'ideological' - 'ideological' is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence<sup>67</sup>

Consequently via this definition, ideology places itself not as an unconscious operation, guiding the hand of social order, but as the illusion, of projected structure that justifies it. Here in accordance to Wonder Woman and the symbolic order of her that places her body as both a sexualized image and the implicit materialized language, ideology is the operative justification of that direction of gaze. Thus ideology is materialized via a gaze that produces structures, which is then in turn materialized as an utterance. One can thus observe as the hegemonic gaze regulates how Wonder Woman can be materialized in all of the examples we've seen so far, yet most apparent is it perhaps in *Wonder Woman #32* (see image 3 in appendix) where both our, as readers gaze is directed by our position, and her materialized body. Thus the hegemony of the patriarchy of western contemporary culture, is a discursive structure, regulating the female body, via a sexed gaze, prompting a preformative function of the Feminine, concretized in Simone's rendition of Wonder Woman.

With this language then, Simone's Wonder Woman appears to submit to the regulatory regimes directed but hegemonic structures as an utterance made to be "looked at" by the hegemonic gaze, and this in itself seems to have two intertwined effects. Both however seems to be dealt with by Simone, the first one being that it situates Wonder Woman inside the dialogized field of beauty and consumption culture where the female body is situated as a consumable, fetishized commodity, and forcibly made to embody the Feminine. The second effects seems to be the articulation of the gaze itself, like in Marston's rendition of Wonder Woman the submission to the sexed gaze of the reader where made to trick or lure them by the "feminine allure" to read and come back to Wonder Woman, thus in sort of toying with the readers sexuality. Marston did this in

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<sup>67</sup> S. Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Verso, London, 2008 (1989) p.15-6

order to in short acclimatize them (mostly boys) to the other side of Wonder Woman's dichotomy, the impending matriarchy.<sup>68</sup> This approach is also used by Simone, the sexed allure of the symbolic order body seems to be used as a way to trigger sexed fantasies in conjuncture with the submission to the regulatory ideals of the hegemonic gaze and subsequent formation of language, in part this is the articulation of Wonder Woman's breasts, legs, the bondage-like situations and the exhibiting of her full profiled body. One such good example is in *Wonder Woman #41* where Wonder Woman fights Power Girl (see image 5 and 6 in Appendix) where both their bodies are exaggerated in their exhibited positions to a quite high sexed degree.<sup>69</sup> The materialization of Wonder Woman's body is not an effect of language, but by a surfacing of ideology, in an attempt to justify social order. The hegemonic language that projects the sexualization of Wonder Woman's body is via those utterances.

However these instances where this surfacing of ideology has so far mostly been quite stereotypical, but Simone's parodic ambition becomes apparent is in *Wonder Woman #34* (see image 7 and 8 in Appendix) where Wonder Woman and The Black Canary have to dress up to become more "sexy" and to show more of her breast so to get in to a meta-human cage-fight tournament (yes, it's a thing), but what she appears to do is a parodic utterance, embodying the hegemonic sexualized way of looking at her body, and miming it.<sup>70</sup> Resulting in an inadequacy of the embodiment itself, as Wonder Woman embodies another's language, but as "her own" the disjuncture becomes almost silly and trivial, thus in that disjuncture in-between languages creating a parody of a dialogized hegemonic language of sexualization of her body. Like in *little Dorrit* the taking of another's speech, here the masculine sexed speech, and embodying them there is a disjuncture. Its made funny by Wonder Woman's inadequacy of the situation, she does not seem to understand why they need to be sexy, funny perhaps because she normally wears a bath suit-type of costume which many might interpret as "sexy". However the situation is over exaggerated by Simone who seem to strive for this disjuncture where the language of the hegemonic – intrinsically another's language, is shown for what is, by being exaggerated and disjuncture.

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<sup>68</sup> Daniels, p.33-5

<sup>69</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M (i), *Wonder Woman #41*, DC comics, New York, Apr 2010, [p.9]/4 and [p.18]/3

<sup>70</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M (i), *Wonder Woman #34*, DC comics, New York, Sep. 2009, [p.11]/1

## 2.5 *Ontology, Materialization and Fantasies*

The materialized plane, and the operation of materialization are indeed most often understood as connected to the mythic, or magical operation. However that would associate it with the *place* – a magical surfacing of something previously un-seen, however in the context of embodiment, materialization is the moment of operation when the embodied substance becomes analogue to the body. Bringing to mind a portion of the title again, HAPPY MAGIC FUN, vocalizing the magic in the formation of the materialization. In science fiction the term materialization is often used in conjunction with teleportation, used to describe the instant where the body is put together again, from an abstract, or de-materialized state in for example a wormhole or a teleportation device, in to a concrete form, a body. In these examples the materialization is the situation where the body is made tangible, and understandable as a body.

However materialization in this manor also implies that as teleporting the un-materialized transportation from one geographical point to another there is a point of departure, a point in contact only through the teleporting. In the book *the abyss of freedom* Slavoj Žižek makes a similar hypothesis concerning teleportation, Žižek uses the Ronald Emmerich's 1994 film *Stargate*, a film about a metallic ring of unknown (alien) origin that when operated correctly can open a wormhole and transport anyone how steps through it to another planet (even another galaxy) with another Stargate on.<sup>71</sup> Žižek argues that the particular action of the teleportation and actual movement from one geographical point of reference to another creates the topographical structure and constitutes a *dispositif* of the screen of phantasmatic-apparitions, because not only is the teleportation an operation that opens Other scenes of fantasy, but also a type of topological twist, turning-into-itself. However as any phantasmatic performance from the perspective of a viewer it is a magical and fantastic thing, but as one were to go backstage; the phantasmatic dissipates as the poverty of this illusion is exposed.<sup>72</sup> Similarly the materialization of the sexed site appears operates as a magical linkage between the geographical points of references of body and the conceptual plane of the normative ideals. This linkage is done via the operation of fantasies, which Žižek connects to

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<sup>71</sup> *Stargate*, dir. Roland Emmerich, USA, MGM, 1994

<sup>72</sup> Žižek 2000(1997), p.58-9

ideology as:

*Fantasy is a means for an ideology to take its own failure into account in advance.*<sup>73</sup>[original emphasis]

Thus fantasies does not only account for the impending failure of ideology but it anticipates the imminent a fill material for the sexed discourse, to fill the gaps emerging as it materializes, filling the gaps to keep it afloat so to speak. Without the structuring of fantasies, directed towards the Feminine body, the phansasm of the naturality of social order – the patriarchy would inevitable dissipate in to thin air.

### *2.6 Becoming Feminine and the Phantasm of the Sexed Site*

As in the sexed discourse of sexuality, language not only justifies the masculine hegemony but also defining the feminine body as an object of desire when transcended to images. With the Bakhtinian idea of the utterance, it can consequently be deployed as Wonder Woman's own symptomatic language constructed by a semiotic system of signs. This embodied utterance consequently is made up by a series of symbolic signs made concrete by connection to the semiotic system of signs; a pseudo-language of sort, which is not completely a full-blood language, but it adopts the syntax of the masculine gaze through the dialogization of the female body. The Feminine should be seen as a discursive system of signs which is inherently a hegemonic construction, and the Feminine as language is consequently something governed by the attention of the masculine heterosexual sexuality, which in psychoanalytical terms is described by Irigaray as follows:

Psychoanalytic discourse on sexuality is the discourse of truth. A discourse that the truth about the logic of truth: namely, that *the feminine occurs only within models and laws devised by male subjects*. Which implies that there are not really two sexes, but only one. A single practice and of the sexual.<sup>74</sup> [original emphasis]

Here Irigaray makes it clear that the *Feminine* is to be considered a part of the masculine sexuality, a product so to speak of the male phallogentric sexuality and expressed as ideology that acts within the male subject, and as shown above, it is articulated through images, as sexual desires not only represented through images, but ontologically is the

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<sup>73</sup> Zizek 2008(1989) p.142

<sup>74</sup> Irigaray Luce, *This sex which is not one*, trans. Carolyn Burke, Cornell University Press, New York, 1985 (1977), p.86

fetishism of images. This is why Irigaray advocates not for equality, which according to her is a mistaken expression of the real objective,

The feminine should, to be absolutely clear, be seen in the intertwined context of ideology and language, it inhabits and manifests itself in the realm of the body, the seen and the outer, in contrast to what can be seen as the inner, which is dictated by the inherent logic. Via this brief initial outline, the feminine is constructed as a symbolic order, dictated via ideology to justify social order. Femininity however is the inner, it inhabits the being and whilst there is some connectivity between the psyche and the materialized body, their intertwined-ness is not a given. So here we should divide these two; the feminine and femininity into two very separate categories. The Feminine is the materialization of the imposed hegemonic vision of the masculine, it's the normative ideals which manifests itself as ideology and consequently regulates, and upholds social order as stagnate.<sup>75</sup> The Feminine is here the symbolic analogue to the lived life equivalent of Gender, which Judith Butler connects to a linguistic preformativity '[w]ithin the inherited discourse of the metaphysics of substance, gender proves to be performative, that is, constituting the identity it is purported to be.'<sup>76</sup> However the Feminine should also be understood as difference, but not as a difference which positions male and female people asymmetrically, but in relation to language, social and economic power and to meaning.<sup>77</sup> It is in itself a phantasm, thus something that tricks us into seeing something that is not there. The American scholar Judith Butler connects the Feminine with performance and the embodiment of regulatory ideals.

To the extent that the naming of the "girl" is transitive, that is, initiates the process by which a certain "girling" is compelled, the term or, rather, its symbolic power, governs the formation of a corporeally enacted femininity that never fully approximates the norm. This is a "girl", however, who is compelled to "cite" the norm in order to qualify and remain a viable subject. Femininity is thus not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is in dissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment.<sup>78</sup>

Consequently the Feminine is then also phantasmatic materialized on the body

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<sup>75</sup> G. Pollock Griselda, *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, Routledge, London, 1988, p.147-8

<sup>76</sup> J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, New York, 1990, p.24-5

<sup>77</sup> Pollock p.56

<sup>78</sup> J. Butler, *Bodies That Matter*, Routledge, New York, 1993, p.177

specifically, it's those ideological machines that regulate how the Feminine body should look, act and be looked at. By this definition the Feminine is inherently passive, more an effect of the masculine than anything. That is why one should not confuse the Feminine with Femininity, which for these intended purposes is intertwined with identity, being and action, it's the inner, not necessarily bound to the body and is always concrete, yet never materialized.

Irigaray links the ideological matrix of the restrictive regimes of sexuality with the body and the production of the Feminine body as the screen which then ideology is projected on. Irigaray also hints towards understanding the Feminine as something which not only is projected as absolute, but which inevitably creates a phantasm of becoming. An illusionary projection of equality and ownership of the body, that is not only false, but that is in fact the crux of the clustered ideology that regulates the body.<sup>79</sup> *Becoming* in these senses is the concept outlined by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* as a state of change, fluidness and in the movement of difference. They are however quite clear that the state of becoming is not a correspondence between relations, neither is it a resemblance, an imitation or at the limit, an identification. They also make clear that becoming does not happen in the imagination.<sup>80</sup> It's something that is connected to physicality but has its operating function in the difference. Then as one starts to outline something as a sexed site in correlation with the Feminine some metaphysical characteristics start to emerge, because if the Feminine intrinsically is something what is projected, something that is laid *on* the matrix of the body and consequently is something directed from "above" (and femininity consequently from beneath), then the sexed, becomes a concept of its own, describing the frame of the phantasmatic screen which defines the things within accordingly to a sexuality that is projected.

The projection consequently operates the becoming, creating an screen on to which ideology can cluster, creating Wonder Woman as a sexed site where the ideological ideas of the Feminine is materialized into a symbolic order, putting together symbols of the body, (which the masculine has monopoly over) into a particular order – consequently a language in itself. But as a language the Feminine not only is projected as

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<sup>79</sup> L. Irigaray, *Speculum of the other Woman*, trans. Gill C. Gillian, Cornell University Press, New York, 1985 (1974), p.255-6

<sup>80</sup>G. Deleuze And F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, Continuum, London, 2004(1988), p.262

the natural state, but as it justifies social order inscribes a system of performativity which is then perpetuated as the natural state. However the Feminine as a language is positioned via the inherent passivity (which is not the same as an inadequacy of action, but a consequent of that the Feminine is not situated in the body of the femininity, but as a projection of the masculine), not as feminine in itself but intrinsically not-masculine, as a difference only in accordance to the subject, not between two. Thus the Feminine is intrinsically only not masculine, that is the basis of the difference, but here a slight paradox starts to emerge, if the Feminine is a projection of the masculine, but at the same time is only definable as non-masculine, then what is projected? Is it only difference? If so, then the masculine must embody those differences as well, if they are projected. This does indeed situate the masculine as an intrinsically schizophrenic subject, and at the same time all-encompassing language, materialized in bodies. Thus here one should consider the nature of language as the communicative system of signs, thus the crux of the projection, if we actually imagine a real screen on a cinema, then the body would be the silver screen, its real texture form and being obscured to us by the projection, making something which is right there covered by projection, which then in turn are language. The projector is ideology, projecting language on the screen so to justify social order.

But as any language, as shown via Bakhtin, one can by positioning language in the wrong context (another's speech) or embodying someone else's language, the inadequacy of the embodiment, and the disjuncture generates a parody, a distance between the "spoken" language and the one who just "spoke" it, and this is an important discrepancy between images and identity as via the parody the space widens, and the ideological structures can be exposed. The Feminine can thus consequently be parodied by disjuncture this all-encompassing masculine language, and show its real inadequacy as a natural state. This is the operation in which by dressing up, masquerading as the hegemonic utterance, and by disjuncture it and exaggerating or "using" it incorrectly, one can use the sexualization of the body, which clusters in the sexed site via the Feminine symbolic regime disjuncture the masculine regime, and as the Irigaray puts it:

Female sexualization is thus the effect of a logical requirement, of the existence of a language that is transcendent with respect to bodies, which would necessitate, in order-nevertheless-to become incarnate, "so to speak" taking women one by one. Take that to mean that woman does not exist, but that language exists. That woman does not exist owing to the fact that language – a language – rules as master, and that she threatens – as

a sort of "prediscursive reality"? - to disrupt its order.<sup>81</sup>

The operation of "looking like" again becomes vital for the understanding of a feminine language. The disjuncture occurs as the order of the regulatory regime is disrupted via the inadequacy of language. The concrete utterance that intersects the phantasm and ideology too become entangled, and this site of feminine language is then the basis of what constitutes the sexed site in Wonder Woman, as an embodiment of the Feminine.<sup>82</sup>

Situating Wonder Woman as a sexed site where the ideological regimes of the Feminine is projected and thus using Wonder Woman as the framing and screen on to which define these regulatory regimes, thus positions Wonder Woman as a passive effect of the masculine and the site of the sexed. As Wonder Woman could be argued to embody the over exaggerated sexualized Feminine body as the symptomatic symbolic order of the Feminine language is concretely materialized, in the extensive exposition of her body. The positions her body is made to pose in, and the actions the body is made to preform the feminine and the phansasm of gender.<sup>83</sup> In one of the Italian scholar Giorgio Agamben's early books *Stanzas* he situates the fantasy as a effect of sensation and translated through the Phantasmatic site (basically a belief), which within these parameters should be translated into the ideological structure, of e.g. the feminine, which then consequently is directed into fantasy.<sup>84</sup> According to Agamben it 'animates our dreams and dominates our waking moments more than we are perhaps willing to admit.'<sup>85</sup> However the Phansasm also directs language, intellect and memory, putting the operating nature of the phansasm very close to the way that ideology is dealt with by e.g. Zizek and Bakhtin.<sup>86</sup>

The sexed site consequently defines the materialization of the masculine syntax and gives the submissive embodiment of the hegemony form, as the image of a feminine body, translated in such a way that it only is translatable through sexuality. However it also provides the point of entry of the masquerading, as it needs something concrete to actually "dress up as" and the preformative nature of the feminine and the phantasm of identification in the assumption of the sexed, thus allows the Feminine to materialized in

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<sup>81</sup> Irigaray 1985 (1977), p.89

<sup>82</sup> Irigaray 1985(1977), p.89

<sup>83</sup> Butler 1993, p.59-60

<sup>84</sup> G. Agamben Giorgio, *Stanzas*, trans. Ronald L. Martinez, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p.76-7

<sup>85</sup> Agamben p.77

<sup>86</sup> For example see Zizek's introduction to *The Sublime Object of Ideology*(1989) and Bakhtin's *Discourse in the Novel* in *The Dialogical Imagination* (1981)

to body it also provides the concrete utterance which then can be miss-used and consequently disjuncture itself. Then through the critical distance of the dichotic consciousness, can be masqueraded, preformed –disjunctioning the feminine body from the ideological strata and operating on a parodic plane, which even further can aid in the distancing of the body and ideology.

### *2.7 Difference and Masquerade*

Irigaray develops a theory of difference; as a tactic of resistance and an attempt to create a power structure separate from the phallogentric, via imitating it - and distancing the body from ideology. Thus a theory of real difference; intrinsically between two subjects, as apposed to the pseudo-difference of non-masculine and masculine, but as the two operating and active subjects, where the phallogentric regime no longer rules supreme. The term Phallogentric is however most often connected to the philosopher Jacques Derrida but widely used by specifically Irigaray as a term to describe the privileged point of view of the masculine in the construction of meaning. Wonder Woman is consequently described in feminine language as a materializing in her body by the effect of the phallogentric gaze.

The symbol-monopoly that justifies the contextual domination of the Feminine body, does in this light again only mediate through the masculine phallogentric filter, and in response the feminine language must mimic or imitate the masculine in an attempt to evade total repression and destruction of her sexuality.<sup>87</sup> As the masculine is the holder of the monopoly of signs of power, one must consequently imitate those symbols in order to gain symbolic access to that discursive power. Again the hetroglottal hybrid dialogue materialized in Wonder Woman's body and the closeness symbols of masculine discursive power, such as potentiality of violence is done by adopting, or imitating masculine symbols, one such example can be found in *Wonder Woman #16* (see image 9 in Appendix), where Wonder Woman appropriates symbols otherwise connected with the masculine, in particular the poses and weapons otherwise symbolically monopolized

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<sup>87</sup> Irigaray 1985(1974), p.72

by the masculine body.<sup>88</sup> While at the same time exposing her body as a sexed site of femininity, by becoming a mirror of the masculine. Taking another's language, and appropriating it in dialogue with the feminine an ontology of appropriating the masculine symbols in order to gain admittance to power is described as mimicry [*mimetisme*], an imitation of the masculine. An embodied strategy for dealing with the realm of discourse, where the utterance of the subject is posited as masculine, in which a conscious operation assumes the feminine style and posture assigned to her within this discourse in order to uncover the mechanisms by which it regulates her. In contrast, Irigaray also develops another concept, which is a similar in operation and that is its analog; the masquerade [*la mascarada*] which is an alienated or false version of femininity, the projected feminine, arising from the woman's awareness of the masculine sexualized desires. The masquerade permits the experience of desire, not in her own right, but as the masculine desire situates her. Consequently the masquerade is an embodiment of the regulatory structures that are expected, a performance where one submits to the sexuality of the other.

The inscribed closeness to violence in Wonder Woman's body, or at least the constant potential of violence, borrows from the hegemonic and normative masculine attributes, thus in some ways transgresses the normative spheres. The materialization of these dichotic sexed-coded dialects of the hegemonic gaze puts Wonder Woman's linguistic consciousness, her femininity in a state of movement, a rhythmic oscillation, sometimes abruptly exposing its own inadequacy to its object, and sometimes on the contrary becoming one with it.<sup>89</sup> This implicates that Wonder Woman, inside her own body contains the building blocks of a hybrid dialogization; with the mixing of different linguistic (un)consciousness-es inside one concrete utterance intersecting both the ideological restrictions and the logic in which they operate. Thus embodying both the mimicry and masquerade and as Bakhtin describes it, as a rhythmic oscillation between submission to the masculine regime, and a parodic distance towards it.<sup>90</sup> Constantly establishing a boundaries in correlation to the spectrum of difference, a active and

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<sup>88</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M (i), *Wonder Woman #16*, DC comics, New York, Mar. 2008, [p.17]/1

<sup>89</sup> Bakhtin 1981 p.302

<sup>90</sup> Bakhtin 1981 p.303

passive coexisting states of being, simultaneously regulating the merging of the mimetic dichotomy and keeping them apart.<sup>91</sup>

It is the dichotic conscious performance that sets these two operations apart, but simultaneously perpetuates them, yet the difference between them are subsequently the conscious effort of either dominating or submitting to the masculine symbolic language. In the Feminine materialized in Wonder Woman's body however shows traces of both these conscious modes of operations. One part Wonder Woman's body seems to be one of masquerade, it's the epitomized female body, posed in ways, and from angles so to not only produce a sexed site, the other part however seem intrinsically aware of its own masquerading and keeping a critical distance, only miming the Feminine.

This dichotomy of the two inherent conscious tactics imply another Bakhtian term: the hybridization, which entail the simultaneous use of two or more linguistic consciousness's within a single concrete utterance, which in this case both "inhabits" or is materialized in Wonder Woman's body. This requires the masquerading and miming to not only be an intersecting point for two separate ideological implications, but also in effect create a sort of phantasmatic screen on which to plaster the hybridization. For Bakhtin this hybridization necessitates a separation of the two consciousness-es via a kind of social space, which in this context possibly could be understood as a difference. A difference understood via the sum of the spatial and conceptual space "in-between" the conscious tactics rather than the sum of their being.

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<sup>91</sup> G. Deleuze and F. Guattari p.353

## Chapter 3 – The Body as Image, Image as Body

This chapter will deal with the concept of images, and specifically the body as an image, once dialogized and the oscillation between what Luce Irigaray calls the masquerade and the mimesis, which was started to be outlined in the previous chapter, however the it does appears as a dichotomy and which is juxtaposed in the same utterance. But first one must dissect the operation of *looking*, which in part is the function of the mimesis, based on this operative function, the exaggeration of that system will also be dealt with before then the oscillation of these structures is elaborated.

Firstly though one must recognize that the active subject does not only looks, but is in it self preforming an act of the ideological regime by looking. Not only as a passive receiver of capitalist mass-produced goods, but also as an active operative – supplying fantasy to the image. Giorgio Agamben puts a lager emphasis on the subconscious in his use of phansasm, where again the sensory inputs is translated through the phansasm and then directed as fantasy, like a screen in the unconscious where these fantasies can be projected on.<sup>92</sup> However as a contrast Judith Butler has another understanding of the function of phantasmatic, Butler means that the sexed is always produced as a rendition of hegemonic norms, which could be understood as a kind of performance. Thus this discursive performativity appears to produce that which it names, consequently enacting its own referent.<sup>93</sup> Thus by preforming the Feminine, Wonder Woman consequently both enforces it, and uses the same as her referent. Thus by enacting *her own* referent Wonder Woman produces a phansasm of identification and assumption of the sexed. So in Butler's idea the phansasm is a result of the unconscious, the phansasm is projected as a justificatory image, outside the unconscious in order to project these false identificatory norms. Thus in a large capacity transcending the Feminine into a pure image, separated from being, more like a protective effect of regulatory norms. However this transcendence, or reduction of the Feminine into images does not only apply to regimes controlling the body, it can be used to regulate other kinds of ideological ideals as well, and fused to the Feminine body they are perceived as symptomatic.

### 3.1 *The Body, Beauty and Patriotism*

As Wonder Woman's body is not only defined, but also only capable of being

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<sup>92</sup> Agamben p.77

<sup>93</sup> Butler 1993 p.71

understood in relation to the masculine regulatory sexed gaze that forms not only the perspectives that the readers is forced to gaze upon her body, but also the ideals that she embodies in the physical appearance and the closeness to sexual situations. The sexed ensures that sexuality is lifted from being into a discursive plane. Sexuality, according to Irigaray, can only be negotiated thru the masculine, as it is that regime that regulates the feminine, because the Feminine is regulated by the masculine gaze thus there is not two sexualities but only one.<sup>94</sup> But by intersecting the ideal of the sexed site into a materialized expression – her body which not only by definition is a non-place [non-geographical] but is as already discussed, the junction of ideals of the feminine body as the perfect defines itself through the difference of other places.

This argument however rests on the notion of Wonder Woman as the manifestation of the imagined perfect feminine body, and the argument gains momentum as one puts her body in to a dialogical relation with other manifestations of a utopic – or fantasized gaze. On the variant front cover of *Wonder Woman #28* (see image 10 in Appendix) Wonder Woman stands on a pedestal with the inscription ‘Liberty’ facing toward the reader, she also holds a sword and shield and she is gazing slightly upwards seemingly into infinity.<sup>95</sup> Both the pose and the pedestal indeed bring to mind classical sculpture, appropriating the idea of divine beauty and furthering the utopic idea of the feminine body inscribed to an American patriotic idea. Bringing together the idea of classic beauty and patriotic, positioning the sexed body as an analogue for the cluster of ideas that is America, fusing the utopic body and patriotism in to one heteroglottal utterance. The notion that Wonder Woman’s body embodies patriotic ideas such as liberty and freedom into the sexed site of the feminine body has been elaborated by Emad, who not only points on the reoccurring use of scenes of bondage as a repressive apparatus – holding the ‘femininity’ at bay so to speak, but also constituting a phantasmatic site for fantasies.

Wonder Woman’s body constitutes a historical site for the interplay of the culturally oppositional spheres of femininity vs. (masculine) nation, private sexuality vs. public politics/war, and relationships vs. action in battle. The intersections of these separate spheres are fundamentally reconciled by asserting the masculine realm over the feminine

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<sup>94</sup> Irigaray 1985 (1977), .p76-8

<sup>95</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M (i), *Wonder Woman #28*, DC comics, New York, Mar. 2009, [Variant Cover]

via the recurrent theme of bondage.<sup>96</sup>

Emad points most often at the perhaps painfully concrete sexualization of Wonder Woman and also with other words describes the fusion of several languages (the sexed and the patriotic) in to one heteroglottal utterance, intersecting the paths of otherwise differing values as patriotism and bondage. However Emad pinpoints the most extreme materialization of the masculine gaze operating with force on Wonder Woman's body, those incursions of the inclinations of the Feminine body is also very much done as to temper the feminine so that it doesn't 'go berserk' and undermines the social order, and Emad continues:

Hypersexualizing Wonder Woman's body assures that female power is reigned in, tacitly directing the primary purpose of the body decorated in nationalist iconography to be an object for male sexual pleasure.<sup>97</sup>

Again positioning the Feminine as something intrinsically passive and which in Emad's discussion points toward a concrete instance as where ideology surfaces to regulate social order, in this case using the masculine violent sexed gaze to suppress a dangerously powerful feminine sexuality. Refraining Wonder Woman from being the active sexual part, because that would threaten the masculine regime, otherwise defining and regulating the feminine sexuality. Consequently ideology seems to be the operation of justification in which materialized "things" and concepts is exposed to the subconscious psyche. The sexed site thus indeed a juxtaposition of the masculine hegemonic regimes and the projected phantasm of the reader. Thus Wonder Woman, and indeed the feminine is reduced into images in them self as a pawn in a larger ideological scheme, using the body as an image outside of the linguistic consciousness, a sexuality transcendent into a masculine sexed discourse.

### 3.2 *Venus Verticordia*

In Griselda Pollock's study of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's nymph symbolism, in his 1864 *Venus Verticordia* (see image 12 in Appendix), Pollock points towards the meaninglessness of these nymphonized images, as they literally are stripped of meaning except that

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<sup>96</sup> Emad p.979-80

<sup>97</sup> Emad p.982

of the symbolic order and the cultural dialogism it entails.<sup>98</sup> And on a similar note Jacqueline Rose writes in her book *Sexuality in the field of vision* that:

A feminism concerned with the question of looking can therefore turn this theory around, stressing that particular and limiting opposition of male and female which any image seen to be flawless serves to hold in place. More simply, we know that women are meant to *look* perfect, presenting a seamless image to the world so that the man, in that confrontation with difference, can avoid any comprehension of lack. The position of women as fantasy thus depends on a peculiar economy of vision (the importance of ‘images of women’ might take on the fullest meaning from this)<sup>99</sup>

Rose is emphasizing that the site of interpretation of the Feminine sexuality on the masculine and that the Feminine is indeed not only a preformative act, but also a transcendence of the performance in image. Rose also point on the fundamentally simplistic notion of *looking like*, a notion seemingly trivial but when put in the dialogized context of positioning the female body as fantasy in an economy of vision. Where the body not only embodies the surfacing of ideology that regulates the social patriarchal order, but also defines the function. This is indeed the same process as reducing the body to images, but here seen from the opposite perspective. Rose puts the visual economy of the ‘image of women’ as a simple operating factor, which is almost intuitive. In an economy of images the function of looking like, and its conceptual counterpart of looking different, is perhaps one of the principal functions governing ideology. Rose via the term “economy” also implies that there is a value system, valuing the “look” against each other and positioning things closer to the ultimate idea, the totally hieratical and static absolute image of the body.

Returning to Irigaray’s use of the mimesis where the language, or consequent image of the Phallogocentrism – the prioritizing of [masculine] speech in the construction of meaning in the hegemony of western culture, allows itself to be mimed, and thereby expose the phallogocentric norm when put outside the site of operation. Taking advantage of its own weakness of self refereeing and participating in a dialogue, with precisely that which is being mimed. Like Bakhtin’s heteroglossia there is a closeness; a looking like, several discursive speeches when miming the feminine, but also the “feminine in language”. This Irigaray describes as the element of ‘play’, as the

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<sup>98</sup> Pollock p.137-8

<sup>99</sup> Rose Jacqueline, *Sexuality in the field of vision*, in Kate Linker (ed.), *Difference On Representation and Sexuality*, New York, New Museum of Contemporary art, 1985, p.33

operator between the subject and the hegemony, an operation that builds in the tension between the hegemony and the mime of the same. Irigaray continues:

[...] to 'unveil' the fact that, if women are such good mimics, it is because they are simply restored in its function. They also remain elsewhere: another case of the persistence of 'matter'...<sup>100</sup>

The mime of phallogentrism also exposes what is covered over by the mimetic self-replication of that discourse. This ontology of self-in-tangled phallogentric mimic play allows for an increasingly materialized view of Wonder Woman's body. Where her body moves away from being an expression of an oppressive regulatory object, to a conscious parodic play, no longer relying on the body ipso facto as a reference point, but the mimicry itself.

In *Wonder Woman #34* The Black Canary and Wonder Woman are about to infiltrate a meta-human cage fight tournament, but to infiltrate they have to 'go undercover', (see image 7 and 8 in appendix) The Black Canary says that they cant go as 'ourselves'<sup>101</sup>. So they have to masquerade, but The Black Canary finds a problem:

The Black Canary [BC]: We have an issue here – the sexier the outfit, the fewer questions asked. This I learned early on.

But that means exposing our community's second most famous bosom.

[...]

Wonder Woman [WW]: Wait. What was that about my bosom?

BC: well, yeah. After Power Girl, of course, you mean you haven't seen all the websites?

WW: I guess I haven't!

BC: Trust me on this, those things are considered like a national treasure

BC: You MUST know all that—Why else wear the American flag on your rumpus mcgoo?

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<sup>100</sup> Irigaray 1985(1977), p.76

<sup>101</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M (i), *Wonder Woman #34*, DC comics, New York, sep. 2009, [p.10]/2-5

Might as well draw a target for nerds on it.<sup>102</sup>

This discussion between The Black Canary and Wonder Woman makes for a concrete utterance of the sexualized site that constitutes and surrounds the body of Wonder Woman, however she [Wonder Woman] herself seems surprised articulating the distance between the psyche and body and the dichotic situation in her body. There is a clear distance between the language of another [another's speech] – the sexualization of her body, and her own inadequacy to understand it. Also in between the masquerading that they are “forced” to preform, and the mimicry of it. The Black Canary acts as the materialization their bodies articulates the apparent conscious use of their body as a point of entry to the hegemonic structure. When they discuss the bosom of Power Girl and Wonder Woman's ‘rumpus mcgoo’, Simone constitutes in a concrete utterance, what otherwise is left implicit and discursive, the objectification, and specifically appellation of fantasies that their bodies creates a site for, but also the rendition of the hegemonic norms which enacts its own referent. On the next page they have now changed into their undercover costume and The Black Canary says (see image 7 and 8 in Appendix)

BC: Ah, we look like high-end trashy hookers in a Tarantino nightmare

WW: Do we need to expose quite so much of the second most famous...

BC: ABSOLUTELY!<sup>103</sup>

Here in a concrete utterance, the actual performance of sexuality is exposed, the hegemonic norms is used to over exaggerate its own referent. In these pages Wonder Woman must play masquerade, “look” like she's submitting to the masculine sexuality which imposes the ideal and regulatory ideals of the body, so to gain access to hegemonic structure. But in fact tis is a process of mimesis, Wonder Woman and perhaps even more so, The Black Canary consciously mime the sexualization of their bodies by imposing the inadequacy of their performative enactment. This materialization of the performative mimesis of the body leaves space for a parodic event that is subsequently created – by them having to dressing up, in order to be “sexier”, is used to transcend into mimicking the sexed body. One would be excused for becoming turned around by this double

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<sup>102</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #34*, DC comics, New York, sep. 2009, [p.11]/2-4

<sup>103</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #34*, DC comics, New York, sep. 2009, [p.12]/1

inversion of the preformative sexed site. But occupying such preformative positions is however not just a matter of ascending preexisting structural ideas concerning the sexed site within the hegemonic symbolic order, on the contrary, certain occupations constitutes fundamental ways of rearticulate the possibilities of expression. Consequently the heteroglossal oscillation between the masquerade and the mimesis creates a distance between the two, yet they are always intertwined, this oscillation does invoke a disjuncture, the logic of the hegemonic does no longer compute as preexisting.

### 3.3 Re-defining the Point of Reference

The parodic elements in Wonder Woman consequently meant to *imitate* the language of the feminine, is in itself an imitation – using itself as referent. And as the Feminine increasingly is understood as an image the over exaggerating of ‘*the feminine syntax*’<sup>104</sup> adds to the point of parody, again as in Dickens *Little Dorrit* the hegemonic and authoritarian voice (the Feminine, which is a projection from the masculine) is imitated and exaggerated in order to create parody.<sup>105</sup> Which is not only a toll for unhinged reality (a *situation* so to speak), but to invert it and in turn creating a site where we can discuss the restrictive aspects in them self, without the detour of the sexed site. In the example in *Wonder Woman #34* the parody emerges as the feminine language is verbalized on the sexed site as the masculine hegemonic gaze is separated by difference. That is were the space for parody is defined as the Feminine language is turned in to a parodic difference towards the masculine gaze, consequently Wonder Woman is parading the quite obvious fact that she must masquerade the Feminine.

Parody makes the Body enter directly into a concrete sexed site where Wonder Woman’s body is the sexual object for the reader to look at, this site is acknowledged by the characters them self’s as well, further justifying its existence by dialogize them. The Black Canary’s comment in *Wonder Woman #34* is not just a comical acknowledgement of the

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<sup>104</sup> (my emphasis) Irigaray 1985(1977), p.76 and p.132

<sup>105</sup> Irigaray actually develops on a term called ‘double-syntax’ which is the state of the masculine discourse achieve when holding both the syntax of the masculine sexuality, and the feminine simultaneously. Developed parity from Freud and in some capacities could be connected to heteroglossia, consequently possible opening for another interesting angle on the connectivity between Irigaray and Bakhtin. Read more on Irigaray’s double-syntax in, Irigaray 1985(1977) p.132-134

situation, but a mimicking of patriarchal speech [act], or in this particular case, gaze.<sup>106</sup> This intersects language and ideology and forms a visual syntax of the feminine language, which is then mimed as a masquerade by over exaggerating and thereby disjuncture the Feminine, consequently exposing the sexualization of the body in the Feminine, something that transcends its own regulatory structure and becomes its own linguistic reference point. This process of ‘speaking (as) woman’<sup>107</sup> would consequently disrupt and/or change the syntax of the discursive logic of the masculine. This logic is based on the requirements of univocity and masculine same-ness inside the phallic discourse, thus, in order to express the feminine difference, the playful qualities of the mime would allow for a rediscovery of the ‘self-affection’<sup>108</sup> and the Feminine language in order to create something that we might call a parodic distance. So by using a heteroglottal logic in Wonder Woman the reference point of the phallic structures and the image of the body no longer bind the body in itself, by the rupture of the body from the phantasmatic assumption of identity and situating it somewhere else – in the masculine, a parodic distance is achieved and the regulatory discursive practices of the sexed body surfaces.

Using of the apparatus of parody Wonder Woman thus is defined by something other than the body *a priori* as reference point, instead the masquerading in itself is the point reference by which Wonder Woman is made to describe the body, consequently Simone has positioned Wonder Woman as not being forced to obey the phantasm of naturality of the feminine, projected via the hegemony, but instead shift towards referencing the structure in itself from a distance. Unhitching the masculine symbol monopoly by using it against itself. This creates a blunt tension between what is being seen and what is happening on the unconscious plane. Thereby by using a heteroglottal operation, embodying the masquerade of the Feminine language yet via a rhythmic oscillation between the two positions, allowing Simone to exaggerate, and abruptly exposing the inadequacy to its object via the mimesis and sometimes on the contrary becoming one and the same with it in the masquerading.<sup>109</sup>

The dichotomy of mimesis and masquerading enforces the heteroglottal closeness of different speeches. Thus the sexuality is intrinsically put with the viewer, that’s where the site becomes sexed. Thereby making the connectivity between sex and Wonder

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<sup>106</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #34*, DC comics, New York, sep. 2009, [p.8-10]

<sup>107</sup> Irigaray 1985(1977), p.135

<sup>108</sup> Irigaray 1985(1977), p.77-8

<sup>109</sup> Bakhtin 1981, p.302

Woman is transcendent, as the sexed site are both defined and perpetuated by the viewer projecting subconscious sexual desires on to the body of Wonder Woman, and justifying it via the normative sexualized ideology. As the Feminine then is in the first operation masqueraded the normative ideals and is submissive to the gaze of the masculine sexed site, yet as its unhitched in the parodic utterance, a mimesis of the first act of masquerading is achieved, and in that – a parodic distance is created, between concept and site. Consequently understanding the body as a site, but one that does not necessarily hold geographical heft, but instead a site reduced to images. A phansasm of regulatory ideals used as a image, be it to regulate the body, or to fuse sex with patriotism, the ideological ideals, surfacing in the body via its image here actually allows for a redefinition of the same, by using the syntax of the masculine, but disjuncture its own function. Looking like the body submits to the ideals – the masquerading, but in reality, having relied the point of reference, using it to exploit the inadequacy of its own ideals, and the phansasm of the image. In the next chapter the body is taken another stem, from image into the formation of space, surrounding ideology, or rather it's the formation of conceptual space, but that has a performative aspect in lived bodies, using fantasy and closeness to transcend the image in it self.

## Chapter 4 – The Body as Space, Space as Body

In this chapter will elaborate on the concepts of site vs. place, a conflict essentially founded in the use and application of space. This space does in a later ontological step open for a discussion about difference and closeness, which in effect will open for a space for action, a space for resisting the hegemonic structures and redefine the points of references that orient and restricts the body. In effect the parody shall emerge as a conscious tool for emancipation from the hegemonic discourse. However one must first define the foundations for orienting a concept in space by differentiate the site and place via a conceptual topology.

### 4.1 Topography

As the distance is achieved between concept and site – the body and the Feminine, the conceptual distinction between *site* and a *place*, especially *space*, as the operative spectrum of difference and parody should be explored. Starting on a vernacular speech, one finds that these two words often refer back to one another seemingly implying that they are in fact the same thing, and indeed in vernacular speech they appear to be used interchangeably. Yet there is an ontological difference slightly separating the two, it's a question of being and becoming in relation to its way to refer to physical space and how they appropriate meaning. By that definition a *place* is a geographical point of reference, situated in-between the physical space and is defined in connection to other geographical points of references, making every place an intersection of geographical references and space. The quality of orienting itself in relation to other physical points of reference thus not only defines the outer limits of the place but it is what ascribes it meaning. Also a place has a physical relation to the body, as the body can move in, to and from a place in space thus being. As an example, take a place of mythical importance, say a Sámi sacred rock which is a place, geographically defined in its relation to others, and its topographical “uniqueness” and it is by that physical quality that ascribe its mythical meaning and consequent use. The ascribed magical meaning to a place based on its geographical point in space, thus scribing mythic meaning to a sett of geographical relations. The mythical place is also inherently stable, it's not a place for change and so the integrity of the place is vital, if one were to move a Sámi sacred rock, the place has been violated and some of the mythical meaning would not compute, the point of reference of the place is consequently in a large capacity a visual place – geographical, though mystically justified by geographical references. This magical connectivity between

the place of geographical reference brings the title again to mind, HAPPY MAGIC FUN referees to the quite sexualized vinyl figure in the comic (see image 13 and 14 in appendix) where the mythical sexed body seems to contain a looming mythical power, when the right speech act has been preformed, affirming its power, it is consequently articulated and it is geographically defined by its topographical qualities and that the use of the place is defined from “above” – i.e. magic.

A *site* on the other hand could in many occasions manifest itself as a place or on top of one, however the site operates rather on the conceptual plane as a cluster of ideas situated so to orienting itself in relation to other ideas – so instead of other geographical points, the site uses other ideas in order to orient itself. Hence it is rather an intersection of ideas that gives symbolic meaning to the site as apposed to magical. These ideas could be ideological and in fact as ideological ideas cluster together it usually does so into a site. The sexed site for example, where a series of ideological ideas about the body and aspects of sexuality is clustered into a site, and it is defined by the orientation to other ideas, which is inherently dialogized. Thus the ideological ideas clusters into sites and regulates those sites accordingly. This becomes especially apparent when a site is layer on top of a place, where the ideological regimes regulates e.g. the body in certain ways.

Ideology, positioning itself as a justificatory layer of the subconscious consequently produces sites as index of the social order, however the site also always has an inscribed becoming, history or potential, the site is always in motion and in a constant state of becoming, it can change, new ideas can be subtracted and added, ideas can become dialogized and thus appropriate new meaning. An example is the construction site, a junction of symbolic ideas whit an operating becoming, it's a non-static space and will inedible exhaust it self.

In this spectrum the clustering of ideas regulating how one's body should be used there, and what body's have access and which normative ideals the rule. The site can consequently intersects the place, giving it symbolic meaning, relating conceptual ideals about how one should preform. These qualities is defined not by its geographical points of reference (there is no need for them) but symbolic points of references, defining its position, temporal and conceptual limits through the relation with other sites in becoming. Thus the site is inherently dialogic and defining its boarders in its dialogue with other sites. So when Wonder Woman's body is described as a site, its so to orient it as a cluster of ideas about how it should look, act and be looked at in a dialogue with

other ideas of becoming concerning e.g. the Feminine, conventions about the body and normativity all in dialogue, yet intersecting into this cluster, but also in relation of its becoming. However the performative aspects which clusters around the body, constitutes a more geographical point of departure, and as the body then has a place ascribed to it via performativity, thus even the sexed site of the Feminine in Wonder Woman intersects a place, which is the performative body.

The site consequently orients Wonder Woman's body in relation to a series of ideas and ideological expressions about how her body is to be situated and "look" in regards to ideals and the masculine sexuality. Consequently when the site is sexed, these conceptual qualities becomes defined and entangled with it's own symbolic manifestation. Thus the site becomes related in a series of ideas concerning the body, only accessible through those ideas.

This directed gaze of the site of Wonder Woman's body puts it in a dialogue with materialized ideals and ideas forming in the lived human body. Consequently defining a conceptual site about sexuality and normative ideals, but also dialoguing her body to lived ones; situated on the symbolic plane, with materialized bodies in the lived plane. Thus as in the masculine sexuality that is controlling the gaze of the sexed site creates the symbolic utterance of Wonder Woman's body, the site becomes entanglement with it's own symbolic cluster of ideas that site transcends on the materialized plane of the lived bodies. Formulating a phantasm that materializes ideology into a concrete utterance, bridging the gap towards the *place*. A phantasm of ideological ideas not only regulating Wonder Woman's body, but lived bodies as well, conversely lived bodies also regulates Wonder Woman's body, so there is a constant regulatory dialogue of regulatory ideas going back and forth.

However materialization is not only a phantasmatic operation, it also implies an embodiment in itself, in that the body is made tangible thru conceptual apparatuses as materialization does demand at least a partial embodied experience via the "geographical" which here should be understood in the phenomenological experience of having a body, and sensing other bodies in the lived life, and thus situating it [the body] in relation to other bodied [geographical] points of references. Comparing it to other bodies, but also making the relations internal and absorbed into the body *a priori*. In a similar manor Judith Butler connects materialization and the performativity of sex via the clustering of ideological regulatory norms that in turn produces a performative ideal that

constitutes the materiality of the body:

[...]the regulatory norms of "sex" work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body's sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative.<sup>110</sup>

Thus making sex the outcome of a materialization of bodies in order to impose sexual difference to strengthen the social order. So sex is seen here in the materialized sense, is not a simple fact of static condition of the body; but a process wherein the regulatory systems of ideology materializes sex, through a constant and repeating of phantasmatic images that the process creates. This discrepancy of space serves as the first step towards describing the masculine sexed gaze forming on Wonder Woman's body as an utopic expression and the inherently dichotic or perhaps juxtaposed concepts of site and place inside the one utterance of the body. This will pave the way for that which is the idea of a perfect feminine body available through the masculine sexuality, and submitting to the voyeuristic intersection of fantasies and sexuality. However the performativity of sex and its phantasmatic connectivity to the body is separated from the being, Butler writes

There is no "I" who stands *behind* the discourse and executes its volition or will *through* discourse. On the contrary, the "I" only comes into being through being called, named, interpellated<sup>111</sup> [original emphasis]

Butler unearths the phantasm of power behind the performativity, and the fragile condition that it operates on, using clusters of ideas, which then is given names, and in that process of materialization is given magical power and made pre-ideological in the subconscious. By interpellation the social order restricting the body is actually embodied by uttering them as natural, perpetuating the discursive structure. Mass culture then, becomes a major, if not the perpetuating force in the perpetuation of interpellation, forcing a fuse of being and sex, a phantasm of closing the topological gap.<sup>112</sup> However this phantasm, as Butler outlined, does not have "someone" behind it, it is not a conspiracy, but the power of the preformative discourse must come from somewhere.

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<sup>110</sup> Butler 1993, p.2

<sup>111</sup> Butler 1993, p.171

<sup>112</sup> Interpellation is often associated with Louis Althusser and describes the process where Ideology embodies the nature of certain social institutions. However it's a term widely used by both Butler and Foucault.

An ideological ideal that could enforce the phansasm of social order, and it does indeed seem like the idea of social order always is formed as a utopic vision of the world, a perfect idea of social order.

#### 4.2 *Heterotopia vision and other spaces*

On this notion, Michel Foucault expanded on the relation of sites, places, Utopias and what he called heterotopias in his lecture from March 1967 titled *Of Other Spaces* [*Des Espace Autres*]. In this text Foucault seems to use the words place and site, almost interchangeable and at random, however as one describe these terms ontologically the interlacing of the site and place appears as a crucial component in the surfacing of the heterotopia and the difference towards Utopia.<sup>113</sup> There seems to be an ontological gap between the two, Foucault's interchangeability of the words seems to imply a deeper connection than just the vernacular interchangeability, but also a need to intersect these concepts, in order to describe the Heterotopia and distingue it from the Utopia in the preformativity of the sexed.

Not only is the heterotopia a real and yet more importantly; materialized place, so that one can interact with one's body in, but is rests on the strong regulatory regime of the symbolic. It's that which regulates the temporal and spatial framework of the heterotopia, and more importantly that which transcend the fantasy of the utopic vision into the lived body. By using these words interchangeably (at least in the English translation) Foucault point towards the intertwined-ness of these two concepts, and the dialogized operation of the creation of the heterotopia. Foucault starts by describing the Utopia as the ideological apparatus that regulates and intersects society as follows:

Utopias are sites with no real place. They are sites that have a general relation of direct or inverted analogy with the real space of Society. They present society itself in a perfected form, or else society turned upside down, but in any case these Utopias are fundamentally unreal spaces.<sup>114</sup>

However as a Utopia by definition cannot exist, we create Heterotopias in its image, a “real” place where values and norms can be reverted ‘a kind of effectively enacted

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<sup>113</sup> M. Foucault, ‘Of other Spaces [*Des Espace Autres*]’, trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Architecture / Mouvement / Continuité*, October, 1984 (1967), Available from EBSCO host (accessed October 31, 2013)

<sup>114</sup> Foucault p.3

Utopia<sup>115</sup>. The Utopia is thus situated as a ideal site, which by definition can hold no place of its own, thus it cannot hold geographical points of reference, spatiality as well as restrictive ideological boundaries, and like sexuality, which on this ontological plane can be argued to be quite similar, as they are both in a constant state of becoming and dialogization – however as society makes claim on that site a mythic connection with a non-time and non-place. Thus as Wonder Woman uses the ideological clustering of a sexed site as a point of reference the ideals of a Utopic vision surfaces in that sexualization of her body, it is created as the approximation of the Utopic body. So Wonder Woman does not only parodic of the regulatory ideals, they are in fact a surfacing of the Utopia of social order, the crux of the hegemony and phallogocentric discourse.

A Utopia whilst it is intrinsically not *real*, neither ever can be, represent an ideal image of society and as in this case the body, appealing to a series of normative ideal, consequently attempting to bridging the gap between ideal and life. It also inhabits the mythical by intrinsically achieving meaning through points of geographical references, although as a place of otherness, not ever being there, not being ever there. Much like the Platonic dualism of the eternal ideal and their imitations, the Utopia and consequent heterotopia are not results or produced from either one, they are analogue, and consequently have a direct ontological linkage. The connectivity to Wonder Woman and the sexed site is intrinsically a utopic approximation, which is an attempt at close-ness, an attempt at the perfect rendition of ideology, but separated by difference in another's body, creating a phantasmatic performance – a Heterotopia.

The heterotopia could by definition never exist without the approximation of the Utopia, and the Utopia could never *exist* with out the heterotopic fantasy and un-completeness of the lived world. So thus the creation of the heterotopic body is always an approximation – an attempt at close-ness (looking like) of the Utopic. Thus neither is they opposites; rather they are parallel planes of understanding ideology, yet separated by the desert of the real.<sup>116</sup> However the utopic vision must penetrate the psyche, the participant must believe that this is a utopic reality, a spectacular effect of the real. Paradoxely making the pursue of reality into a spectacle and a pure semblance to the spectacular effect of the real – here in the form of the phantasmatic idea of the

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<sup>115</sup> Foucault p.3

<sup>116</sup> S. Zizek, *Welcome to the desert of the real*, Verso, London, 2002, p.9-10 & p.33

Feminine. This paradox of spectacular and real is in the Lacanian sense is ‘traversing fantasy’<sup>117</sup> leads the psyche into ‘*fully identifying oneself with the fantasy*’<sup>118</sup>[original emphasis]. This is the transcendental, and also embodied quality that not only presents the Utopia as an immersion, but as an embodied phantasmatic experience laid on top of the real.

Imagine a boat, an example Foucault also uses, it’s a space confined by spatial and temporal borders, without a specific geographical point of reference, literally floating around, it has to project not only the image, but the actual utopic vision of social order on the boat to function. A perfect and fair hierarchic structure where every (man) has a place and an assigned duty, in which (he) excels. Yet it is only an approximation of the Utopia from the fantasy, the real space is consequently the heterotopia, and Foucault elaborates:

[...]the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea and that, from port to port, from tack to tack, from brothel to brothel, it goes as far as the colonies in search of the most precious treasures they conceal in their gardens, you will understand why the boat has not only been for our civilization, from the sixteenth century until the present, the great instrument of economic development (I have not been speaking of that today), but has been simultaneously the greatest reserve of the imagination.<sup>119</sup>

As the boat’s projected utopic vision and social stratification Wonder Woman’s body is exposed to the same operation. A visual approximation of a utopic social order and sexualized feminine body. And as the heterotopia of the boat, the sexed site of her body constitutes not only the spatial borders, meaning that it does not penetrate other spaces.

### 4.3 Admittance

However Foucault also describes that in order to enter a heterotopia, one must pay admittance, this could be in the form of a speech act, or a contract, in where one submit one’s imagination to the Utopia. As Wonder Woman’s body does not hold physical space, neither could it be said to be *real*. There is a lived bodily aspect of this embodiment of the phantasmatic of the comic book that invades the lived geographical space of the real

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<sup>117</sup> Zizek 2002, p.17

<sup>118</sup> Zizek 2002, p.17

<sup>119</sup> Foucault p.9

using ones own difference to ones body as a tool for approximation of the utopic gaze. This operation constitutes a form of the ideological sedimentation forces on the hegemonic gaze of the reader, and is the operating structure that in the first place constitutes the phantasmatic screen on to which the site can be projected. Thus ideological structures, directs the gaze of the readers own body, as a tool for approximation of the projected utopic vision, thus via that geographical insurgent constituting a heterotopia in the act of actually reading and imagined approximation the comic book, or in fact consuming mass culture. However one should consider the real physical being of the comic book them self, wherein the heterotopic space is subsequently projected, like the two-dimensional space on the screen in a cinema the heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing a single real place – the comic book – as a utopic image, several heterotopic sites which in them self hold no physicality but are instead transcendental concepts.<sup>120</sup>

Thus making the site of the sexed site dependent on the action of reading and looking on the physical place of the comic book to gain entry into the sexed site. Thus like the boat the comic book holds a actual physical place, ‘floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time is given over to the infinity of the sea’<sup>121</sup>, thus the utopic fantasies is the discursive power that perpetuates the performance and situates the heterotopic space, and as something transcends into imagination its immediately approximated via dialogization.

#### *4.4 Monologue and Difference*

In contrast to the heterotopic which is only a approximated Utopia, and thus still is erratic and heterogenized, the Utopia on the other hand is intrinsically absolute and homogenized, there is no room for differences and is in the Bakhtinian sense a pure monologueized space, an utterance in vacuum so to speak, deprived of any dialogization. Also in the Irigarayan sense, the absence of difference constitutes the perfect masculine place where the symbolic monopoly is constituted from a singularity, which spawns a social order that punishes difference. Thus the masculine can be found to inhabit the Utopic monologue, a space of non-dialogue and a projected ultimate phantasm of sexuality in where the idea of the feminine take shape and the monopoly of the symbolic

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<sup>120</sup> Foucault p.6

<sup>121</sup> Foucault p.9

order are spent.

If then the Utopias are monologue, then Utopias points of reference are in other words geographical, and are defined by the space in-between, the vacuum of the space rather than the myths affiliated with them, the difference from itself. However it is another kind of difference from that which allows action, this difference does not really create difference between two (or more) but in-between singularities. The monologue is absolute and cannot be in dialogue and when the cluster of ideas that form the Utopian site materializes in to the lived world with geographical points of references and in this case the body of Wonder Woman the formation of the heterotopia occurs. But as the monologue of the geographical references starts to emerge it becomes increasingly apparent that the points of geographical orientation which it is defined by, is not regulated on closeness, but on difference. However it does not constitutes a culture of difference, but it positions itself according to difference, so to achieve singularity. Consequently as the previously section argued, Wonder Woman's body is constituted by a utopic image laid upon the physicality of the comic book which then transcends her body.

There the utopic image defines itself not in its similarities to the *pure past* of the feminine sexuality, but in its difference, and most importantly, positioning itself *not* as real life. If the closeness to lived life was to close, the subsequent Utopia would not function. Utopias is a figure of our imagination, it subsequently inhabits the site in our subconscious where the flawed real world is made perfect by distancing its from difference. Thus Utopias are a virtual space, a pseudo-material, which can never be embodied, but projected, on the phantasmatic screen a non-real place, yet oriented by *real* places, e.g. the utopic vision of the Feminine sexuality is oriented on the actual, lived and real sexuality of femininity, but its used as a phantasmatic reference point.<sup>122</sup> A mechanism which produces a magical *effect*, in a sense an event that creates a gap between the site of difference and the place of non-difference. The heterotopia is consequently a space of otherness and upside-down-hegemony, it is not an opposite of the Utopia as much as it is a shift and transcendence from the ideal conceptual plane towards the geographically defined plane.

Here the understanding of *geographical reference* becomes increasingly blurred as it departs

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<sup>122</sup> Zizek 2000(1997) p.60-1

from the vernacular understanding, however we shall settle on a definition on *geographical reference* as a categorizing apparatus that maps lived life into physical points of references, parted from the symbolic plane of reference. Thus using points of reference that intersect the lived life to define its position. A heterotopia is consequently a physical approximated place of the Utopian site. Subsequently the heterotopia is inherently dialogical, not only with the Utopia ipso facto but with the geographical points of references also affiliated with the place; so as to clarify, by this definition the materialized body of Wonder Woman allows for a utopic understanding of the lived body as points of references. Forming in one part a Utopia internally through the embodied body of Wonder Woman, but put in dialogue with lived body, and approximated with the lived plane, the heterotopia explodes.

Foucault uses the now famous example of the mirror to exemplify the physical geographical difference between the utopic site and heterotopic space, where the mirror is after all a placeless place; a Utopia, and in that placeless place one can see oneself:

[...]in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent: such is the Utopia of the mirror.<sup>123</sup>

However the mirror is also a heterotopia in disguise, as it makes the temporal moment when one looks in to the mirror absolute unreal as the image in order to be perceived must pass through its virtual point that is not here, but in the Utopia of the mirror. In this example the Utopia again appears as an image, like the place it is a visual property that can be violated, or copied, however in the approximation, or rather structural imitation of the geographical points of references in the Utopia the heterotopia forms as a dialoguing cluster of ideas.

This evokes the idea that if the inherently dialogized sexed site of Wonder Woman's body constitutes a heterotopic *virtual reality* – the phantasm of sexuality, there must be an operating utopic gaze, which not only imposes on the ideological structures surrounding the body, but constitutes a materialized process where in the repeating of phantasmatic images imposes a magical original ideal. This original ideal as the parameters of the Utopia constitutes a non-existence, meaning that it does not hold geographical points of reference. Yet as its approximated and

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<sup>123</sup> Foucault p.4

consequently embodied and absorbed by the body, it is translated to another plane of being – the materialized – and consequently dialogized via posing opposing competing languages inside a single utterance i.e. hybridization, thereby generating a process with a fragile state somewhere in-between being and non-being.

Here the utopic gaze goes from a static notion to a state of becoming and in Gilles Deleuze's book *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze utilizes and inverts Plato's notion of the dichotic relation of eternal ideas and their imitations (or to put in Foucault's vocabulary – approximated utopic visions) in the sensuous reality; into the dichotomy of the materialized body and the pure impassive surface of consciousness. This puts the act of becoming in a constant flux on the borderline of being and non-being. Subsequently the act of becoming it constantly on the limits of being and non-being, an inversion that consequently puts Wonder Woman's body in a state of fluctuating becoming as a result of the utopic masculine and conversely sexualized gaze, that through approximation is materialized, to a site of heterotopic becoming, border lining the impassive surface of consciousness and the materialized body.<sup>124</sup> Consequently using the Utopia as a virtual reality, to impose on the body, and through the phantasmatic place of the utopic vision impose the master-signifier on the performative consequence of the materialization. Thus intersecting a constant state of utopic vision on a constant state of becoming and subsequent fluidness in the performative body.

#### *4.5 Miming the Masquerade*

However as the parody not only shifts the point of reference but also distances itself from the regulatory ideals, and it becomes increasingly clear that the utopic gaze belongs to what is being parodied, with other words, the parody seems to embody and masquerading as the utopic gaze. Then the heterotopic analogue would indeed be the operating ontology of the parody. Hence as the heterotopia transcends the parodic part of the sexed site (the body) as it comes in to contact with that which is being parodied; the Utopia, which relies on the geographical, or rather likeness of the physical Feminine body as its point of reference. Thus in turn constructing the sexed body inside the heterotopia as well. This transcendental quality of the heterotopic vision is indeed a sort of simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space, in which we live as it

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<sup>124</sup> G. Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, New York, Columbia university press, 1990 p.5

intersects both site and place. Take the first few pages of *Wonder Woman #35*(see image 13 and 14 in Appendix), which inspired the title of this thesis. There on first page there is a Manga-esque version of Wonder Woman, flying through the air with a ridiculously large sword.<sup>125</sup> She has long dark hair that blows in the wind and her outfit is if possible tinier than usual, except for her red lather boots, which is now taller and almost touching her knees. Her legs and hips are placed so to shown as much of them as possible, that holds thru for her arm muscles as well which flexes as she raises her sword. On the next page on the first panel we see a small sign that says:

WONDER WOMAN  
HAPPY MAGIC FUN  
SWORD GIRL  
SEXY! SEXY!  
FIGHT! FIGHT!<sup>126</sup>

On the next panel we now see that the manga inspired Wonder Woman we saw on the first page was a vinyl model, complete with background and a battle scene. Next to it looking at it is The Black Canary and Wonder Woman (see image 13 in Appendix). Here writer Gail Simone has materialized the masculine sexed gaze inside an actual phantasmatic device inside the comic book, the display cabinet holding the hypersexualiced manga-esq version is more than a wink to the huge fan obsession with collecting toy figures. It's an articulation of the utopic vision, an approximated Utopia, the non-place, and the place of fantasy and the closeness of the same. But by over exaggerate that approximation of the Utopia inside something made Heterotopic by the heteroglottal appearance of the "real" Wonder Woman the parody unhitches the conscious mimesis as evokes the utopic idea once again. This action of parodying, creates an *Event*, a moment in spatial and temporal time wherein the utopic vision is parodied, thus consequently allowing the heterotopic site a moment of consciousness to turn the gaze of the reader, who is the instigator of the utopic singularity, entering a site where Wonder Woman's body now mimes the masquerade.<sup>127</sup> Parading the masculine utopic

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<sup>125</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #35*, DC comics, New York, Oct. 2009, [p.1-2]

<sup>126</sup> Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #35*, DC comics, New York, Oct. 2009, [p.2]/1

<sup>127</sup> Zizek 2014, p.10

gaze back towards the reader by embodying it.

Simone evokes a utopic image of Wonder Woman inside the phantasmatic screen, the vinyl figure, which not only epitomizes the sexualized body, but pairs it with extreme violence, however its just an illusion as the phantasmatic-apparitions of the utopic image are not only the teleportation an operation that opens scenes of fantasy. But also a type of topological twist, turning-into-itself but as any phantasmatic performance from the perspective of a viewer it is a magical and fantastic mechanism, the place of Utopia but as one goes backstage, or in this case, zoom out and see the “real” Wonder Woman, the phantasmatic dissipates as the poverty of this illusion is exposed.

The mimicry of the feminine is used to expose a masculine phallogocentric gaze, yet intrinsically not a copy in so far as it is embodied, there is a distinct distance that still keeps the feminine from becoming its own subject. Yet at the same time the masquerade embodies the restrictions and indeed becoming its own object. In doing so the masquerading of the normalized body closes the gap between the psyche and the ideology and thereby regaining the embodied aspect of the utterance. While on the other hand the mimicry distances its subject from the body by essentially copying itself, thus furthering itself from the embodied aspects of the utterance whilst also merging the inherent logic of the psyche and ideology. However it could be understood as a method of achieving critical distant to what is mimicked, and the hegemonic regimes and power relations interlaced with sexuality.

#### *4.6 Disjuncture and Resistance*

Bakhtin’s example from Dickens *Little Dorrit* where Bakhtin exemplifies parodic speech in the masquerading of “ceremonial speech“ is found in the dialogized contrast with the “normal” speech and the difference and closeness of the two. In *Little Dorrit* the ceremonial language is made absurd in the masquerading as it is connected with the hegemonic power enclosed in one concrete voice, but uttered as two distinct languages in opposition and thus marking a violent intersection of different belief systems. This, in the Bakhtinian sense, is the intrinsic ontology of the parodic, which not only creates a certain distance to the discursive practice that is being parodied but allows for a degree of enclosure where new rules apply. The parodic speech is then consequently produced in the mimicry of the otherwise given masquerade and the disjuncture that follows, it’s a topological twist of the utopic vision materialized in the heterotopic speech of the comic book. Transforming the otherwise normative ideals clustered from the utopic gaze into a

backwards social-relation, where Wonder Woman on an explicit level appears submissive, but actually dominate on a subconscious level, this transformation of the social relations underpinning the heterotopic spirit that precipitated ‘the disintegration of laughter’<sup>128</sup>. The simple fact that in all its seriousness, Wonder Woman, for example in *Wonder Woman #34*, it is also funny, evoking the disjuncture of laughter creates a dialogical utterance where both seriousness and a comic element co-exists, non reductive towards each other, intertwining. Becoming a serio-comical utterance of sort, as Simone have written Wonder Women to appear to mimic the masquerade and consequently resembling her self so to speak, yet with the mimicry and masquerading creating a barrier, and a distance between the “real” and the virtual [resembling]. *This desert of the real* (no pun intended) separating the real from the virtual, and the seriousness from the comical is elaborated by Slavoj Zizek in his 1991 book *Looking Awry* where he uses Hitchcock’s 1958 film *Vertigo*.<sup>129</sup> Where “Scottie” a retired detective is asked to follow a beautiful woman, Madeleine who claims to be possessed by a dead ancestor, Scottie of cores falls in love with Madeleine though, but sadly Madeleine commits suicide. Several months’ later Scottie meets Judy, who looks identical to Madeleine, and whom Scottie starts to try and transform in to the dead Madeleine.

This comical identity of "resembling" and "being" announces, however, a lethal proximity: if the false Madeleine resembles herself, it is because she is in a way already dead. The hero loves her as Madeleine, that is to say, insofar as she is dead—the sublimation of her figure is equivalent to her mortification in the real. This would then be the lesson of the film: fantasy rules reality, one can never wear a mask without paying for it in the flesh.<sup>130</sup>

Zizek’s example elaborates on the previous condition between a utopic- and heterotopic gaze, as Scottie takes on the heterotopic condition of applying the virtual utopic gaze on Judy consequently separating the space between the real and virtual. It is in this sense that the desert is the analogy for the condition of separating the being and the real, in contrast to Nietzsche’s original use of the term where it instead seems to be a space in where the potential for greatness lies, the place where the strong and independent minds can

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<sup>128</sup> M.M. Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984, p.115

<sup>129</sup> *Vertigo*, dir. Albert Hitchcock, USA, Paramount Pictures, 1958

<sup>130</sup> S. Zizek, *Looking Awry: an introduction to Lacan through popular culture*, October Books, London, 1991, p.68

withdraw and become hermits.<sup>131</sup> Instead here this desert is the metaphor for the empty dry space that's created between the being and the virtual projection of social order. It is then, in this desert, where the space between ones being and the projection of phansasm arises, granted neither Nietzsche nor Zizek has acknowledge that this desert as the operating creator of space, but is seems plausible to imagine that the desert created in-between being and the projection of lived life, is also the creation of difference. Though one should acknowledge that this understanding of difference differs from Derrida's who is most often connected to the term, and who develops the concept *Différance* which is more like a line of separation, a more or less clear way of distinction one, from the other. However in within these parameters, difference takes on a form much more like a spectrum. Here difference is the space in-between, in the desert of the real where as in a Nietzschean sense also the possibility for action is placed. The difference between the masquerade and the mimesis thus situates a possibility of action and resistance. In this sense, the creation of difference, is also the creation of a active space, and the heteroglottal difference between linguistic consciousness-es like in Wonder Woman where she performs the embodied interpellation of social order and the "speaking as Woman" operation in the mimesis, is creating a site of difference – a space for action, the parody. The parody is, as elaborated before constantly, and by definition heteroglottal, the symbolic structuring of orders, inscribed in the masquerade and the mimesis alike correlates in a heteroglottal utterance, the event of parody.

In this sense language is the apparatus that has the potential to bridge this empty space via the symbolic order and the creation of fantasy, a utopic vision that consequently rules the reality.<sup>132</sup> Irigaray also opens for to function of play and the laughter that will follow in a parody, because the parody and play must be very similar, they for example both are defined by their difference and consequent disjuncture of the real, one cannot play something which is already embodied, however accordingly to Irigaray:

To play with mimesis is thus, for a woman, to try to recover the place of her exploitation by discourse, without allowing herself to simply reduced to it. It means to resubmit herself – insomuch as she is on the side of the "perceptible," of "matter" – to "ideas," in particular to ideas about herself, that are elaborated in/by a masculine logic, but so as to make

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<sup>131</sup> F. Nietzsche, *On The Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Diethe Carol, Ansell-Pearson Keith (Ed.) Cambridge University Press, 2006, p.78-9

<sup>132</sup> Zizek 1989(2008), p.173

“visible,” by an effect of playful reception, what was suppose to remain invisible: the cover up of a possible operation of the feminine language.<sup>133</sup>

So Irigaray places the mimesis on the plane of play, it must consequently be “playful” and create a disjuncture, especially in accordance to a site, a construction worker cannot play, or mime to be a construction worker at a construction site, because that embodied performative being does not have the potential for difference, and there is no spectrum, or desert of the real in which the action can emerge. However if the construction worker played to be a doctor at a construction site, there would be a disjuncture and a creation of difference in the real and virtual. Correspondingly Wonder Woman cannot apply the playful mimesis miming the femininity, which must be considered her being, the real, but as she is masquerading as the feminine, via the phantasmatic screen of sexuality, she can crate a space of difference between the masquerade and the distance of the mimesis by embodying both these languages and thus create a potential operating apparatus of resistance. Here a metaphysical concept that serves as phallogentrism can via play and imagination mark a linguistic site of critical mime. Thus to play, is not *only* to mime, it demands that the performativity of play [playfulness] is contextualized according to the parameters that are outlined in the ideological system, consequently to be noticed it needs to be outside the normative site of that operation. Appropriating the symptomatic language of the masquerade in order to achieve space between being and real, between projection of normativity and being, between masquerade and the mimesis. It is in that space then, that the parodic operation is situated.

The conscious application of the mimicry then allows for the positioning and consequent collapse the hetroglottal symbolic orders into one, and the body thus becomes expressive and in a state of becoming: not only as an image of a body, but the body as image. The dichotomy however of the mimicry and masquerading that dictates even if there can be a critical conscious distance to the body in Wonder Woman, there is simultaneously a submissive part that gives in to the masculine sexual desires, forming its object accordingly. Consequently the same body seems to rely on both a distancing towards its own body as a reference point, and merging –collapsing two orders into one,

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<sup>133</sup> Irigaray 1985(1977), p.76

and there by the symbolic order of the body thus becomes expressive and affective: not an image of a body, but the body as image.<sup>134</sup>

Mimicry does not only has the potential for exposing the regulatory regimes at play by contrasting normative practices that uses the body as reference point, but also the mimed performative practices. The mime is as the word implies, an imitation, a copy of the masculine syntax, thus potentially ontologically a lesser form. However, as ideology and psyche it intersects in Wonder Woman, and the miming is preformed so to not only imitate, but to exaggerate the Feminine. This is the point where the reference is shifted from the distance of the body, to the absurdness of the masquerading inside the same body. Thus there opens up a possibility for a juncture between the mime and the parody, as the mime takes the masquerading as its point of reference. Thus Wonder Woman does not only have a dichotic sexuality in terms of a dual set of strategies inscribed in the concrete utterance of her body, but consequently there is a dichotic conscious effort of parodying this dichotomy itself, shifting the reference point of the parody towards the masquerade.

The conscious psyche distanced from the embodied utterance is also an important part of the parody. The distance is there to not only to allow, but dictates the parameters for a critical position, and as the parody then emerges as function between the dichotomy of her sexuality Wonder Woman is consequently miming neither “women” or the masculine language *per se*, but when miming the masquerading is imitating the very performative aspects of the phallic discourse women must negotiate. Pushing the point of reference from the body and altering the very syntax of the masquerade that they previously relied on.

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<sup>134</sup> G. Deleuze, *Cinema: The Movement Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbera Habberjam, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota 1989 (1983), p.58

## Conclusion

In the introduction to this thesis, it asked itself whether a mass cultural expressions, like a comic book heroine could be used to problematize the concept of the feminine body and the hegemonic regimes regulating it, and what role does and the body have in the definition of sexuality? This question opened some interesting possibilities, but most importantly it opened for an elaboration of the function of parody and its relation to the body in the work of the writer Gail Simone. The title then further elaborated on the functions of parody and its possible intertwined-ness to sex and violence. Parody which sometimes seems trivial and possibly even as a intuitive kind of laughter was the main operating concept in the separation on and unveiling of the discursive regimes regulating, in this case – the Feminine. The Feminine which was expanded on as a way to understand the projection of preformativity, which in turn facilitated the screen on to which ideological ideas could cluster in a sexed site. The intertwined-ness of the Feminine and the Phansasm made possible the disjuncture that consequently occurred in the mimesis – the imitation, of the masquerading. A disjuncture that appears as just slightly off, but opens a spectrum off difference between what is masqueraded (the Feminine) and the mimesis (the imitation), and in this spectrum of difference, which this thesis in homage to Nietzsche, Žižek and Baudrillard called *the desert of the real*, a vast and dry *space*, but where the potential for action lies. This consequent spectrum of potential action is then analogue to difference, but not to much difference, just like a real desert, its made up by space, space which one can move in, but if the space become to large, and the difference triumphs over the closeness, there can be no space for action, there needs to be a dialogue there in between, that is the parody. The Russian linguist M.M. Bakhtin provided this thesis with concepts to describe these connection in the separation, Bakhtin's understanding of Parody also paved the way for a connectivity between his idea of disjuncture of *another's speech* and the spectrum of difference and closeness, in connection with Irigaray's the concepts of difference and sexuality, especially in accordance heteroglottal nature of the masquerade. However the Bakhtinian concept of dialogization opened for another understanding of the parody, because as this thesis progressed it has become increasingly apparent that parody is not the final step of this metaphysical ontology. The Parody seems to rather be the operation, there is indeed no substance to it, it's a system in its own right, then what does the parody really do? Well to answer that, and the original question above, one must take a step above the parody, again. The Bakhtinian dialogic allows for another kind of logics, one that is always

intertextualized and by definition is always in *becoming*, then parody is also in becoming, becoming what then? The Parody of the Feminine seemingly inscribed in Wonder Woman is not only a question of imitation nor is it an exchange of signs. There is an embodiment and simultaneous redefinition of referents in the instant of the utterance, crossing space between the real and the phansasm thus leaving the curvature of the real into something else, what Jean Baudrillard writes about as this new other space beyond the synthesis of the hyperreal.<sup>135</sup> Here however it is not a question of synthesis but of a dialogized spectrum of difference, absence and presence in the realm of the hyperreal. Which henceforth only leaves the space where the simulation of difference is possible. The Parody here then becomes again pure function, a point of entry into the spectrum of the difference, the desert. Baudrillard again puts words to this as the function of truth and meaning and their equivalence to this hyperspace as being something which:

[It] is no longer a question of imitation, nor duplication, nor even parody. It's a question of substituting the sign of the real for the real, that is to say of an operation of deterring every real process via its operational double, a problematic metastable, perfect descriptive machine that offers all the signs of the real and short-circuits all its vicissitudes.<sup>136</sup>

Baudrillard underscores the disjuncture that occurs, in part by the perfect descriptive machine, which this thesis described as a utopic gaze, part of a discursive machinery, and by offsetting that by producing rhythmic oscillations of the heteroglottal parodic speech in the dichotomy of mimesis and masquerading. Which as both I and Baudrillard points out, no longer is a question of imitation, even though by definition a mimesis always is a “lesser form” of the original, it appears to transcends those vernacular understandings and in par become something more encompassing. The signs of real are substituted for the real in this hyperreality of sexuality. Simone’s Wonder Woman then as a mass cultural expression, and in all honesty - a commercial product, does not only disjuncture the real of mass culture, but of the Feminine phansasm. Consequently this thesis would argue that it does not only problematize the role of sexuality in mass culture, but opens a space in that structure where both action and distance is achieved. Both exposing that there are indeed regulatory ideals laid on the conceptual site of the body, but that it also is a function of a grander discursive phansasm of sexuality.

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<sup>135</sup> J. Baudrillard, *Simulacra And Simulation*, trans. S.F. Glaser, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1994, p.2

<sup>136</sup> J. Baudrillard, *Simulacra And Simulation*, trans. S.F. Glaser, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1994, p.2

The second question stated in the introduction was, how does this separation of body and regime correspond to the parody and the materialization of the regulative ideal of sexuality? However this has in a large degree already been answered, yet some key aspects of this question arise as imperative. I have in my thesis elaborated on the separation of regimes and of the body with the help of the parody, which transcends these concept into the space of the desert, and here distance between the two is achieved, and with distance comes in these case a larger possibility for critique – as the otherwise embodied experience of the regulatory regimes makes it “too dangerous” to take a critical stance. Yet consequently, and more importantly this desert and the critical distance is the space wherein action is possible, and it has been the goal of this thesis to show how such a process can be intertwined into the fabric of a mass cultural icon. And to show that this action is placed in the vacuum of the space of the desert of the [hyper]real, is poses a space where power can be drawn from that vacuum instead from, as the Irigaray’s mimeses would have it, from the symbolic order of the masculine. I’ve wanted to outline a tactic for resisting the hegemony, from within. A state of resistance placed in the unconscious, or rather the ‘what we know but do not see’<sup>137</sup>. Thus the parody poses a powerful function, not entirely of its own, but for its potential to transcend the parody into a space where another kind of power can be drawn, short-circuiting the discursive power of the masculine hegemony, a space for resistance. Redirecting the point of reference from the body, which it would be in the masculine discourse, to the vacuum of space, pending it between difference and closeness. This potential space of action however is intrinsically dialogized, demanding a dialogue with a reader capable of answering. However it must be underscored that this is not just another stratification of the readers of comics, separating them who “gets it” and those who don’t, instead it’s a articulation of the dialogized nature of a community based mass cultural expression of comics. In par this in itself makes this function interesting, allowing critical parodic expression roam in the crux of mass culture, and in doing so not only presenting a space for critique and problematizing, but actually formatting a new kind of resistance. This new kind of resistance that this thesis wants to outline is not a resistance in the usual meaning of the word, because that often implies opposing forces, but this kind of resistance is placed on another, parallel plane. Not as much opposing than it is presenting something new, something which is essentially something else. Again

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<sup>137</sup> Zizek 2014, p.8-9

a disjuncture of the normative ideals and discursive structure otherwise regulating every day life in the form of one of these structures otherwise enforces, a commercial product, a fetiched object – the comic book. Pollock wrote in her book *Vision & Difference* about the potential function of mass culture that:

By stressing the working process – both as manufacture and signification – as the site of the inscription of sexual difference I am wanting to emphasize the active part of cultural practices in producing the social relations and regulations of femininity. They can also conceivably be a place for some qualification or disruption of them.<sup>138</sup>

The disruption of the regimes otherwise regulating every-day life is indeed the crux of this thesis. Like the situationist situation, this disjuncture outlined in Wonder Woman is only possible for a very short time; it's an instance, a meeting with the heteroglottal disjuncture that disrupts our conceptions of normative ideals. By exemplifying some of these instances in Simone's version of Wonder Woman this thesis have consequently showed the potential for some writers and artists inside the machinery of mass culture to make valid and consequent critique of it self, but most important is the looming potential space for resistance in these otherwise often normative mass cultural expressions. Connecting the function of *looking like* and the utopic gaze via dialogization and performativity has also led this thesis to open new theoretical frameworks for the study of comics and mass culture. One of the goals also outlined in the introduction of this thesis was indeed the elaboration and creation of new theoretical tools to understand comics and by applying Bakhtin and Irigaray on comics, this thesis have in a very broad way opened for an new theoretical machinery, forming something that we might call a dialogic of difference, a combination, or rather intertwining of the Bakhtinian dialogic, and the Irigarayan culture of difference. Also the interlacing of the Deleuzeian becoming and the dialogization have provided this thesis with an insight which hopefully future researchers will contribute from. As well as the understanding of the body as a topological function in relation to Foucault's Heterotopia/Utopia and then again interconnected with Irigaray's culture of difference as well as Nietzsche and Zizek's Desert of the real to provide the spectrum of action which have indeed provided a new outlook on the function of materialization and preformativity of the body in conjunction with site and place. These wide combinations of theoreticians clustering on his subject

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<sup>138</sup> Pollock p.84

with varying explicit interest in mass culture, have proven vital in also showing the wide theoretical point of entry that comics can provide, and that in the future can be used to involve more theory and acclaimed scholars into the field of comic book studies and to dissect the various theoretical openings that this thesis have opened.

## Appendix

Image 1



Image 1 - Marston W.M. [Charles Moulton] (w), Peter G. Harry (a) *Wonder Woman* #1, DC comics, New York, summer 1942, [p.6], Copyright DC comics, This is the original back story to how the Amazons fought the patriarchy, and in the spirit of Marston it is filled with symbolic meaning, especially what happens on the 6<sup>th</sup> panel, where Hippolyte strikes down Hercules, the avatar of the patriarchs with the chains that once tied her, but that she now got the strength to break and use to fight back!

Image 2



Image 2- Marston W.M.[Charles Moulton] (w), Peter G. Harry (a), Wonder Woman #7, DC comics, New York, Winter 1943 p.5a/7, Copyright DC comics, here in a future, 1000 years in to the future, the USA have a woman as president, and even the soldiers are women, but for some reason the men (or at least this senator) of the future still cling to the belief that they are better than women. However the president of this new matriarchy proclaims that "woman is a prouder title than president!" very much in accordance to Marston's conviction that women soon would rule the world, however he was sure that it would happen within only 100 years.

Image 3



Image -3, Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman* #32, DC comics, New York, Jul. 2009 [p.3], Copyright DC comics, here is an example of the sexed gaze, both we as readers are forced to embody, and the effect of that gaze in the whole pose, her exaggerated breasts, legs and Wonder Woman's face brings to mind the ecstasy of renaissance sculpture.

Image 4



Image 4 - Simone G. (w) Chang B. (a), *Wonder Woman* #24, Nov 2008, DC comics, New York, 2008 [p.24], Copyright DC comics, Wonder Woman is caught with her own lasso by her own various incarnations, including the Marston-era Wonder Woman.



Image – 5 Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M (i), *Wonder Woman #41*, DC comics, New York, Apr 2010, [p.9], Copyright DC comics, both Wonder Woman and Power Girl, are often showed in full profile, so to exhibit the full body, on this page they are both positioned so to show as much as possible of their body through the sexed gaze.

Image 6

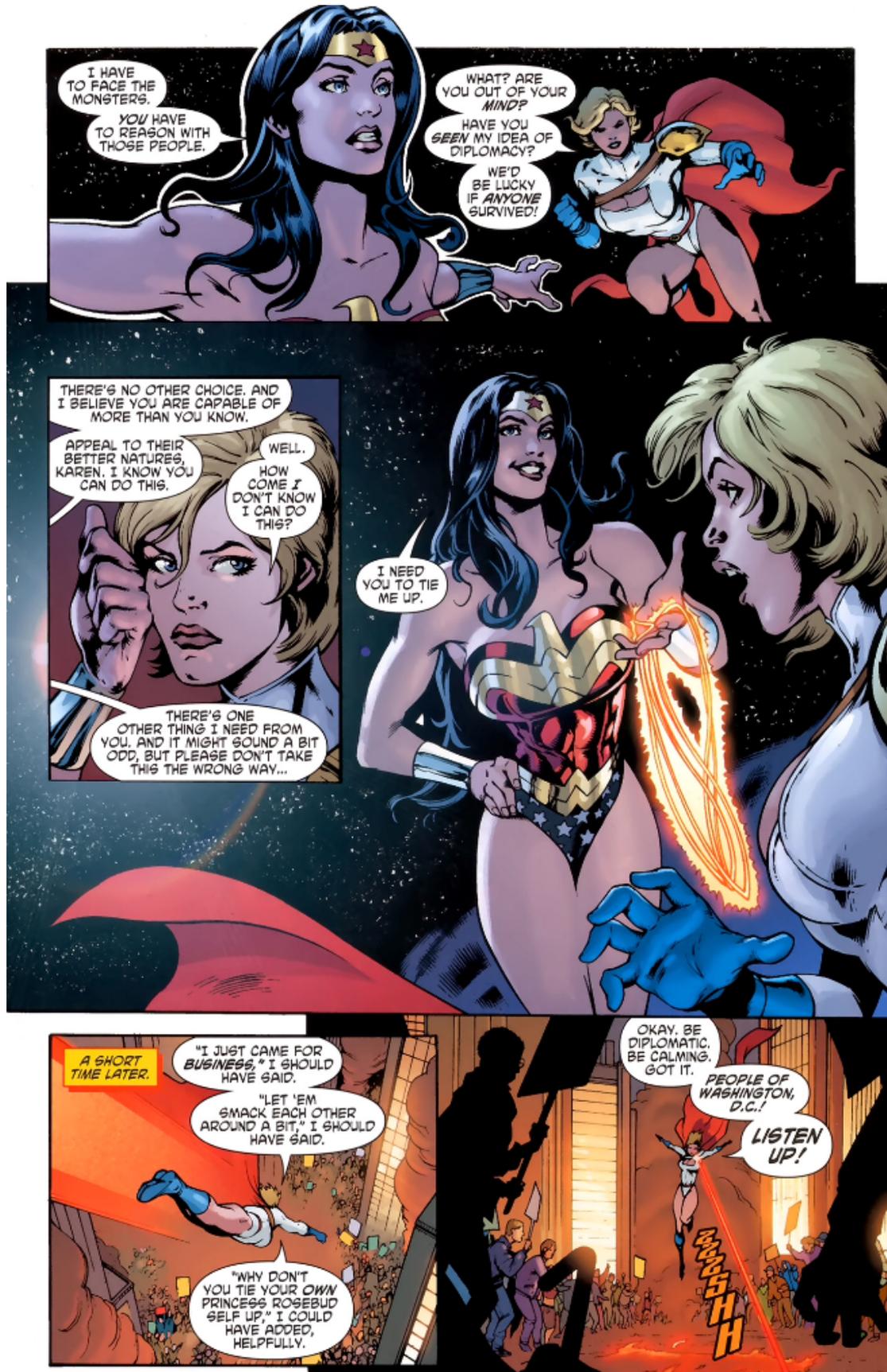


Image – 6 Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M (i), *Wonder Woman* #41, DC comics, New York, Apr 2010, [p.18], Copyright DC comics, on the third panel there is an obvious sexual suspense as Wonder Woman asks Power Girl to tie her up, bondage scenes have indeed been a large part of Wonder Woman, but here Simone first implies it, but what we see on the next page is an even more super powered Wonder Woman as she has become more powerful by being tied with her own lasso,

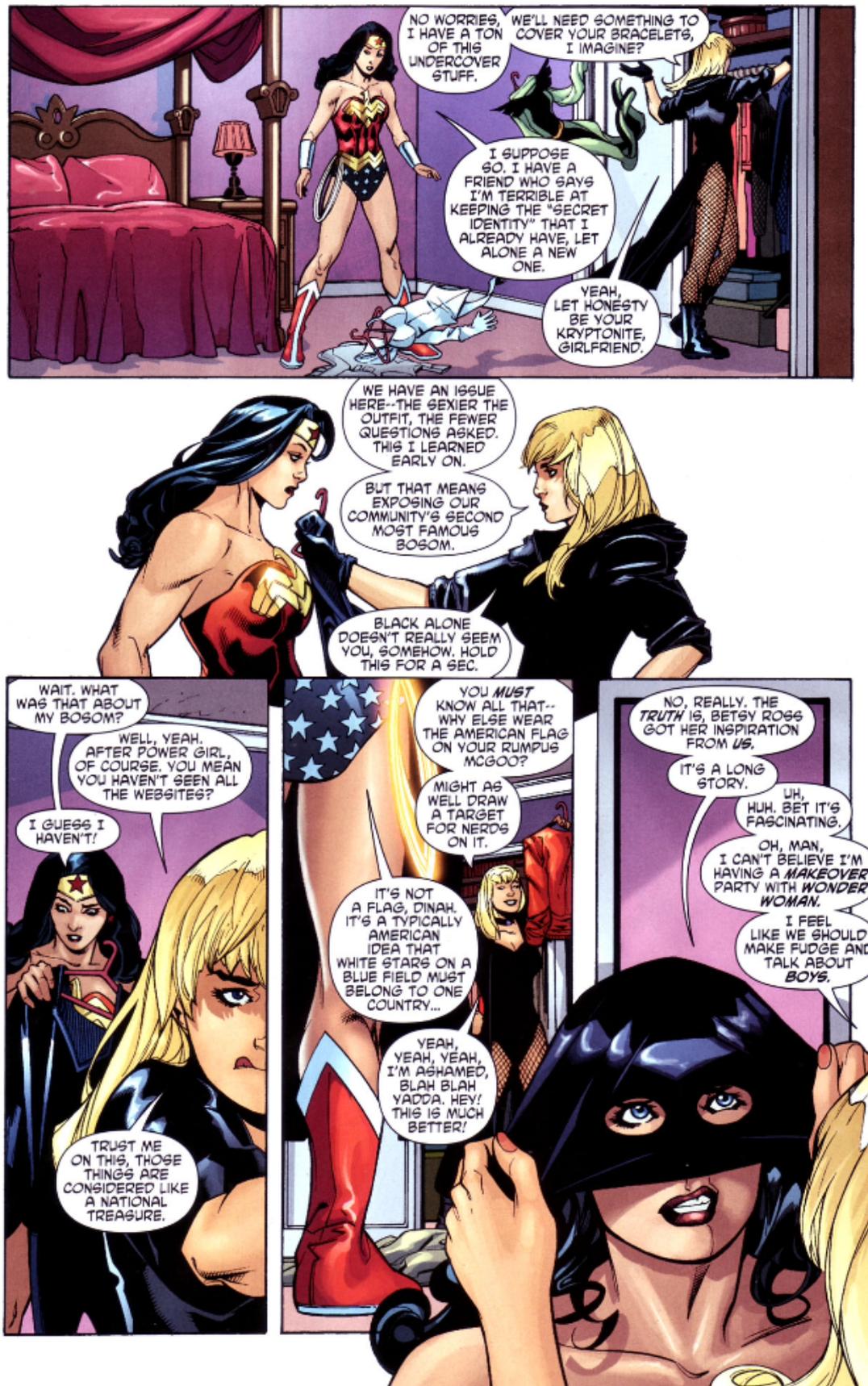


Image – 7 Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman* #34, DC comics, New York, sep. 2009, [p.10], Copyright DC comics, The Black Canary is trying to make Wonder Woman more sexy, making a few jokes about her breasts and her “rumpus maccgoo”. While Wonder Woman only seems confused, she also claims that Betsy Ross, the woman credited for the sewing the first American flag

Image 8

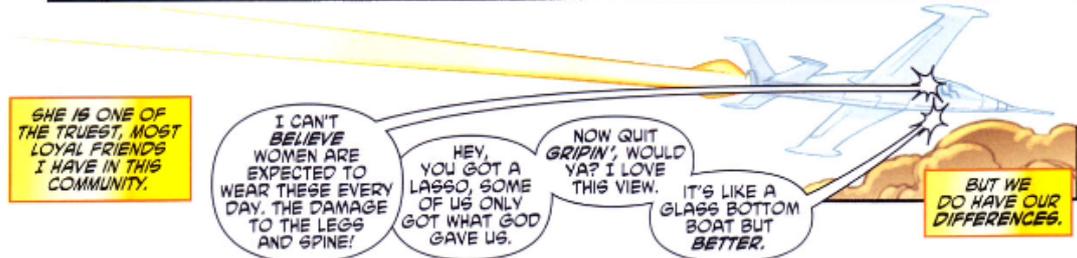


Image -8, Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman* #34, DC comics, New York, sep. 2009, [p.11], Copyright DC comics, The Black Canary and Wonder Woman has achieved the critical level of exposure, they look like 'hookers in a Tarantino nightmare'.

Image 9



Image – 9 Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #16*, DC comics, New York, Mar. 2008, [p.17]/1, Copyright DC comics, Wonder Woman is fighting to retake her homeland, the paradise island, which has been occupied by Nazis. Here is also a great example of pairing extreme violence and sexual allure, in the same body, especially in the first panel.

Image 10

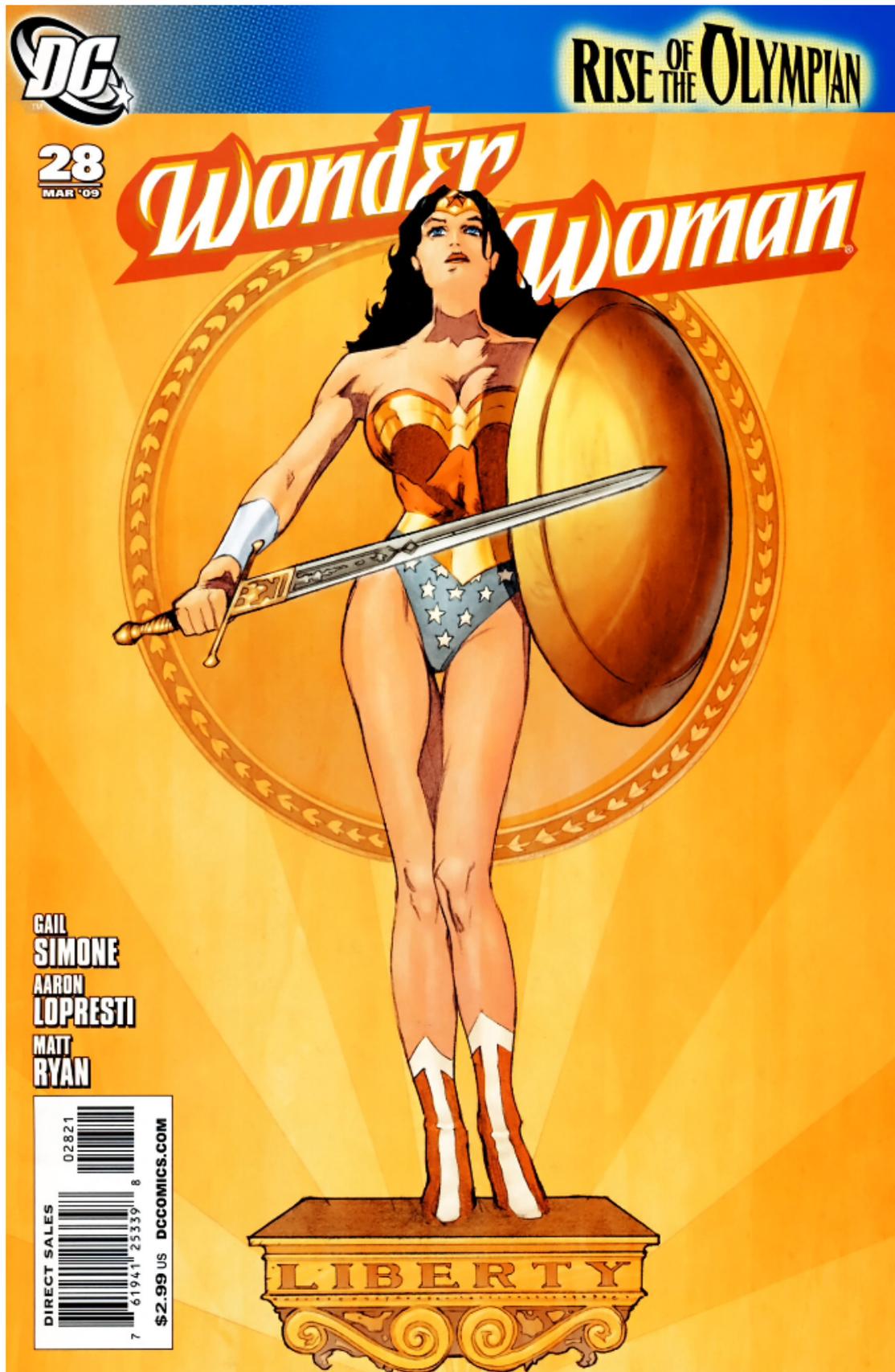


Image – 10 Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman* #28, DC comics, New York, Mar. 2009 [Variant Cover], Copyright DC comics, Appealing to classical sculpture and patriotism is something that is often utilized in Wonder Woman, here quite pronounced.

Image 11



Image – 11 Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman #41*, DC comics, New York, Apr. 2010 [Cover], Copyright DC comics, Wonder Woman fights Power Girl, a exhibition of two bodies in their most extreme positions.

Image 12



Image – 12 Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Venus Verticordia*, Available from <http://www.rossettiarchive.org/img/sa344.s173.unknown.jpg> (accessed May 13, 2014), Copyright Rossetti Archive, original can be seen at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery in Bournemouth, Rossetti's painting of the nymph used in Pollock's example brings the Art Historian John Berger's similar yet elaborating quote from his book *Ways of seeing*:

You [the painter] painted a naked woman because you enjoyed looking at her, you put a mirror in her hand and you called the painting *Vanity*, thus morally condemning the woman whose nakedness you had depicted for your own pleasure.

The real function of the mirror was otherwise. It was to make the woman connive in treating herself as, first and foremost, a sight. (from J. Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, BBC and Penguin books, London, 1972, p.51)

Berger's quote highlight the actual function of looking and creating as a sexed practice, defining the feminine body, in order to facilitate a sexuality that is "hidden" or physically non percent in the image itself. This does also put Wonder Woman in a more clear historicized context, a possible rut for future research.

Image 13



Image – 13 Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman* #35, DC comics, New York, Oct. 2009, [p.1], Copyright DC comics, the splash page showing a manga inspired version of Wonder Woman as a vinyl figure, figures that does exist and is made by DC as collectibles, way before appearing in this issue. They are also clearly stenciled and sexualized version of Wonder Woman.

Image 14



Image – 14 Simone G. (w) Lopresti A. (p) Ryan M. (i), *Wonder Woman* #35, DC comics, New York, Oct. 2009, [p.2], Copyright DC comic, this is the page just next to the one above (in the comics) where the phansasm of the previous appearance is exposed and the inadequacy of Wonder Woman's own response make it clear that there is a separation between what we see, and what Wonder Woman's own perception of her being [linguistic consciousness].

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