



Henry Moore: Sculptural Process and Public Identity

Circling Each Other: Henry Moore and Adrian Stokes

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This essay explores the tensions that underlay the public collaborations between Moore and the critic Adrian Stokes during two phases in their careers. While they both originally supported an aesthetic of direct carving and publicly supported each other's reputations, they disagreed about the relationship between painting, sculpture, architecture and the role of psychoanalysis in the interpretation of sculpture.

Adrian Stokes (1902–1972) was an aesthetic critic of Renaissance and contemporary art and architecture, a balletomane, a psychoanalytic thinker, painter, poet and what might now be called a psycho-geographer of the environment. Henry Moore (1898–1986) was for many years Britain's most nationally and internationally renowned modernist sculptor. He also wrote incisively about art and wielded significant influence on the British art world and beyond. Despite some close attention to Stokes's pioneering short review of Moore's sculptures of 1933, and to the brief mention of Moore in a late essay on Barbara Hepworth of 1973, the development of their personal and institutional relationship over several decades has yet to be fully addressed from their reciprocal points of view.¹

Gaining early acclaim from a tiny British intelligentsia in the 1920s, Moore rose to become Britain's foremost representative of modern art in the eyes of an elite and of a general public who, in the words of the writer Hilary Spurling, 'grew up knowing about modernism, if at all, from *Punch* cartoons in dentists' waiting rooms'.² In his final years his international reputation grew to such proportions that it seemed as if every city across the world with international pretensions felt inclined to acquire at least one of his public works. So great was his stature that it both paved the way for and blocked the careers of younger British sculptors, so that, with the ebbing of his posthumous appeal, it became safe to ridicule his 'colossally mediocre work' together with the 'absurdly inflated and unjustified ... cult of Moore'.³ In retrospect, however, as his work passes out of fashion and its institutional contexts become visible, its original motivations appear stranger and less bland.⁴

Today, by comparison, Adrian Stokes, whose writings have always seemed strange, is often deemed famous for being unknown. A popular anthology of aesthetics, for example, includes him with Georg Simmel and Herbert Read on a select list of 'those who are generally neglected by current interests and courses of study'.⁵ In fact, a steady stream of secondary literature has sprung up about him, especially since the posthumous publication of the three volume *Critical Writings of Adrian Stokes* in 1978. What is unassailable, however, is his reputation among those he influenced in his day. The academic and publisher Sir Geoffrey Faber thought him the greatest prose writer of his generation,⁶ while the philosopher Richard Wollheim contended that his 'prose, fiercely difficult by the standards of his age, seized the imagination of some of the most interesting and creative minds of his time'.⁷ Although often characterised as a belated follower of Ruskin and Pater's autobiographical approach to art, it is now possible to make wider comparisons with the serenity of Winckelmann and the intensity of Nietzsche, as well as voices of his own time from which his distinctive sensibility arises through a finely differentiated calculus of acknowledgment and disagreement: F.H. Bradley, D.H. Lawrence, Ezra Pound, Virginia Woolf, Clive Bell, Roger Fry, Wyndham Lewis, Aldous Huxley, the Sitwells, Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein and many others.

The strong and sometimes strategic public regard in which Moore and Stokes held each other is most apparent in the early 1930s and the years from 1955 to 1968. A certain solidarity arose from their membership of the Hampstead artists' community in the 1930s. Moore moved there and took

up a teaching position at the Royal College of Arts after his marriage in July 1929. Stokes arrived in 1930 to continue his daily psychoanalysis with Melanie Klein, who would surely have encouraged him in forming vibrant new friendships there. Stokes, Moore, Ben Nicholson, Barbara Hepworth and Herbert Read all lived within yards of each other along Parkhill Road in Hampstead.⁸ Stokes would have met Moore through Ben Nicholson, to whom he was introduced by Margaret Gardiner. She recalled that, 'Adrian really became a great friend of this group of people ... he liked their work, he was extremely *perceptive* ... they liked his ideas ... they found him ... *inspiring* in fact, and ... with Ben Nicholson he had this great bond of games.'⁹ Moore shared this bond, particularly at playing the invented indoor game called 'Shut-Eyed Golf'. He also would have appreciated Stokes's fascination with the varied properties of carved stone, discussed in *Stones of Rimini* (1934).¹⁰ Yet given Moore's notable warmth of character it is perhaps surprising that they do not seem to have been as friendly with each other as with others in the group (Moore with the critic Herbert Read, for example, and Stokes with Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth). Stokes's return to Hampstead after years away in Ascona in Swiss Italy, where he married Ann Mellis, the sister of his first wife, Margaret, and after further years living with his new family in an isolated house near St Albans, is probably the context for his renewed contact with Moore in the 1950s. The catalyst, however, was Stokes's positive re-evaluation of one of Moore's favourite sculptors in *Michelangelo: An Aspect of Art* (1955). Stokes's return to London was to facilitate care of his mentally ill daughter Ariadne and to reintegrate himself in intellectual life (he founded the Imago Group with Robert Still to promote the discussion and cultural application of psychoanalysis). This was a time when psychoanalytic thought was moving to the fore of Stokes's writing, a development that both intrigued and worried Moore, who like many artists, did not feel comfortable with the idea of the sources of artistic creativity being described or explained.

There were of course enough differences of regional identity, class and experience to keep a distance between Moore, the wily and aesthetically radical son of a Yorkshire miner who had seen gruesome action in the First World War (something that would inevitably have placed a gulf between him and all those in Hampstead who had missed that experience), and Stokes, a highly assimilated Sephardic Jew from a wealthy background, educated at Rugby School. Like others whose older brothers had perished in the war, Stokes had chosen an alternative lifestyle – in his case, that of a balletomane and 'child of the sun', exploring Italy and the Mediterranean, identifying himself as a gay rival of W.H. Auden in the years before his marriage to Margaret Mellis in 1938.¹¹ Two years before his death in 1986, Moore could 'not remember receiving any letters from Adrian Stokes',¹² although three survive in the archives of the Henry Moore Foundation, and a few remain from Moore to Stokes in the latter's papers now held at the Tate Archive.

Yet Moore was the celebrated student carver of an early Renaissance bust made by direct cutting instead of the pointing machine required by his professor at the Royal College of Art (fig.1)¹³ and Stokes, the exotically subtle art critic of Renaissance art and architecture, was the great advocate of direct carving as opposed to modeling, a practical and metaphysical opposition most fully developed in his *Stones of Rimini* (1934), which was devoted to Agostino di Duccio's low reliefs in the early Renaissance Tempio Malatestiano at Rimini. When Moore asked about Stokes in a late interview, 'I wonder whether – I'm only now thinking – does he anywhere talk about the difference between the hard and the soft?', he may have been recalling a resounding passage from *Stones of Rimini*: 'Limestone is between the hardness of jade and the softness of clay. This



Fig.1
Henry Moore
Head of the Virgin after Rosselli 1922–3
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intermediate substance is the mean of European art. It demands neither to be moulded like the clay, nor minutely whittled like the jade; but to be boldly carved.¹⁴ Although by his own admission Moore was not a great reader,¹⁵ it can be confidently stated that, apart from *Stones of Rimini*, Moore read at least parts of *The Quattro Cento* (1932), the whole of *Michelangelo: An Aspect of Art* (1955), which he lavishly praised in 1956, and the first chapter of *Three Essays on the Painting of our Time* (1961), on which Moore spoke in some detail in an interview. For his part Stokes wrote briefly but intensely on Moore in 1933, and more glancingly in 1956 and 1968.

Collaborations

During its preparation *Stones of Rimini* provided criteria for one of five memorable essays Stokes wrote for the *Spectator* when he took over from the regular art critic Anthony Blunt for a few weeks in October and November 1933.¹⁶ His appreciation of Moore took its place next to equally eloquent testimonies to contemporary works by Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth, helping to constitute their group identity as Hampstead artists in later years. The critic John Russell wrote in 1961 that Stokes's 'essays on Henry Moore and Ben Nicholson, though now thirty years old, can stand today with hardly a word change',¹⁷ and indeed Stokes found exquisitely apt, memorable, even daring metaphors for Moore's work that few artists could fail to be entranced by, although it does not seem that Moore urged Stokes to write on him again as Nicholson and Hepworth did.¹⁸

Whatever transpired between them in the interim, their relationship rekindled in 1956 after Stokes's aesthetic had undergone a deep transformation that fortuitously brought it nearer to Moore's outlook and tastes. In 1955 Stokes wrote to Moore to congratulate him on being made a Companion of Honour, although as he later recalled, he had made the mistake of calling it the Order of Merit, which Moore would not receive until 1963, when Stokes wrote: 'I remember some years ago with shame, writing to congratulate you on the O.M.; it turned out to be the C.H. Obviously I was unable to understand the separation.'¹⁹ At least the mistake was the right way round, since the Order of Merit is considered to be the pinnacle of the British Honours system, but 'shame' might not be an entirely idle choice of word. Freudian slips were important to Stokes. In declaring his ignorance of the 'separation' between the two awards he is not merely showing a certain, probably ironical, disregard for the Honours system but also directing attention away from recognition of envy in himself as well as admiration of Moore's reputation and clout at this time.

Perhaps Moore was sensitive enough to understand and sympathise with this, for in 1956 he kindly made first a private then a public acclamation of Stokes's *Michelangelo: An Aspect of Art* (1955), the first of his books in the Tavistock series after Fabers had discontinued their long relationship with him due to his increasingly explicit psychoanalytic approach to art. 'I have just finished reading your "Michelangelo" and must write to tell you how very much I have enjoyed it. I've found it full of profound understanding. I did not expect, at this time, to read anything on Michelangelo so enthralling, and showing such new insight into the greatest sculptor there will ever be.'²⁰ The phrase 'greatest sculptor there will ever be' runs deep, for as a boy at Sunday school Moore had heard a story in which Michelangelo was hailed as 'the greatest sculptor who ever lived', a phrase he felt had crystallised in him the ambition to be a sculptor.²¹

In the 'Books of the Year, 1956' segment in the *Sunday Times* for 23 December 1956, Moore made his appreciation of Stokes's book public.

Of the books I read in 1956 the one which remains strongest in my mind is Adrian Stokes's *Michelangelo: A Study in the Nature of Art* (Tavistock Publications).

This book is concerned with the aesthetic judgment of Michelangelo's sculpture and painting and his poetry, and with the unique quality of humanist art of Michelangelo's work.

I did not think that, at this late date, so much that is new and profound could be said about Michelangelo. I was continually engrossed and appreciative, and was made to

believe and marvel more than ever in the superhuman greatness of Michelangelo.

Because a sculptor's work is so slow, if he is to have anything to show for his efforts he must daily work more hours than most. Therefore there is not so much time to read serious books, really thoroughly but this is one I hope to read at least once, if not twice, more.

I think Adrian Stokes has made a new, deep and penetrating contribution to present-day art criticism.²²

The praise is unstinting, but in making a virtue of his restricted time for reading, Moore alerts the reader to his priorities as a maker rather than a critic, though in fact, he read 'almost anything' on Michelangelo.²³

Meanwhile Stokes expressed his deep gratitude for the tribute, framing it as an unexpected Christmas present, but striking a few odd notes along the way:

Dear Henry,

I 'take' the Observer but was given your very generous references to my Michelangelo on Christmas morning. I am feeling strongly pleasure, pride, gratitude, and recompense. It pleases me particularly that your dictum should appear in a Sunday newspaper from neither of which I have had any sort of notice for close on 25 years. Nothing more authoritative could be said; and that is not only immediately helpful – very considerably so – but something to hearten one always.

Looking out of the window on a day like today, it seems to me that you are the only English artist to have conquered as well as used our climate.

Always in deepest gratitude,

Yours sincerely,

Adrian Stokes²⁴

In putting quotation marks around the word 'take', Stokes was perhaps expressing his long-established disdain towards journalism that dated from his brief spell as a disgruntled London gossip columnist in the early 1920s. The gratitude to Moore, however, was heart-felt but it also seems as if Stokes felt that Moore's tribute did not make up for the years of neglect from these papers at a time when his career was reaching a nadir. He tried to gratify Moore with a mental picture of himself imagining a powerful sculpture outside his window, but the words 'conquer' and 'used' are generally negative terms in Stokes's aesthetic vocabulary. The extraordinary feature of this letter is that he was frank enough to paint himself here as under a cloud of depressive envy, in the psychoanalytic terms of his former analyst and intellectual mentor, Melanie Klein.

Lapsing into relative obscurity in the late 1950s,²⁵ Stokes may have been sufficiently heartened by recognition from a recently honoured artist of soaring international reputation to try in 1959 to take Moore under his critical wing again by responding to Stephen Spender's request for a review of Erich Neumann's Jungian biography, *The Archetypal World of Henry Moore*.²⁶ On the 30 November 1960 Moore wrote to Stokes thanking him for a cheque that had just arrived for a private purchase of a small bronze, *Seated Figure on Square Steps* 1957 (fig.2). Since Stokes was not in the habit of collecting contemporary art, the timing may have been significant. Three days earlier Anthony Caro, Moore's former assistant from 1951 to 1953 and a rising sculptor in his own right, had published a generally hurtful review in the *Observer* of Moore's exhibition at the Whitechapel, the same exhibition from which Stokes selected his sculpture. Although respectful in many ways, it challenged Moore's monopoly of contemporary sculpture as an obstacle to progress. If Stokes had read this review (and we have just seen that he 'took' the *Observer* newspaper),²⁷ then the purchase might be seen as a very kind indication of support by compensating Moore in the most practical means

possible, and so attesting to lasting bonds of affection, however framed by self-interest Stokes's gesture may have been.²⁸ 'I am delighted you want a sculpture', Moore replied, and as if to reassure him, mentioned how busy his bronze foundry was being kept in producing his work.²⁹ The purchase was all the more potent for the witting or unwitting effect of sending Moore an auspicious signal, since Moore would surely have known that Stokes, like Moore before him in the 1940s and 1950s, had been appointed a Trustee of the Tate Gallery the previous September, in which capacity he would serve until September 1968, the year in which the second full-scale retrospective of Moore's work took place in the Gallery. It was around 1960 that Stokes told Vera Russell that he had made a conscious decision to 'join the establishment' he had earlier spurned.³⁰ Retaining scepticism towards its motives, he articulated a clear understanding of how the establishment could contribute to 'the cause of art' in writing to congratulate Moore in 1963 on receiving the Order of Merit (Moore wrote a large 'O.M' on the envelope, ready for filing): 'Not that they can do you any honour: they honour themselves in seeking to honour art at its best. That is highly important to the cause of art.'³¹

In 1961 Moore was interviewed in the company of his wife Irina by Vera and John Russell, then art critic of the *Sunday Times*. Moore had primed himself by reading the opening pages of Stokes's latest book, which he refers to as 'Three Little Essays' but is, in fact, *Three Essays on the Painting of our Times* (1961).³² He claims to have had time to read only the opening pages but internal evidence suggests he got through to the end of chapter one.³³ It is as if Stokes was an obvious authority, almost a crib, to go to for contemporary thinking on art, but also someone to be fiercely disagreed with as a representative critic who does not understand sculpture as sculptors do. The question of Stokes's need for recognition came up. Vera Russell felt Stokes did not want to be recognised. Her husband vigorously disagreed. As others who knew him would confirm, 'in spite of his shy manner, he's an absolute fiend for making somebody notice his work. He had got a very strong instinct of self-preservation in that way', and Henry Moore, no slouch at self-promotion himself, was 'very glad to hear that'.³⁴



Fig.2
Henry Moore
Seated Figure on Square Steps 1957
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Whatever his reservations about Stokes's comprehension of sculpture, Moore's regard for the brilliance of his writing was in fact unwavering, and in a letter of 12 August 1965 to the *Times Literary Supplement*, Moore, who was by then in the habit of supporting worthy causes in national newspapers,³⁵ was among eighteen signatories of distinguished artists and writers complaining about the journal's neglect of 'a writer who has claims to being the most original and creative living English writer on art.'³⁶

Finally, Stokes included a short encomium of Moore in a foreword to an exhibition catalogue of Hepworth's works at the Marlborough Gallery in 1970. The art historian Anne Wagner has criticised Stokes's use of Moore to diminish Hepworth's importance by putting his name first in an 'inevitable' pairing with hers in the 'English contribution' to sculpture, but Stokes had genuine reservations

about her work at this time.³⁷ This might have reflected a broader institutional position towards Hepworth. Stokes was a Trustee of the Tate Gallery from 1960 to 1967 and in a minute of a board meeting of 1965 it was noted that the gallery's collection particularly needed a 'major wood carving and several other types of work' by Moore but only 'pre-abstract', 'early work' by Hepworth.³⁸ Stokes was one of eight trustees who endorsed this decision, and privately he was not a fan of Hepworth's turn to abstraction in her late career, a fact that Hepworth herself cheerfully acknowledged when she once offered Stokes a sculpture in return for cancelling a debt.³⁹

Stokes's position was consistent with his long established defense of naturalism against abstraction, as illustrated by a letter to the critic David Sylvester in 1965: 'I believe I have long presented Ben [Nicholson] with a problem that irks him. The basis of it is that I seem for thirty years thoroughly to understand and admire his painting, yet I do not declare unilaterally for abstract art and all that is written about it. I hang up paintings by Bill [Coldstream] for instance'.⁴⁰ In 1970 he wrote about Hepworth's late abstract work more out of a sense of duty than genuine enthusiasm,⁴¹ whereas the retention of what Moore called 'the humanist organic element' secured Stokes's approval.⁴² Moore wrote in 1932: 'All the best sculpture I know is both abstract and representational at the same time'.⁴³ Here is one respect in which Moore's openness on questions on which Stokes took sides did not harm Stokes's estimation of his work.

Yet a closer look at the public symbiosis between Stokes and Moore reveals a rich background of tensions along aesthetic, psychological and institutional lines. In the 1961 interview with the *Russells* Moore expressed three main reservations about Stokes's aesthetic, which date back to the 1930s. First, he felt that Stokes belonged to a class of critics who read sculptures as if they were paintings. Secondly, he refuted Stokes's contention that architecture is the mother of the arts in order to defend the rights of sculpture as an autonomous art. Both caveats reflected opposition towards Stokes's consciously Eurocentric cultural orientation and a different understanding of the carving-modeling opposition whose currency preceded Stokes's formulation of it by at least ten years.⁴⁴ Thirdly, Moore struck an ambivalent stance towards psychoanalytic interpretations of his work, whether Freudian or Jungian, positioning himself strategically within competing tastes for innovation and tradition in contemporary sculpture.

World sculpture versus western pictorialism

Well before they met each other in the 1930s, Stokes and Moore had formed diametrically opposite opinions on two major critics of their time. So hardened did their positions become in later life that if they talked about such matters in Hampstead in the 1930s, as seems likely, it is difficult to imagine them seeing eye to eye. In answer to Donald Hall's question in 1960 whether any other works of art criticism had affected him as greatly as Roger Fry's *Vision and Design*, Moore emphatically answered 'no', though he added that 'another book that I found a great help and an excitement was Ezra Pound's book on Gaudier-Brzeska'.⁴⁵ The silence on Stokes is deafening in this context, especially since Stokes strongly repudiated the major themes of these books in his early aesthetic.

The essence of the matter was that when he read *Vision and Design* in 1921 Moore was strongly influenced by Fry's essay on Negro sculpture, which promulgated the superiority of non-Western art where mastery of three-dimensional sculpture was concerned. This is the crucial passage on which Stokes and Moore would have diverged:

They have indeed complete plastic freedom: that is to say, these African artists really conceive form in three dimensions. Now this is rare in sculpture. All archaic European sculpture – Greek and Romanesque, for instance – approaches plasticity from the point of view of bas-relief. The state bears traces of having been conceived as the combination of front, back, and side bas-reliefs. And this continues to make itself felt almost until the final development of the tradition.⁴⁶

In *The Quattro Cento*, by contrast, Stokes had sprung to the defense of the low-relief by differentiating his own subject from Negro sculpture: 'since Quattro Cento, and indeed Italian sculpture as a whole, can with few exceptions be condemned by a purist as "pictorial", – that is to say, not essentially plastic, – I must defend the low relief.' And he continues in the following sentence, at the beginning of the next chapter:

I admit the charge: I admit that even much free-standing sculpture – even the work of Michelangelo – is conceived from a front view, not, as by a good modern sculptor, wholly in three dimensions. Also I agree that only pseudosculptors will attempt the pictorial effect today. Because stone today cannot have the overwhelming significance that I have described: nothing bursts from the stone demanding perspective or emergent effect.⁴⁷

Stokes reiterates the gist of this general constraint on contemporary sculpture in the conclusion of his review of Moore's sculptures a year later: 'The sculptors, though they have concentrated upon actual carving almost exclusively, have shown a far less pure carving conception in their work: for they have sought to make of the block something as simple and integral as a lump of clay; possibly because natural stone is losing its use and importance as a material.'⁴⁸ Here was a disagreement in the making, for the contrast is with the painters, particularly Ben Nicholson, whom Stokes had credited with fulfilling the 'carving conception' better than the sculptors.⁴⁹

Stokes possessed a consciously Eurocentric vision based on radical opposition to proponents of world aesthetics such as Robert Byron on world architecture, Arthur Waley on Chinese art and particularly Roger Fry of whom he was thinking when in *The Quattro Cento*, again, he asked whether we must 'refuse to the Italian subject any consideration which, at present, owing to ignorance and to our distance from African civilization we cannot bestow upon Negro sculpture?'⁵⁰ Fry's essay had strengthened Moore's rebellion against academic sculpture (including the low-relief Rossellini head he had chiseled rather than drilled at college) by opening the doors not only to African sculpture but also to the eclectic might of world sculpture at the British Museum, including 'Palaeolithic and Neolithic sculpture, Sumerian, Babylonian and Egyptian, Early Greek, Chinese, Etruscan, Indian, Mayan, Mexican and Peruvian, Romanesque, Byzantine and Gothic, Negro, South Sea Island and North American Indian sculpture', to cite a list he compiled in 1930 towards 'a world view of sculpture', alternative to the Greek and Renaissance ideal.⁵¹ In reality, though, there would be limits to Moore's commitment to non-Western sculpture: 'Gradually I began to realize that a lot of things one might be using and being influenced by – Negro sculpture for example, which gives you a simplified programme to work on – are, compared with Rodin, altogether too easy.'⁵² Moore reflected that there should be 'no discarding of those other interests in archaic art and the art of primitive peoples, but rather a clearer tension between this approach and the humanist emphasis.'⁵³

Stokes's position was not based simply on unthinking chauvinism. He believed, for example, that an intra-European synthesis of world styles, 'an intensification of all previous forms' and 'a spilling of every kind of racial memory', had already taken place within the Florentine Renaissance. In his view it had, on the one hand, sublimated the transcendental savagery of the Gothic and, on the other hand, communicated a sinister Semitic reserve of power from Etruscan sculpture through lesser Quattro Cento artists to Michelangelo, who in germinating 'the seeds of the Baroque', had attained 'colossal shapes, joyless, writhing, supreme'.⁵⁴ Thus, at this time Michelangelo was Stokes's *bête noire* before he rehabilitated him under the revised aesthetic criteria of *Michelangelo: An Aspect of Art* (1955).

In pondering Moore's reaction to Stokes's early aesthetic, we might wonder how well he could have got on with Stokes's revulsion from the 'sitting up and staring' posture of Etruscan tomb monuments condemned in *The Quattro Cento* and whose 'animus' explicitly reminded Stokes of Mexican sculpture in the British Museum,⁵⁵ when Moore's own inspiration for the *Reclining Figure* in Brown Hornton stone 1929 (fig.3) was the equally uncomfortable, upright posture of the the Toltec-Maya Chacmool reclining figure in the Museo Nacional de Antropología, Mexico City? If not framed in

conscious opposition to Stokes's aesthetic (which remains possible), Moore's early aesthetic compass was set very differently. A year after Stokes's review of his work Moore wrote, 'I want to make sculpture as big in feeling & grandeur as the Sumerian, as vital as Negro as direct & stone like as Mexican as alive as Early Greek & Etruscan as spiritual as Gothic.'⁵⁶ Even when he had been agonised by divided allegiance between non-Western sculpture and Italian art after his travelling scholarship in 1925, Moore's Italian enthusiasms would turn out differently from Stokes's.⁵⁷ He was inspired not by Agostino di Duccio nor Luciano Laurana nor Piero della Francesca, as Stokes was, but by Giotto, Orcagna, Tadeo Gabbi and late Michelangelo,⁵⁸ whom he tried to avoid on his travels but still recognised as 'an absolute superman.'⁵⁹ Later he would share a crusade with Michael Ayrton to rediscover the trecento sculpture of Giovanni Pisano.⁶⁰ Where Stokes saw early Renaissance sculptors giving the lead to painters, Moore saw Masaccio and Rembrandt (another *bête noire* of Stokes whom he later redeemed) as painters who inspired sculpture with a full grasp of three-dimensional values.⁶¹



Fig.3
Henry Moore
Reclining Figure 1929
Leeds City Art Gallery © The Henry Moore
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Where Stokes wished to make a real issue out of controversies in art, Moore refrained from choosing between alternatives he felt were false – and which might have restricted his market. So, with the battle lines drawn up around the publications of *Unit One* of 1934 and *Circle* of 1937, Moore regarded the conflict between abstractionists and surrealists as 'quite unnecessary' because their work represented essential polarities in every artist's personality.⁶² In *Colour and Form* (1937), by contrast, despite the shock of fantasy he used to leaven his descriptive prose, Stokes lambasted the 'ignorant half-based and journalese theory of Surrealism', while at the same time distancing himself from abstract and semi-abstract artists who lacked 'the *mis-en-scène* of any good gangster film'.⁶³ In the same year Moore undercut Stokes's early Renaissance aesthetic again by declaring, '[s]ince the Gothic European sculpture had become overgrown with moss, weeds – all sorts of surface excrescence which completely concealed shape.'⁶⁴ What chance here for Stokes's twin criteria of 'stone-blossom' or 'incrustation', kinds of surface carving defined in *The Quattro Cento* as respectively flowering outwards from or, under the erosive power of water, growing into the stone?⁶⁵

The consistency of Moore's opposition to what he saw as Stokes's pictorial view of sculpture emerges from the fact that even after praising *Michelangelo: An Aspect of Art*, he explicitly identified Stokes (and David Sylvester) with 'critics' who 'approach sculpture from a painters point of view (thats why they are often suckers for relief sculpture – they find it impossible to get away from their liking for not destroying [?] the picture plane, why often they get their opinions studying photographs of sculpture and not the sculpture itself – why they retain a flat picture of a sculpture in their minds.)'⁶⁶ Such critics were so addicted to an optical view of sculpture that they refused to circle around it as a physical object.

There was some justice for this view even in *Michelangelo* where, despite Stokes's positive re-evaluation of the sculptor, he posited Agostino di Duccio's low relief sculptures as the origin of Michelangelo's layering effects, such as a child embedded in the mother and the mother in

'homogenous material which discloses her form.'⁶⁷ These views led to remarkable divergences in their interpretations of Michelangelo's Rondanini Pietà (fig.4). For Stokes, 'an upright dead Christ is supposedly supported from behind by the Madonna standing on a higher level, there is the effect, none the less, that the second figure rides on the back of the first.'⁶⁸ Instead of this complex unity of reversible dependencies emerging from the matrix of the stone, Moore brilliantly reconstructed the artist's violent process of manufacture to pinpoint a radical disunity in the composition. He believed that at some point Michelangelo had decided to knock the head off the pre-existent sculpture:

There are the legs finished as they were perhaps ten years previously, but the top re-carved so that the hand of the Madonna on the chest of Christ is only a paper-thin ribbon. ... The top part is Gothic and the lower part is sort of Renaissance. So it's a work of art that for me means more because it doesn't fit in with all the theories of critics and aestheticians who say that one of the great things about a work of art must be its unity of style.⁶⁹

Stokes's sculptural pictorialism is still at the forefront of Moore's mind in his interview of 1961. Stokes had written in *Three Essays on the Painting* that 'the simplest relationships, the most sporadic marks, have deep meaning'.⁷⁰ Although John Russell rightly protested that Stokes was explicitly writing about painting here, the word 'marks' was enough to stir bees in Moore's bonnet:

you see Adrian here says that ... 'Every mark means something', and you could say in the same way every form means something, but to Adrian it's 'mark' ... – you see – and this is what is the painting point of view, and the modern abstract painter – the tashist [sic] painter – is often concerned like – ... the Alan [Davie] there – [with] a mark, it's not a kind of object. ... but I contend too that every form, every shape, every little bit of natural object that you find, that every little bit of chip off the sculptures if you stopped and looked at it, every bit of clay if you picked it up and just squeezed it and then looked at it, or you pulled a piece out, ... – ... just as if you stop and look at any mark on a wall – ... has a meaning – but people [have] ... got used to looking at marks but not at pieces of reality, of form.⁷¹

What Moore is really doing here is striving to find a substitute in solid natural objects or studio rejectamenta for Stokes's persistent recourse to Leonardo's dictum that the history painters should find imaginative stimulus from random marks of lichen on a flat wall. Against Stokes, Moore's emphasis on the 'reality ... of form' continued to reaffirm allegiance to Roger Fry's explicitly three-dimensional aesthetic.

Moore may also have been reaffirming his allegiance to the sculptor Gaudier-Brzeska's principle that 'Sculptural feeling is the appreciation of masses in relation' recorded in Ezra Pound's *Gaudier-Brzeska: A Memoir*, the other book Moore admitted influence from.⁷² Pound had mentored Stokes's early writings on the Tempio Malatestiano at Rimini, a monument that Stokes discovered in 1925, the same year as Moore's travelling scholarship. Pound had reviewed *The Quattro Cento* enthusiastically but was diffident towards *Stones of Rimini*,⁷³ for during 1933 Stokes had evolved his comprehensive theory of the visual arts and categorised them according to the wholesome, objective effects of carving or the wilful, subjective effects of modeled art, a distinction Pound rejected as theoretically reductive. More to the point, Pound had written of *The Quattro Cento* that 'one can only suppose that [Stokes] in some way regards himself as the forerunner of some sort of sculptural ameliorations, or at any rate is trying to clear up incomprehensions and to establish the relations between pure and mixed sculptural values.'⁷⁴ It was perhaps this challenge that prompted



Fig.4
Michelangelo Buonarroti
Rondanini Pietà 1555–64, Castello
Sforzesco Milan

Stokes to write his series of reviews promoting the sculptural art of Nicholson, Hepworth and Moore in 1933.

These essays were a key factor in the mounting rivalry between Pound and Stokes, for Stokes was intent on superannuating Pound's championship of an older generation of wartime sculptors – Gaudier, Epstein and Brancusi – by extending his own sphere of influence from the criticism of the Renaissance to the modernists of his generation. He sought to make the aggressive masculinity of the older generation, applauded in Pound's *Memoir*, look distinctly old-fashioned by turning to sculpture that demonstrated a gentler, reciprocal interaction between material and carver on the one hand and sculpture and spectator on the other. Pound was right to detect the influence on Stokes's writings of Gaudier-Brzeska's concept of the flattened sphere: the Hamite sculptural vortex that 'RETAINED AS MUCH OF THE SPHERE AS COULD ROUND THE SHARPNESS OF THE PARALLELOGRAM',⁷⁵ but Stokes transformed the influence through the example of early Renaissance reliefs and the biomorphic shapes of the Hampstead artists into a gentler thinning or rubbing of the stone that accords with the laminated structure of limestone. The 'sculptor is led to woo the marble', bestowing the 'definition that our hands and mouths bestow on those we love', Stokes had written in *Stones of Rimini*.⁷⁶

Stokes successfully influenced young artists with such phrases. However little sympathy Moore felt for flattened effects, he admitted to Vera Russell in 1961 that 'I've got obsessions all right. Well in subject matter ... the mother and child as a relationship – and reading Adrian Stokes, there was a period when I did just children at the breast and so on'.⁷⁷ Curiously enough, the visual record does not entirely confirm this, but rather suggests a confluence of interests in infancy and mothering. Moore carved babies' heads from 1926 and was increasingly preoccupied by the mother and child theme from 1929 onwards, a year before he met Stokes.⁷⁸ But the gentle undulations and fluvial qualities of a work such as *Mother and Child* of early 1936 (fig.5) bring it close to the spirit of sculptural gentleness and parental love set forth in *Stones of Rimini* (1934).

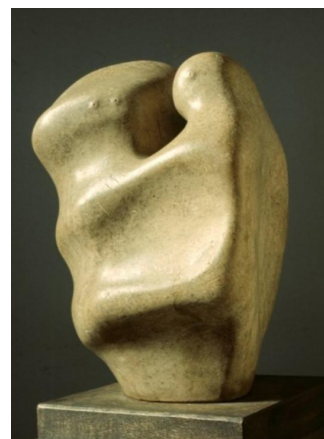


Fig.5
Henry Moore
Mother and Child 1936
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As Stokes's senior by only four years, however, Moore had been subject to roughly the same visual and critical influences. Having fought at the front during the First World War he had his own relationship with Pound's older generation of sculptors whom he revered for breaking the barriers of taste that had helped to make his own innovative practice more viable. His conception of direct carving in 1930 was nothing if not masculine, as when he quipped, 'Sculpture [is] a manly art which is perhaps why there are so many young ladies attracted to it just now',⁷⁹ (presumably meaning female sculptors such as Barbara Hepworth rather than female viewers of sculptures made by men.) In Pound's *Memoir* Moore would have learned the antithesis of Stokes's pro-Renaissance programme: 'we have begun deliberately to try to free ourselves from the Renaissance shackles, as the Renaissance freed itself from the Middle Ages'.⁸⁰ He also saw Brancusi, Gaudier-Brzeska, Modigliani and Epstein as having led the way to the taste for direct carving in Negro sculpture and primitive art.⁸¹

Pound's transcriptions of Gaudier-Brzeska's manifestos from the trenches were another avenue away from the allegedly stale narrative traditions of Victorian sculpture to the manly robustness of primitive forms originating outside Europe, where 'manhood was strained to the highest potential – his energy brutal – HIS OPULENT MATURITY WAS CONVEX.' Here was the impetus of the 'primary civilizations', the 'HAMITE VORTEX of Egypt', the Indian 'VORTEX OF BLACKNESS AND SILENCE', 'the SEMITIC VORTEX', which 'elevated the sphere in a splendid squatness and created the HORIZONTAL', and the African and Oceanic 'VORTEX OF FECUNDITY', which 'pulled

the sphere lengthways and made the cylinder'.⁸² Something of Pound's and Gaudier-Brzeska's stridency perhaps stayed with him when in 1934 Moore insisted, 'It is only when the sculptor works direct, ... that the material can take its part in the shaping of an idea.'⁸³ This disavows the ambivalence between masculine carving and feminine modeling that Stokes saw in his works in 1933, although he later valued the polarities equally.⁸⁴

Sculpture versus architecture

The second major issue of critical difference between Stokes and Moore is the place of architecture in the arts. Stokes's resistance to the three-dimensional plasticity of 'Negro sculpture' would have further provoked Moore because the defense of the low relief was integral with Stokes's aesthetic dictum that architecture is the mother of the arts. After tilting at Roger Fry in *The Quattro Cento*, Stokes continued:

in view of the attraction to the stone that underlies the whole Renaissance, it is absurd to attach to this sculpture the word 'pictorial' as a pejorative. Of course it is pictorial. Not only love of colour but sense of space derives from the tones of marble building. All the southern arts have this architectural foundation. Sculpture in the Renaissance is an extension of architectural fantasies, but, so far from aping pictorial art, sculpture led it: the sculptors fired the painters, taught them perspective, showed them space.⁸⁵

Compare Moore in the same year: 'Most architectural sculpture is relief decoration and not carving in the round, and for that reason I think that a holiday for sculpture away from architecture might be a good thing for sculpture.'⁸⁶

From *Smooth and Rough* (1951) onwards, Stokes was progressively more adamant that 'Architecture ... is the Mother of the Arts',⁸⁷ for it was the basis of his later position that the modern city was an inadequate maternal environment for integrating the collective human ego and succouring the lesser arts. Moore would have heard about the crusade Stokes led on this theme in his lecture to the Institute of Contemporary Art in February 1956 titled 'A Prime Influence of Buildings on the Graphic Arts'.⁸⁸ Always professionally conscientious in defending the fragile institution of British sculpture, Moore used modern versions of Renaissance *paragone* arguments to defend his own art against architecture. Sculpture was superior to architecture for the hierarchical reason that 'not being tied to a functional and utilitarian purpose, [it] can attempt much more freely the exploration of the world of pure form.'⁸⁹ In a practical sense, Moore found that the linearity that still prevailed in architecture at that time distracted from the organic asymmetries of sculpture, and so he preferred to concentrate on sculpture's relationship with landscapes: 'I would rather have a piece of my sculpture put in a landscape, almost any landscape, than in, or on, the most beautiful building I know.' On the other hand, sculpture was superior to painting because sculpture 'is a real thing, as a tree is real.'⁹⁰

Moore was wrong, of course, to slight Stokes's complex synaesthetic grasp of three-dimensional space. Stokes's sensitivity to the multi-dimensional stresses and strains of Verrocchio's early Renaissance *lavabo* in the sacristy of San Lorenzo, Florence; his plastic recreations of dancers' choreography in his ballet criticism; the spatial amplitude of sound carried up from shunting yards, or through trees from the Cornish beach in autobiographical writings, and the attention to the fuller spatial symmetries of sei- and settecento Italian buildings in *Smooth and Rough* (1951) are ample testimony to Stokes's writerly projection of a fully integrated three-dimensional sensorium. In acknowledging the 'mystery of the hole – the mysterious fascination of caves in hillsides and cliffs' as the origin of the interlaced voids and solids of his 'internal-external forms',⁹¹ Moore may have been indebted to some extent to Stokes's evocation of the arterial geometry of Mediterranean landscape in *Stones of Rimini*.⁹² Yet in the 1930s, and again in the mid-1950s and 1960s, Stokes and Moore did not quite fit each other's agendas. It is fascinating to discover that despite their shared commitment to a carving aesthetic, they had independently arrived at considerably different ideas of what that meant.

As Moore defined it in 1937, the sculptor

must strive continually to think of, and use, form in its full spatial completeness. He gets the solid shape, as it were, inside his head – he thinks of it, whatever its size, as if he were holding it completely enclosed in the hollow of his hand. He mentally visualized a complex form from all round itself; he knows while he looks at one side what the other side is like; he identifies himself with its centre of gravity, its mass, its weight; he realizes its volume, as the space that the shape displaces in the air.⁹³

This has nothing to do with Stokes's reverence for thinned layers of stone, which for Moore would have been too visually passive and intellectually unassertive: 'Carving is more in keeping with the mental attitude, modelling with the visual.'⁹⁴ But for Stokes this mastery of matter conceived of outwards from within is modelling because, as the art historian Alex Potts has astutely observed, it involves 'the plastic activity of fashioning free-standing solid shapes in blocks of matter' and 'the imposing of a subjectively imagined shape or form on material to hand'.⁹⁵ Moore's conception lacks Stokes's requirement that sculpture should register the carver's sense of interactive confrontation with the block before him, where 'The shape is on the surface, the matrix behind it.'⁹⁶ Still more significantly from the point of view of architecture, Moore repudiates the Kleinian sense in Stokes's later writings of the work of art's capacity to draw the viewer in to a maternal envelopment from which it simultaneously precipitates a distance from 'the whole object', in psychoanalytic parlance. Architecture is essential to Stokes's later aesthetic because it provides an integrated maternal environment characteristic of pre-modern European societies such as Venice and Amsterdam. For Moore art is fostered primarily by a concept of enduring human community: 'I believe that the best artists have always had their roots in a finite social group or community, or in a particular region ... The sculptor *belonged* to his city or his guild.'⁹⁷ For Stokes, who in 1933 had characterised Moore as one of 'a few serious artists of genius, self-conscious, isolated and well-informed',⁹⁸ human community is felt indirectly by the loss of beautiful pre-modern urban environments that leaves contemporary art to compensate in stridently assertive ways: 'to declaim from a wall the need for tactile passages and transition that were once available in lovely streets. The primacy of architecture, mother of the arts, is ... the universal witness to the luxuries of art'⁹⁹ Moore's reaction to this very passage in 1961 is adamant: 'I've just got to the bit in which he talks so much about architecture – and I disagree with a lot of that making architecture the kind of touchstone – or whatever – that's not the word – but that sort of – the real mother of the arts. I don't believe it.'¹⁰⁰ And more pithily in 1973: 'It's time that the myth of architectural primacy be debunked.'¹⁰¹

I earlier suggested that Stokes's purchase in 1960 of Moore's *Seated Figure on Square Steps* 1957 (fig.2) may have been a generous gesture of support at a time when Moore's reputation faced an unexpected challenge, but there is also the possibility that in choosing a leaning figure seated on a short staircase with its feet firmly planted on its lowest step and its left hand leaning on its

uppermost step, Stokes was encouraging a rare architectural impulse in Moore's sculpture and thus reinforcing his own side of their paragone debate. Whether or not Stokes caught wind of Moore's renewed attack on his supposed pictorial and architectural biases in the interview of 1961, it is fascinating to consider a polemical edge in Stokes's decision to include Moore's bronze in a painting he completed the year after. *Still Life* 1962 positions Moore's sculpture in front of a grouping of Stokes's own paintings on a shelf in the studio attic of his house in Church Row, Hampstead (fig.6). At first sight it appears that in addition to other changes to Moore's bronze (including an apparent change of gender to male), Stokes has fixed a short column on



Fig.6
Adrian Stokes
Still Life 1962
Private collection © The estate of Adrian Stokes

the top step to the right of the figure, enhancing its architectural character but also approximating it to the broken columns on a ledge in Giorgione's *Tempesta*, one of his favourite paintings. This positive form is in fact a negative shadow from a small picture frame represented within the largest painting within the painting. It is, therefore, the represented shadow on the solid edge of a painting within a painting within a painting. This dark vertical therefore appears to hover in status between a solid and a shadow, and between different levels of represented paintings, sculpture and architecture. It thus effaces the sharp distinctions between media that Moore held dear. Admittedly, Stokes's paintings are usually innocent of iconographical meanings, but this painting is exceptional in other respects, too. The inclusion of his own paintings already speaks of an exceptional degree of self-consciousness in the selection of subject matter. To this we may add the inclusion of thematically opposed objects. On the one hand, there are useful things: a chest of drawers, bottles, a metal frying pan (without a handle, partially draped with a white sheet) and a remarkable council paraffin lamp. On the other hand, there are works of art – the paintings, the sculpture and a pot made by Stokes's wife Ann, bearing an orange circle that rhymes with the lens of the street lamp. The qualities of art and life are ambiguously held in suspension on the surface of the canvas. And perhaps there is another subliminal iconography that aptly introduces the essay's final section. Stokes's son Philip had asked his father to use this lamp from his collection of found or stolen road lamps. He liked the way his father had reproduced it and his father gave it to him. Likewise Moore's bronze is listed as belonging to Moore's daughter in the catalogue of an exhibition of Moore's work at the Whitechapel Art Gallery in 1960.¹⁰² For all its suggestions of intellectual disagreement, the painting speaks of family romance, of objects made or possessed by loved ones.

Psychoanalysis and iconography

Stokes was exposed to psychoanalytic culture unusually early in his life as an adolescent pupil at Rugby School where the headmaster and other teachers had enthusiastically responded to the later discredited Freudian prophet and educator, Homer Lane.¹⁰³ Although Stokes took up psychoanalysis with Melanie Klein in 1929 through personal need, it also helped him to intervene upon the dominant formalist theory of his day by providing him with intellectual ammunition to challenge Roger Fry's diffident verdict on the relevance of psychoanalysis to aesthetic achievement in *The Artist and Psychoanalysis*, first delivered as an address to the British Psychological Society in 1924. By the 1950s Klein's antithesis between the depressive and psychoanalytic positions of infantile development that underlay adult behaviour led Stokes to substitute the aesthetic opposition between self-sufficiency (the art work standing apart from the viewer) and envelopment (the art work fusing with the viewer) for the earlier opposition between carving and modeling. Stokes himself in the early pages of *Michelangelo* supplied the fullest and most nuanced explanation of the gradual integration of Klein's theories into his work:

A generic distinction I made between carving and modeling (1934 and 1937) has close connections with the present theory. It is possible that the carving-modelling distinction was already associated with the lengthy experience and study of psycho-analysis: if so, the influence was not overt: the one department of experience has not been applied summarily at any time to the other: on the contrary, aesthetic appreciation and a modicum of psychological awareness have gradually become inseparable; they mingle in the present book at the instance of Michelangelo's works.¹⁰⁴

When Moore hailed Stokes's *Michelangelo* as book of the year in 1956 he made no reference to its controversial Kleinian psychoanalytic approach to art. In the year after Stokes's review of his exhibition in 1933, he declared himself open to such approaches, without saying whether they convinced him or not: 'I do not consciously use any form of symbolism in my sculpture (but I'm prepared to have it proved to me that unconsciously I do).'¹⁰⁵ Stokes's review of Moore's work at the Leicester Gallery contained startlingly androgynous erotic fantasies based on a physiology of optics derived from Bernard Berenson that Moore would have understood perfectly because he shared it.¹⁰⁶ Of *Composition* in African wonderstone (fig.7) Stokes wrote, 'the swift convergences that the eye

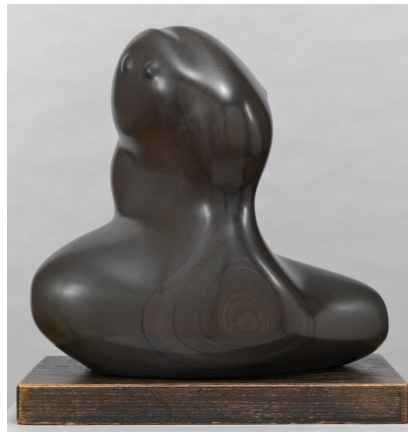


Fig.7
Henry Moore OM, CH
Composition 1932
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apprehends immediately but around which the hand hesitates, exploring further and further, are a solid cream upon the surface of this stone, a cream whose clefts are wrinkles – wide, shallow and smooth.'¹⁰⁷ In the languorous deferral of those last three adjectives, vicarious hands and lips reach slowly out over the uncertainly gendered form of a sculpture already apprehended visually. The effect is opposite to the one most prized in Stokes's early writings where the eye 'with the assistance of previous tactile experience' is 'able largely to synthesize the successive element in the tactile part of the appeal, and cause it to be something immediate as vision itself.'¹⁰⁸ There vision collects successive touch and taste instantly; here they lag far behind it. In a sense Stokes is driven to such measures by the disappointment of his search for subject matter in the sculpture. It is an apt reaction to a sculpture that is biomorphic surrealism before its time, for anyone who has circled it will doubt its subject matter, for it presents the semblance of a sort of elephant foetus at one angle, a vestigial face with lumps for eyes at another angle, and just a process of amorphous melting from a third. For Stokes, desire seems to overwhelm awareness of the object of desire. Within the aesthetic duality of his writing at that time, this is code for a modelling effect. Similarly, a reclining figure cast in lead arouses further confusions of sense in the service of strong regressive fantasies: 'Anyone who in childhood played with lead soldiers probably loves lead for its extreme weight in association with its softness as a metal.'¹⁰⁹



Fig.8
Henry Moore
Reclining Figure 1933

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington
University, St Louis © The Henry Moore
Foundation. All Rights Reserved

Stokes provides no explanatory key to these oceanic fusion fantasies except to identify 'how intense has been the plastic aim behind his conceptions of carving', particularly in view of the mixed modes required for carved concrete.¹¹⁰ Stokes identifies Moore primarily as a modeller, but in such pleurably imaginative ways that, until his final paragraph, he avoids the moralistic policing of gender difference between masculine carving and feminine modelling expressed in other writings. At a time when Moore's female figures are largely passive in character, Stokes admires the strong womanhood of Moore's *Reclining Figure* in carved concrete (fig.8) whose 'composition as a whole may suggest an image of Cleopatra reclining on the stern of an Egyptian barge, her long body in such unison with the boat that her propped-up head, as though the topmost section of a rudder oar, guides, steers and governs.'¹¹¹ The untutored reader is not to know that this embodied the authority of his analyst, Melanie Klein, who asserted the strong maternal ego-aspect that gives priority to the mother in the depressive position rather than the father in the Freudian Oedipal complex maintained by Klein's chief rival, Anna Freud. Stokes's imagery is controversial, daring and subjective, suggesting more than it explains, but it also serves the more conservative purpose of inserting Moore's work into a European tradition. As John Russell observed of the Cleopatra image, 'Adrian Stokes was the first to see that this seemingly ruthless refashioning of the human frame was not, as it seemed to many, a complete violation of the European tradition.'¹¹² It was also part of this consolidation that Stokes saw Moore working through the long history of cyclic alternation between caving and modelling values several times within a single career.¹¹³

The tension between tradition and 'novelty' here (a recurring word in the review) resonates in Moore's ambivalent reaction to psychoanalytic interpretations of his work. Moore's interview with the Russells in 1961 opens a retrospective vista on this issue. Stokes had evidently primed Vera Russell with his own question before the interview. The two couples had been discussing the 'mysterious' *Three Part Object* 1960 shown in the Whitechapel exhibition: 'Could I just ask – Adrian wanted very much to ask you a question about that very thing [i.e. mystery]. He said do those shapes ... come from something that might have happened to you or an event that might have happened very close to the time you make it?'¹¹⁴ At first it seems that Stokes might simply be looking for evidence of a naturalistic source in Moore's sculpture within his usual antagonism to abstraction, but Moore realises that more is at stake. Stokes's indirect question prompts a torrent of incoherent negation from Moore, which John Russell ably edited in his book of 1968:

I want to be quite free of having to find a 'reason' for doing the Reclining Figures, and freer still of having to find a 'meaning' for them. The vital thing for an artist is to have a subject that allows [him] to try out all kinds of formal ideas – things that he doesn't yet know about for certain but wants to experiment with, as Cézanne did in his 'Bathers' series. In my case the reclining figure provides chances of that sort. The subject-matter is given. It's settled for you, and you know it and like it, so that within it, within the subject that you've done a dozen times before, you are free to invent a completely new form-idea.¹¹⁵

In the original interview Moore did not want, as Russell reports here, to be quite free of having to find a "reason" for doing it', but rather 'how it began and what is the – I don't seek to know – very often', which leaves open the possibility that he sometimes did want to know the very thing his speech represses with a lacuna. That is the idea of a psychological origin for his forms. I believe that foremost in what Moore finds restrictive in 'absolute reason and meaning' is schematic interpretation of Freudian or Jungian symbolism, to be distinguished from 'given' and 'settled' conventions that provide a grateful cover for unknown, perhaps disturbing meanings. The correlation of intimate psychoanalytic interpretation and stable, public iconography were themes Moore would have discovered in Stokes's late writings.

The source of the question Stokes placed in Vera Russell's lips can be found in his unpublished review of Erich Neumann's *The Archetypal World of Henry Moore* (1959). Although Stokes takes Moore's greatness for granted there, his sculpture serves largely as a pretext for attacking a rival psychoanalytical theory. (It is after all a review of the book, not of the sculpture.) Already the prospect of the Jungian system as a 'mystical imbroglion of conscious and preconscious activities', had awoken old aversions to the foreign in Stokes, 'whereby it is sought to bring Western man in greater rapport with the 'wisdom' ascribed to the East or, maybe to the medieval alchemists or even to D.H. Lawrence's "dark gods".¹¹⁶ In Stokes's view Jungian interpretation offers only one side of the Kleinian dualism necessary to an understanding of Moore's art, namely 'the homogeneous states so widely diffused in our living, for which the model is the contented infant at the breast.' In Kleinian terms, this is the schizoid-paranoid position towards part objects. By itself it ignores 'another of an opposite character': the all-important 'view of a work of art as a self-sufficient unit' which, underpinned by and coexisting with the schizoid-paranoid position, establishes the depressive position in which the work of art gains the integrated cohesion of a whole object.¹¹⁷ It is this aspect that rescues the appreciation of art from the Jungian system in which 'repression ... guilt, sublimation in their Freudian series, play no part, nor infant sexuality.'¹¹⁸

It is at this point that Stokes provides an example of a special life event as inspiration for Moore's sculpture, an event whose importance is lost when

theory demands that art serves to reflect archetypes that are of their nature entirely impersonal and collective. It goes without saying that Dr. Neumann seeks to discount the connection between the birth of a daughter to the Moores after 17 years of marriage and the development of his family sculptural groups: and of course the appearance of the so-called thin reclining figure some nine years later is not referred to his daughter's movements, though he describes this sculpture as "pathetically girlish."¹¹⁹



Fig.9
Henry Moore
Reclining Figure 1953
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Neumann illustrates Moore's *Thin Reclining Figure* 1953 (fig.9) on the page to which this refers. Stokes has singled it out from a series that Neumann had criticised for 'a "thinness" most unusual in Moore: the feminine in them is no longer maternal but has dwindled to something pathetically girlish'.¹²⁰ Implicitly defending his preference for sculptural thinness, Stokes finds Neumann's disdain for the sculpture's girlish qualities heartless and obtuse. Abstractionist theory, like abstract art, is anti-humanist, in Stokes's opinion.

Although it is not known whether Moore ever read the unpublished manuscript of Stokes review, something very close to this idea seems to have reached him, except that he transposes it from Reclining Figures to his Mother and Child theme. Sometime before 1968 Moore wrote that

The theory that the work of an artist or a novelist is directly attributable to his personality is a romantic one ... And yet, of course, an artist uses experiences he's had in life. Such an experience in my life was the birth of my daughter Mary, which re-invoked in my sculpture my Mother and Child theme. A new experience can bring to the surface something deep in one's mind.¹²¹

The final words reveal the basis of Stokes's question. Here was a way of conducting psychoanalysis

through art without naming it, of relating an inspirational event to an underlying formative fantasy, of presenting sculpture as a recapitulation of the fecundity from which family affections arise. It is characteristic of Stokes's occasional late writings on the Hampstead artists to withdraw explicit psychoanalytic terminology from them so as not to trouble public reception of such fantasies: Moore as the son of a miner, Nicholson observing his mother scrubbing the kitchen table, Hepworth attending to her father's work as a civil engineer nurturing the veins of the road system in the Yorkshire moorlands. Without a technical apparatus these Oedipal fantasies easily translate into national myths.¹²² The gendered role of the ideal family writ large in national consciousness has taken over from the erotic ambiguity and emancipation that prevailed in his earlier sculptural criticism.

Moore famously declared himself uncomfortable with Neumann's Jungian speculations about his motivation. He recoiled from attending too much to Neumann's book because

Part of the excitement of sculpture is the associations it can arouse, quite independent of the original aims and ideas of the sculptor. But I do not have any desire to rationalise the eroticism in my work, to think out consciously what Freudian or Jungian symbols may lie behind what I create. That I leave for others to do. I started to read Erich Neumann's book on my work, *The Archetypal World of Henry Moore*, in which he suggests a Jungian interpretation, but I stopped halfway through the first chapter, because I did not want to know about these things, whether they were true or not. I did not want such aspects of my work to become henceforth self-conscious. I feel they should remain subconscious and the work should remain intuitive. Perhaps the associations it can arouse are all the stronger for that very reason.¹²³

The explanation echoes the poet Rilke's reluctance to endanger his poetic creativity by allowing Freud to psychoanalyse it. Equally, however, Moore did not want the interest of his sculpture prematurely curtailed by schematic psychoanalytical explanations ('absolute meaning or reason'). His rejection of 'Freudian or Jungian symbols' might apply equally to either Stokes or Neumann. 'Sculpture should always at first sight have some obscurities, and further meanings. People should want to go on looking and thinking; it should never tell all about itself immediately.'¹²⁴ One thinks of the hand lagging behind the eye over the anthropomorphically indecipherable wonderstone shape that Stokes evoked in 1933.

Such hidden psychological content helped to satisfy the need Moore felt for the greatest art (Masaccio, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Cézanne) to be 'disturbing'.¹²⁵ But while he rejected the primacy of architecture as a nurturing environment for art in Stokes's account, his attachment to the stable subject matter of unchanging themes such as the Reclining Nude and Mother and Child may well have been reinforced by Stokes's advocacy of shared public iconography that Moore attended to carefully in 'A Note on Iconography', the brilliant appendix on Warburgian iconographical studies at the end of *Michelangelo: An Aspect of Art*: 'Art was richest ... when the commanding influences, including a rampant iconography, were various, cross-grained yet sufficiently harmonious to avoid for a time the relaxation of a dominant tone.'¹²⁶ He would have encountered it again in the opening chapter of *Three Essays*, which, like Neumann's *Archetypal World*, he constantly denied having read very much of: 'Convention, stylization, the power to generalise, are among the means of furthering the enwrapping component in aesthetic form ... But at the same the identified formal qualities ... are the means also for creating the object-otherness, independence, and self-containment of the work of art'.¹²⁷ It is the dualism missing from Neumann's thesis again.

In his interview with the Russells Moore at first doubted Stokes's credentials for generalising about the bewildering variety of contemporary art – how much of it had Stokes actually seen? – but once he had been reassured on that point (Stokes was in fact obsessively conscientious in his researches as buyer for the Arts Council and Trustee of the Tate) he took the opposite tack and affirmed the need for 'somebody with standards, with values based on permanent interest in art ... change alone is not the value.'¹²⁸ By injecting verbal life into artistic conventions and finding deep

psychological reverberations in individual works of art, Stokes was perhaps imaginatively and even institutionally useful to Moore in holding the line, not only against the critic Clement Greenberg's painful condemnation of him to 'the category ... of the sincere academic modern',¹²⁹ but also against the new generation of sculptors, such as Caro, who were rising up to challenge his institutional primacy.¹³⁰ At the same time, a tentative confederacy with psychoanalysis gave succour to those more alarming and uncanny associations in his later work that perhaps arose more from repressed memories of war than eroticism, yet kept him in the running with the fashionably anarchic elements of the contemporary avant-garde.

If one took the unusual step of comparing Stokes and Moore as writers it is striking how much easier and more readable Moore's spare and muscular prose is than Stokes's. Stokes generously observed that 'Henry Moore's published notes on his own work are without rival for their good sense among the declarations of living artists'.¹³¹ But 'good sense'? Are not artists supposed to be imaginative and critics to make sense of them? Is there a reversal of roles here? Moore laughed readily at John Russell's witty observation that Stokes 'really can't see why, in fact, what he writes is not on everybody's lips – like Wilfred Pickles, or something. He can't think why it's not absolutely world favourite, housewives's [sic] choice'.¹³² For Moore the obvious comparison was 'K', his friend, supporter and Director of the National Gallery, Kenneth Clark. Moore thought he was 'much more clear-headed' and wrote 'much more beautifully than ever'. But while acknowledging how difficult Stokes could be to read, Moore remained fascinated by his writing process:

there are jumps – there are gaps in the arguments or in the progression of thought that have no connection, and there's only a comma connecting them. I mean it's not even a full-stop between them. But at the same time it's so rich in allusions and such, that I know that I'm going to enjoy reading it although I've only got to about the first three or four pages.¹³³

This was perhaps slightly unfair to the way in which the distinctive meaning of Stokes's late prose emerges from an even and enveloping accumulation of appositional clauses that could snap the concentration of the most assiduous reader. Moore's admiration of Stokes was akin to the dramatic disunity he relished in the Rondanini Pietà. It was also the psychic automatism he valued in his own working process: 'the mind jumps from one stage to another much further on without there being traceable steps shown between ... sudden solutions which cannot be followed step by step – in a word – inspiration'.¹³⁴ That is to say: he read Stokes's prose as art, savouring the fact that as a writer of past art at least, 'he is giving out more possible reverberations to somebody reading it' than other people.¹³⁵ It was perhaps a mild equivalent to surrealism combined with the ability to make traditional conventions exciting again that tempered Moore's ambivalence towards Stokes's trespasses on the sculptor's preserve, his preference for architecture over sculpture, and diffidence towards the larger world that Moore was rapidly making his market place.

Notes

1. In an essay that had Stokes's sanction, namely, the introduction to Richard Wollheim (ed.), *The Image in Form: Selected Writings of Adrian Stokes*, Harmondsworth 1972, p.18, Richard Wollheim put Moore behind Barbara Hepworth and Ben Nicholson as artists whose practice 'notably' influenced Stokes's aesthetic opposition between carving and modeling. On the gender politics and psychoanalytic significance of Stokes's *Spectator* essay on Moore and the late essay on Hepworth, see Alex Potts, 'Carving and the Engendering of Sculpture: Stokes on Hepworth', in David Thistlewood (ed.), *Barbara Hepworth Reconsidered*, London and Liverpool 1996, pp.44–5; Alex Potts, *The Sculptural Imagination: Figurative, Modernist, Minimalist*, New Haven and London 2000, pp.148–58; Richard Read, *Art and its Discontents: The Early Career of Adrian Stokes*, Philadelphia 2003, pp.214–39; Anne Wagner, *Mother Stone: The Vitality of Modern British Sculpture*, New Haven 2005, pp.188–9; and Stephen Kite, *Adrian Stokes: An Architectonic Eye*, London 2008, p.166.
2. Hilary Spurling, 'The Turbulent Reputations of Henry Moore', *Guardian*, 27 February 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2010/feb/27/henry-moore-sculpture-tate-britain>, accessed 1 July 2014.

3. Jonathan Jones, 'Pitting Francis Bacon against Henry Moore is a Cruel, One-Sided Brawl', *Guardian*, 6 September 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/jonathanjonesblog/2013/sep/05/francis-bacon-henry-moore-flesh-and-bone>, accessed 1 July 2014.
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7. Richard Wollheim, introduction to Adrian Stokes, *Michaelangelo: An Aspect of Art* (1955), London 2012, republished as 'Features: Michelangelo, Introduction', <http://www.routledge.com/classics/features/michelangelo/>, accessed 20 July 2013.
8. See a map of homes of Hampstead artists, architectures and writers in the 1930s in *Art in Britain: 1930–40, Centered Around Axis, Circle, Unit One*, exhibition catalogue, Marlborough Gallery, London 1965, p.9.
9. Eric Rhode, interview with Margaret Gardiner, unedited tape made in preparation for 'Adrian Stokes, 1900 [sic]–1972', a programme broadcast on BBC Radio 3, 18 October 1973.
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11. Margaret Gardiner, interview with author, October 1984.
12. Betty Tinsley, Henry Moore's secretary, letter to author, 23 January 1984.
13. Donald Hall, *Henry Moore: The Life of a Great Sculptor*, London 1966, pp.9–56.
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15. Henry Moore, 'Books of the Year, 1956', unidentified press cutting among Stokes's papers before their relocation to the Tate Archive, quoted below. See also Spurling 2010, unpaginated: 'He said he could never read a book on a train for fear of missing something outside the window.'
16. An excerpt from *Stones of Rimini*, then called *The Tempio*, was published as 'From THE TEMPIO', *Criterion*, vol.13, October 1933, pp.7–24.
17. John Russell, review of Adrian Stokes, *Three Essays on the Painting of our Time*, 'Situation Not Vacant', 1961, unidentified press cutting among Stokes's papers before their relocation to the Tate Archive.
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19. The letter of 1955 does not survive but it is referred to in Adrian Stokes, letter to Henry Moore, 23 August 1923, Henry Moore Foundation Archive.
20. Henry Moore, letter to Adrian Stokes, 14 April 1956, Tate Archive TGA 8816/237.
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22. Moore 1956, unpaginated.
23. Hall 1966, p.152.
24. Adrian Stokes, letter to Henry Moore, shortly after 25 December 1956, Henry Moore Foundation Archive.
25. See Richard Read, *Art and its Discontents: The Early Life of Adrian Stokes*, Aldershot 2002, p.xxi.
26. Adrian Stokes, typescript of review of Erich Neumann, *The Archetypal World of Henry Moore and Art of the Creative Unconscious*, c.1959, Tate Archive TGA 8816/167. The letter of invitation to Stokes from Stephen Spender is dated 15 July 1959, Tate Archive TGA 8816/243. A search of *Encounter* suggests that it remained unpublished.
27. Adrian Stokes, letter to Henry Moore, undated, but shortly after 23 December 1956.
28. Anthony Caro, 'The Master Sculptor', *Observer*, 27 November 1960, p.21.
29. Henry Moore, letter to Adrian Stokes, 30 November 1960, Tate Archive TGA 8816/237.
- 30.

- Vera Russell, interview with author, October 1984.
31. Stokes 1963.
 32. Moore in Moore 1961, p.25
 33. The transcript of his digressive conversation with old friends is cued by phrases that can only be traced this far but no further into the book.
 34. *Ibid.*, p.24.
 35. Roger Berthoud, *The Life of Henry Moore*, London 1987, p.276.
 36. Henry Moore, letter to *Times Literary Supplement*, 12 August 1969, p.697. The other signatories were Alan Bowness, William Coldstream, Andrew Forge, John Golding, Lawrence Gowing, Stuart Hampshire, Barbara Hepworth, Frank Kermode, R.B. Kitaj, Robert Melville, John Piper, Herbert Read, Henry Reed, Norman Reid, John Russell, David Sylvester and Richard Wollheim.
 37. Stokes 1970, p.6; Anne Middleton Wagner, *Mother Stone: The Vitality of Modern British Sculpture*, New Haven 2005, p.189.
 38. Copy of unpublished 'Minutes of the Tate Held on Monday 5 July 1965', among Stokes's papers before their relocation to the Tate Archive. The following trustees and staff were present: Sir Colin Anderson (chairman), Andrew Forge, Ceri Richards, Robert J. Sainsbury, Adrian Stokes, Norman Reid (Director), Ronald Alley (Keeper) and Lawrence Gowing (Keeper).
 39. Barbara Hepworth, letter to Adrian Stokes, 13 January 1945, Tate Archive TGA 8816/234.
 40. Adrian Stokes, letter to David Sylvester, 21 August 1965, among Stokes papers before their relocation to the Tate Archive.
 41. Ann Stokes-Angus, interview with author, February 1984.
 42. Henry Moore in Alan Wilkinson (ed.), *Henry Moore: Writings and Conversations*, Aldershot 2002, p.197.
 43. *Ibid.*, p.190.
 44. Penelope Curtis, 'How Direct Carving Stole the Idea of Modern British Sculpture', in David J. Getsy (ed.), *Sculpture and the Pursuit of a Modern Ideal in Britain, c.1880–1930*, London 2004, pp.298–9.
 45. Moore in Wilkinson 2002, p.151.
 46. Roger Fry, 'Negro Sculpture', in *Vision and Design*, 1920, ed. by J.B. Bullen, London 1981, p.71.
 47. Stokes 1978, vol.1, pp.48, 49.
 48. *Ibid.*, p.312.
 49. *Ibid.*, p.308.
 50. *Ibid.*, p.115.
 51. Moore in Wilkinson 2002, p.187.
 52. *Ibid.*, p.177
 53. *Ibid.*, p.266.
 54. Stokes 1978, vol.1, pp.53, 100, 98–101 and 130.
 55. *Ibid.*, pp.45, 98.
 56. Moore in Wilkinson 2002, p.200.
 57. *Ibid.*, p.54.
 58. *Ibid.*, pp.52–3.
 59. *Ibid.*, p.157.
 60. *Ibid.*, pp.169–73.
 61. *Ibid.*, pp.155 and 173–4. For Rembrandt, see Moore in Moore n.d. [1961], p.60.
 62. Moore in Wilkinson 2002., p.197.
 63. Stokes 1978, vol.2, p.13
 64. Moore in Wilkinson 2002, p.194.
 65. Stokes 1978, vol.1, pp.38 and 160.
 66. Moore in Wilkinson 2002, pp.141–2.
 67. Stokes 1978, vol.3, p.42.
 68. *Ibid.*, p.150.
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73. Ezra Pound, reviews of *The Quattro Cento* and *Stones of Rimini*, in Harriet Zinnes (ed.), *Ezra Pound and the Visual Arts*, London 1980, pp.222 and 167–9.
74. Pound 1980, p.223.
75. Pound 1916, p.10.
76. Stokes 1978, vol.1, p.231.
77. Moore 1961, p.38.
78. See David Sylvester (ed.), *Henry Moore. Volume One: Sculpture and Drawings 1921–1948*, London 1957, passim.
79. Moore in Wilkinson, p.231.
80. Pound 1916, p.137.
81. Moore in Wilkinson, p.201.
82. Pound 1916, pp.9–12.
83. Moore in Wilkinson, p.191.
84. Moore in Moore 1961, p.57: 'Now I think there's no difference in – whether one is better than the other, of course not – but at one time I thought ... that carved sculpture was a better kind of sculpture than modelled sculpture'.
85. Stokes 1978, vol.1, p.49.
86. Moore in Wilkinson, p.191.
87. Stokes 1978, vol.2, p.240.
88. See Stephen Kite, 'Building and the Graphic Arts: Adrian Stokes at the ICA', *Tate Papers*, no.20, Autumn 2013, <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/building-and-graphic-arts-adrian-stokes-ica>, accessed 20 December 2013.
89. Moore in Wilkinson 2002, p.193.
90. Ibid., p.245.
91. Ibid., p.213.
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98. Stokes 1978, vol.1, p.312.
99. Ibid., vol.3, p.146.
100. Moore in Moore 1961, p.26.
101. Moore in Wilkinson, p.244.
102. *Henry Moore: An Exhibition of Sculpture from 1950–1960*, exhibition catalogue, Whitechapel Art Gallery, London 1960, fig.51.
103. See Read 2003, pp.14–18. Thanks are also due to Sarah Fletcher of the Henry Moore Foundation for confirming the identity of Moore's sculpture in the painting.
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105. Ibid., p.212.
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107. Stokes 1978, vol.1, p.311.
- 108.

- Ibid., p.50.
109. Ibid., p.311.
110. Ibid., p.312.
111. Ibid.
112. Russell 1968, p.57.
113. Stokes 1978, vol.1, p.312.
114. Moore in Moore 1961, p.62.
115. Ibid., p.28.
116. Stokes c.1959, p.1.
117. Ibid., p.3.
118. Ibid., p.2.
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120. Erich Neumann, *The Archetypal World of Henry Moore*, London 1959, p.111 and pl.80.
121. Henry Moore in John Hedgecoe (ed.), *Henry Moore*, London 1968, p.68. Unfortunately the passage is undated.
122. See Moore in Moore 1961, p.5; Stokes 1969, p.14; and Stokes 1970, p.5.
123. Moore in Wilkinson 2002, p.115.
124. Ibid., p.199.
125. Ibid., p.118.
126. Stokes 1978, vol.3, pp.71, 73.
127. Ibid., p.159.
128. Moore in Moore 1961, p.29.
129. Clement Greenberg, 'Review of Exhibitions of Gaston Lachaise and Henry Moore', 1947, reprinted in *Clement Greenberg: The Collected Essays and Criticism*, vol.2, in John O'Brien (ed.), *Arrogant Purpose, 1945–1949*, Chicago and London 1986, p.127.
130. See Berthoud 1987, pp.288–90.
131. Stokes c.1959, p.1. By 'published notes', Stokes may be referring to Henry Moore, 'Notes on Sculpture', reprinted in David Sylvester (ed.), *Henry Moore. Volume 1: Sculpture and Drawings 1921–48*, London 1944, first published as 'The Sculptor Speaks', in *Listener*, 18 August 1937. It is also published under the title of 'The Sculpture Speaks' in Wilkinson 2002, p.193, n.9.
132. Moore in Moore 1961, p.26. Wilfred Pickles was a popular Yorkshire broadcaster and comedian. 'Housewives' Choice' was a musical programme for housewives at home during the day.
133. Ibid., p.25.
134. Moore in Wilkinson 2002, p.115.
135. Moore in Moore 1961, p.25.

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