"Ingenious . . . Alhadeff's monumental work exemplifies theory as practice." —*The New York Times*

Viscous Expectations

Justice, Vulnerability, The Ob-scene

By Cara Judea Alhadeff



Reviews by

Avital Ronell, Alphonso Lingis, and Lucy R. Lippard



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Sigrid Hackenberg y Almansa, Robert Mailer Anderson
and Ivan Illich

"The pride of the European Graduate School, Cara Judea Alhadeff breaks new ground with her first book. Devoted to a radical engagement with embodied democracy, the work offers wide-ranging insight into precarious textual adventure and the artistic intercept. A bold and remarkable boundary-crossing on a number of crucial levels."

—Avital Ronell, Professor of the Humanities, New York University, Jacques Derrida Professor of Philosophy and Media, European Graduate School Switzerland, author of *Loser Sons: Politics and Authority*

"In *Viscous Expectations*, Cara Judea Alhadeff offers an innovative hybrid of complex theoretical discourse, performative photography, and timely political analysis. Her treatment of vulnerability is particularly provocative, as are her analyses of the collision of the hyperphysical with the hyper virtual. Alhadeff opens up new ways of thinking about contemporary life and sexuality, while delving deep into myriad subjects. Everything is embodied, endowed with a sensual visual or verbal presence-- from dreams, to pregnancy and motherhood, to Occupy Wall Street. Alhadeff's work is a fascinating fusion of art and scholarship. Intricate theoretical text is paralleled by unexpected photographic imagery – sensuous, enigmatic, and layered. The book extends into new and fluid realms the still valid idea that 'the personal is political.' Intellectually rigorous and esthetically daring, the book is hard work, and worth it."

—Lucy R. Lippard, art writer, curator, and activist. Author of 22 books on art and cultural criticism

"…With enormous energy and theoretical appetite, her thought exposes itself to the most difficult and most radical contemporary thinkers, contesting them with her own experience and insights…[Alhadeff's] thought is unlimitedly ambitious and vulnerable. It issues in putting vulnerability central, rather than individual autonomy or collective enterprise, rather than the subject of rights or the construction of institutions; and, opens a new perspective on justice and democracy."

—Alphonso Lingis, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy, Penn State University, author of *Violence and Splendor, Dangerous Emotions, Trus*t

"A radical provocation envisioning a 'collaborative emancipatory project' based on a 'dialectic of the unresolvable' and the 'becoming impossible.' Alhadeff's *Viscous Expectations: Justice, Vulnerability, The Ob-scene,* presents the work of an extraordinary individual whose fascinating auto-biography—an American, Spanish/Turkish Jew—breathes a renewed sense of urgency into a lived philosophy, 'perceiving the world through possibility rather than prescription.' Intimating an ae(s)thetics of contestation, intercession, resistance, and outrage, Alhadeff's project reinvigorates the scandal that is philosophy. A tour de force, whose intellectual and aes _(t)(h)etic bravura will stun the reader."

—Sigrid Hackenberg y Almansa, Assistant Professor of Art and Philosophy, European Graduate School Switzerland, Chair of Independent Studies, Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts, Portland, Maine, author of *Total History, Anti-History*, and the *Face that is Other*

"Viscous Expectations: Justice, Vulnerability, the Ob-scene by Cara Judea Alhadeff is exactly what an 'art book' should be, it offers a unique and singular world view, posing more questions than answers, but advancing lines of thought and arguments into uncomfortable territory in the form of photos and text to create a further understanding of ourselves. The first impressions of her work always offer uncertain footing, causing one to find their own balance of previously conceived notions and context, and then challenge them with the new information Judea Ahadeff offers with her sensual, beautiful and often disturbing pictures. This is important work by an artist that is unflinching with her camera and pen."

—Robert Mailer Anderson, author of Boonville, producer of "Pig Hunt"

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List of Abbreviations

AOed Anti-Oedipus

AS 1 Accursed Share, Vol. 1

AS 2,3 Accursed Share, Vol. 2,3

APGD An Apprenticeship in Philosophy: Gilles Deleuze

BD Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy

ES Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative

DS Deleuze & Sex

DE, DB Deviant Eyes, Deviant Bodies

KKT King Kong Theory

LF Legends of Freud

LL Lust for Life: On the Writings of Kathy Acker

MO Methodology of the Oppressed

NAF "Nietzsche's Amor Fati"

ON On Nietzsche

PL Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence

STP Space, Time, Perversion

TE Tears of Eros

TP Thousand Plateaus

VE Visions of Excess

ZMERS "Zarathustra, the Moment, and Eternal Recurrence of the Same"

To my mother, Micaela Amateau Amato, my collaborator, editor, and co-conspirator, you labored with me over every last word, again and again. I am forever grateful for your astounding clarity and your sense of the absurd. From you I learned the courage to trust my intuition. I treasure our intimacy.

To my baby boy, Zazu, joy beyond anything I could have ever imagined. You remind me in every moment where I can find home. I thought your life entering mine would be the culmination of this work; it turns out we are only the beginning.

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mother Micaela Amateau Amato, Henry Giroux, Betsy Shally-Jensen, Gayatri Spivak, Lucky Yapa, Ivan Illich, Celeste Fraser-Delgado, Trinh T. Minh-Ha, and Michael Taussig all infused me with the language to encounter the infinite possibilities of theory becoming practice. They helped me recognize how to live ambiguity not as a lack of clarity, but as a multiplicity of clarities. While Wolfgang Sachs' Development Dictionary: A Guide to Power and Knowledge laid the foundation for my commitment to question everything, unlimited access to Ronell's personal library while writing my thesis provided me with vast treasures. Judith Lasater's commitment to teach the sacred continues to guide me today. I am infinitely grateful for her compassion. My Iyengar and prenatal yoga students have ignited my understanding of the dense, rich relationships among social and individual bodies; and, the contradictory responses from my photography viewers and models have been catalysts of consciousness during the realization of this book. I must repeatedly thank all of my models; and, in particular Julia Davenport, my photographic muse, for surrendering her body to my camera. Additionally, I have deeply appreciated Maria Margaroni's encouragement to theorize the "I", Judith Butler's reminding me to recognize the difference between obligation and passion, and Wolfgang Schirmacher's illuminating support. I am tremendously grateful to Paul Forrest Hickman, Grace Johnson, Candice Ng, Hank Willis Thomas, and Vanina Doce Mood for their endurance as they helped me navigate through the morass of technological challenges, and in particular, I would like to thank Rich Heeman for his unrelenting stamina while fielding my onslaught of questions. During the final stages of publishing, my steadfast managing editor, Peggy Bloomer, shared her consummate expertise with alacrity. Finally, I must recognize my parents for living art and teaching me that work is love, Darrah Danielle for the exquisite depth of our *wabi-sabi* friendship, Nicole Sumner for compelling me to think through my art, and Kent Craig Racker for hanging on to the wild bucking bronco disguised as being a new parent, while writing a doctoral dissertation.

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"I wanted to make an object that was indestructible, so I made an object that was completely vulnerable."

Gabriel Orozco quoting Donald Judd

Introduction

Disentangling the roots of systemic psychic and social violence, "Viscous Expectations: Justice, Vulnerability, The Ob-Scene" investigates how the forces of body-phobia, misogyny, racial hygiene, and anti-intellectualism *both* undermine *and* produce conscious, holistic social relations. By scrutinizing the relationships among unchallenged assumptions of how we[1] are socialized, this project reconfigures how perception and choice frame freedom. Political and ethical analyses of the interstices of cultural studies and corporeal politics enable a rhizomatic re-conceptualization of community rooted in difference and vulnerability.

This research offers a constructive strategy to challenge the inertia that perpetuates insidious

[1] Initially, I refer to the "we" as a US citizen-subject and later, as one who surpasses inertia—a citizen-warrior (Chela Sandoval's phrase). The latter "we" seizes our agency as cultural workers in order to engage in a collaborative citizenship as a radical democracy.

body-phobic, convenience-culture hegemonies inscribed in the current crisis of agency in the US, and lays the groundwork for an emancipatory, performative pedagogy.[2] A radical democracy requires that theory becomes practice.

By examining the lived intersections of technology, aesthetics, eroticism, and ethnicity through the lens of vulnerability, my position offers citizen-subjects an opportunity to recognize their potential for transformative resistance. Although vulnerability is conventionally understood to mean *being susceptible to harm*, the foundation of this practice is rooted in encountering vulnerability and difference *as* physical and emotional strength—a roiling of ambiguity, the unknown, and the uncanny. Artists, scientists, and philosophers, ranging from Heraclitus to Elizabeth Grosz to Edouard Glissant, have explored this condition of *becoming*.[3] In the context of multiple constituencies, creativity becomes a political imperative in which intellectual and aesthetic risk-taking gives voice to social justice—a collaborative becoming-vulnerable. I am proposing an embodied democracy in which social models become a practice based on recognition of the absolute necessity of difference: an infinite potential of our bodies as contingent modes of relation. By challenging how we internalize binaries and taxonomies, I investigate lived empathy[4] within a matrix of an erotic politics—not a unified merging which dissolves into an amorphous normativity, but as the fluid exchange of autonomy and interconnectedness.[5]

[2] An emancipatory, performative pedagogy presupposes critical pedagogy.

[3] "Becoming is defined as 'extreme contiguity within a coupling of two sensations without resemblance'. Becoming refutes binary divisions and enables further transformations, melding subjects and objects in close proximity. The embodied consciousness of the spectator participates in the process of becoming" (Powell 211).

[4] Converging with Samuel Weber, I embed my explorations of the uncanny within an empathic field: "What is at stake in the uncanny is nothing more nor less than the disposition to 'put ourselves in the place of the other'" (*LF* 31).

[5] "The link of the chiasmic relationship maintains both the sameness and difference of the two...The power...of potentiality...the power or capacity of "both-and"..." (Ulfers, *Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought* seminar, EGS 2008).

[6] Deleuzian tendencies only become actual during an encounter, an engagement with an other(s). I am explicitly expanding the concept of tendencies as a re-cognition to move beyond dichotomous language.

[7] Henry Giroux illuminates the rhizomatic entanglement of power in the context of the Occupy Movement. "This task of delineation is not easy: the conditions of domination are layered, complex and deeply flexible" (truth-out.org).

[8] Throughout Part II, I emphasize how the mother-body, as a source for *f*éminine écriture, is intimately interwoven

Throughout my project, I undertake a homeopathic approach to this rhizomatic *Ineinander* (entanglement) of cultural conditions. A Deleuzoguattarian anti-critique allows me to simultaneously use the very tendencies[6] I am critiquing to more thoroughly scrutinize their multiple enfoldments—making a home in "enemy" territory—embodying the uncanny. I am explicitly choosing to examine the relationships among seemingly disparate subjects. As a practice of embodying theory, I simultaneously deploy a reticulated methodology of analyzing such an ensnarement, while striving to extricate the liberatory potential of this seemingly monolithic knot.[7] Rather than solely addressing my subjects as autonomous, my inquiry disentangles pivotal junctions, interstitial nodes of relation, and philosophical congruencies that engage a *féminine écriture*.[8] Precisely because "…the works of Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray, and Hélène Cixous dramatize some of the contradictions that emerge when feminists seek to free women's desires from the structures erected by psychoanalytic phallicism" (Bristow 104), they evert, thus defossilize, arborescent schema of filiation. Analogously, Gregory Bateson's[9] "aesthetics of ecological survival"[10] calls for a meandering, non-linear social agency and a conscious dis-ordering of sanctified normalcies.[11] Systems of production maintain their interpenetrating oppressive influence because they are so insidiously interconnected.

I identify an "acentered, nonhierarchical nonsignifying system" (*TP* 22)—that of the rhizome[12]—as a raison d'être of *féminine*

through *contradictory* definitions of sexual difference and sameness—for example, the absence or critique of female ejaculation in feminist discourse.

[9] "A plateau is always in the middle, not at the beginning or the end. A rhizome is made of plateaus. Gregory Bateson uses the word 'plateau' to designate something very special: a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation towards a culmination point or external end…[a] bizarre intensive stabilization" (*TP* 22).

[10] See Gregory Bateson, *Steps to an ecology of mind: A revolutionary approach to man's understanding of himself*. New York: Ballantine, 1972: 461).

[11] "Above all, the uncanny is intimately entwined in language with how we conceive and represent what is happening within ourselves, to ourselves, to the world...It 'un-' unsettles time and space, order and sense. The uncanny overruns, disordering any field supposedly extraneous to it" (Royle 2). Congruently, discussed throughout this thesis, Judith Butler theorizes censorship as producing speech.

[12] "The rhizome [is]…. without a General and without an organizing memory or central automaton…What is at question in the rhizome is a relation to sexuality—but also to the animal, the vegetal, the world, politics, the book, things natural and artificial—that is totally different from the arborescent relation: all manner of 'becomings'… 'Some sort

écriture. I recognize the intellectual risks I take by committing to the strategic practice of *féminine écriture*:

> …it is worth asking if Cixous' model of feminine sexuality does not reduce women to precisely those qualities that have long been stigmatized in a patriarchal order. Consigned to the unconscious, to instinct, to the body, even to irrationality, this feminine libidinal economy bears an uncanny resemblance to familiar stereotypes of women (Bristow 114).

By reorienting these essentialized characteristics through a homeopathic rubric, I am embarking on this project of feminine libidinal economy in order to draw wider attention to our internalized insidious layers of complicity with the forces of academic, institutional, and corporate coercion. This investigation of "co-implication"[13] disengages *how* our bodies and psyches are embedded in contradictory social constructions that strip our identities of relationality, thus shackling our potential accountability to others and ourselves. Undecidability, like co-implication, "harbor(s) within itself (a) complicity of contrary values… prior to any distinction-making…" It has "no stable essence, no 'proper' characteristics, it is not, in any sense of the word…a *substance*" (Derrida 1981: 125).

My project is intricately rooted in the potential of a rhizomatic uncanny—"reducible neither to the One nor the multiple" (*TP* 22). By incorporating dates and geographical locations, I ground my theoretical investigations within

of continuing plateau of intensity is substituted for [sexual] climax,' war, or a culmination point. It is a regrettable characteristic of the Western mind to relate expressions and actions to exterior or transcendent ends, instead of evaluating them on a plane of consistency on the basis of their intrinsic value" (*AOed* 21-22).

[13] In *Sex Time Perversion,* Grosz explores the idea of co-implication in both a sexualized somatic sense and in the sense of community.

narratives of personal experience. In her exposition of her friendship with the late Kathy Acker, and of the problematic of friendship itself, Avital Ronell self-interrogates:

> I have to interrupt myself here and confess my uneasiness as I write: in the first place, so unaccustomed to saying "I" in my texts, so comfortable in the practice, nearly Zen, of the attenuation of the subject, the effacement of self and the radical passivity exacted by writing—it is very shocking to me to have to include myself in this unnuanced way. I could handle myself as a barely audible trace in the service of some alterity to be addressed, but saying, for me, brazenly, "I" makes me shudder. …"I" is vulgar, or so goes my prejudice and practice (*LL* 26).

In Chapter Five, I revisit Ronell's "I" in her investigation of philosophers' self-censorship within historical intertwinings of philosophy and sex. Grosz praises the "rare combination of openly expressed personal obsession and scholarly rigor, the rigorous reading and analysis of [Roger Caillois' and Alphonso Lingis'] driving personal preoccupations" (*STP* 189). Grosz continues, "[w]hat seems rare is not the combination of scholarship and personal obsessional—this could be said to characterize much if not all theoretical and scientific discourse—but the open acknowledgement that the research is based on personal concerns" (*STP* 246, nt. 2). Both the process and content of my photographs and of the writing of this dissertation demonstrate an uncanniness that

> marks the confounding of this polarity: of first-person and third-person discourse. But the instability is not just *between* narrative positions:



PLATE 1

> it is already *within* both of them…[the uncanny] is already busily at work at the heart and hearth of every home, contaminating and corrupting all authority, just as the *style indirecte libre* blurs the boundaries between authoritative third-person and engaged first-person narratives (*LF* 16, 19).

As a strategy to elucidate my theoretical queries, I refer both to my philosophical underpinnings and to the international public reception of my photographs—which has frequently led to censorship. In doing so, I practice an embodied theory[14] that advocates a political, philosophical, and pedagogical commitment rooted in everyday behavior and interaction. In his introduction to *On Nietzsche*, Sylvère Lotringer elucidates Georges Bataille's practice of embodied theory: "Bataille never developed ideas that he didn't backup with his life" (*ON* vii).

I am aware of the precarious territory I tread by attempting to shift among elliptical performative language modalities. Like Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, I am unequivocally compelled to invoke the "blur of the theoretical and the auto-referential granted permission to make bodies matter" (Apter 63). I am explicitly choosing to engage in a counter-narrative to the politics of clarity. Giroux's deconstruction of the politics of clarity elucidates how one-dimensional normalized forms of communication become entrenched in our daily lives.

> I recall flushing and stiffening at what seemed to me democracy become mediocracy, at the

[14] The experiential learning mission statement for The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education: www.contemplativemind.org, www.acmhe.org is as follows: "The Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education (ACMHE) is a multidisciplinary, not-for-profit, professional academic association with a membership of educators, scholars, and administrators in higher education. The ACMHE promotes the emergence of a broad culture of contemplation in the academy by connecting a network of leading institutions and academics committed to the recovery and development of the contemplative dimension of teaching, learning and knowing. The ACMHE is an initiative of The Academic Program of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (the Center). The Center's Academic program has advanced research and established the credibility of the benefits of contemplative higher education over the past fourteen years. Through regional meetings, national conferences, a website and its Contemplative Practice Fellowship Program, the Center's Academic Program has identified leading academics in the field, reached a broad constituency and become the defining voice for contemplative practices as they specifically apply to higher education settings and pedagogical developments".

> looming sense of democracy as a science of the lowest-common-denominator, as competency trumping speciality, as random access to generic brands. I recoiled from the gray, undifferentiated space of this democracy. Here, it seemed to me, was the democracy of the Food Lion, Kmart, and superstores everywhere: Flatline consumption disguised as purchasing power; democracy turned over to the bland multiplicity of bodies pushing identical carts up and down aisles promising equally bland satisfaction. In his argument against the 'politics of clarity,' Henry Giroux decries what he calls the 'populist elitism' implicit in such a view. Referring to the often smug tendency to privilege clarity in popular discourses of writing and education (how could anyone with any common sense not be for clarity?), Giroux argues, 'clarity becomes a code word for an approach to writing that is profoundly Eurocentric in both context and content writing that conforms to presuppositions about standard language use and neglects the historical, political, and cultural specificity of diverse audiences or publics' (Phelan and Lane 77).

The institutionalized illusion of neutrality reifies the myth of transparency. Trinh Minh-ha's discussion of the tyranny of accessibility[15] equally brings to the forefront how clarity is imposed; how the effects of "being clear", "making accessible" exemplifies/materializes homogeneous ways of thinking and acting—further breeding intolerance and the politics of exclusion. Under the guise of communication, clarity and accessibility sabotage and eventually annihilate differential modes of being. My choice to unapologetically insinuate and implicate the "I" is not simply a reaction to our socially constructed reductive vernacular, but a vital commitment to embodied thinking.[16]

[15] "Accessibility, which is a process, is often taken for a "natural," self-evident state of language. What is perpetuated in its name is a given form of intolerance and an unacknowledged practice of exclusion. Thus, as long as the complexity and difficulty of engaging with the diversely hybrid experiences of heterogeneous contemporary societies are denied and not dealt with, binary thinking continues to mark time while the creative interval is dangerously reduced to non-existence" (Minh-ha cited in Giroux, 1993: 154).

[16] "In Acker, the literary, the philosophical and the political are disengaged from the narratives which traditionally sustain them. In the last essay of the volume, Leslie Dick writes that Acker 'refuses narrative momentum,' leaving out suspense, temporal logic as well as resolution or closure (115). This refusal applies to the literary as well as the political and philosophical. By breaking free from the striations of established discourses and their narratives, Acker creates a textuality that verbalizes the political and philosophical. This is different from a narrativization in that it disassociates these terms from a striated, or conventional context of their own narratives and makes them happen – become verbs inextricably intertwined with the events and bodies they traverse. This is also what makes Acker's textuality beyond any ontic conception of the abject, conjuring Bataille's call for a radical possibility of a general economy. The political and philosophical becomes so

In Part I, I examine de-historicized, neo-colonized middle-class forms of consciousness in which citizen-subjects fail to recognize their ability to witness the context of embodied energy,[17] and how this failure to make corresponding relevant choices obliterates their socio-political potency. I designate this failure as the violence of the everyday—a violence that engenders and perpetuates convenience-culture. Embodied energy designates both the local and global cycles of extraction/production/representation/distribution/consumption/disposal/containment. Through an intimate re-examination of embodied energy as a Spinozian ethology,[18] my argument offers a rationale for comprehending not only why, but *how* US society can become the democracy it purports to be. I will explore participatory citizenship through a conscious integration of embodied energy into the everyday and how we experience the other within ourselves as a key to provoke social agency. In Chapter Three, I investigate how this integration of embodied energy manifests as the erotic.

The violence of the everyday can be characterized by the ways in which we embody constructed desires and fears of our own bodies and of difference. The hegemony of the everyday and the ostensible self-evident aim to deny, contain, control, and eventually extinguish vulnerability and difference. Neoliberal normative definitions of difference, what is considered obscene and deviant, shape the violence of "everyday" representations and

dirty, so soiled by bodies that refuse to become abstractions of any higher discourse and instead tie the political and philosophical to themselves like in the sadomasochistic impulses that propel the text" (Frida Beckman's review of *Lust for Life: On the Writings of Kathy Acker.* eds. Amy Scholder, Carla Harryman, Avital Ronnell, New York and London: Verso, 2006, www.politicsandculture.org).

[17] In contrast to an Aristotelian individualized product, properties reified into essential categories, embodied energy reflects a Deleuzian process, acknowledging historical processes that produce any given communal product. The "citizen-warriors" (see page 36) who I identify in my catalogue of Philosophical Congruencies mobilize multiple manifestations of embodied energy.

[18] Deleuze writes about Spinoza's introduction of the concept of ethology—judging things as they relate to and with other things (Deleuze 1988: 125). Ethology as a socio-political practice of becoming-animal deserves further inquiry in the field of cultural studies.

determine how they are consumed: "We patrol gender expressly because our claim to normality (i.e. conventional humanness) has been made to rely on it" (*DE, DB* 174). Neoliberalism confines US citizens within the familiar, the "neutral". They are inoculated against difference. My research attempts to unsnarl the contradictions embedded in the practice of equality—how the illusion of neutrality has given mediocrity, and its subsuming violence, free reign over every aspect of our lives:

> This rhetoric constructs the most seemingly innocuous forms of personal and everyday life—of subjectivity, of citizenship itself…a structure, a rhetoric for being that orders and regulates Western social space and consciousness…that invite[s] citizen-subjects to faultlessly consume ideology, and to guilelessly reproduce 'depoliticized' and supremacist forms of speech, consciousness, morality, values, law, family life, and personal relations (*MO* 21).

This utopic world of monolithic perceived perfection—automated assimilation—fuels the sanctity of normalcy and drives compulsive consumerism. Contrary to critical pedagogy in which value is context dependent, this axiomatic habit feeds on fear, on self-censorship leading to everyday taken-for-granted violences. Structural inequalities range from standardized testing to the medicalization of sexuality to humanitarian imperialism[19] to eugenics. US society is rooted in this infinitely reproducible self-censorship—an internalized fascism and institutionalized anti-intellectualism that

[19] Under the guise of the common good and universal values, *humanitarian imperialism* has emerged as a neo-colonialist method of reproducing the unquestioned status quo of industrialized, "First World" nations. For a detailed deracination of these fantasies (for example, taken-for-granted concepts of equality, poverty, standard of living), see Wolfgang Sachs' anthology, *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power.* Although the term humanitarian imperialism is not explicitly used, all of the authors explore the hierarchical, ethnocentric assumptions rooted in development politics and unexamined paradigms of Progress. As public intellectuals committed to the archeology of prohibition and power distribution, we must extend this discussion beyond the context of international development politics and investigate how these normalized tyrannies thrive in our own backyard.

reifies the mediocrity of the status quo. We expect the lowest-common-denominator[20] of intellectual engagement as a justification for how we make decisions, for what should and should not be allowed in the public realm—firmly establishing a mediocracy. In Part III, Chapters Five and Six, I discuss in detail the imperatives of critical thought, dissent, social responsibility and civic courage in the context of the art market and educational institutions.

Entitlement and enforced equality have overtly and covertly become devices of social submission. Global democratization is an accepted, unquestioned euphemism for inequality. This equalization eradicates the subversive potential of the unseen, the private, the individual.[21] Homogenization self-perpetuates by mimicking the model of the norm rather than challenging its terms. Equality is sustained because it renders invisible and eventually extinguishes socially subordinate identities and dismisses their potential for functioning through differential relationships with others. Entitlement—governmental selective restrictions, media representations, corporatized morality—restrains vulnerability and the rhizomatic field of possibility. Through taken-for-granted binary reductive thinking, entitlement denies any dialogic relationship, any genuine incorporation into the polity. We are taught that in spite of *and* because

[20] John Cage translates the lowest-common-denominator as common-sense or as logic (as in accessibility and the politics of clarity): "...everything we understand under that rubric 'logic' represents such a simplification with regard to the event and what really happens, that we must learn to keep away from it" (80).

[21] Butler asserts: "It is not a matter of a simple entry of the excluded into an established ontology, but an insurrection at the level of ontology, a critical opening up of the questions, What is real? Whose lives are real? How might reality be remade? Those who are unreal have, in a sense, already suffered the violence of de-realization…Violence renews itself in the face of the apparent inexhaustibility of its object" (*PL* 33).

of our differences, we lack[22]—we need more, because we are less:

> Under [the regime of pan-capitalism], individuals of various social groups and classes are forced to submit their bodies for reconfiguration so they can function more efficiently under the obsessively rational imperatives of pan-capitalism (production, consumption, and order). One means of reconfiguration is the blending of the organic and the electromechanical (Critical Art Ensemble 2001: 11).

Sandoval's characterization of "identification" parallels my analysis of equality as the result of constructed desire. Media-saturated fear-politics form and sustain "need", ownership, and entitlement. This fictional consciousness "seeks to equate all differences with itself". Under the imperatives of the first world cultural order that Roland Barthes inhabits, the other is recognized as a deceptive snare, a lure threatening to ambush with its duplicity the sense of self on which the citizen-subject secures its own forms of humanity" (120.1). The fantasy of equality, in which equality is reduced to homogeneity, "presents itself as 'natural' while being laden with the values, hopes and desires of the dominant social order" (ibid.). Barthes' exploration of equality-as-sameness intersects with Rancière's discussion of the Ignorant Schoolmaster: "Equality, writes Jacotot, is neither given nor claimed; it is practiced, it is *verified*" (1991: 43). Equality manifests as assimilation/toxic mimicry.

In Chapter Two, I discuss the pathologized other in the context of our contradictory (*both*

[22] In the 1999 science-fiction film, *Gattaca,* the characters in the film were strictly classified as achievers, administrators, or "deficients".



PLATE 2

neutralizing *and* politicizing) technological age. Jewish peoples have inhabited a host-parasite historical space of alterity within their adopted countries over the centuries—an uncanny zone of the stranger within. As with any irreducible irritant, the host interrogates: What must be done with that which cannot be assimilated, that which will not submit to equality? As I investigate this question, vulnerability surfaces as a prostheticized "shared deterritorialization"[23] between host and parasite (*TP* 294)—"a co-existence of two asymmetrical movements". Becoming-vulnerable means that we are in a continual state of transition. Because identities in this realm are unfixed and in flux, they become-relational. Difference establishes this condition of vulnerability. Vulnerability operates from the Law of Impermanence: "[it] sustains such continual disturbance between the essentially interrelated antitheses and does not allow them to come to equilibrium" (ZMERS 7).

[23] "Consistency is neither totalizing nor structuring; rather, it is deterritorializing (a biological stratum, for example, evolves not according to statistical phenomenon but rather according to cutting edges of deterritorialization)" (*TP* 160).

Again we are confronted with the aching paradoxes of post-humanism. Psychasthenia is the condition of the chiasma of post-humanism:

> A disturbance in the relation between self and surrounding territory; a phenomenon in which the ability to define one's position in space is confused with, and by, represented space; an urban cultural condition which provides the dual experience of being everywhere at once while not really being anywhere at all (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU).

In Chapter Two, I discuss in detail the contradictory relationships among our reifying



PLATE 3

phallo-centric, techno-capital discourses and their "systemic mutability" (Garoian 4). Contra *détournement*,[24] explored throughout my project, the neoliberal prosthetic ideology sabotages differential thinking. Wolfgang Schirmacher identifies modern technology as hostile to the natural body by attempting to render it ageless and even immortal, thus neutralizing differences and the unfamiliar. Bill T. Jones' choreography heightens our understanding of Schirmacher's position:

> The body is at once the most solid, the most elusive, illusory, concrete, metaphorical, ever present and ever distant thing—a site, an instrument, an environment, a singularity and a multiplicity. The body is the most proximate and immediate feature of my social self, a necessary feature of my social location and of my personal enselfment and at the same time an aspect of my personal alienation in the natural environment (Bryan Turner cited in Henry Louis Gates Jr., *The New Yorker,* Bill T. Jones).

I offer the challenge to inhabit the uncanny interplay of modern technology, media, and imagination. I define the uncanny as the potentiality of "a visual language that disrupts and extends beyond the dialectical disclosure of *thesis*, *antithesis*, and *synthesis* through the divergent interconnectivity of *prosthesis*" (Garoian 2010: 12). Prostheses, like visualizing technologies, embody the contradictions of lived post-humanism. Rooted in a contemporary re-appropriation of the politics of clarity in which ambiguity no longer signifies a lack of clarity, but presents a multiplicity of clarities: Derrida's "affirmation then determines the noncenter otherwise than as loss of center"

[24] In *The Greek Myths,* Robert Graves suggests that the Gordian knot may have symbolized the ineffable name of Dionysus. Since the knotted *détournement* is cryptic, enigmatic, unknown, unknowable, ineffable, unrepresentable, it cannot be judged or decided.

(1978: 292). My exploration of post-human dynamics in the context of postmodern globalization is inherently ambiguous and multi-pronged; rhizomatically unfolding into multiple paradoxical positions—reflecting on both its assimilationist tendencies and emancipatory potentials.

Post-humanism embodies and disembodies *both* a dissident manifestation of globalization *and* a myopic, totalitarian manifestation of globalized new world economy. How we choose to metabolize post-human dynamics delineates the difference between reification of the sanctity of normalcy and the possibilities of a radical citizenship/participatory democracy. We can co-exist within a neo-colonizing *and* within a decolonizing postmodern version of cyberspace. This tension-filled conviviality is integral to post-human ethics,[25] aesthetics, and corporeal politics. Conflict is irreducible. By no means am I suggesting a binary relationship between two versions of post-humanism. Rather, I am proposing a polysemic dialectic of possibility—an affinity through difference (Donna Haraway 1990: 92), an elliptical continuum which decodes, trans-codes, translates, and critiques "the real".

Under the tyranny of normalcy, equality becomes a euphemism for assimilation—an identification with a shared identity. Vulnerability *confronts* this homogenizing force. In PART II[26], I explore the new field of research called "intermedialities" which offers an ethics of difference and a politics of

[25] I am exploring a Deleuzian/Spinozan ethics as the capacity to be effected during an encounter.

[26] PART II and III are "answers" to the problematic I pose in PART I. To a degree, I am following the layout of Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985) in which she begins by examining the actions that "unmake" the world (pain's inexpressibility). She then analyzes the actions that "make" the world (creativity, imagination, language). Schirmacher incites us: "With so many great theories, why are they not working?" (EGS 2009).

transformation rooted in an investigation of *how* to privately and publicly/ ob-scenely (off-stage)[27] and explicitly dissolve the calcified and calcifying tyranny of certainty—that which obliterates the possibility of difference, both lived and shared. This inquiry is not centered on attempting to find a resolution to our current global state of emergency, but is focused instead on engaging with the "as if" of a participatory universe—the torodial condition of continual non-arrival[28] and its potential dissolution of social inertia and cultural somnambulism.[29] PARTS II and III respond to Schirmacher's challenge to productively transform theory into practice. Eldridge Cleaver's indictment, "You're either part of the solution or you're part of the problem" (Speech 1968), behooves us as cultural workers to commit to immediate and sustainable legislated justice.

In "Philosophical Congruencies", I catalogue[30] numerous philosophers' designations for the intricate interconnectedness of the *in-between*—another chiasmic[31] web through which we can explore the social scientific concept of embodied energy. By accruing a list of congruencies, I draw attention to the philosophers' common preoccupation with de-solving the sanctity of normalcy. My research reticulates radical sub-altern spaces: Baruch Spinoza's enchantment and intuition, Friedrich Nietzsche's chiasmic unity, and Glissant's poetics of relation (to name just a few of the philosophers cited throughout my text). Additionally in Chapter Three, I target

[27] Throughout my argument, I discuss the paradoxical intricacies of the concept and term obscene.

[28] Like Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's rhizome without a derivation or destination, in her *Volatile Bodies*: *Towards a Corporeal Feminism,* Grosz designates lesbian orgasm as a process, a "continual non-arrival".

[29] In contrast to the institutional numbing of our bodies and minds, to retrieve balance from the grip of moralizing normalcy, we must recognize constantly shifting positions and be willing to inhabit those often contradictory fluctuations.

[30] Although I cite thirty-three philosophers, this is admittedly an abbreviated list.

Audre Lorde's concept of *erotic politics* that identifies the de-colonizing, liberatory practice of nourishing relationships among seemingly contradictory socio-psychodynamic forces.

Erotic politics are relational, requiring the ineffable, play,[32] inquiry. This inter-dialogue cannot be contained or resolved. A dialectics of no resolution resounds with a commitment to art as erotic politics—one in which binary codes do not dictate our decision-making process;[33] but rather, how anomalies, aporias, ambiguity, metaphor, aphorisms, the eternal not-yet lead us to the give-take of continual non-arrival[34]—a vividly post-human condition. This condition yields the uncanny as the exiled stranger within. I associate the eternal-not-yet as Kristeva's definition of the uncanny: an "ordeal of fundamental incompleteness: a 'gaping',..." (Kristeva 1982: 27). The uncanny is my political strategy, an erotic ethic, a commitment to aesthetics and everyday politics as multiple and relational. The uncanny can never be de-cided—cut into dichotomous pre-digested wholes: "Every time you draw a line you are cutting through someone's flesh" (Raymond Cadvera).

By inhabiting the unknown through ambiguity and contradiction (Chapter Three) we can invoke an order rooted in fluidity that is capable of confronting the current state of US democracy and its obfuscating humanitarian imperialism. Philip Slater's *Toilet Assumption* identifies US democracy as that which functions through institutional concealment—the

[31] Fred Ulfers' defines chiasmic unity as the following reading of Barbara Johnson's "A World of Difference" (111-14): "The figure of the chiasm is derived from the graphic of the Greek letter "chi," denoting crossing over or interlacing. It is the figure of entanglement of two opposites, of the undecidable fusion and separation. Chiasmic logic suspends the system of binary oppositions on which non-contradiction is based, but without reducing the opposition to some form of the 'same' (Ulfers, *Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought* seminar, EGS 2008).

[32] Throughout my text I extol the Nietzschean concept of "'being 'playful' in its ceaseless, goalless Becoming" (NAF 8).

collusive concept "that unwanted matter, unwanted difficulties, unwanted complexities and obstacles will disappear if they're removed from our immediate field of vision" (19). The public knows explicitly what is being hidden. The ob-scene, then, becomes a true marker of an advanced civilization. Ironically, the post-human tendency towards transgression in reality is not transgressive. In fact, it prescribes the norm and consistently mirrors non-Western concepts of the taboo. I describe these tendencies in greater detail in Chapter Three. When the private seeps into the public sphere it becomes a spectacle of its own invisibility. Since those who exist within the liminal zone of the taboo, those without a homeland[35] are inherently ob-scene, off stage, off screen, *elsewhere*, I ask: How is u-topia (no-where), different from the ob-scene? How can we[36] deploy the state of being in exile, homeless, the *unheimlich*, the unhomely, the uncanny—all markers of the sub-altern—to enable an emergent democratic republic?

Considered a danger to civilization, order, and the common good, the sub-altern is methodically de-materialized. Kristeva argues that our culture has ingested this "operation of the psyche through which subjective and group identity are constituted by excluding anything that threatens one's own (or one's group's) borders" (1982: 71). The hegemony of industrial imperialism fears the disorder of the exotic/toxic other, bodily functions, the unpredictability of instinct and intuition. The sacred cannot be segregated, localized, or categorized; it is inherently messy, relational,

[33] Process involves an acknowledgement of embodied energies.

[34] Irigaray urges us to recognize woman's desire as it "upsets the linearity of a project, undermines the goal-object of a desire, diffuses the polarization towards a single pleasure, disconcerts fidelity to a single discourse" (1985: 30).

[35] For a detailed discussion of Jews' as the quintessential pariah, see Chapter One.

[36] This "we" refers to active citizenry in which the citizen-subject becomes the citizen-warrior.

post-human. "The sacred involves right or wrong action and is imbued with the opposing qualities of pure and impure, holy and sacrilegious" (Caillois 37). Kristeva's *carrefour,* boundary-crossing, is precisely what constitutes contradictory post-human art-making and corporeal integrity. Her concept of the *chora*, also explored in Chapter Four, invites a primal, interconnected materiality of being.[37]

In Chapter Four, Kristeva's analysis of Teresa de Avila's relationship of her devotion to the divine explicitly moves from metaphors to metamorphosis—a becoming inherent in embracing the unknown, the unfamiliar. The *chora* and the *carrefour* of the erotics of the uncanny constitute a transmogrification of becoming-animal. Becoming-animal performs the interpenetrations of the irreducible difference of erotic politics. In contrast, repugnance for the animal signifies ethnocentrism. In the context of this thesis, ethnocentrism is not affiliation with a nation (ethnos) but an affiliation with race, religion, sexuality, and in particular, a taken-for-granted ethos—a masquerade of morality that supercedes the sacred. This masquerade effectively neutralizes difference:

> …one strives on all sides to reduce the differences between beings to external difference, separate and apart from an active intention to surpass and destroy animal nature within us. On all sides, one strives to deny *human* value, because this value is essentially difference-between animals and manor between men; for this reason, one strives to reduce every difference to the insignificance of a material datum (*AS 1* 69).

[37] This materiality of being is animated through ineffable translatability: "An idea is the dimension, on the symbolic level, of what cannot be precisely named. Lacan called it the Real. There always remains a gap between the word that designates an idea and what the idea defines" (*BD* 53). This gap propels me to inhabit *le pulsion*, a word that has no English translation—Kristeva's *carre-four* and Nietzsche's version of compulsion at the crossroads offer possibilities. Ulfer's discussion of Antigone as the Pious Criminal, the ultimate tragic character of Derrida's *undecidability* and Nietzsche's *will to power,* demonstrates this contradictory in-between not as a moral phenomenon or as a conceptual phenomenon, but rather as an aesthetic phenomenon.

Vulnerability, difference, and the sacred co-exist as a fertile uncanny opposition to the taxonomic reductionism of the public sphere. Within this hegemony, like Bataille, I identify the sacred as the uncanny, as a manifestation of art—that which is not taken for granted. In Bataille's philosophy of sacred destruction and excess, we can find a Dionysian opening[38] which allows us to pay explicit attention to the contradictions embedded within our own psyches and bodies. Recognition of and exposure to these ambiguities roots us in the sacred—a paradoxical embodiment of the *both/and* status of the sacred, the ineffable, *neti-neti* (neither this-nor that).[39] This sacred reflects Michel Foucault's investigation of *ars erotica.*

Using the body as a manifestation of relational-identity, my photographs/videos become sites[40] that explore this schizophrenic slippage between violence and the sacred as a terrain for invoking individual and social consciousness. My photographs play with inter-relating imbrications—concurrent multiple, contradictory tendencies. As I discuss in detail in Chapter Six, my photographs "figure the unfigurable by disfiguring figures" (Taylor 240). This rendering formless through image-making becomes a sacred act. The sacred plays out the complexities of the *carrefour* as embodied rhizomatic vulnerabilities. These tendrils form a Moebius-band[41] simultaneity in which "… the libido suffuses everything. Keep everything in sight at the same time…" (*AOed* 35), a non-binarism of inside/outside, order/disorder, public/private[42] animating the visible sacred.

[38] "The figures of Dionysus and the Bacchanalia crystallize the entire set of orgiastic motifs, from collective fury to the carrying away of bodies and their furious dismemberment: the reign of what is too close, blended, confused—generations, the dead and the living, the animal and the human, the sacred and the profane. The god Dionysus explores all notions of identity with the self. …This enigmatic matricial reality is assembled by the god's multiple identities; this is the point of opening and passage between the living and the dead at which sex and generation, jouissance and ecstasy, are articulated" (ibid. 45).

[39] "Derrida shows that the remainder ([desire]), in the Rig-Veda, has no possible status; neither being nor nonbeing, neither world nor nonworld..." (*BD* 80). The statusless is beyond good and evil—a sphere whose center is everywhere and thus nowhere in particular.

[40] "The notion of 'site' refers... to a specific material form with a particular relationship to time and space within which modes of production and distribution of representation are accomplished" (Simon 141).

[41] All references in my dissertation to the Moebius-band or Moebius-strip imply an open field of co-relations: "[I]ts familiarity and strangeness is in the uncanniness of the present participle in which the part is brought before our eyes and ears as a reiteration that is forever incomplete, never coming full circle, always open to change" (*LF* 28-29).

De-solving the hegemonies of naturalized order, we engender an ever-shifting, polyvalent, performative politic. This erotic politic produces a new alignment by decolonizing what Ronell identifies as the "hetero-rhetorical unconscious of the social milieux"—one in which an expansive dialectics of pedagogical intervention repositions our everyday interactions. We practice immanent patterns of becoming this palimpsest of simultaneous global-local convergences. In "What is Critique?", Judith Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak explore this variation of social consciousness:

> As a mode of radical questioning, of unsettling self-evident answers, of interfering in established relations of power, [critique] is simultaneously a self-critical process. …Critique thereby becomes an intervention, a resistance to conformity, a tool that can bring the production of truths into crisis. It disrupts secure foundations, interrupts the functioning of discourses, not to substitute them with more accurate alternative epistemes, but to reveal the complexity, contingency and violence of our 'regimes of truth'. … [A]ccompanying processes of subject-formation… critique is an exploration of how it may be possible to think otherwise – persistently denaturalizing and historicising the order of things…. a crisis of the epistemological framing of our worlds. … It is *ruthless* in the sense that it does not fear its own consequences (Butler and Spivak "What is Critique?").

The fearlessness of unintended (and intended) consequences of the uncanny is precisely the practice of politicizing vulnerability as a ruthless impossibility. The impossible defies stupidity: our current state of emergency—US

[42] Henry Louis Gates Jr. writing on Bill T. Jones states, "…nudity, in Jones' work, can be enlisted for more complex purposes—for communion rather than affront. …'It was a piece that had been about the things that separate people, and I thought, What is the most direct way I could talk about unity, and the risk that we take on all levels with our bodies?. …Because the nudity became a metaphor for our true commonality" (121). One challenge to this apparently unproblematic synergistic public-private is the transgendered body. A FTM (female-to-male) friend contested my self-evident demand for normalizing nudity. His comment about *not* relishing in his body being exposed in public *or* in private illuminated my own privileged status of inhabiting a biologically gendered body accepted and supported by the status quo. This exchange reflects a gendered Moebian-strip twist on vulnerability.



PLATE 4

democracy's masquerade of morality in which our inherited culture of projected shame manifests in institutionalized suppression and self-censorship. Our "democratic" society is characterized by standardized and conformist laws of conduct which are reduced to the lowest-common-denominator:[43] "To the extent that morality teaches hatred of too great a freedom, it implants the need for limited horizons and immediate tasks, teaching the narrowing of perspectives and thus in a certain sense stupidity, as a condition of life and growth" (Ronell 2002: 3). In opposition to *stupidity*, vulnerability can become a site for reterritorialized democracy.

Irigaray's call to *becoming* demands that we inhabit the impossible: "To become means fulfilling the wholeness of what we are capable of being".[44] Radical citizenship invokes "…this circumstance of resistance, [it] requires that the unspeakable be spoken and that the impossible be done" (Critical Art Ensemble 2001: 8). In Chapter Six, I explore how the ineffable, *l'informe*,[45] and the undecidable[46] potentially decolonize our consciousness and our quotidian behavior. Consciously becoming[47] defies equality, as it refutes any and all invisible, internalized hierarchies.[48] An embodied consciousness conjures an elastic dialectic of becoming in which difference pulsates with the impossible—the lived rhizome:

> A rhizome has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*. The tree is filiation but the rhizome is alliance, uniquely alliance. The tree [taproot] imposes the verb "to be," but the fabric of the rhizome is the conjunction, "and...and...and..."

[43] Throughout this thesis, I associate the lowest-common-denominator with Nietzsche's disdain for the common 'herd'—"his disgust with democracy and its herd of citizens" (A. Star 10). In contrast, I associate community and *convivencia* with Deleuze's enthusiasm for the swarm. Spinoza's ethics emerged from his reading of Maimonides, another Sephardic who lived and theorized during the extraordinary epoch of *convivencia*—a cultural collaboration of diverse religions and ethnicities (primarily Moslems, Jews, and Christians) in Spain before the Inquisition. Maimonides unequivocally stressed that Arabic and Hebrew are one language. This was a world that conceptualized the *continuity* of being, of thought, and of living things. "The progress of knowledge had a meaning that was at once personal and transpersonal. A human being was…a receptacle of thought and of the divine" (*BD* 72).

[44] Cited in Grosz's essay, "Of Bugs and Women: Deleuze and Irigaray on the Becoming Woman" in *Engaging with Irigaray*. Irigaray's impossibility echoes Spinoza's "what a body can do?" which I mobilize in Part III.

[45] I depart from Bataille's original experiment with *l'informe* as a "job," and move into an intermediality—a third interval as a site for becoming. For an investigation of avant-garde and modernist art practices which seep through and decode binary perspectives, see Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss' *Formless: A User's Guide*. New York: zone books, 1997.

[46] The undecidable reflects an absence of intentionality, an "interminable detour" (Ulfers) that continually surfaces

> This conjunction carries enough force to shake and uproot the verb "to be." Where are you going? Where are you coming from? What are you heading to? These are totally useless questions...[Rhizomes] establish a logic of the AND, overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings...the middle is by no means an average; on the contrary, it is where things pick up speed (*TP* 27, 28).

In Chapter Four, I investigate how carnival and the *festival* suspend all hierarchical rank, prohibition, and privilege: they are the celebration of mutation. The anomaly or outsider (discussed in Chapter Three) offers the transformative potential of becoming. As I propose in Chapter Four, Kristeva unravels Teresa de Avila's *becoming the impossible* through the dialectic of the unresolvable. Because becoming refuses to merge/homogenate, and instead dissonantly seeps intermediality[49]— preserving relational alterity and the never fully knowable. "[Mikhail] Bakhtin has characterized the grotesque body as a 'body in the act of becoming'" (Stewart 105). Thus, within the collaborative intensities of my photographic process, the grotesque becomes a mutually constituted private and public space for exploring contradictory interpretations and vulnerabilities. The tension created during the constructing[50] and viewing of my images hopefully defies definitions because "it" is never fully knowable. Because this tension is part of an ongoing collaboration with the shifting positions between the viewer and myself, the work of art embodies *l'informe*—in a perpetual condition of becoming. Critical

through interpenetration and unending play.

[47] "Nietzsche observed a shift in the orientation of natural science from an essentially mechanistic vision of the universe to a conception that espoused a radical Becoming over the primacy of Being that was inherent in the atomism of mechanistic science...an energeticist model of Becoming provides the operational paradigm for the full argument of eternal recurrence...one that finally eliminates the ontology of normative time... that breaks an intrinsically cyclical Becoming away from normative, linear time" (ZMERS 2, 9).

[48] I address multiple manifestations of the invisible/invisibility. The structures of domination are such an integral part of our cells and psyches, we are not cognizant of their constitutive and formative mechanisms. Our own off-stageness, our own ob-scenity dictates *how* we participate in these structures. Literally and figuratively, invisibility plays with our optically fixated culture (including Benjamin and Deleuze and Guattari's critiques of hierarchically ordained ocular-orientations). Through my photographic work, I am exploring the invisible in relation to the gaze—representations of the body (male, female, and the in-between), perception, interpretation, and reading (note Ronell's 2001, 'The Hook-Up: Stupidity, Irony, Mechanicity and Testing' (excerpt) in *Connect: art, politics, theory, practice* (New York: Arts International, Inc. pp. 41-56). "Inside the Visible", one of my image titles (see plate 43), does

art, thought, action scandalizes the normative through such seepage. In both my art practice and commitment to the political domain, I investigate not the elimination of conflict, but how to negotiate conflict. Redistribution of conflict invites a differential consciousness and behavior. Ekphrasis,[51] a luminescent oscillation of cross-fertilizations, resounds with political potential. These promiscuous crossings have compelled me to collaborate with musicians and choreographers, poets and philosophers—to continually immerse myself in unfamiliar territory as the process of becoming.

> It is a multiplication of connections and disconnections that reframe the relation between bodies, the world where they live and the way in which they are 'equipped' for fitting it. It is a multiplicity of folds and gaps in the fabric of common experience that change the cartography of the perceptible, the thinkable and the feasible. As such, it allows for new modes of political construction of common objects and new possibilities of collective enunciation…to produce a sensory form of strangeness, a clash of heterogeneous elements prompting a chance in perception (Rancière 2006: 11).

As a "citizen-warrior"[52] inhabiting this rhizomatic liminal zone becomes a socio-erotic imperative. Because I recognize the complexities of the intersections of race, class, sex, gender, and aesthetics, and how they inform our daily interactions, I have lived difference as a point of departure, rather than as an end point in the deconstruction of anti-democratic normative behavior. In Chapters Five and Six, I explore the disfiguring potential

not privilege what is seen, but recognizes that which is simultaneously witnessed and rendered impotent.

[49] Intermediality deforms decisions so that undecidability is "a medium as element enveloping both terms (of an opposition); a medium located between the two terms…" "What counts here is the between, the in-between-ness…" (Derrida 1981: 212).

[50] My models can only feel the strain in their muscles, the precarious balancing of fragile forms which are so dependent on their absolute self-composure, the viscous or sharp substances encountering their skin, the weight of other bodies compressing their own; they can only smell the dried cephalopod, the deteriorating latex, the aging blood, the other bodies. They rarely "see" how their bodies are being acted upon.

[51] "One particular kind of visual description is also the oldest type of writing about art in the West. Called ekphrasis, it was created by the Greeks. The goal of this literary form is to make the reader envision the thing described as if it were physically present. In many cases, however, the subject never actually existed, making the ekphrastic description a demonstration of both the creative imagination and the skill of the writer. For most readers of famous Greek and Latin texts, it did not matter whether the subject was actual or imagined. The texts were studied to form habits of thinking and writing, not as art historical evidence" (Marjorie Munsterberg, "Writing About Art").



PLATE 5

of the *festival* as an emancipatory pedagogy. If used consciously, shedding the illusion of individuality can become an explicit strategy for erotic agency. In his book, *Sexuality: The New Critical Idiom*, Joseph Bristow challenges scholars to form a political project rooted in Deleuze's rhizomatic and schizoanalytic lines. My pedagogical and art-based research explores possibilities of radical citizenship by actively cultivating vulnerability through corporeal inquiries. It explores the cross-fertilization of Deleuze's enfoldments as disarticulated membranes. This awareness awakens the potential of fully inhabiting our bodies—bodies that pulse with the multiplicity of the 'I'[53]—bodies as inherently interdisciplinary. A commitment to heterogeneous embodied curiosity decodes, thus ruptures cultural assumptions. It addresses the "ineluctable contiguities" (Ronell's introduction to *Scum Manifesto* 1) of body-minds as conditions for participatory democracy—a lived erotic politics. A collaborative call and response revives the vulnerability inherent in the disfigurement, the *écriture* of the abject (which I explore in Chapter Six). Vulnerability becomes a textual *jouissance*.

My investigation of socio-erotic ethics generates the following questions: What if sexual and erotic relationships with oneself, one's environment, and with others, became a condition for a just, humanitarian, compassion-based society? What if our bodies and the experiences they produce became models for active citizenship? Could social justice evolve

[52] Sandoval generates her concept of the citizen-warrior through "the body of the oppositional cyborg [which] becomes wholly articulated with the material and psychic positionings of differential US third world feminism" (168). Like Gloria Anzaldua's "mestiza consciousness", the role of the citizen-warrior employs the strategic skill of "cognitive mapping" (Fredrick Jameson's term)—orienting ourselves within the constantly shifting relationships of our post-modern global systems. As a non-violent peace and social justice activist, I am explicitly choosing the term "citizen-warrior" not only in order to reanimate Sandoval's call-to-action, but to revive the concept of the impeccable warrior located in a yogic context. The impeccable warrior is *impossible*—embodying the contradictory characteristics necessary to generate sustainable social change.

[53] Multiples are slippery and complex. They demand attention. Ronell calls attention to our culture's missing pulse: "Western medicine, not far from decisive monotheistic habits, tends to focus in on one pulse, crowding out the subtle varieties of signs and linkups to which the body has recourse when betraying its bustling itineraries. Even a locution such as "*the* body" reveals a mostly Western bias, since ayurveda, for instance tallies up ten bodies and counting" (*BD* xvii). For an additional exploration of multiple bodies, see the writings of Jean-Luc Nancy.

out of an uncanny vulnerability? Ronell's parallel investigation of sex in relation to philosophy guides me through my queries: "Sex is not bodies, as philosophy is not concepts; each is an act, a relation, and a language" (*BD* 16).

Eroticism as a form of critique (critique via Butler and Spivak) aligns collisions of liminalities. Distinguishing and recognizing, not separating, self from other, we can encounter the unknown, opening up the potential for corporeal cognition and erotic play.[54] Erotic conjunctions provide a framework for perceiving the world through possibility rather than habitual prescription. The nature of this collaborative emancipatory project transgresses the phallic lure of internalized, invisible, capitalist Oedipal structures.[55] Reason and intuition become subordinate to perception.[56]

Everyday mediocrity and contrived neutrality expose the intersection of entertainment, consumerism, and ethnocentrism as a collective violence through which we encounter our bodies and consciousness. Supreme Court Justice Douglas was emphatic on this subject:

> The First Amendment was not fashioned as a vehicle for dispensing tranquilizers to the people. Its prime function was to keep debate open to 'offensive' as well as to 'staid' people. The tendency throughout history has been to subdue the individual and to exalt the power of government. The use of the standard 'offensive' gives authority to government that cuts the very vitals out of the First Amendment. As is intimated by the Court's opinion, the materials before us may be garbage. But so is much of what is said in political

[54] This erotic play is a Nietzschean engagement with the aesthetic in that it is an "integration of integral opposites" (NAF 11).

[55] "Deleuze and Guattari argue in *Anti-Oedipus* that the family is not a universal and ahistorical structure. It is a specifically capitalist coding of desire. Capitalism operates by decoding flows yet it must continually set limits, since there can be no such thing as a completely decoded society. Oedipus is a fragment of code retained from State society and deployed in the service of capitalism to create one of the necessary conditions for the continual consumption of commodities—consumers. 'Our semiotic of modern White Men [is] the semiotic of capitalism' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 182 cited in Gretchen Riordan's "Haemosexuality" in *Deleuze and Sex*. Frida Beckman, ed. Edinburgh: University Press, 2011).

[56] *Wabi-sabi* (explored below) offers an oppositional language to transcendent rationality. In the Japanese tea-room we enter a sphere that reflects these relational possibilities: "Conventional aids to discernment, like the origins and names of the object makers, are of no wabi-sabi consequence. The normal hierarchy of material value related to cost is also pushed aside. …An object obtains the state of wabi-sabi only for the moment it is appreciated as such" (Koren 61).

> campaigns, in the daily press, on TV, or over the radio (cited in Eastland 223).

A pro-active philosophical approach to sexuality resists these systems of identification/equalization that co-exist within the rubric of the ostensibly typical and everyday. When we render these assumptions visible, we disrupt the status quo; we embody erotic politics. This un-settling is not a dialectical negation, but rather manifests as a co-existence. Although I make the explicit distinction between eroticism and sexuality (both metaphoric and literal), I position both as techniques for social emancipation—the circulation of radical citizenship.

In Chapter Five, "Rhizomatic Vulnerabilities for Radical Citizenship: Pedagogical Promiscuities", my investigation includes a discussion of how pornography, prostitution,[57] and other forms of sex-work in the US constitute active intensities of resistance. By re-examining our psychic and corporeal interiority, I invite the potential of the uncanny as a pedagogical strategy for social change. In this context, I explore women's access to public sexuality, male multiple orgasms, female orgasm (which may imply multiplicity), and in particular, female ejaculation as models for becoming. Protean sexualities (ranging from sex activism to female ejaculation) suggest a conceptual shift that deconstructs patriarchal inscriptions on our bodies. As previously mentioned, my visual and theoretical works "figure the unfigurable by disfiguring figures"

[57] Like Carol Queen, my friend and mentor, I am referencing a particular sub-culture of sex workers. She makes the clear distinction: "I do not intend to encompass the experience of those whores who do not work voluntarily, who are underage, who are not sex-positive, and who act out the negative expectation imposed on them by a sexist and sex-negative culture" (*Whores and Other Feminists* 128). My arguments are strictly focused on those women and men who have chosen to earn income through *consensual* sexual exchange. Clearly, there are vast histories of non-consensual sex work. Two vivid examples are the award-winning documentary "Born Into Brothels" and Chika Unigwe's novel *On Black Sisters Street* unravels an ethically different perspective on the sex work industry: desperate stories of four Nigerian women sex workers (ranging from a "window girl" to a woman whose goal it is to open up her own brothel) trying to survive in Belgium.

(Taylor 240). Dis-figurement presents *le déreglement de tous les sens*—an invocation of Kristeva's description of *écriture:* "What is unrepresentability? That which, through language, is part of no particular language: rhythm, music, instinctual balm. That which, through meaning,[58] is intolerable, unthinkable: the horrible, the abject" (Taylor 140). The anxiety of orgasm becomes the stranger within, just as *écriture* becomes a surrender to the unknown. Revitalization of both individual and social bodies produces enfoldments[59] of psyche-somatic consciousness. No hierarchies survive these monstrous, heterogeneous, multiple entwinements of body intelligence and wisdom.[60]

In contrast to the institutional act of cutting, a pharmaceutical-free vaginal birth allows a woman's perineum to tear if necessary. This unmediated *process* opens up the liminal zone of birth. Throughout my project, I use this metaphor of self-splitting (as a deviation from hospital-enforced episiotomies and cesarean *sections*—de-cisions inflicted on the vulnerable body) to reflect on the potential euphoric *détournement* of the uncanny. The uncanny requires an openness to deception (Slavoj Žižek's reading of Hegel's "cunning of reason"),[61] an erotics of not knowing,[62] in which we continuously re-assemble ourselves: "Unless one is able to perform the Freudian *Spaltung*, protective self-splitting, many of [us] minoritized, evicted creatures spend ourselves staving off the pressures of social psychotization" (Ronell's introduction to *Scum*

[58] Tzvetan Todorov states "meaning lies in telling itself…[which] bring[s] out the pointlessness to discover the final meaning" (Barthes 1979: 21).

[59] See Andreas Papadakis. "Gilles Deleuze The Fold" in *Folding in Architecture,* London: Architectural Design, 1993.

[60] *Jouissance,* or *jwisan*s in Haitian, embodies these enmeshed becomings: "In the early days, soon after he'd left, she had spun the tips of the feathers inside her ears too and discovered that from them she could get *jwisans*, pleasure, an orgasm. She'd thought then that maybe the foreign television programs were right: sex was mostly between the ears" (Danticat 40).

[61] "Žižek looks at Hegel's notion of the *act* which involves jumping into the unknown and the externalizing of the self insofar as it plays alongside other selves, communicates with them in order to find out one's own desires, values, since—as learnt from Freud—one does not have some privileged access to the truth about oneself. … As Žižek explains, 'the deception is just a game Idea plays with itself. Idea realizes its true ends by means of the 'cunning of reason'. But ultimately, the dialectical game is a failure: there is no being who is the supreme manipulator, i.e. who is beyond deception. Žižek emphatically declares that 'the manipulator [even God] himself is always-already manipulated.' Hence, it is a mistake to assume that there is a grand puppeteer (the Absolute) who is not subjected to the subject-substance oppositional

Manifesto 16). This conscious atomization asserts an ethics of the flesh, an emancipatory politic, a new aesthetic: "The new aesthetics aim to restore the fluidities between persons and things" (Johnson 259). Transformative fluidity implies an erotics of the uncanny, a socio-erotic ethic of instability and asymmetry—a "dialectic of 'embracing' and 'splitting'"(Rancière 2006: 5). In the last section of my dissertation I incorporate a series of schizo, non-linear anecdotes/narratives in order to occupy the visible. The etymology of *schizo-* is from the Greek irregular verb "to split". Throughout my project, I distinguish splitting/tearing (differential, relational oscillation) from cutting (de-ciding).

Self-portraits are central to my art practice. As a photographer, filmmaker/videographer, I am ob-scene until I invite my body into the pictorial frame. "The image is affected as much by the body behind the camera as those before it" (MacDougall 27). Participatory aesthetics, a kinesthetics of physical and psychological commitment, become an eroticism of our interconnectedness—a "cinematic orgasm"[63] which can potentially propel us into collaborative social change. Through this *wabi-sabi*[64] *détournement* to thinking and creating, I scrutinize the fluidity between word and image—*ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica.*[65] Similarly, Barbara Hammer discusses the potency of cinema, "I believe that an active audience engaged perceptually, intellectually, and physically...encourages its members to become more politically active in the world" (262).

relationship and simply toys with the human playthings. Everybody, even the dialectician, is an integral member of the game that produces truth through deception" (Nagel 90).

[62] As an ekphratic erotics of not-knowing, "[t]his mixing of genres poses a challenge to a notion of scholarship that still insists that knowing and not knowing are mutually exclusive" (*LF* 21).

[63] "The pleasure of filming erodes the boundaries between filmmaker and subject, between the bodies filmmakers see and the images they make. Filming is fundamentally acquisitive in 'incorporating' the bodies of others. The filmmaker's consciousness must also expand to accommodate these other bodies, but it cannot hold them all; they must be given to other—or at least returned to the world. In achieving this the bodies of the subject, the filmmaker, and the viewer become interconnected and in some ways undifferentiated" (Marshall 27). As an example of relational fluidity, the author refers to Jean Rouch's film in 1951, *Bataille sure le grand fleuve*.

[64] Originating in 9th century China and later Japan, *wabi-sabi* is defined and experienced through impermanence, imperfection, and incompleteness. It is about perception and relationships. The aesthetics of an object are broken down, imbued with this contradictory philosophical approach, and then reabsorbed by experiential corporeal relations. *Wabi-Sabi* is the dematerialized act of finding strength in vulnerability. Leonard Koren. *Wabi-Sabi*

Franz Kafka invokes language as a psychic and corporeal redemption—a flesh-receptor[66] that jars us out of our cultural somnambulism: "What we need are books that hit us like a most painful misfortune".[67] Being receptive necessitates the wounding of both the writer and reader, of inscribing the morcellated body with unresolvable questions, tearing it apart in order to open up the body-mind:[68] "As long as I have questions to which there are no answers, I shall go on writing" (Lispector 11). Examining the *how* instead of the *what* enables us to act through intuition—more conscious of our pre-determined agendas. This embodied thinking is not the product of thought, but thought itself. Embodied thinking is formlessness in constant flux.

My concluding chapter presents the current Occupy Movement as a literal and metaphoric manifestation of cultivating vulnerability into a poetics of the public sphere. The movement exhibits a creative, non-linear, techno-civil disobedience to social change. It exemplifies both the ultimate impossibility of Hegel's "cunning of reason" ("the manipulator himself is always-already manipulated") and a Deleuze-Guattarian schizo-analytic embodiment of provoking change through inscrutable multiplicities—non-unifiable ambivalences. This *détournement* is an anti-critique of consumer society that recognizes critique as an illusion of control. Rather, by embracing the flux of capital, we displace the energy of capitalism (Lotringer *Jean Baudrillard: Reversability and the Emptying of the Symbolic for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers*. Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1994.

[65] This kind of collaborative emancipatory project rooted in unrestrained categories mobilized the Avanzada, the quintessential Marxist movement in post-coup Chile in the early 70s that was characterized by its explicitly political implications on Chilean national consciousness. The Avanzada activists dissolved the categories that divided art from politics and from daily living. Creativity was a political imperative in which their art-works functioned as political treatises against the US sponsored dictatorship—risking their very lives. For a detailed analysis of the Avanzada Movement, see Nelly Richards, "Margins and Institutions: Art in Chile Since 1973". Melbourne: *Art and Press.*

[66] Rupturing the concept of "self" as a singular identity, this process of receiving echoes the process of writing existence as infinitely metamorphosing. Butler writes: "Is there a way in which the place of the body, and the way in which it disposes us outside ourselves or sets us beside ourselves, opens up another kind of normative aspiration within the field of politics? The body implies mortality, vulnerability, agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well...The body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine" (*PL* 26).



PLATE 6

seminar, European Graduate School (EGS), 2009). Redistribution is an integral element in recognizing the "cunning of reason".

From its inception, the Occupy Movement's anatomy of dissent has evolved as a technology-based revolution. Social media has been a key organizational element. It is a particularly post-humanist movement—playing out its own ambiguous (interpreted as "amorphous" by mainstream media) agendas as it challenges interrelated modes of domination that are fluid, complex, contradictory. The Occupy Movement offers an attempt to inoculate the American public, who we, the protesters-citizen-warriors,[69] identify as the 99%, with the same kind of enfoldments that we endure through institutionalized everyday violences. Like Hannah Arendt's banality of evil (discussed below), stupidity is ingrained into our quotidian expectations. Ronell cites Nietzsche: "To the extent that morality teaches hatred of too great a freedom, it implants the need for limited horizons and immediate tasks, teaching the narrowing of perspectives 'and thus in a certain sense stupidity, as a condition of life and growth' " (2002: 3).

We are collectively embodying our awareness of interdependency—our lived "poetics of relation" (Glissant). The tens of millions of spokespeople for this movement "are not calling for reform, but for a massive rethinking and restructuring of the very meaning of politics" (Giroux, truth-out.org). Weber tells us that through critique, we

[67] In a letter to Oskar Pollak on January 27, 1904, Kafka wrote: "I think we ought to read only the kind of books that wound and stab us. If the book we are reading doesn't wake us up with a blow on the head, what are we reading it for?...We need the books that affect us like a disaster, that grieve us deeply, like the death of someone we loved more than ourselves, like being banished into forests far from everyone, like a suicide. A book must be the axe for the frozen sea inside us". Kafka writes: "The Judgment" felt like "the breaking open of the wound for the first time" (Letter to his fiancée, Felice Bauer).

[68] Kathy Acker's investigation of body-building plays out the metaphors of muscle fibers tearing in order to create space for new "useful" fibers. See her *Bodies of Work*. In the journal *Connect*, Ronell's discussion of failure amplifies my commitment to the continual non-arrival of language. See my section, "Practicing the Abject", for a discussion of both Acker and Ronell's irreducibly allusive language.

[69] The role of the citizen-warrior extends into three imperatives exhorted by Former US Surgeon General, Dr. Antonia Novello: "There are three extra commandments: the first is thou shall not be a victim, thou shall not be a perpetrator, thou shall not be a bystander" (Speech given at a national anti-gun rally).

must open territories of reflectivity. I identify this critique, investigation, and reframing as an erotic politics that fosters a democratic republic. The formlessness of the movement invites a rhizomatic commitment to deep structural change. Education is critical to this democratic project. We are mobilizing our collective imagination as a form of social agency to undermine the power relations that inform hypercapitalism. We are resisting the false assumption of transparency and the politics of clarity as we unravel how neoliberal authoritarianism and industrialization of our bodies-psyches have become normalized. As we explore erotic politics as a form of public pedagogy, we comprehend our vast potential for practicing a democratic economy. Giroux incites us: "Democracy is always an unfinished project".

I

Embodied Energies: Convenience Culture and the Violence of the Everyday

"The system reproduces its existence because it goes unrecognized."

Pierre Bourdieu

1 The Illusion of Neutrality in 21st Century Democracy

Civilization requires the *perception* of conviviality,[70] proportionality, and balance in order to function efficiently, defending laws and mores that maintain the status quo—which, as Barthes stresses, are fundamental to the "maintenance of dominant identity" (*MO* 118.9). Socially imposed assumptions of neutrality-as-universal dictate how we must conduct ourselves in public and in

[70] See Ivan Illich's essays on proportionality in *Tools for Conviviality.* Marion Boyars, New York: Random House, 1990. In the early 90s, Illich regularly lectured in Penn State University's Science, Technology, and Society Program. I had the privilege of attending many of his remarkably embodied lectures. He sat cross-legged without shoes on a table facing his rapt audience. I wrote frantically, attempting to keep up with Illich's incalculable peregrinations. A massive cancerous tumor on the side of his face moved in concert with his empassioned gestures.

private.[71] Officially sanctioned abuses legislate how we encounter the body politic. Neutrality, like transcendence, by necessity is static, sanitized, absolute, relentlessly homogeneous. Experientially, neutrality is a fiction—a vast mythology proselytized to maintain order with the purpose of appropriating creativity and difference. Censorship becomes an overarching strategy for sustaining the status quo, while simultaneously it frequently exhibits the inverse of its intended effect.[72] Censorship does not solely render an object or idea ob-scene, but a collusive *and* conspicuous inhabiting of one's consciousness through enforced neutrality. Judith Butler theorizes censorship as

> a way of *producing* speech, constraining in advance what will and will not become acceptable speech...it cannot be understood exclusively in terms of juridical power. In the conventional view, censorship appears to follow the utterance of offensive speech: speech has already become offensive, and then some recourse to a regulatory agency is made. But in the view that suggests that censorship *produces* speech, that temporal relation is inverted. Censorship precedes the texts (by which I include 'speech' and other cultural expressions), and is in some sense responsible for its production (*ES* 128).

In our "post-idea"[73] age, the fantasy of neutrality signals the termination of free will.[74] There can be no neutral political position, no neutral piece of art, there is not even a neutral/natural physical orientation for the human body.[75] Neutrality, a search for purity,[76] is born of patriarchal inscriptions on our cells and psyches. Grosz declares, "[t]here is no position outside [patriarchy's] orbit, not in our culture,

[71] In her *Methodology of the Oppressed,* Sandoval presents Barthes' Rhetorical Figures cultural management categories: The Inoculation; The Privation of History; Identification; Tautology; Neither-Norism; The Qualification of Quality; and The Statement of Fact. Each of Barthes' rhetorical devices, "poses", "figures", "machines" become a "deputy for the real that works to erase difference" (Sandoval, 118.9). Congruently, the activists/scholars writing for *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge and Power* (London: Zed, 1991) scrutinize the most basic terms that we take for granted as humanitarian and just, i.e. naturalized and normalized universalization *doing* the real through the lens of contemporary Euro-American superstructures.

[72] The first incident of censorship of my photography provoked extensive public response (described in detail in "Practicing the Abject"). Before there had only been silence. Following the incident, numerous articles were written about my work, from both a critical standpoint of the university politics and psychoanalyzing the intentions of myself as the artist. The initial silence of art department professors was overwhelmed by the public outcry. I was interviewed and invited to give lectures on my photographic work in several campus departments. These public discussions were followed by another exhibition and an interactive performance.

[73] If ideas cannot be instantly monetized they are rendered powerless. Consumer-

but there are possibilities of transformation, historical change" (1994: 343). Neutrality is too often mistaken for balance. Rather, balance offers a mapping for this "transformation, historical change". Balance is a dialogue/call-and-response of falling and catching one-self in the in-between.

Mediocrity, Morality, and The Sanctity of Normalcy

When we peer into the socially constructed enfoldments of ethnicity, sexuality, and aesthetics, we witness the mechanics of collusive numbing. Observing closely, we can invoke both Arendt's precision of language and her commitment to vulnerability. She subverts the status quo by emphasizing the distinction between authority, power, and violence. Arendt deconstructs society's superstructures in order to examine how they proliferate through Oedipal assumptions that are both unwittingly and consciously reproduced: "The family man [is] the greatest criminal of the century" (Arendt cited in May 60).[77] Precision does not require reduction; specificity can expand ideas. Precise thinking demands a playful engagement with possibilities that reveal the unexpected. The status quo is violated when this kind of ambiguity enters the public domain rendering the norm vulnerable. Vulnerability cannot easily be regulated, thus it defies the neutrality of the status quo and is forbidden in the public sphere:

> One way a hegemonic understanding of politics is achieved is through circumscribing what will and will not be admissible as part of the public

oriented big ideas "may change the way we live, [but] they rarely transform the way we think. They "are material, not ideational". See Neil Gabler, "The Elusive Big Idea" in *The New York Times* Sunday, August 14, 2011: 1, 3.

[74] "Neither-Norism", one of Barthes rhetorics of supremacy, demonstrates "'neutrality' or 'objectivity' in behavior". Binary-thinking is a reductive framework in which the citizen-subject "only has to endorse what already is" (Barthes 108…"This apparent neutrality, 'objectivity,' and levelheadedness creates an inflexibility of being that supports the order of the dominant rather than that of some other moral, or political, order" (*MO* 122.3).

[75] In her *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure, and "The Frenzy of the Invisible",* Linda Williams theorizes the ways in which "the mechanics of body movement...[underlay] the very invention of cinema" (36) and more specifically, the invention of pornography. In "Mediocrity, Morality, and The Sanctity of Normalcy" I discuss mainstream cinema's regulation of the body and in **"**Pedagogical Promiscuities" I discuss pornography as an emancipatory device.

[76] "So sanitary ideology tends insidiously to break society at the level of the bodily quality of individuals; it relieves them of their specificity" (Virilio 99).

[77] In the context of totalitarianism, Arendt was addressing her accusation of the family man in the context of the Nazi regime—those who seek an enemy from whom they "protect"



PLATE 7

> sphere itself. …The constraints are not only on content…but on what 'can' be heard, read, seen, felt, and known. The public sphere is constituted in part by what can appear, and the regulation of the sphere of appearance is one way to establish what will count as reality, and what will not. … Our capacity to feel and to apprehend hangs in the balance (*PL* xx-xxi).

The private within the public arena is synonymous with deviant behavior. The threatening condition of vulnerability exposes one's very humanity to the dangerous, unpredictable territory that such agency invokes. Consistently, the public/collective manifests itself as that which must be contained, easily assimilated, and reproduced at and as the lowest-common-denominator in order to maintain a neutralized status quo. The private/the individual transgresses civilization's prescribed, legislated boundaries. Reactionary assimilationist hegemony neutralizes difference and expurgates vulnerability rendering it palatable for the public. This civilizing neutralization defines the foundation of imperialist psychological tourism[78]—the roots of contemporary US-style democracy[79]—Wall Street government. In his introduction to Bataille's *On Nietzsche,* Sylvère Lotringer decries the "complicity and denial [that] are constitutive of morality whose concern for utility is merely there to suture the wound" (xii). Foucault's "civilization" is this wound—the outgrowth of *scientia sexualis*: the "sexual science that gives form to the 'truths' that are confessed" (Williams 48)—"confession" as institutional and internalized coercion. In her *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy,* Anne Dufourmantelle cites Foucault:

their family, regardless of the social or ethical implications.

[78] As an extension of US imperialism, I am referring to imperialist psychological tourism as the ways in which citizen-subjects internalize the violence of the everyday—a violence that breeds convenience culture. Imperialist psychological tourism perpetuates our inherited culture of projected shame manifested in institutionalized suppression and self-censorship. Rather than making clear decisions rooted in our intuitive, creative, and interconnected thought-processes based on the "common-good", we have internalized shame, thus restricting the emancipatory possibilities of our bodies and minds.

[79] "...Nietzsche's early readers took him as an antidote to Americanism" (A. Star 11).

> Surely no other type of society has ever accumulated—and in such a relatively short span of time—a similar quantity of discourses concerned with sex...Rather than the uniform concern to hide sex, rather than a general prudishness of language, what distinguishes these last three centuries is the variety, the wide dispersion of devices that were invented for speaking about it, for having it spoken about, for inducing it to speak for itself, for listening, recording, transcribing, and redistributing what is said about it: around sex, a whole network of varying, specific, and coercive transpositions into discourse (*BD* 31).

The Other, the immigrant within, is positioned as perpetual outsider, internalizing the illusion that difference is deviant and obscene, and that such vulnerability must be categorized and contained by institutionalized authority. In cultural production, as in reception, vulnerability becomes a vital intervention in public-private discourse. We are allowed to experience and express vulnerability only in private. The private is construed and constructed as deficient and pathological, requiring unquestioned taxonomies of regulation and normalization. The tyranny of the normative neutralizes difference and must be recognized as the banality of evil[80] in its violence of everyday representation. Daily violence can be identified by the representations in which difference is neutralized/equalized. Abigail Solomon-Godeau reminds us that, "The most insidious and instrumental forms of domination, subjection, and objectification are produced by mainstream images of women rather then by juridically criminal or obscene ones" (Solomon-Godeau 237).

[80] In her *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Arendt unravels the implications of thought-phobia that elides differing perspectives—consuming and disposing of democratic potential. Also see Jean-Paul Sartre's theorization of the "mediocre mind" in *Anti-Semite and Jew*. New York: Schocken Books, 1948



PLATE 8

Insidiously, this sanctity of normalcy constitutes a hegemony of representation that colonizes our relationships with our bodies. It silently breeds distrust of our innate corporeal humanity. Institutionalized constructions of vulnerability bind the psychological to the physical: everyday of our lives we learn that to be accepted we must suspect and contain our bodily functions. Paul Virilio exposes our entrenched body-horror (self as other) as socially constructed:

> The entire olfactory domain has been devalorised...a natural odor henceforth signifying a vile-smelling exhalation, culminating at its extreme point in the hygienic wind of so-called 'deodorant 'products, by which the advertising system demonstrates man's revulsion for his neighbor's odor (99).

We judge this other within as excess.[81] We must feel fear, shame,[82] guilt.[83] Our compliance is imperative. Paradoxically, our body—the "alluvions, sedimentations, coagulations, foldings, and recoilings that compose an organism" (*TP* 159)—become the stranger within. We become the spectacle of our own invisibility—an alienated, mythified, commodified site of colonization, reminiscent of Kristeva's reference to that which is "foreign not only to others but to him or herself, harboring not an essence but a 'pulverized origin'" (Suleiman 1994: 230*).*

As the photographer and subject in my visual work, I consciously inhabit this uncanny—a deterritorialization—*l'informe* of vulnerability.[84] I choreograph my photographs

[81] This judgment can be witnessed in Kafka's version of fear; and this excess, in what is publicly (collective coercion) interpreted as waste. Congruently, Gayle Rubin calls mainstream feminism a "system of sexual judgment" (282). I am exploring sex radical feminism as a manifestation of "literature"—a lived co-implication of *l'informe*: "Kafka sees "literature" as a way of "unjudging," and thus deconstructing, the "judged" version of the real towards its originary "unjudged" (undecidability)" (Ulfers, *Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought* seminar, EGS 2008).

[82] The sex-shame-morality triad infiltrates common law: "Shame raises the question of transgressions and taboos. Sexuality, to the extent that it signified excess, the non-humanized, brought back into view, in the characteristics of animals, that which escapes all sociality. Animality has thus become, par excellence, that which casts us out of bounds, outside the civilized sphere, the human compact, the *polis*. Sex was not originally interpreted as an evil, then, but as one of the appetites through which our always latent inhumanity comes to be engulfed. ...As sex is appetite par excellence, its very root has to be extirpated, namely desire, lust, lasciviousness: in short, the body itself becomes guilty. Guilty of an excess that is always potentially revelatory of possible evil. In this legacy we convey the value of a body always capable of treason, a body on which we cannot rely. A body of shame. Shame exceeds the psychological distortion that it seems to establish naturally between self

and self. It comes from a place much more remote than childhood; it comes from our radical doubt about the body, which may betray us at any moment, may tilt us once again towards the inhumanity that is—that is said to be our common origin. Sex is there to remind us that we are inhuman, that any measure taken with respect to desire is a secondary measure susceptible to being forgotten, suspended, eradicated, annihilated" (*BD* 29-30).

[83] See Gerald Heard's discussion of how socially imposed pain represents an obstacle to expanding consciousness and sexual energy driving the evolution of the mind in his *Pain, Sex, and Time: A New Outlook on Evolution and the Future of Man*. New York: Monkfish Press, 2004.

[84] Precisely because it is slippery, messy, uncontainable, vulnerability, in its deterritorialized *essence*, is of *l'informe*.

[85] The following details on the MPAA's rating system comes from Kirby Dick's independent documentary film from 2006: *This Film Is Not Yet Rated*.

and exhibit them with the intention of encouraging people to witness and question the violence that saturates our daily realities. We may not even realize that an invisible, habitual comfort zone exists because it is perniciously ingrained in our psyches. Louis Althusser's philosophy of how both the ideological and the repressive state apparatuses function to "make continued state force less noticeable, especially to those who 'fit in'" (*DE*, *DB* 307) demonstrates the collusive nature of this invisibility. Below I discuss various manifestations of the insidiousness of US democracy, characterized by Bill Maher as a "system of open bribery", ranging from the invisibility of whiteness to the machinations of mass consumerism. Too often, anything outside of the zone of the familiar is seen as socially inappropriate, and therefore abhorrent. We use the lowest-common-denominator of intellectual engagement as a justification for how we define morality—standards of a civilization—determining what can and cannot be allowed in the public realm.

The history of film in the US is a history of censorship.[85] Since 1922 when it was first established, the Motion Pictures Association of America's (MPAA) anonymous board members have met in complete secrecy. The president of MPAA was first appointed by the federal government. The MPAA claims to operate through a "transparent process," but in reality they function as a censorship organization which rates all films, including independent and Hollywood productions. Their aim is

designed to advance the business interests of its members. They allegedly serve the so-called average American parent. Their mottos are "We serve the public" and "We serve the parents". The MPAA professes to be guardians of morality. This institutional fiction has effectively eliminated any possibility of a critical community who could decide whether or not the general public can get access to a film.

A film is given a NC-17 rating when masturbation, gay sex, or any "aberrational behavior" i.e. sexual activities or desires other than hetero-missionary sex, more than two partners, anal, or fetishes are mentioned, let alone depicted. With this rating, the studio is prohibited from releasing the film. There is no advertising budget, no distribution, and no children are allowed—whether or not they have parental permission. With a NC-17 rating and for those directors who refuse to be rated, a film loses viewership and the potential for tens of millions of dollars of earnings. We accept this institutionalized sequestering of information as a given. By not allowing its rating system to be challenged, the MPAA has fed into our societal fear that unleashed sex, more than violence, would dissolve the moral fiber of "civilized" society. Astonishingly, in the 1999 film *Boys Don't Cry,* about Brandon Teena, a transgendered man, the scene where Teena is shot in the head with blood spewing everywhere was neither censored nor edited out, while the scene where Teena goes down on his girlfriend and wipes her cum off his mouth was considered offensive and was edited. His

[86] Lack as a pre-requisite for internalizing and attempting to replicate phallic norms has filtered into the medicalization of women's bodies and psyches: "Victorian women who weren't locked up for falling victim to lypemania (melancholy), monomania, homicidal monomania or 'moral insanity' were at risk of neurasthenia, a 'mirror image of rebellion' in which their 'nervous depletion' was explained as the result of their 'incursion into the masculine sphere of intellectual labor,' a strain that constitutions formed for tender sentiment couldn't be expected to support" (Harrison 13).

[87] This seemingly contradictory function is one of the great motivating forces in contemporary corporeal power. In his *History of Sexuality, Volume 1* 57-73, Foucault's analyses of *scientia sexualis* reveals the private-public enfoldments of modern sexuality. I discuss these slippages throughout the text that follows.

girlfriend's orgasm was excessively long and her erotic pleasure too unnerving and offensive, according to the MPAA—who rated the film NC-17. Irigaray challenges this institutionally accepted, thus rendered invisible sexism when she recognizes how the public "makes explicit the intolerable of *woman's desire* within a culture founded on its denial" (Grosz 1994: 338).[86]

In films that are sifted through the MPAA filter, sex is simultaneously desexualized and hyper-sexualized.[87] Sex is rendered impotent as a sensual interrelationship,[88] and replaced with an *impression* of sex as a commodity—an *impression* that serves only to confirm gender stereotypes: "The subject's experience of the body is irreducibly bound up with the body's social status" (Grosz discussing Lingis' both/and concept of body-image which simultaneously troubles and conforms to the norm, *STP* 195). Sex and nudity[89] are consolidated into one single category.[90] The naked human body, whether of a five-year old girl or ninety-year old woman, is interpreted as inherently sexual, thus immoral when seen in a public venue**.** Paradoxically, their meter of morality does vary—the MPAA board counts the number of penetrative thrusts (implicit or not) to determine the level of moral decline, just as they count the number of times the word "fuck" is used to determine "strong language".

While US democracy insidiously gives the impression of freedom of speech, political choice, and social justice,[91] the rating system

[88] In his extra-ordinarily poetic play with Nietzsche's concept of will to power, Ulfers discusses the sensuous as a shared experience not subject to simplistic reduction, classifications, or generalities (EGS 2008).

[89] Across continents and centuries, the body is perceived as an object separate from the mind. The unclothed body is perceived as provocative—a euphemism for immoral—when exposed and viewed in the public arena.

[90] "Consequently, the objects that evoke sexual activity for us are always linked to some sort of disorder. Thus, nudity itself signifies a downfall, and even a kind of betrayal of the appearance that we give ourselves in our clothing" (*AS 1* 178).

[91] Greenwashing is a prime example of the ways in which capitalism dictates our alleged freedom. In Chapter Two, I theorize eco-capitalism in relation to the blaring invisibility of convenience culture: "Capital has fallen in love with difference; advertising thrives on selling us things that will enhance our uniqueness and individuality. ...From World Music to exotic holidays in Third-World locations, ethnic TV dinners to Peruvian knitted hats, cultural difference sells (cited in Martin Davidson, *The Consumerist Manifesto.* New York: Routledge, 1992: 199).

appears socially responsible—functioning as a moral watch-dog. In fact, the MPAA's current rating system reifies society's shame-induced embodiment of sexuality and is undeniably unconstitutional. What is most critical to my argument here is that the public is unaware of (and potentially indifferent to) the significant creative/educational content of the film that may have been lost due to censorship.[92] For example, many films are not allowed to be made if they depict the US military because military approval is *required* in the film rating process: five scripts must be sent to the Pentagon, while Generals attend initial screenings to determine the potential distribution or censorship of the film in question.

In his article on pedagogy and Deleuze and Guattari, Charles Garoian cites educator Elliot Eisner's (1979) term *null curriculum:*

> '…what schools do not teach may be as important as what they do teach' ([Eisner cited in Garoian] 83). What Eisner is suggesting is that teaching students to conform to prevailing cultural representations in schools, which reflects the *hidden curriculum* of academic, institutional, and corporate desire, implies that students' differential knowledge and experiences acquired outside of school are insignificant (9).

Another "democratic" irony is that the same reactionary forces that require the art and entertainment industries to be regulated to protect children (labeled as the most vulnerable in society),[93] refuse regulation for health care[94] and environmental protection, ranging from lead in paint, toxins in air and water, fuel consumption to agribusiness and

[92] "The operation of implicit and powerful forms of censorship suggests that the power of the censor is not exhausted by explicit state policy or regulation. Such implicit forms of censorship may be, in fact, more efficacious than explicit forms in enforcing a limit of speakability. Explicit forms of censorship are exposed to a certain vulnerability precisely through being more readily legible" (*ES* 130).

[93] "...perversion is a recent concept, as is the protection of children" (*BD* 29).

[94] While conducting research on pharmaceutical companies pandering to children diagnosed with Attention Deficient Disorder, I came across a statistic stating that it is not uncommon for children to be prescribed up to five medications.

school lunches—let alone the dangers of NRA lobbies and the proliferation of hand weapons. The number of childrens' deaths from gun-related accidents continues to climb, as does research proving the dangers of cell phone use in early childhood development. As a precautionary principle in 2009, France, Russia, Israel, Germany, UK, Belgium, India, Finland, and Toronto's Departments of Health outlawed or issued warnings against cell-phone usage by pregnant women and children under 18. Predictably, in the US, Sprint recently signed a two-billion dollar contract with Disney to market cell-phones to children under 12—ignoring the dire health impact on neurological development. According to this research, cell-phones are more toxic than asbestos and cigarettes.[95] Google's blitzkrieg campaign to promote and supply cell-phones throughout non-industrial countries reflects this perfidious illusion of the public good.[96]

> It is not a matter of a simple entry of the excluded into an established ontology, but an insurrection at the level of ontology, a critical opening up of the questions, What is real? Whose lives are real? How might reality be remade? Those who are unreal have, in a sense, already suffered the violence of de-realization. …Violence renews itself in the face of the apparent inexhaustibility of its object (*PL* 33).

Google's One Laptop Per Child, OLPC, is an example of the violence of corporatizing equalities. The initiative that provides (at a cheaper rate, as if a lower price is equated with accessible and culturally appropriate usage) computer laptops to children throughout

[95] Carrie Hyman, CMD & Marcia Zina Mager, *Pathways to Family Wellness*, Spring 2010: 56-7.

[96] See Entitlement and Equality Chapter Two for my detailed discussion of these corrupt neoliberal practices.

the non-industrial world illustrates this displacement of technology in environments where other structural needs are paramount (such as agricultural or water recuperation from transnational corporate infiltration). Such imperialist digital utopianism demonstrates misplaced priorities—creating more problems than it solves.[97] As I discuss in the section on "Entitlement and Equality as Submission", this proliferation of technology serves to obliterate difference. Democratization of the other fuels our voracious global economy's addiction to convenience through consumption. In contrast to the chiasmic methodologies of Jacotot, The Ignorant Schoolmaster, the myth of Progress attempts to apprehend and conform our consciousness and our bodies into self-maximizing capitalist teleologies:

> Reason is, indeed, far more cunning than the liberal conscience will care to acknowledge. It sets 'the passions to work in its service'; it keeps Itself 'in the background, untouched and unharmed', while it 'sends forth the particular interests of passion to fight and wear themselves out in its stead'. No, the universality—the sovereign, tyrannical universality—of Reason remains unscathed. ...Reason in its universalizing mission has been parasitic upon a much less lofty, much more mundane, palpable material and singularly invidious force, namely the urge of capital. ...Reason has travelled the world piggyback, carried across oceans and continents by colonial powers eager to find new grounds for trade, extraction and the productive expansion of capital. ...By now, of course, the historical identity between Reason and capital has taken on the form of an epistemic privilege, namely, 'development' as dictated by the advances of modern science and technology. ... [M]any of the problems faced by socialist countries today show to what extent the identity

[97] An anonymous HR recruiter at New York City Google's office who I interviewed on this subject failed to recognize the hazardous environmental and health impacts, the ineffective educational strategy (language-specific books are an actual need), and the neo-colonizing effects of depositing computers without cultural or technological support. These tactics serve as another example of sound-bite education as the foundation for US democracy.

[98] While working with the Quijos-Quechua in Ecuador in 1991 on an ethno-botany program, I witnessed multiple culturally inappropriate projects that were implemented by "aid" organizations. Two examples of this corporation-determinate dependency include the absurdity of replacing thatched roofs with aluminum. Since the women cook on open fire in their homes, the roofs no longer absorbed the smoke. The rates of lung cancer, asthma, etc. soared. They then had to seek medical assistance from the urban areas. The story of extreme oppression begins there. Another example of insidious colonial control is when a major seed distributor planted soybeans along the sides of the most traveled roads. Villagers picked and used the soybeans, but couldn't produce the plant on their own and ended up having to buy it in quantity from the transnational agribusiness who had originally planted the soybeans.

> between Reason and capital, in its contemporary form of the unchallenged prerogative of 'modern' technology, still remains a reality (Chatterjee 168, 169, 170).

Reason as Progress is ob-scene—protected 'in the background'—as the divisive tactics of development politics have taken on a life of their own. Mutually parasitic equalizing "reciprocal contamination" (Ronell's introduction to *BD* xvii) maintains the force of Reason—ranging from US style democracy to "appropriate technology". Infinite incidents demonstrate back-door monoculturization of minds, bodies, and environments.[98]

Self-Censorship: Toxic Mimicry, Internalized Fascism, and Phallic Norms

> *First, you must give people a much larger degree of freedom in order to let them act as they want in the economic field. At the same time you must exert more and more control over them in their private, moral behavior.*
> Foucault interview with Thomas Zummer

Civilization markets freedom as an abstraction to be consumed (FOX News,[99] CNN, the art market, the culture industry at large, venture philanthropy, humanitarian imperialism, the corporatization of the Green Movement). As sacrificial lambs, citizen-subjects internalize these abstractions and unquestioned fears of the other as abject.[100] Industrialized economies have become extraordinarily effective systems of self-censorship. Although "moral" fascism[101]

[99] Fox News viewers are less informed than people who don't watch or read any news. Fox News viewers are more likely to believe false information about politics. "Fox News Viewers Know Less Than People Who Don't Watch Any News: Study", 11/21/11, http://www.huffingtonpost.com.

[100] In the US, people fear others because they don't know where they come from; elsewhere, others are feared because people do know where they come from.

still saturates and fractures our contemporary world, I am less concerned with overt moral crusades that have dictated our behavior and cultural norms over past centuries, and am much more wary of the insidious explicit and implicit ways in which we have internalized phallic norms and fear of our own bodies. In his introduction to Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus,* Foucault identifies this vertiginous condition as the "fascism within". Analogously, Kathy Acker alerts us to this manifestation of fascism: "As long as we continue to regard the body, that which is subject to change, chance, and death, as disgusting and inimical, so long shall we continue to regard our own selves as dangerous others". Virginie Despuentes, the writer/director of the film *Baise Moi*, which was banned in her home country of France, states, "We are all familiar with the syndrome of the hostage who identifies with his captor. That is exactly how we have ended up policing each other, judging each other through the eyes of those who keep us under lock and key" (117). In the following paragraphs, I chart how ethnicity, sexuality, and aesthetics play out a tripartite problematic of internalized oppression demonstrated through the Stockholm Syndrome.[102]

1996. San Francisco.[103] I was a docent at The Jewish Museum's exhibit titled, "Too Jewish?". I found myself affronted by this seemingly comprehensive traveling exhibition whose purpose was to expose stereotypes of Jewish identity. However, only Jews of Eastern European descent (Ashkenazi / "white Jews")

[101] In Chapter Four, I probe "moral fascism" in the context of *limpieza de sangre,* the Inquisitional laws of *purity of blood.*

[102] The Stockholm Syndrome, in addition to identifying with and defending captors, is a paradoxical psychological phenomenon which displays a radically effective technique to subvert any attempts at self-definition or resistance to normalizing tendencies.

[103] Throughout my dissertation, I introduce personal narratives with date and city.

were included to the exclusion of Sephardi, Mizrahi or any other non-Ashkenazi[104] artists. What are the implications of such an omission? Both Jewish Museums in New York City (where the exhibition originated) and in San Francisco disregarded the viability of including any artists from global populations of non-white Jews (many of whom live and work in NYC and SF). The exhibition curators stated their mission automatically disqualified so-called "ethnic" Jews. The artists chosen focused on bawdy slapstick humor and self-deprecation—apparently not recognized as cultural characteristics for Jews of Spanish, Egyptian, Persian, Filipino, Ghanian, etc. descent—whose work was characterized as "poetic". What the curators failed to recognize[105] in their conceptually uninformed exhibition was that, for example, *converso* Jews (forced converts to Catholicism) played the role of court jesters during the Inquisition—demonstrating the double-face of humor:

> The *converso* perspective erupted through humor. The court jester, or *truhan,* became a feature of the Court in the fifteenth century. The jesters were largely or wholly *conversos.* This may have been due to the Jewish cultural acceptance of humor. It also reflected the *converso's* marginal status—it was easier for Old Christians to laugh at these former Jews and, conversely as outsiders, *conversos* looked more skeptically and satirically upon Castilian society (Gorsky 61).

Like Hip-Hop culture's cross-culturally disenfranchised youth,[106] Anton de Montoro, fifteenth century Castilian *converso* poet, "flaunted his Jewish heritage by dramatizing the

[104] For more detailed information on this distinction between white and non-white Jews, see Chapter 5 on transdisciplinarity.

[105] If not for their own internalized anti-Semitism manifested in ignorance, why did the curators not adequately research their subject matter? The show obviously should have been titled, "Too White European Jewish?", or "Too Stereotypically Jewish?", not "Too Jewish?". As I discuss in Chapter One, the purpose of a museum is apparently not to educate the public, but to maintain one-dimensional thinking—rendering art once again collateral damage of the entertainment industry.

[106] Director Joshua Atesh Litle's feature-length film, *The Furious Force of Rhymes* (2010), United States / France is an example of individuals exhibiting their collective struggles through Hip-Hop: "Back in the day when Blacks weren't allowed to learn to read or write, Hip-Hop's manipulation of language proved the man wrong—a clear display that Blacks are intelligent, even though we may not be educated. Not only as a public voice, but also as an economic opportunity through the music industry, the ability to manipulate words in this way speaks about the oppressive situation of minorities" (Kent Craig, *Digital Underground).*



PLATE 9

plight of fellow converts, victims of…violent persecution". He used exaggerated humor to protest abuse: "We want to give you tributes, be your slaves and serve you, we are impoverished, cuckolded, faggots, deceived, open to any humiliation only to survive…What death can you impose on me that I have not already suffered?" (ibid. 60-61). Whether we hear the voices from the fifteenth or twenty-first centuries, the message is the same:

> It amazes me how we as black people now enslave each other by determining what blackness is through a type of language (ebonics), dress, demeanor, money-makin', violence, and by skin color. We now use the chains that massa' used on us to kill our own individuality. In black culture, the term 'keepin' it Real' embodies a lifestyle that this particular black male has been incarcerated, shot, makes money illegally, is violent, liven' the thug life like Tupac, Biggie, FiftyCent…This is the ultimate internalization of 'the man' (Kent Craig, *Digital Underground*).

The destructive elements of Hip-Hop culture have become the ambition of much of black youth, as well as white youth *wanna-bes* who take on these characteristics as models for success, fame, and fortune. Similarly, in his *Letters to Milena*, Kafka divulges his turmoil about having to contend with the most precise and penetrating forms of degradation that come from within. He anguishes over this internal crisis—the worst of all punishments.[107] As mentioned above, Foucault shares the terror of this self-imposed embattlement: "And not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini [...] but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism…causes us to love power, to desire

[107] See Kafka's, *Letters to Milena*. ed. Willi Haas; trans. Tania and James Stern. 1953. New York: Random House, 1999.

the very thing that dominates and exploits us" (Foucault's introduction to *AOed* xii).

Black-on-black gang violence and riots destroying working-class communities resulting in prison encampments primarily populated by black male youth are two examples of the disenfranchised strategically positioned to self-destruct. During WWII, similar divisive tactics were used in concentration camps when a few prisoners were chosen as guards—asserting albeit restricted power over fellow prisoners in exchange for limited "privileges".[108] This calculated practice of divide and conquer turns prisoner against prisoner through suspicion and distrust—a variation of the Stockholm Syndrome in which the prisoner with privileges depends on his captors' favors for survival.[109] Those afflicted with this syndrome, which erodes individual and collective will to power,[110] gradually function as though they are isolated units, not integral within an interconnected entity.

Centuries of persecution and pariah-status in most if not all host-nations have led many Jewish peoples, like other diasporic populations, to become infected by forms of alienation and marginalization. In her discussion of statelessness, Arendt wrote about the "ecstasy of sovereignty" (May 29; discussed in detail in PART III in the context of abjection and collaboration)—those in exile whose civil rights are negated compared ironically, to a "real citizen". Civil rights in the context of statelessness are a denied privilege. This exile

[108] Sonderkommandos were Jews who were forced to dispose of the bodies of Jews in the crematoriums. See the 2001 film, *The Grey Zone*.

[109] Not surprisingly, the patient diagnosed with cancer quickly learns to fear, distrust, despise his body, identifying with the disease as self, and unable to recognize the self as independent from that which destroys life. His will to power is annihilated.

[110] Ulfers examines two distinctions of Nietzsche's will to power: a cosmological variation, not a will to overpower or subordinate, but to manifest and imbue in potentiality to actualize itself. Like the First Law of Thermodynamics in which matter is neither created nor destroyed, but transformed, nature is a monster of energy reflecting the "real"—philosophy and art in and as continual exchange. The flow of energy is at the core of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. The second distinction is the concept of will to power considered in this context: will to truth, equality, and knowledge in which the human instrument is used for survival, not political power. The latter distinction has historically been perverted by fascist ideologies, including in the work of Leni Riefenstahl.

also manifests as being in exile from oneself.[111] When the "real citizen", for example, the Italian (but not the Italian-Jew who is identified as stateless) commits a crime, the Italian, as a citizen criminal, would have more rights than the stateless undocumented alien: "He is no longer the scum of the earth but important enough to be informed of all the details of the law under which he will be tried" (Arendt cited in May 40-41). Such psychological infiltration inseminates the cycle of internalized anti-Semitism[112] and its concomitant fantasy that anti-Semitism no longer pervades as our society's norm.[113] This refusal to acknowledge the obvious serves to maintain the fascism within—a collusion with the invisibility of whiteness and with the dominating forces of academic, institutional, and corporate coercion. Because our roles of corporatized citizenship are so intricately intertwined with this coercion, we find ourselves within a neoliberal boomerang ethic of unaccountability. Uncanny "'intellectual uncertainty'...calls into question judgment; the *position* from which distinctions are drawn" (*LF* 20). Lack of consciousness, the opposite of Soren Kierkegaard's call for awareness,[114] illuminates anxiety as the "dizziness of reason". Judgment and lack of consciousness are seamlessly bound:

> Why, [Emmanuel] Levinas asks, so much concern for the manslaughterer? He answers: because we are all manslaughterers. The manslaughterer is the one who is half-guilty, since he has killed, and half-innocent, since he did not mean to kill. We all participate in structures of oppression—this makes us guilty—but we participate for the most part unwittingly—this

[111] Butler avows: "To be ec-static means literally, to be outside oneself, and thus can have several meanings: to be transported beyond oneself by a passion, but also to be beside oneself with rage or grief. I think that if I can still address a 'we,' or include myself within its terms, I am speaking to those of us who are living in certain ways beside ourselves, whether in sexual passion, or emotional grief, or political rage" (*PL* 24). I discuss another extension of this version of ec-static in the context of Nietzsche's *disidentification* in "Embodying the Unknown: Birth in the 21st Century".

[112] Hitler and Torquemada, The Grand Inquisitor zealot who conducted the *auto da fés*, are amongst the most demonic historical figures whose reported Jewish origins are the very identity they then seek to destroy. Turning themselves, their ancestry, into the most grotesque manifestation of the uncanny, they hyperbolize toxic mimicry.

[113] I discuss this duplicity in detail in "Prostheses and Parasites".

[114] For detailed analyses of waking as societal consciousness, see *Kierkegaard and Levinas: The Subjunctive Mood* and "The problem of the promise: Derrida on Levinas on the cities of refuge".

> makes us innocent. Were we fully awake, he says, there would be no manslaughter. We would know what we were doing, and while under such conditions there might still be murder, there could be no unwitting harm. But, as it is, we do not know exactly what we're doing...Though we understand full responsibility and may assume it deep down, we cannot impose it on others or ourselves. For this reason, says Levinas, all our liberal cities are organized as cities of refuge. The original cities of refuge provided sanctuary because the manslaughterer was innocent, and exiled because he was guilty. ...At the same time they perpetuate...unwitting oppression—economic, social, and political—and in this way allow or encourage their citizens to stand in exile from truth (Eisenstadt 46).

Our conscious and unconscious[115] participation in such institutionalized violence marks one of the most defining characteristics of being a post-human citizen in a global economy: "The body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a disassociated Self (adopting the illusion of a substantial unity), and a volume in perpetual disintegration" (Foucault cited in Butler 1999: 165). Our bodies perform this reactivity in ethnic, sexualized, and aesthetic contexts.

1989. Tunis. As a Jewish eighteen-year old girl traveling in a Muslim country by myself, I never felt threatened because of my gender. On the other hand (as I discuss in "The Scandal of Ekphrasis"), being Jewish left me utterly vulnerable. As a Jew, I am familiar with my bodily presence provoking curious disgust and distrust. Because of this familiarity, I am fascinated by the ways in which sexuality provokes a corresponding repulsion[116] and

[115] The litany of our collusion with corporate and imperial forms of domination is almost infinite. For example, our phone taxes pay for "death squads" throughout Central America, every time we look something up on Google we contribute to global warming, every time we refuse to look someone in the eye or when we sit in a chair unconsciously we undermine our bodies' homeostatic capacities. The most benign actions affect (in the Spinozan sense) our socio-political environments, equally if not more than, our obviously privileged positions. My point is not to belabor our unrecognized accountability, but to reinforce an acknowledgment of the complex impacts of our sexual, ethical, aesthetic, and political affiliations—in short, Derrida's *pharmakon* of interrelatedness.

[116] The more primitive civilizations do not separate linguistically the taboo caused by awe of sanctity from that inspired by fear of defilement. The same term evokes all the supernatural powers from which one ought to stay far removed, whatever the motive. 'Blessed or accursed', 'miraculous or incomprehensible' impartiality is expressed using the same term for both. …One desires to approach and possess it at the very moment in which one is keeping a proper distance from it (Caillois 36).

[117] "*Human* existence commanded an abhorrence of all sexuality; this abhorrence itself commanded the attractive value of eroticism…for *humanity* would cease to exist the day it became

seduction.[117] My body has had to unperform its ethnic insinuations. But, it refuses to submit to comparable sexual de-cisions—my body refuses to unperform its sexual insinuations.[118] My insinuating body is compelled to think through its contradictory, incomplete biological and cultural constructions. Dufourmantelle's thought-body is central to my investigation of how to reconceptualize (thus re-appropriate) vulnerability as agency:

> ...so much effort has been expended to fight it, to make it guilt-ridden, to bury it in shame to deny the freedom that bears it and that also constitutes its power of revolt; so that the enigma of desire can be reduced to the expression of a mechanical need. Because for a long time sex has aroused hatred. And we have yet to conceptualize the threats they both pose to the human community, threats that make sex and philosophy the objects of so many rules and taboos, so much violence. Hatred of thought and hatred of the desiring body have many lands, many exiles, and many foliations in common. The taboo on thinking and the taboo on loving may lie at the foundation of the social body, in an obscure way, because the freedom that thinking and loving arouse emboldens people to act against oppression, against the dictatorship of stupidity, against cowardly behavior, false appearances, and self-evident truths (*BD* 12).

Habitually dichotomous constitutive conditions of patriarchy vilify the potentialities of embodying the physio-psychological. Predetermined agendas obliterate the Now, the Moment, the equivocality of creative intelligence. Contra, instinct and vulnerability converge at the Moment of the psyche-somatic integrity of becoming-animal: "nothing... is older, stronger, more inexorable and

something other than what it is, entirely made up of violent contrasts…obscenity itself is nothing but that natural animality, the horror of which establishes our humanity" (*AS 1*: 18, 149).

[118] Since I began to shoot photographs as an attempt to unwrite the world around me (see "Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations: Molecular Meat Round Two/Second Course"), I have identified my sexuality through the lens of socialized masculinity—my sexuality has a mind of its own: "Men have been seen to embody the idea of rationality. [Yet,] one could argue that the male sexual organ is the only part of the male body that is not controlled by the will but instead governed by a complicated interaction between blood, nerves and muscles. Men cannot control the raising or lowering of the penis by force of will. … Our culture, to a great extent, has made a taboo of the erect male member. … That physicians, biologists and cultural fictions have caused men to turn this upside down, associating the experience of pleasure with the penis, and referring to their penises as their brains, has created the basis for misunderstandings, self-deceit, a lessening of the real brain's capacity of pleasure, and the potential for sexual abuse. Sex becomes not just a weapon but a weapon that controls itself" (Žižek NYU lecture October 15, 2009). Men have two types of erections: psychogenic erection from sexual/arousing thoughts and reflex erection from physical contact, including random stimulation like rubbing on pants.

unconquerable than this instinct—because this instinct constitutes the essence of our species, our herd. . . ." (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 1, pp. 73-74). Because the animal only "knows" how to live in the Moment, the ever-extending, discontinuous Now, it evokes an absence of judgmental, classifying consciousness: "animals coincide with the instant of their presence" (*BD* 65). The poet René Char wrote, "Each act is virgin, even the repeated one". The utter presence (which becomes the formlessness of absence)[119] of being fully alive is the crux of John Cage's statement, "we have to go back to zero before reaching the next term" (92).

Deleuze associates this becoming-animal with Kafka's *écriture*-existence "that simultaneously opens the way to a 'thinking otherwise than being' (Levinas cited in Leahy 158), a thinking that is not oriented to any 'Same' that is inherent in the very notion of Being and being, but to the 'other' as infinite interpretability [Nietzsche's phrase]" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU). "Of course one cannot even figure out one's own riddle; this is precisely the meaning of 'fear'" (Kafka, 1953: 237). Fear of one's self[120] charges representational social systems of women's bodies, disorder, and intellectual unfamiliar territory. Both men and women are engaged in a reifying, everted system of self-containment: "If humanity lives in fear, it will gradually, and almost without being aware of what it is doing, abdicate its capacity to think, to imagine, to dream. And thus, also to love" (*BD* 83). Fear fuels the radical potency of divide-and-conquer strategies, maintaining the sanctity of normalcy.

[119] "The affirmation of life... as play, is, as Derrida put it in his reading of Nietzsche, an affirmation that determines the absence of a center of Being ('presence') 'otherwise than as loss of the center.' This interpretation is one in which 'play must be conceived before the alternative of presence and absence,' that is, the alternative of Being and Becoming" (NAF 11).

[120] In "Aesthetic Obscuratism: The Ineffable, The Incomplete, *L'Informe"*, I explore the constitution of male aggression toward their "internal" female.



PLATE 10

Questioning gender positions in relation to authority, power, and agency, Grosz asks: "[C]ould men's refusal to acknowledge the effects and flows that move through various parts of the body and from the inside out, have to do with men's attempt to distance themselves from the very kind of corporeality-uncontrollable, irrational-they have attributed to women?" (Grosz 1994: 200).

Probing public response to the intimacies of my photographic images, I witness the infinite complexities of how difference is institutionally regulated and how normalcy is made so pervasive as to become invisible. Rigid gender distinctions insidiously perpetuate patriarchal systems of identification within the medicalization of sex, the pregnancy and childbirth industry, the everyday violence of marriage roles,[121] and communication dynamics within educational hierarchies. Congruently, these same systems regulate the vacuum of art and culture as entertainment, the snare of market fundamentalism, and visual digital technologies. This stage of hyper-capitalism is riddled with misogyny:

> Unless we step into the uncharted territory of the gender revolution we know exactly whether we will be regressing. An all-powerful state that infantilizes us, interferes in all our decisions for our own good and-under the pretext of protecting us-keeps us in a childish state of ignorance, fear of punishment and exclusion. The special treatment until now reserved for women, with shame as the primary tool for ensuring their isolation, passivity and lack of protest, could

[121] Below, I synthesize the everyday violence of marriage as a counter-argument to Elisabeth Badinter's conviction that babies victimize their mothers.

> now be extended to all. To understand the mechanics of how women have been made to feel inferior, and induced to willingly maintain themselves in this state, is to understand how the entire population is kept under control. Capitalism is an egalitarian religion, in the sense that it demands general submission... (*KKT* 27).

Internalized Apartheids

Below I suggest two examples**,** both in Western contexts, of a dialectical enfoldment which reflects the toxic mimicry constitutive of patriarchy: When "difference [is] reduced to...opposition, oppositions always presuppose the same key term: A and not -A"(Irigaray). The first comes from popular culture representing Middle America working class; the second, from French intelligentsia elite. *Thelma and Louise*, one of the most popular films of 1991, presents two working class women who are on the run after killing a rapist. Throughout the film, the only way they gain power is by replicating patriarchal tendencies. By killing a man, stealing from men, blowing up flammable objects that men are in, humiliating men, and racing in car chases with men, the female protagonists deny any potential of their implicit alterity; they merely reify the selfsameness of socialized masculine identities and behavior—the tyranny of judgment and decision-making based on "rational" consciousness. If these women-as-Other had embodied their vulnerability, they could have reterritorialized their resistance to patriarchal concrescence

> 'to the point where [their] very resistance [did] not become converted into a content of consciousness [i.e. Being as male tendency]. The relation with the Other, where, however, the Other ... absolves itself from the relation which it enters into, is not a thought that directs itself to an object....' (Levinas 16). I would add here that the 'object' referred to by Levinas is any 'Same' or Identity, including the 'subject.' In this context, the 'resistance of the Other to the indiscretion of intentionality consists in overturning the very egoism of the Same; that which is *aimed at* unseats the intentionality which aims at it' (Levinas 16 cited in Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU).

Instead, by "being" men, they refuse to exert their vulnerability as strength. By rendering themselves equal i.e. male, Thelma and Lousie do not come to terms with how their behavior proliferates their very "inequality"; they rigidify their slave status. This drive for equality nullifies Spinoza's concept that "[t]o cease to be slave is thus to understand one's own servitude" (*BD* 75). Eventually, their collaborative suicide leaves them not only powerless as women, but powerless as women masquerading as free-agents i.e. overdetermined male subjects. *Thelma and Louise* received six Academy Award nominations and won one for Best Original Screenplay. The extreme popularity of the film demonstrates our Western dimorphic model—a neoliberal addiction to the "illusoriness of selfsameness" (ZMERS 27).

As France's most influential intellectual and most prominent voice on feminist topics (according to *The New Yorker*), Elisabeth Badinter's dichotomous scenarios illustrate another example of judgment-based intentionality and

identity rooted in the selfsame Being. In her *Le Conflit: la femme et la mère* (in France, the book was the best-selling nonfiction title the week after its release and number two for the following eight weeks), she claims that women have re-entered into slavery to their babies—the baby has now become "the best ally of masculine domination". Badinter fails to examine the quotidian violence of the most holy sanctity of marriage. Marriage can be seen as a contractual agreement for women to sell their bodies in exchange for homes, families, etc.

> When you hear that prostitution is an 'act of violence against women,' we are supposed to forget that it is marriage and other things we put up with that are 'acts of violence against women.' We cannot ignore the fact that far more women die from domestic violence than from engaging in sex work. Women who are fucked for free must continue to be told that they have made the only possible choice, otherwise how can they be kept under control? ...It is the control exercised upon us that is violent—the power to decide on our behalf which is dignified and what is not (*KKT* 80).

Badinter draws a divide between the professional, career-driven woman and the mother-as-green activist/ecologist whose choices she conflates with a return to naturalism. She condemns the mother's tendency towards ethology[122] as dragging women out of the race for equality. Her treatment of ethology and ecology is rooted in ahistorical, dichotomous neoliberalism. She refuses to witness and debate the connection with Spinoza (ethology) and the Spanish Civil War anarchists (social ecology)[123]—who were clearly not "victims" of

[122] The field of maternal studies interrogates the *détournement* of contemporary motherhood. "[I]ntersubjective dynamics (embodied, suppressed, repressed and taken for granted, articulated in speech and action, and in constant dynamic conflict) spans maternal relations and research relations" (Wendy Hollway). Contradiction and ambivalence is central to this new field of study—ranging from "Kleinian theoretical framework based on the idea of incessant ordinary conflict...[to] Rozsika Parker's exploration of maternal ambivalence (the inevitable coexistence of conflictual feelings)" (Hollway).

[123] See Murray Bookchin's *The Modern Crisis.* Philadelphia: New Society Publishers, 1986.

back-to-nature motherhood. "I'm convinced that the way feminism has been evolving will lead it to a dangerous dead end. I continue to think that gender equality comes with sharing roles and duties". Badinter interprets feminism (like masculinity, whiteness, capitalism, pornography, and pregnancy—each described in detail below) as a monolithic petrified object ascribed to sameness, not a rhizomatic process of relationships.[124] Concepts that may appear to be monolithic and one directional (as general as power, or as specific as capital and pornography) can become mechanisms of erotic politics when we recognize the interplay between good and evil. As I discuss throughout my argument, these concepts are not static, but lived relations, beyond transcendental intention—beyond good and evil. For example, capitalism as a monolithic system that has its own laws doesn't exist. Rather, instead of making moral judgments which dissipate the potential for change, if we speak of economies of agglomeration, we can deploy a relations of ethics (Manuel Delanda, *Gilles Deleuze and Science* seminar, EGS 2008). The appearance of pornography and sex-work as inherently sordid is integral to moral judgments lodged among the enfoldments of sexism. Just as racism degrades not just people of color, but whites as well, sexism degrades, limits, erases possibilities for full-capacity living for men, as well as women.

Badinter's depoliticized, body-phobic, advanced capitalist pontifications contend that misplaced ecological, home-birth and breast-feeding activists are steering woman

[124] Adopting a rhizomatic approach to living as becoming allows us to live in the world without succumbing to institutionalized hypocrisies. When Arendt saw Eichmann's face, she was stunned by its averageness. At that moment, she recognized the necessity to endure living within and among life's contradictions of joy, horror, and simplicity: "The world seemed no less terrible, but it seemed less demonic after [seeing Eichmann's face]" (May 115).

[125] See list of books, films, and additional resources from my yoga website: www.carajudea.com/yoga.

[126] In 1961, The Pampers Institute hired renowned pediatrician Dr. Terry Brazelton to prove to American parents the mental and physical health imperative of diapering their babies until the approximate age of three years old. He officially claimed that potty-training prior to this age could lead to psychological and physiological problems. Since the 60s, the disposable diaper industry has made trillions of dollars from this mis-education scheme. We are the only species that sits (and voluntarily at that!) in our own filth. Disposable diapers are the number one land-fill and the chemicals used to make the disposable diapers are some of the most toxic both for the environment and for the baby's skin and organ system. The average parent uses 7,000 diapers per baby. Since the birth of our son

into domestic slavery—the *heimlich* as a dungeon of inequality. She neglects to examine the politics of the medicalization of birth,[125] baby formula-saturated economies—such as Nestle's grotesque national and international advertising schemes and environmentally disastrous (for both our natural environment and that of our own bodies) disposable diaper industry—such as the Pampers Institute.[126] These intricate systems of metropolitan capital dominance colonize both our individual bodies and our social bodies.

Badinter inadvertently corroborates this chiasmic colonization when she states: "The specter of the bad mother imposes itself on her even more cruelly insofar as she has unconsciously internalized the ideal of the good mother". This good-mother/bad-mother binary proliferates the hierarchy of equality in which men's bodies are implicitly the norm and should be attained to be as such. By positioning, for example, the breast- feeding mother as a "nature fundamentalist" (Badinter's term) /an eco-victim (my term) who has squelched the "liberated professional woman", she locks the discussion in an either-or of Being-Man or becoming-animal. Becoming-animal is a poetics of relation, not an atavistic practice of denying freedoms. As Amandine Panhard states, "The real conflict is not between the woman and the mother, but between the woman and the company".[127] Irigaray's analysis of "equal rights" elucidates the ways in which both *Thelma and Louise* and Elisabeth Badinter reproduce hetero-normative standards of

Zazu, now two-years old, we have never used a single disposable diaper.

[127] Just as pediatricians are *required* to have a certain percentage of their patients "choose" to vaccinate, gynecologists, both male and female, have institutional pressure to promote formula (just as they do pharmaceuticals). Physicians coerce new mothers to get hooked on formula. If they don't start breast-feeding their babies soon after their birth, their milk supply dries up. For example, I breast-fed my baby during my recent staff meeting at the Oakland YMCA, and was later thanked by the director who asked me to give a "sensitivity-training" to the staff. Once again, the irony of interlocking mechanics of institutionalized poverty and obesity came to the surface. One in three children in Oakland are obese. Women stuck in the weakest economic position are effectively forced to feed their infants formula. Once their breast-milk dries up (which is a physically wrenching process) and they can no longer afford the formula, they give their baby juice—which is pure sugar—inevitably leading to health problems, including obesity. The fact that the staff needed training to "feel comfortable" with YMCA members breast-feeding is a sore indication of our collusion with the hyper-colonialist formula industry (Nestle), pharmaceutical industrial complex, and the medical establishment.



PLATE 11

being—conceptual systems that are rooted in institutionalized toxic mimicry. Congruently, Lorde stresses the imperative to recognize the collusive tendencies of white academia:

> I stand here as a black lesbian feminist, having been invited to comment within the only panel at this conference where the input of black feminists and lesbians is represented. ...To read this program is to assume that lesbian and black women have nothing to say of existentialism, the erotic, women's culture and silence, developing feminist theory, or heterosexuality and power. ...What does it mean when the tools of a racist patriarchy are used to examine the fruits of that same patriarchy? It means that only the most narrow perimeters of change are possible and allowable. (1979)

Ronell questions another way in which women might internalize phallo-centric discourses and systems of representation:

> Could there be a feminine intensity or force that would not be merely 'subversive'? Because subversion is a problem-it implies a dependency on the program that is being critiqued-therefore it's a parasite of that program. Is there a way to produce a force or an intensity that isn't merely a reaction (and a very bad and allergic reaction) to what is? (1991: 128).

Rather than reactive re-categorization or reductive recognition, this erotic momentum, a "feminine intensity", potentially generates a third space for political and personal models based on recognition of difference in contrast to sameness. Rancière's concept of *being together apart*[128] reflects this chiasmic space of the sensual—a third space "for at the same

[128] Both in "Practicing Critique" and in my conclusion on the Occupy Movement, I discuss Rancière's concept of the sensorial aesthetic community.

moment that it holds the two together as related, it also holds them apart" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). Ulfers elaborates:

> [T]he tragic, rather than constituting the "negating" side to an opposed 'affirming,' embodies, through the conception of opposites as interpenetrating, what Nietzsche calls an irreducible 'contradiction.' 'Contradiction,' for Nietzsche, does not mean the violation of binary logic, but an 'intricate relation' between opposites, such as bliss and pain, that simultaneously unites them and holds them apart (NAF 5).

Congruent with Rancière's *together apart* and Nietzsche's tragedy, Jean-François Lyotard's *compossibility* invoke these multiple potentialites which align political and libidinal economies. By exploring plural, contradictory pleasures, my photographic images don't simply counteract socialized notions of the body, but actively transform the possibilities of (inter) action and reflection. Bataille's non-hierarchical allegory generates a remapping of the liminal:

> Bataille is not simply privileging a new object (excrement, flies, ruptured eyes, the rotten sun, etc.) over the old one (the head, the king, spirit, mind, vision, the sun of reason, etc.). If, as Angus Fletcher has pointed out in *Allegory,* the medieval allegorical imagination posits a fundamental congruence between *hierarchy* in the body and the guaranteed, stable *meaning* of allegory (in the body, the highest element is the head; in society, the king; and in the universe, God), then we must conclude that a theory that simply substituted one hierarchy for another (a hierarchy that favors the *high* replaced by one that favors the *low*) would only inaugurate a new metaphysics and a new stabilized allegorical system of meaning. Filth would replace God.

> But Bataille's approach is not that simple. Fully conversant as a medievalist with the theoretical implications of allegory, Bataille precisely recognizes that the *fall* of the elevated and noble threatens the coherent theory of allegory itself. This is not to imply that allegory is simply done away with in Bataille—any more than is the dialectic—but rather, that what Bataille works out is a kind of headless allegory, in which the process of signification and reference associated allegory continues, but leads to the terminal subversion of the pseudostable references that had made allegory and its hierarchies seem possible. The fall of one system is not stabilized, is not replaced with the elevation on another; the fall in Bataille's allegory is a kind of incessant or repetitious process. Thus filth does not "replace" God; there is no new system of values, no new hierarchy (*VE* xiii-xiv).

Within the rhizomatic detours of internalized fascistic tendencies—habituated norms—the boundaries between collusion and agency become even more unstable and circuitous. Whether sex-workers,[129] who straddle the private-public corporeal construction of desire, or myself as photographer, who consciously deploys a radical perversity of subject-object interplay in order to illuminate the how of what we do not know, I believe it is possible to do what Ulfers claims is not possible: "To write at all, to think at all, is of necessity to do so—one cannot stand at both ends of the microscope at the same time" (NAF 23). How can the image-maker, writer, poet, philosopher[130] and their corresponding viewers/readers consciously resist this enfoldment of metaphysical[131] collusion in order "to stand at both ends of the microscope at the same time" (ibid.)?

[129] The conscious choice to decriminalize prostitution rolls into a denaturalization of the surburban (coerced) body. See Beatriz Preciado's "Pharmaco-pornographic Capitalism Postporn politics and the Decolonization of sexual representations".

[130] Although I disagree with Ulfers' privileging music over visual art and language, I will concur enough not to include musicians in this list. Ulfers privileges music as a sheer becoming. According to Ulfers' critique of metaphysics, music, unlike the visual and written arts, is non-assimilatable—exempt from the tyranny of conceptual language—in which the creative urge is not to be confused with etiology. Nietzsche writes: "*Die Musik ist eine Sprache, die einer unendichen Verdeutlichung fähig ist.*" "Music is a language that is capable of infinite interpretability".

[131] Schirmacher's critique of metaphysics is that it clings to an illusory certainty and truth, a linear quest for progress rooted in binary logic and conceptual thought (EGS seminar 2008). Similarly, Ulfers identifies the "corner" of metaphysics as "the reign of a dualistic perspective that insists on *one* interpretation of the world: the interpretation, the ultimate truth, of the supremacy of Being and its variants functioning as perfection, goal, meaning, and judge over the world of Becoming, the world that is, apart from its interdiction, eternally in process" (NAF 10).

For both representation as produced by the agent or manager or mediator of the reading—artist or photographer—and the reactions of the onlooker or reader of the image must be re-exposed in the light of a certain recent criticism putting into question the whole binary system of subject and object. This is a revision overdue and all the more problematic in Surrealism, which already wanted to overcome the split between seer and seen, visionary and view: thus, a problematics of the problematic, and how it is received (Caws 263).

Both prosthetics and digital technologies (both of which I theorize in detail in Chapter Two) in the arts embody the multi-fold contradictions that maintain market economies. Baudrillard concurs, "Any touching-up, second thoughts or staging assumes an abominably aesthetic character". I'm interested in decoding ways in which we are complicit and how that complicity is inverted to look like resistance—a veiled mask hiding a faceless face. In "Prostheses and Parasites", I discuss the paradoxes of the roles of artists who use the language of the canon to mock the canon while only reifying the ordained power paradigm. There is a perverse apparent lack of self-awareness on the part of very well-known artists like the Brothers' Quay whose work appears to confront status-quo ethics (or lack thereof), but in fact directly participates in and profits from an "enforced stultification" (Rancière 1991: 16).[132] The art-world is a paragon of such mediocrity.[133]

Museums are/have become institutions for the prostitution of anti-intellectualism. Intellectual

[132] The Brothers Quay have made a few commercials for Monsanto's weed killer product. Monsanto is one of the world's leading polluters. They intend to absorb the world's entire food supply into a GMO maelstrom—converting 100 percent of the seeds that exist today to become genetically engineered and patented. The fact that the Brothers Quay unabashedly supported this bio-industrial monolith that dictates the FDA's (de)regulation procedure indicates the extent to which many artists will go to be recognized in the absence of ethical thought and action.

[133] One example is of this enforced dumbing-down is from The Palmer Art Museum (which was designed by the renowned post modern architect, Charles Moore) at Penn State University. The administrators of the museum are reluctant to exhibit the paintings of naked people in their collection because representations of the naked body have offended some visitors—ironically, even the paintings of Philip Pearlstein.

[134] The new book, *Plastic-Free—How I Kicked the Plastic Habit and How You Can Too* and the feature-length documentary: *Addicted to Plastic: The Rise and Demise of a Modern Miracle* both address the rhizomatic concrescence of our cultural plastic-habit. It would behoove political activists fighting the oil empire to incorporate a critique of plastic and convenience-culture into their argument. For example, while attending Antonia Juhasz's (my friend who I have known since we were three-years old) lecture on her new book

labor and aesthetic labor is consistently reducible to market value. Art in the US is consistently reproduced as entertainment, not as education in the broadest, most relational sense. An example of art-as-education can be found in Derrida's exploration of artmaking as a way in which we can begin to see—seeing which offers a process of becoming-cognizant. This in-sight is not about seeing as a mind projection (which puts the ob-scene to rout), but a psyche-somatic reception, i.e. vulnerability that incites thought, exposure, listening, and action.

In contrast to becoming-vulnerable through cognition, everything in our consumer-culture indicates that unconsciously and consciously, we are desperate to be placated. Thought is feared because it is unstable; thought does not soothe. It makes us "tremble with uncertainty" (Cixous). We recoil from imbalance. Whether we are reacting to our addiction to certainty or our addiction to convenience culture,[134] we crush the vulnerability of doubt with a resounding univocality. My pedagogical and artistic commitments are rooted in actively engaging the hazardous intersections between the ineffable and language. This is one reason that, as a visual artist, I have tremendously high expectations for the scholarly capacity of artists working in an academic setting. Over the past years, I have been greatly disappointed by the quality of public discussion engendered (or not) by artists who are invited to speak about their work in academic environments—including Claire Denis, Annie Liebowitz,

The Tyranny of Oil: The World's Most Powerful Industry—and What We Must Do to Stop It (New York: Harper Collins, 2009), I was the only person in the audience who brought up our insidiously integral practice of plastic consumption as a critical element in normalizing the grip of the fuel industry.

Two years later, I attended a similar event at the politically progressive Commonwealth Club in San Francisco. This time, Bill McKibben, the first environmentalist to write about the impact of global warming on climate change (*The End of Nature*, New York: Random House 1989) and twenty later, the founder of 350.org, joined Juhasz on stage. For years, McKibben has been identified as "the nation's leading environmentalist" (*Boston Globe,* 2010). Yet, during the entire interview in front of the audience, he drank cola from a commercial plastic bottle. During the Q&A, I pointedly asked how individuals can resist plastic use in our petro-culture? In addition to the imperative for structural change (which is McKibben's emphasis), how can our everyday choices create an opportunity for significant social change? He offered no response. It must not go unnoticed that this disparity took place in the city of San Francisco which in 2007, established the first plastic bag ban in the country and has set the goal of reaching ZeroWaste by 2020 (diverting 100% of the city's waste from landfills). Both commitments require individual-social agency *and* structural change.

Convenience-culture is riddled with ironies. For example, in an attempt to combat hours of sitting

Alison Shotz, Janine Antoni, Suzan Frecon, and Pierre Huyghe. If artists are locating themselves within a pedagogical context, they must not assume that their work "speaks for itself".

I am addressing this quarantine of thinking in the context of institutionalized anti-intellectualism because the contemporary art world has become another instrument of consumption/entertainment. Institutionalized anti-intellectualism reifies the systemic habits of internalized racism and internalized anti-Semitism—relentlessly struggling to be normal, neutral i.e. to be white and accessible. In the context of normalized ethnicity, the fantasy of sameness renders whiteness invisible:

> …ethnically neutral institution[s] like the Museum of Modern Art…Ethnically neutral? That's just code-term for white, the no-color, the every-thing-color. For whiteness is as much- or as little-a racial category as blackness, though it is rarely acknowledged as such wherever it is the dominant, default ethnicity…in our laws, our behavior, our institutions, our sensibilities, our dreams (Holland Cotter 32).

The functionality of the invisibility of whiteness reflects my history of censorship and the public reception of my photographs. Both are rooted in an institutionalized extraction of the unknown—defined, judged, de-cided a priori. When "the public" is confronted with a divergence from their expectations, they panic.[135] The politics of inclusion,[136] the ostensible neutral, permeates each contradictory longitudinal intertwining of

in bottleneck commuter traffic, pay for inflated toll costs, and reduce pollution, many US cities have devised informal ad hoc carpools, also know as slugging or casual carpooling. Nevertheless, the one-person-per-car habit still drives most US highways. In footnote 596, see my discussion of post-humanist social justice and mass transit activist, hacker Krys Freeman. "Ride match is aimed at primarily reducing the large percentage of people who drive alone to work. ...By re-purposing the excess capacity in the cars of solo drivers (also the population with the greatest flexibility in their schedule), for a number of populations we can potentially offset an every day 'pain point' like commuting" (Conversation with Freeman 2013). Freeman's project demonstrates an attempt subvert the petro-hegemony of "everyday violence"(see page 468).

[135] When Vaslav Nijinsky first performed Igor Stravinsky's Rites of Spring ballet in Prague, 1907, the audience became enraged and stormed the stage. In addition to the music that they found shocking in its orgiastic repetitiveness, were the turquoise and orange costumes. Not only did the color combinations provoke outrage, but also the way the costumes exposed Nijinsky's body incited the audience to violence.

[136] The politics of inclusion form the foundation of what is proselytized as equality.

hierarchical relations—Euclidean geometry reigns. Whether extending into transnational fascism or the precarious intricacies of racial, ethnic, and gender "passing", the fantasy of selfsameness pervades our collective consciousness. It drives our desire to belong while simultaneously undermining the potential for a vital community rooted in difference—a difference that deters the universalization of dialectical approaches. In her discussion of the Matrix, Bracha Ettinger tells us "about that encounter between difference which tries neither to master, nor assimilate, nor reject, nor alienate. It is the symbol of the coexistence in one space of two bodies, two subjectivities whose encounter at this moment is not an either/or" (213). The Matrix fluctuates as a chiasmic unity.

Institutionalized Anti-Intellectualism

In any discussion of emancipatory politics, it is crucial to examine the concept of development. I scrutinize "development" in the context of the mind (the construction of sight and the construction of desire through pedagogy and entertainment), the physical body (balance, bodybuilding, health-care, sexuality), and the social body (cross-cultural and intra-cultural well-being, medical, and agribusiness/biotech industries). Development agencies like the venture philanthropical institution, the museum, and the university augment the convenience-culture myth of Progress[137] and the "proper" consumer, (see Ulfer's connection between the proper and

[137] "Scouring the hetero-rhetorical unconscious of the social milieux through which she ventured, Valerie Solanas found herself disabled by the very fact of language, by its phallic lures and political usages, by its disturbing record in the human sciences and liberal arts—by the mere fact of its incessant institutional collaborations. ...In some ways, Solanas shows up as a victim of the failed performative, as one who felt her verbal velocities could reach no one in a way threat would truly mark or unhinge the brutal protocols of lived reality. At the same time, Valerie Solanas, who took no prisoners, took pleasure in the injurious effects of language and, with Lacanian precision, understood that works are bodies that can be hurled at the other, they can land in the psyche or explode in the soma. A hurtful utterance can give you hives, make you want to throw up, put a dent in your appetite, or summon up any number of somatic responses and physical collapses" (Ronell's introduction to *Scum Manifesto* 4-5).

"property"[138] discussed below). Too often in the context of museums, art has no other value than to raise tourist dollars: art functions as entertainment, not as self-reflection, education, or social critique/awareness. Contemporary art operates within a field of unchallenged everyday violence. The art market *interprets* art as property (discussed below), delineating what is proper and what is ob-scene—the tyranny of aesthetics qua entertainment. Baudrillard writes, "It is this promiscuity and the ubiquity of images, this viral contamination of things by images, which are the fatal characteristics of our culture" (Baudrillard 1988: 36). Too frequently art *means* nothing beyond revenue and mass consumption.[139] Baudrillard continues, "What I bemoan is the aestheticization of photography, its having become one of the fine arts, the photographic image, by its technical essence, came from somewhere beyond, or before, aesthetics" (1999:139-140).

2005. Seoul. I met Jean Baudrillard at his photography reception for his solo exhibition, "Micro-Macro Presence" at the Daelim Museum where I was planning my own upcoming photography exhibition. Prior to his opening, I had not seen Baudrillard's images in person, although several Korean curators had pointed out their theoretical resonance with my photographs—how both problematize the real, truth, and meaning. For Barthes, the photograph exists outside of meaning, rather, it is sustained as infinitely recurring contingencies. Barthes' comment echoes viewer

[138] Kafka writes about conceptual thought and language that are repeatedly "concerned 'with property and its relations,' that is a grasping acquisitiveness" (Ulfers, *Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought* seminar, EGS 2008).

[139] The 2009 independent documentary film, "The Art of the Steal" (director Don Argot), demonstrates culture industry's fetish tourism. The story unfolds as the Barnes' Collection's private ownership is challenged by corporate interests. 9,000-pieces of late-19th- and early-20th-century art including Picassos, Renoirs, Modiglianis, Matisses, Cezannes is valued at over $25 billion. Unequivocally, culture is defined through industry and profit. Through a convoluted breech of Barnes' will, his collection no longer functions purely as a lived art and a pedagogical community service, but instead has become a tourist-magnet.

responses to my own photographs. Both our bodies of work are ob-scene in that we leave the viewer to imagine the unrepresentable, the unfigurable—filling the space of nothingness or overfullness (re)presented in the image. In his *Simulations,* Baudrillard postulates, "it would be interesting to see whether the repressive apparatus would not react more violently to a simulated hold-up than to a real one? For the latter only upsets the order of things, the right of property, whereas the other interferes with the very principle of reality" (1998: 38).

Recently, Kenneth Saltman, author of *Capitalizing on Disaster: Taking and Breaking Public Schools* and *The Edison Schools: Corporate Schooling and the Assault on Public Education*, invited me to collaborate on a documentary film addressing critical pedagogy, privatization, and the corporate takeover of the US public educational system.[140] In the context of neoliberal prosthetic ideology (de-politicized, neutralized, idealized), the refrain of the film is essentially, how do we learn and what is learning? We explore how public intellectuals, performance artists, and top physicists (like Watson and Crick whose work clearly transgresses the argument for standardized testing and homogenized forms of pedagogy) represent a post-humanist, trans-disciplinary polysemic dialectic of possibility. We ask the following questions: How do we foster an imaginative society? How can we cultivate radical inquiry? How does the intersection of the economization of schooling,

[140] Educational Management Organizations (EMOs), like HMOs, subvert public governance and discipline (in Foucault's terms) the labor force. EMOs are a manifestation of Paulo Freire's concept of education as banking: "Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat" (Freire 1993: Chapter Two). In contrast to my project with Saltman, neoliberal/capitalist realist films take for granted the media barrage and the use of privatized contracting in US education system.

art as entertainment, and the medicalization of our bodies and minds feed our voracious cyber-society? How could a just society be "produced" in the midst of our current post-human socio-political teleologies? Within a post-human subjectivity, what does it mean to live and produce in a democracy as a culture of criticism versus a commercial culture, focused on consumption, entertainment, and market fundamentalism? How can we generate systems for decolonized, dialogic forms of institutional education?[141] Just as Haraway's definition of a neocolonizing postmodern rendering of cyberspace reminds cultural critics of our constant need for vigilance, our queries call for a direct democracy:

> Cyberspace seems to be the consensual hallucination of too much complexity, too much articulation. It is the virtual reality of paranoia. Paranoia is the belief in the unrelieved density of connection, requiring, if one is to survive, withdrawal and defense unto death, the defended self re-emerges at the heart of relationality. Paradoxically, paranoia is the condition of the impossibility of remaining articulate. In virtual space, the virtue of articulation, the poser to produce connection threatens to overwhelm and finally engulf all possibility of effective action to change the world (Haraway 1992: 325).

2009. New York City. Haraway's warning comes to life—echoing an incident of censorship that occurred when I exhibited my photographs during the Luce Irigaray Circle held in a New York City university for which Grosz was the keynote speaker. Moments before Grosz's lecture on Darwin was to begin, the conference technician decided he could not condone

[141] Two recent independent films which address some of these complexities are *Waiting for Superman* which explores current educational facilities as "failure factories", "drop-out factories", "academic sink-holes" that drive the "bewildered herd" (Walter Lipmann): "The things we've done to help our schools work better have become the things that prevent them from working"; and, *A Place Out Of Time: The Bordentown School*. The Bordentown School, an all black, co-ed school, identified as "an educational utopia when discrimination was law and custom" was forced to shut down because of Brown vs. Board's Separate but equal schools were deemed illegal. Ironically and pathetically the school was transferred into a mental health asylum in 1957 and in 1993, the asylum was shut down and became the State Juvenal Justice system. And as with every incarceration facility in the US, it is populated mostly by blacks.

the projection of my images. There was a moment of panic when we understood—he would not allow me to exhibit my work "under his watch". Although my images perform "Irigaray's theory of the female body's fluid, decentered erotogeneity" (Apter 316), the conference organizers ultimately could not override his censorship. Eventually, everything was "resolved" when I agreed not to project particular photographs. The absurd crisis of my imagery being more threatening than Irigaray's written word demonstrates how theory is immobilized—made mute[142]—the opposite of embodied. When it comes to putting theory into practice, it's pretty clear our First Amendment civil rights are too often expendable. On paper, academics are risk-takers, but we must not ignore the necessity of risk-taking in our daily lives in defense of social justice. The implications of repressive social dis-ease threaten the very foundations of an emancipatory public:

> The political aspect of intermediality has become more and more urgent not in the least because of the influence of the democratizing process of information technologies, instrumentalization of social relations, and the emergence of the inter-related phenomena of multicultural society and globalization (Oosterling and Ziarek 2).

Pedagogically ordained censorship renders impotent the potential of collaborative citizenship, making untenable the possibility of a radical democracy in which subject-citizens could actually make informed, unadulterated choices about their own bodies.

[142] Merleau-Ponty declares: "My own words take me by surprise and teach me what I think." His textual *jouissance* demonstrates the inherent metaphoricity of language, thus threatens the predictability of meaning.



PLATE 12, VIDEO STILL OF ELIZABETH GROSZ SUSPENDED IN MY HEAD

University departments continue to resist embodied theory, thus denying the fertility of cross-examination. Neoliberal ethics reinforce this institutional denial of contradictory complexities and complicities of advanced capitalism and its drive to appropriate post-modern slippages:

> Unable to say with any certainty what is real or virtual, human or animal, organic or genetically modified, some wish to resuscitate again, but this time with nostalgia, the failed antimodern project of shattering distinctions. While the chorus – composed now of cyberpunks and activists joined by capitalists and technocrats – rejoices in the indistinguishable difference between online and offline, organic and synthetic, man and machine, the most crucial distinction of all – that between resistance and complicity – is collapsing as well (White *Adbusters*).

The crisis of academia disassociated from the public realm parallels the ways in which we have internalized and *redistributed* our socialized mind-body split. Academia functions through the de-corporealized mind, while the public is paralyzed as the voiceless, non-thinking body. Academia and consumer convenience-culture have become insidious

corporatized collaborators, just as market fundamentalism has subsumed the art and literary worlds.[143] Academic institutions are run as corporate enterprises and not first and foremost as environments for the purpose of supporting informed and rational citizen-subjects. Curricular decisions are determined by financial need based on mass enrollment in on-line courses—a Foucauldian twist on Paulo Freire's banking concept of education (see footnote 140). The result is that frequently students are only comfortable speaking *anonymously* on-line in blogs, not face to face which is more confrontational and risky, thus vulnerable.

Academic anti-intellectualism manifests itself through multiple forms of discreet repression. Citizen-subjects have internalized the effects of corporatized education (i.e. venture philanthropy); we have metabolized institutional pedagogical reductionism into a radically effective form of self-censorship. Our addiction to entertainment, accessibility, and homogeneity dictate how and what we do and do not teach and learn. In his introduction to Randy Martin's keynote speech[144] at the Cultural Studies Association, 2010, Percy Hintzen, Director Center for African and African American Studies at UC Berkeley, used the analogy of toilet-taboos as a cultural foundation of incomes and revenues. He railed against university programming, demanding that we question whose public is education serving? Hintzen asserted that the university creates the

[143] See Ulfers on Kafka's concern with the collisions between the proper and property.

[144] In his keynote address at the Cultural Studies Association Conference 2010, Randy Martin, Director Art and Public Policy at NYU, wove through the complexities of international "development", performance studies, and disciplinary displacement and replacement. He discussed the ways in which social contingencies converge with aesthetic contingencies—the infrastructural avowal of support of the material and psychic effects of neoliberal models of subjectivity. Martin emphasized that intellectual labor is not reducible to market value. He examined the role of the university and its potential resistance to universalization of market logic through an embodiment of multivalent realities and self-production through self-determination, self-dissemination, and self-representation as interventionist modalities. Martin enlisted Theodor Adorno: "whoever speaks of culture, speaks of administration" the cultural policy and culture of policy.

demand for a mesmerizing entrepreneurship. Its concomitant profligate consumption is propelled by the neoliberal appropriation of ethics which, he professed, is the embodiment of the Age of Aquarius. His example came from The Gap's "RED" campaign which claims to "Save Africa" from tuberculosis/malaria. The Gap hired U2s Bono to represent the legitimation of the consumptive behavior of the status-quo's unexamined ethnocentrism—a managed xenophobia.

I can only assume that Hintzen's rage against the academy would exponentially multiply when we consider the role of the university in such hysterics as the 2008 economic disaster. Deregulation has corrupted the study of economics itself. Academic economists, essentially academic experts for hire, are consultants who make millions by working for investment bankers who make billions. According to economist and educator Satyajit Das, these post-Cold War physicists and mathematicians did not think about the secondary effects of their research—there is "not a lot of reflection in [the banking and finance] industry…these people who live with their computer, with their screens, almost essentially live in a surreal world where the actual implications of their actions are so remote to them that they don't actually register" the consequences of their decisions (cited in *Inside Job* 2010). These financial engineers not only fabricate history, but also prostheticize their own psyches. Baudrillard observes, "...our very bodies are

becoming monitoring screens" (1988: 12). They in-corporate a commodification of knowledge—a simultaneous expansion of and loss of knowledge (see Martin's speech below). The hierarchies of material value (Koren 61) besiege context relational-perception.

Throughout my argument we will see a recurring entanglement of the implicit and explicit forms of corporate coercion and corporeal collusion.[145] The "capricious meanderings"[146] of neocolonialism and convenience-addictions fuel neoliberal rationality of self-help individualism that supersedes lived community.[147] Their focus on the dehistoricized, individual commodifies knowledge—breeding white consciousness conformity in our classrooms. They besiege the potential for intrasubjective protocols of accountability. Institutionalized racism and anti-intellectualism, radically rampant in academia, also potentially neutralize the pedagogical impact of those "white" historians who theorize the sub-altern:

> Why have Barthes' fundamental contributions to anti-colonial resistance and to a quite contemporary and utopian postcolonial theory, and particularly his work on the rhetoric of white consciousness, been elided in contemporary cultural, critical, and literary theory, even by those scholars who are also concerned with identifying such 'poses' for consciousness? ...Have scholars genericized Barthes, taking him up only as a critic of the 'human' condition (also known as the unmarked-dominant-posing-as-universal) in its drive to signify, at the same time that they ignore his substantial contributions towards undoing colonial, middle-class, 'white,' and supremacist

[145] Like the regulatory police of the MPAA (Motion Pictures Association of America), US universities are co-opted by both military and corporate funding for research. Educational institutions, bought by corporate sponsorship, continue to choose to adopt the corporate model for top-down structure and administration in an age when corporations are so alarmingly unethical.

[146] The term originally comes from Charles Baudelaire's *Petits Poemes en Prose*.

[147] The contemporary *convivencia* of both the civil rights "beloved community" and the critical formative culture of the current Occupy Movement contrast with this consumer-oriented grasp of consciousness.

> forms of consciousness? ...Indeed, are these tendencies symptoms of an apartheid of theoretical domains that keeps knowledge's in the academy developing separate versions of the methodology of the oppressed—under varying terminologies, while they at the same time seek a method for transdisciplinarity that works? (*MO* 118.9, 202.3).

Rancière's discussion of the Ignorant Schoolmaster vividly demonstrates the possibilities of unlearning universalized hierarchical superstructures. Exile, as a form of vulnerability, offers a vital knowledge process:[148] "…the result of an accidental discovery occasioned by the peculiar circumstances of exile,[149] Jacotot came to realize that knowledge is not necessary to teaching, nor explication necessary to learning. 'Explication,' he writes, 'is the myth of pedagogy.' Rather than eliminating incapacity, explication in fact, creates it" (1991: xx). Our addiction to taxonomies and habits refuses "the intelligence sleeping in each of us"(1991: 21).[150] Recognizing disjunctive rhizomatic vulnerabilities supports this intelligence.

> How differently would art, science, and the other disciplines be valued, for example, if experienced as an ecological system of ideas in circuit as Bateson suggests? To imagine such an inclusive, interconnected system of learning would be to resist curricular nostalgia that aims solely at maintaining the logic of educational compartmentalization, which takes hold of students' creative and intellectual agency by transmitting preexisting academic structures and representations of learning (Garoian 23).

[148] Similarly, Louis Althusser defended the relationship between knowledge and ignorance—a relationship that respects and engages with the fertility of the unknown (Erik Malewski and Nathalia Jaramillo *Epistemologies of Ignorance in Education*. Charlotte, NC.: Information Age Publishing, 2011: 33).

[149] I am here referring to both individual exile and ancestral exile like that of the Jews, where exile is part of our DNA. Spinoza lived and worked through both. The fertility of anguish while in exile/in prison must be recognized. A few examples of those who wrote their life-manifestos about freedom (or variations thereof) include: Anne Frank, Marquis de Sade, Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, Eldridge Cleaver. There is a movement within prisons to provide philosophical educational seminars that help prepare inmates for more advanced education following their release from prison. These seminars rehabilitate the inmates in surprisingly sophisticated ways. This is real rehabilitation as indicated by former intimates' anecdotes.

[150] One of my failed attempts to collaborate across disciplines involved a celebrity doctor, Dr. Iffie Okoronkwo Aitkenhead, (who has posed with Gloria Gaynor for articles written about her in *Vogue* magazine). We had a Parkinsons patient in common, but when I attempted to explain why it was vital for me to collaborate with medical professionals, her only response to me was: "Tell me something practical or don't talk to me at all". Although

Ralph Nader calls for a cultural upheaval that revokes corporate personhood[151] reigning over the commercialization of childhood,[152] education, and other attacks on citizen's capacity to think. Transnational corporate culture thrives within an extreme disavowal of such realities. Congruent with Nietzsche, Ralph Waldo Emerson encountered a thought as "alive...like the spirit of a plant or an animal". Failure to think equalizes as it reproduces itself. It flattens our differences and silences our potential. Relational thinking, on the other hand, capsizes our infotoxin-addicted culture: "[p]hilosophy is a vigil against forgetting, against time, against stupidity, against prejudices, belief, the immediacy of the consumption of the void, against ready-made morality, against the silence of the executioner and that of the victim" (*BD* 99). Thought cannot be quiet once it *becomes* public.

> [G]ood can be radical: evil can never be radical, it can only be extreme, for it possesses neither depth nor any demonic dimension yet – and this is the horror! – it can spread like a fungus over the surface of the earth and lay waste the entire world. Evil comes from a failure to think. It defies thought for as soon as thought tries to engage itself with evil and examine the premises and principles from which it originates, it is frustrated because it finds nothing there. That is the banality of evil (Arendt's introduction to *Eichmann* Section 2).

she is quoted to have said: medicine is "more of an art than science", she refused to share a dialogue with me, refused to be open to the possibilities of working with her patient/clients' bodies in an unconventional, experimental setting. Her unexamined attachment to pragmatic thinking reifies the entropy of her chosen profession—a mechanistic atomistic view of the body and its inherent lack (of potential and of consciousness)—another demonstration of Arendt's "banality of evil".

[151] "If corporations are people, then why doesn't Texas execute them?" (sign held by a protestor at the first Occupy Oakland march on November 2, 2012).

[152] "The corporation as person has recently created the following scary- and absurd- scenario. Lawyers for Nike have argued in California courts that when Nike lied to the public about conditions in its overseas sweatshops, it was engaging in personal rather than commercial speech, and therefore its lies were protected by the First Amendment. The lawyers claimed that as legal persons corporations have the right to intentionally mislead the public in matters pertaining to their corporate activities..." (Alan Kanner, Stop Commercial Exploitation of Children (SCEC)).

"It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society."

J. Krishnamurti

2 Entitlement and Equality as Submission

2010. New York. I attended the weekend long conference at NYU titled, "Black Cinema".[153] I became fixated on the irony of the speakers defining "nuances" of black audiences and black identity/experience while the concept of whiteness remained unexamined. The social construction of white remained invisible—a taken-for-granted given which only reinforced the suppressing forces of equality. W.E.B. Du Bois' double consciousness[154] contrasts with this white-washing, this problematic of homogenization.

[153] The speakers included some of the most prominent African-American scholars writing today: Clyde Taylor, Manthia Diawara, Ed Guerrero, Mia Mask, Mark Reid, Michele Wallace, Sam Pollard, Stanley Crouch, Keith Harris, Paula Massood, TreaAndrea Russworm, Kobena Mercer, Jane Gaines, Michael Gillespie, Leslie Harris, John Akomfrah, and Anna Everett.

[154] Du Bois sought to re-appropriate the psychosocial fractures, the lived contradictions, that haunt the mind-bodies of African-Americans: "The history of

If we deconstruct the constitution of white directors, producers, editors, and white audiences we could witness how, for example, Obama's presence in the White House (at least in the beginning, before he lost his popularity) was an opportunity for the "white" American public to *also* redefine/re-examine their whiteness. Given that there is no absolute monoculture of any race, ethnicity, or gender, no monolithic blackness or whiteness, we return to Rancière's discussion of the Ignorant Schoolmaster and our addiction to absolutes. Similarly, the term capitalism obscures specific relationships of how obedience is produced. Monolithic language relies on a disavowal of histories.

Equality, both in our cravings (to have the same rights) and in our aversions (to reject the axiomatic character of those rights), demands that we cling to the familiar. It engenders a fear of the multiple, the rhizome, the elsewhere. Minh-ha warns us: "The use of dialogic language is also discouraged (because the dominant world view can hardly accept that in the politics of representing marginality and resistance one might have to speak at least two different things at once)" (1991: 228). Our attachment to the concept of Equality imposed through conformity homogenizes and nullifies deviation from the norm.

Difference as Contamination: The Insinuating Body

> Institutionalized rejection of difference is an absolute necessity in a profit economy which needs

the American Negro is the history of this strife — this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost. He does not wish to Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa. He wouldn't bleach his Negro blood in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world. He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face" (W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York, Avenel, NJ: Gramercy Books, 1994).

[155] "This is the meaning of anguish, without which sexuality would be only an animal activity, and would not be *erotic*. If we wish to clearly represent this extraordinary effect, we have to compare it to vertigo, where fear does not paralyze but increases an involuntary desire to fall; and to uncontrollable laughter, where the laughter increases

> outsiders as surplus people. As members of such an economy, we have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals. As a result those differences have been misnamed and misused in the service of separation and confusion (Audre Lorde).

The equalizing tendencies of toxic mimicry is perversely everted in popular culture—another manifestation of democracy's everyday violence: "White America adopts the slang ("chill out"), the features (full lips from botox), tan skin, the music—the whole idea of coolness comes from black culture, yet they still hate us" (conversation with Kent Craig, *Digital Underground*). In *Bodies That Matter,* "Butler asserts that the normative subject is produced not by the refusal to identify with the other but rather through *identification* with an abject other" (*DE, DB* 175).

Equally seductive as it is repulsive,[155] the abject magnifies[156] the institutionally deemed pathology of the other.[157] Rendering the other abject becomes an act of framing[158]—delineating what is valid/invalid, center/periphery, *property*/unattainable: "Abjection is above all ambiguity. It does not radically cut off the subject from what threatens it—on the contrary, abjection acknowledges it to be in perpetual danger" (Royle 9, nt. 3). Abjectification mirrors the dynamics of diagnosis (discussed below in the context of

in proportion to our anguish if some dangerous element supervenes and if we laugh even though at all costs we should stop laughing. … A void in the face of which our being is a plenum, threatened with losing its plenitude, both desiring and fearing to lose it. As if the consciousness of plenitude demanded a state of uncertainty, of suspension. As if being itself were this exploration of all possibility, always going to the extreme and always hazardous. ...And so, to such a stubborn defiance of impossibility, to such a fell desire for emptiness, there is no end but the definitive emptiness of death" (*AS* 2,3 100-101).

[156] Magnification as focusing can also be playful. See my discussion of babies' brain development in "Inhabiting the Unknown through Ambiguity and Contradiction".

[157] In "Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations: Molecular Meat Round Two/ Second Course", I discuss this amplification of the abject in the context of Jews and meat; Eisenstein and montage.

[158] Derrida's emphasis on art-making as a way of seeing (see above) echoes abject-making. Seeing is a creative/collaborative act that renders the other simultaneously the same and different.

censorship and citizenship). The diagnosis frames the part of the body or psyche that is identified as abject. The diagnosis cuts/judges by de-ciding what out of the whole—culturally or corporeally—must be eliminated or transformed but without ever any final resolution. Ulfers problematizes the *dénouement* of

> trying to establish a grounding for interpretation and meaning in a story/world in which such an attempt is doomed to failure, if by "failure" is meant a univocal result or signified...the reader [is] forced to abandon a classical hermeneutic or interpretive stance—that of 'unlocking' the secret of the text, that is, the symptoms, with the intention of then progressing to a 'conclusion' or 'diagnosis' (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).

One aspect of my past research focused on the fluctuations of knowledge itself: how the US medical establishment (the politics of medicalized anonymity and the diagnosis) and international development (the politics of internalized poverty/lack) define and dictate individual's somatic self-perceptions.[159] One encounter of knowledge is to embody these often conflicting potentialities: "a transversal movement that sweeps one and the other away" (*TP* 28). Barbara Duden analyzes two other incompatible meanings of the word *knowledge*: "first, to designate the process of cognition and second, to designate date, information, or so-called knowledge-stock...scientific facts become confused with cultural interpretations" (Duden 1994: 74, 69). Foucault's investigation of *scientia sexualis* mirrors Virilio's examination of the construction of concepts ranging from

[159] In contrast to these homogenizing principles, Glissant contends that "... the particular resists a generalizing universal and soon begets specific and local senses of identity, in concentric circles (provinces then nations). The idea of civilization, bit by bit, helps hold together opposites, whose only former identity existed in their opposition to the Other"... invading nomads' "passion for self-definition... in the guise of personal adventure...The root is not important. Movement is. Center and periphery are equivalent...Power—the totalitarian drive of a single, unique root, rather than around a fundamental relationship with the Other" (Glissant 14).

[160] See Wolfgang Sachs, *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge and Power.*

standard of living to basic human rights:[160] "...the development of 'health and hygiene'... over and above the context of simple bodily precautions...now represents a veritable sanitary ideology" (Virilio 98). In the service of capital of genericized bodies, the concept of health has been radically reduced to something that needs to be fixed by consumerism. Health is distilled to fit a predetermined system of dependency and ignorance. The uncanny "is at once what produces the disease, and the source of health..." (Hegel cited in Kristeva 1982: 128).

Barthes, like Duden, informs us, "It may well be that on the plane of 'life,' there is but a totality where structures and forms cannot be separated. But science has no use for the ineffable: it must speak about 'life' if it wants to transform it" (Barthes cited in *MO* 158.1). As with Rancière's discussion of the Ignorant Professor, the ineffable functions as pedagogical exchange. Kristeva's unrepresentability and Bataille's *festival* confront standardized testing (conversations with Saltman, Giroux) and institutionalized erasure—everyday violence—of advertising media. The official diagnosis functions like public images (see Duden 1994: 68 and 76). The anonymity of the official diagnosis echoes the mass distribution of art-as- entertainment. Ronell invokes Nietzsche's *disidentification:*

> What Nietzsche emphasizes—this becomes important for Bataille but also for a liberationist politics—is a domestic policy of *disidentification,* the necessity of separation in order to make friendship and something like community

> possible. ...The Nietzschean severance policy is opposable to political tendencies towards unification that assert a mystified oneness. …Nietzsche argues for the necessity of the dissociate, singularized, *vereinsamt* (isolated, alone), for that which is constituted by monadic alterities. So he asserts the necessity of resisting what I have been calling fascistic fusion, the oneness that characterizes key phantasms of totalitarianism and attempts at totalization. …No one gets mashed up in the political machine as a work, as a substantial project that swallows you whole. … Thus the logic of the gift elaborated in Derrida's several works on the topic reorients our more common understanding friendship, calling it back to the aneconomic terms of nonreciprocity, dissymmetry, or dispropotion. The political consequences of such a rupture in reciprocity, particularly in regard to democratic formations, are considerable. Nietzsche puts us on a search for a justice that would break with sheer equivalence. …What would be a concept of equality, an equity, which would no longer be calculated according to our systems of equivalence? Or a political structure that would inscribe a movement beyond proportion or appropriation, exceeding thereby all love of the proper? (*LL* 27, 28, 29).

Disidentification potentially unfolds into a process of intensification.[161] Amplifying the abject tends towards *détournement*—beyond good and evil proper(ties).[162] "By isolating observations, [selection/framing] reveals commonalities and connections that may have gone unnoticed before. …Such intensifications and reinforcements of perception may make us, as viewers, more observant in our daily lives, but they can also dull our responses through overuse" (MacDougall 4). Assimilation both produces and is an outcome of this "overuse"—an excess to be reduced and contained. Accused of assimilation[163] (an unchallenged institutional

[161] See Trinh T. Minh-ha, *Framer Framed*. New York: Routledge, 1992.

[162] The uncanny is unfixed—beyond good and evil—it moves past a dialectic (Derrida), it refuses the cultural-ideological sway of binary codes: "*Heimlich* thus becomes increasingly ambivalent, until it finally merges with its antonym *unheimlich*" (Royle 159).

[163] The cross-cultural tradition of scape-goating Jews continues to be unchallenged.

violence), yet wholly unassimilatable, Jews ironically cannot be known and can never truly become citizens. We are that adipose flesh on the social body that is magnified as "inherently" abject. Jewish anxiety as internalized abjection, becoming-animal, oscillates between simultaneous alienation from and *identification* with the norm:

> their insecure position, insecure within themselves, insecure among people, would above all explain why Jews believe they possess only whatever they hold in their hands or grip between their teeth, that furthermore only tangible possessions give them a right to live, and that finally they will never again acquire what they once have lost—which swims happily away from them, gone forever…'Are you Jewish?' in Czech sounds like a fist pulling a 'happy blow'" (Kafka 1953: 20-21).

Homeless, unhomely, *unheimleich*, those without a home in perpetual exile (even in their own home), Jews are inherently ob-scene, off stage, elsewhere; yet, simultaneously spectacles i.e. spectacles of our own invisibility.[164] How is u-topia, no-where, different from the ob-scene, stripped of relational possibilities? Is this utopia one in which Jews participate in a "cunning of reason", while simultaneously are interminable strangers in a strange land?

> True violence ["uncanny violence"] consists therefore in the inability of human beings to 'have' a site, to inhabit a place, to accept its laws and observe its boundaries. It is precisely this inability that defines human being in terms of an uncanny convergence of power and vulnerability (*LF* 25).

[164] See my discussion of Homi Bhabha's beyond as the communal elsewhere in Chapter Four.

Levinas reinscribes the term utopia as an indication of a past, present, and future apolitical (although the implications are political) ethical encounter. The utopic diagnosis claims to know. To be known is to be rendered equal, reduced to sameness. The Jew's body, like that of the woman, is equalized and at the same time determined mysterious. Duden unveils the homogenizing dictates of the medicalized women's body:

> [I]n the course of the nineteenth century, female innards and interiority become medically, administratively, and judicially public while, at the same time, the female exterior is privatized ideologically and culturally. These opposed but linked tendencies are both characteristic moments in the social construction of 'woman' as a scientific fact, as well as in the creation of the citizen in industrial society (1991: 95).

The construction of desire establishes the template of acceptable citizenry.[165] The homogenated[166] body of the fabricated citizen is rooted in fear—health is fear of illness (Virilio). Our bodies are colonized through the medical diagnosis. Modern medical representation secures the homogenizing concept of universalized health that takes the body for granted as an unchanging biological reality.[167] Medical ideology naturalizes the privatization of the body while it simultaneously requires institutional regulation: "Doctors had accomplished the remarkable feat of creating a taboo which they alone could freely violate" (Duden 1994: 118). Medical institutions, as self-appointed agents of social control, codify and transmit reality, and therefore apparently transcend representation:

[165] Below, I describe my experiences while I was working in Bangladesh during which time I was confronted with the internalization of the equalizing/universalizing concept of economic poverty. Of course, the radical poverty of self-awareness in the US is "required" to *be* a productive normally functioning citizen-patriot/consumer of nationalism.

[166] FDA/Food politics are riddled with agribusiness controls that promulgate the homogenized, pasturized, and processed over the raw.

[167] In my essay, "Beyond Diagnostic Anonymity: The Discursive Body and Medicalized Identities," I discuss the iatrogenics phenomenon as a form of corporeal colonization.

> [T]he body is not merely a self-evident or universalized possibility. Rather, the body is always, in some sense, 'spoken' through language, in representation.[168] There is no bodily essence... that we might give recourse to behind the word, behind the image, no essence that might be conceived as existing outside of representation (Gagnon 54).

The mechanics of diagnosis parallel those of censorship.

Heteronormative representation is implicitly formed/de-cided through a conceptual cause-and-effect[169] version of the real—a formulaic censorship/diagnostic anonymity that is "paralyzing our capacity to make ethical judgments on what is right or wrong" (*ES* 9). Butler's conviction parallels my argument with anti-pornographers who have decided that pornography *causes* promiscuous sex. First of all, if people are practicing consensual safe sex (emotionally and physically), what is wrong with promiscuous sex? Additionally, the anti-pornographers' position doesn't address what does actually lead to teenage pregnancy. Their superimposition of a cause-and-effect prevents citizen-subjects from witnessing the cognitive correlates among subjective interpellations—an infinitely mutating call-and-response. Butler insists that we must investigate the roots (although there is no singular originating factor), rather than blame the subject: "pointing to conditions not causes…Conditions do not "act" in the way that individual agents do, but no agent acts without them. They are presupposed in what

[168] Just as the hyper-medicalized body is a public site of political struggle, the various "objects" in my photographs take on meanings in relation to the ways in which they are juxtaposed and integrated. Through my photographs and their physical construction, I seek to rupture the privatization of this public daily violence of the familiar as truth. In other words, these aren't private, isolated bodies, rather they and the ways in which they are represented co-exist within a social whole.

[169] See Ulfers and Cohen's "Nietzsche and the Future of Art".



PLATE 13

we do, but it would be a mistake to personify them as if they acted in the place of us" (*PL* 11). Following his commitment to Deleuze, DeLanda insists that their is no singular form of power: there is no "the system", "the market", "the citizen". The "the" refuses to acknowledge the specifics of a particular scale (for example, local economies) and the ever-shifting nature of how organizations interact through persons—obedience needs to be produced. In his discussion of the invisibility of power structures, DeLanda takes from Foucault's aspects of authority: we self-regulate, we, citizen-subjects behave.

THEY SAY SHE IS VEILED
They say she is veiled
and a mystery. That is
one way of looking.
Another
Is that she is where
she always has been,
exactly in place,
and it is we,
we who are mystified,
we who are veiled
and without faces.
Judy Grahn, *Queen of Wands*

Neutrality operates as a form of collective numbing that reifies the tourism of difference embedded in ethnocentrism and the absolutizing of making both the other and the dominant structure monolithic. There are infinite

unintended consequences of acting in unfamiliar ways in unfamiliar places…do our inter-

> vention debates exist on a separate plane, that of symbolic rather than practical politics? Or, to put it somewhat brutally, are we talking about people in desperate need of aid or are we talking about ourselves when we debate such matters?... [T]he debate differs little from those that have taken place over the man-made disasters of ethnic cleansing and massacre (Rieff 124).

Cross-cultural examinations intersect with the affects on the intra-corporeal. Charles and Ray Eames' *The Powers of Ten* youth educational film and book demonstrate an exquisite simulacrum of the call-and-response between our micro-corporeal worlds and the macro-cosmos. DeLanda asks, "How can we create a new social ontology that is neither micro nor macro?" (*Gilles Deleuze and Science* seminar, EGS 2008). This model translates from individual bodies to social bodies; micro-politics to global economic relations. "[P]hilosophical and scientific approaches to the world in terms of Being—of permanence, of numerically and temporally identical things, such as the atoms of Newtonian physics—[is] a useful fiction" (ZMERS 3). I am appropriating Galileo's[170] paradigmatic vision in the context of a fertile intersection of ethnicity, aesthetics, and sexuality that offers a model for shifting our comprehension of the potential of active citizenship. In opposition, an ethnocentric constriction of Galileo's vision reifies infrastructures of illusory monolithic consciousness and behavior.

Monolithicizing colonialism via humanitarian imperialism as a "useful fiction" that rigidifies the "wall of antithesis" (Barthes) is the result of

[170] See Brecht's *Galileo* for an interrogation of micro-politics reflecting cosmic relationships.

rationing (judging, dichotomizing) normative temporality and an "Apollonian, mechanistic, atomistic reality of substance" (ZMERS 26). The "rescue politics" of humanitarian intervention embodies a language that is involved "in property and its relations" (Kafka), i.e. in its "proper" signified or meaning, compared to a language that is irreducibly "*andeutend*" as in "allusive"… thus a "signifier" that is never "proper" or with "property" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). I am not questioning the commodification of our bodies and psyches (to be sure, my position as professional artist and as a therapeutic body-worker (yoga teacher) depends on it, but it is the very core of what is deemed socially appropriate—a tyranny of the proper—that renders "property" so dangerous.[171]

[171] For a remarkable exploration of the socio-economic, aesthetic, and communal vitality of gleaning and its concomitant prohibitions, see Agnès Vardas' film *Les Gleneaux et Moi*.

1993. Dhaka. I was invited to travel through Bangladesh to investigate the impact of international Food Aid. I visited the Ministry of Culture, Finance Ministry, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, among several other governmental institutions—including the President Abdur Rahman Biswaseach of Bangladesh. What I didn't realize before I arrived was that my invitation was sponsored by USIA, a branch of the CIA. I inadvertently was engaging in contemporary colonialism—US style democracy via universalized ethics that translate as cultural dependency and erasure. My years of working in the international development sector illuminated our country's drive to render the ethnographic other ob-scene. International

charities employ market-economy business practices that are "…representative of the instrumentality and purposefulness of conceptual thought and language…" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). CARE, Unicef, USAID, and even PeaceCorps (particularly insidious because of its anti-imperialist agenda first implemented by President John F. Kennedy), all operate within an embedded contradictory master narrative—the bottom line is capital-accumulation and maintaining the status-quo of US values under the guise of transparent morality (neutrality)—i.e. humanitarian imperialism.

> Our sense of place involves both the perception of a preconfigured space, with its own existential coherence, and our culturally and experientially determined interpretations of it. It is always imbued with our notions of the sort of place it is—jungle, desert, urban, rural, beautiful, ugly 'typical,' and so on. …This is why Edward Casey argues that places are never neutral spaces upon which we project cultural ideas, but that places exist in our lives and define them from the very beginning and are thus prior to notions of space in the abstract. Human environments are organized so that they affect us 'even-indeed, especially-when a given perception is preconceptual and prediscursive. To be not yet articulated in concept or word is not to be nonculturally constituted, much less free from social constraints'. In many respects we learn the appropriate relations to ur social environment without becoming conscious of them. One could even argue that a asocial 'anesthetic' operates to desensitize us and conceal from us the particular conditions of our surrounds—through familiarly, habituation, or lack of a realistic alternative. We are most aware of home when we are away from home (MacDougall 59).

Poverty as a universalized concept actually diminishes the potential for equality as justice—overdetermining equality as sameness. During my travels in Bangladesh, at the commencement of each meeting—whether with the poorest rural woman discussing her community's involvement in the Grameen Bank (described in my conclusion) or with the President of Bangladesh, every Bangladeshi introduced themselves with an apology for their apparent poverty. Barthes analyzes this internalization of deficiency through the rhetoric of inoculation:

> …through the figure of inoculation difference can be recognized, taken in, tamed, and domesticated. …But inoculation is not only capable of immunizing individual consciousness, warns Barthes. Its force extends to immunize 'the collective imagination' as well. For example, the inoculating figure can encourage 'the general recognizing principal evil,' that of class hierarchy itself, can be concealed. …it provides a sanitary precaution against the contamination of the same by difference (*MO*119).

They didn't *know* they were poor until they were told; after years of World Bank, IMF, Voice of America infiltrating their psyches and individual and social bodies, they finally *absorbed* the *fact* of their poverty.[172] Poverty became the unquestioned reference point from which the Bangladeshis would define their self-worth and cultural value. This problematic is one variation of Foucault's theorization of the disjunction between power and knowledge: we know too much without knowing what to do with that knowledge. Žižek's elaboration of poverty re-interpreted as a choosing to be

[172] When I visited Bangladesh in 1993, the Human Development Index (HDI) classified Bangladesh as the "least developed country of the least developed countries"—the LDC of the LDCs.

poor and then sold as a freedom is an example of freedom of choice functioning through an entanglement of institutional and symbolic state networks: "We are forced to live as if we are free". Žižek's counters, "we must emerge against complex unwritten thick invisible rules which condition how we live freedom... how we practice freedom" (*Media, Philosophy & Psychoanalysis* seminar, EGS 2009). In "Irrational Wombs" and "Protean Sexualities", I investigate similar cases of knowledge and classification that prescribe who and what we are and do, how our bodies are identified and what they perform.[173]

Barthes took the lead from Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* in which Fanon "ruthlessly outlined the forms of colonial consciousness encouraged in people of color who live under white supremacist rule" (*MO* 117). Barthes' deconstruction of the "primary ideological forms that structure consciousness for members of Euro-white colonizer classes" (ibid.) reveals how the masquerade of morality—"natural, normal, and neutral categories of being" (ibid.)—have once again gripped our personal and social interactions and understandings of ourselves and others.

> This rhetoric constructs the most seemingly innocuous forms of personal and everyday life—of subjectivity, of citizenship itself…a structure, a rhetoric for being that orders and regulates Western social space and consciousness…that invite citizen-subjects to faultlessly consume ideology, and to guilelessly reproduce 'depoliticized' and supremacist forms of speech, consciousness, morality, values, law, family life, and personal relations (ibid.).

[173] Two additional examples of superimposed social systems of representation that I theorize in following chapters involve both sexuality and childbirth. For example, in a sexual context, I didn't know I "shouldn't" ejaculate until it became clear how unfamiliar my behavior was: my male partners' surprise, fetishization, feeling impressed with themselves. In the context of childbirth, there are many stories of women who gave birth and only later found out that they were "supposed" to feel pain. In footnotes 323, 452, and 477 I refer to these erotics of not-knowing as an emanating libidinal economy. In contrast, in his introduction to *The Legend of Freud,* "Uncanny Thinking", pp. 2-4, see Weber's "knowing without knowing".

The insidiousness of US democracy and representation are bound in an everted dialectic. Economic status offers unlimited access to overriding pre-scripted bounds of normalized morality. Repression of sexual desire with self and/or other, the problematic of the constructed desire of marriage as contract binding, and erasure of imagination erode erotic politics and Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva* (discussed below). Similarly, Nietzsche "denigrated the 'slave morality' of Christianity...[and hated] Christian asceticism, middle-class sentimentality, and democratic uplift" (A. Star 10).

> Many gays and lesbians have objected to campaigns to institute 'gay marriage' on the grounds that these legal developments assimilate same-sex relationships to a heterosexual model rather than challenging its terms. If this is equality, they claim, then it looks suspiciously like the erasure of socially subordinate identities rather than their genuine incorporation into the polity (Cressida Heyes).

Western democracy-as-(not so veiled)-Christianity and its seeming counter-hegemony, Chinese Communism, are perhaps two sides of the same coin. Totalizing equality sustains repressive tactics in both Chinese Communism and Western Democracy. Equality is constitutive of restricted bodily encounters. We witness the Chinese proletariat who is not permitted to experience romantic love or any kind of lust, including auto-eroticism.[174] In the context of Western excess, in contrast to "the masses" having a choice about experiencing their sexuality publicly,

[174] See the scene with the "Masturbators" hiding, being outed, and finally brutally arrested in the park bushes in Anchee Min's novel, *Red Azalea,* p.179.

Paris Hilton's upper class status gives her unrestricted access to public sex through her doggie-style internet pornography—making her increasingly marketable. Congruently, the "cunning of reason" operates as an *interpretive* system of equivalence, a consensual prosthetic: "The ideal of consent...makes sense only to the degree that the terms in question submit a consensually established meaning. Terms that mean in equivocal ways are thus a threat to the ideal of consensus" (*ES* 86).

Post-Humanism: Digital Visualizing Technologies

My exploration of contradictory globalized post-human dynamics addresses the construction of sight and of desire as anti-intellectualism, translatability, and psyche-somatic integrity. By attempting to converge these post-modern conditions, I offer an additional strategy of fracturing the toxic mimicry of ostensible neutrality. The beauty and horror of post-humanism in our digitized age is that it affirms and denies such radical contradictions:[175] Schirmacher's concept of *Homo Generator* asserts that "a philosopher worthy of his or her profession has to love and hate technology at the same time, acknowledging our debt to Kierkegaard who made such contradictory moves a powerful indirect communication".[176] Post-humanism's interstitial master-narrative of progress can be both absolutist and reactionary, while voicing playful, critical, and self-reflective polyvalent

[175] "'Anorexia,' she writes, 'is usually an illness of plenty not of famine, as depression is one of times of peace and prosperity, not of war.' Having wept, raved, trembled and hallucinated our way into the 21st century, when 'the sum of information available in any given minute is larger than it has ever been in history," we've conceived 'a condition in which attention is at a deficit" (Appignanesi cited in Harrison article, *New York Times*).

[176] See Wolfgang Schirmacher, "Homo Generator: Militant Media & Postmodern Technology": http://www.egs.edu/faculty/schirmacher/homo.html.

languages, including that of the body.[177]

The construction of sight predetermines the status of reality. When we make assumptions, we are too often convinced that they represent an unequivocal fact. In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories,* Salman Rushdie's Genie, a typically uncanny Rushdie character, taunts us: "Believe in your own eyes and you'll get into a lot of trouble, hot water, a mess" (63). Rushdie teaches us to unravel vulnerability within a Riemannian field[178] of conscious subjectivity. Ulfers refers to Riemann's non-Euclidean geometry as a lived metaphor for Nietzsche's version of the irreducible complexity of truth as *unbearable*. Truth, then, is uncanny: The uncanny is an "unbearable limit between inside and outside, ego and other" (Kristeva 1982*:* 140). As with the *extimate* of pregnancy (discussed in "Irrational Wombs), the outside cannot contain the inside. Conversely, the inside is a becoming of the outside. "It is not something that is 'out there'...as a crisis of the proper and natural, it disturbs any straightforward sense of what is inside and what is outside" (Royle 2). What is homeless has no "property". In contrast to reductive binaries and Euclidean space as conceptual appetite, everything is implicated in a chiasmic double orbit of Nietzsche's "truth". Because of its mercurial character, I associate this truth with vulnerability. Through my images and collaborative performances, I want the body to continually defy the assumption that it is easily categorized by blurring its own constructed boundaries of difference/sameness, pleasure/

[177] As with Nietzsche's "joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming," (Derrida 1978: 292) an affirmation that "tries to pass beyond man and humanism ", post-humanism asserts possibilities that thrive beyond the No into the Yes! (which is not a negation of the No). My body conscious workshops focus on one definition of commitment, "the innocence of knowing how not to know" (Cixous 1991: xii)—one version of Cixous' "second innocence" originates from Baudelaire.

[178] As a result of his deep connection to his intuition, in 1854, George Friedrich Riemann disobeyed Euclidian geometry and discovered a way to describe curved spaces.



PLATE 14

pain, expectation/unfamiliarity: "...since it is not a question of sheepishly holding to what is already known, I see no reason not to provoke violently my comrades to perhaps unhoped for excess, even by entering into details that others, seemingly more virile, will judge tiresome and decadent" (*VE* 74).

The extreme popularity of the 2010 film, *Avatar* represents a useful example of the simultaneous vacuous and hyperbolic imagination embraced by US popular culture—the neocolonizing version of post-humanism. At this point, I will not discuss *Avatar's* perhaps all-too-obvious imperialist discourse of invader versus indigenous peoples, the "noble savage", etc., but rather I am interested in totalitarian normalizing art-as-entertainment production and consumption. I am offering specific examples of my encounters with censorship in order to illustrate why I find the public reception of a film like *Avatar* to be insidious and illustrative of our cultural somnambulism, our unconscious habitual behavior that inherently eliminates magic and our potential to pay attention to the uncanny fertility of our differences. Rather than taking for granted the "realness" of our everyday lives, I am defining magic as a conscious process of witnessing the infinite potential of each moment, each interaction.

In France, "la réalité dépasse le fiction" is an idiomatic expression that evokes E.T.A. Hoffman's exhortation in *The Sandman,* "There is nothing more marvelous or madder

than real life". The idea that reality goes beyond fiction compels me to engage my students' and viewers' corporeal imaginations. This perspective can be useful as we examine entertainment-based digital media in popular culture. The intersection of entertainment, consumerism, and ethnocentrism (theorized in Chapter Four) form a collective social and individual violence through which we take for granted our bodies and consciousness—i.e. decision-making processes, how we perceive the familiar and unfamiliar now ingrained in institutionalized use of digital technologies, specifically media. Bataille's exploration of sovereignty becomes a critical lens through which we can loosen the invisible grip of this holy trinity (entertainment, consumerism, and ethnocentrism): "Social difference is at the basis of sovereignty, and it is by positing sovereignty that the men of distant times gave differentiation its full scope…" (*AS 1* 349). Difference is rooted and thrives in the unknown. In its nothingness, "the unknowable of the moment" (nt. 5, 440), sovereignty disavows servile and subordinate habitual action. Nothing[179] is "the honest simplicity of imperfection...I define unalloyed sovereignty as *the miraculous reign of unknowing*" (*AS 2,3* nt. 3, 5 440). The simultaneous devolving/evolving of this erotics of the unknown[180] manifests in *wabi-sabi:* "And nothingness itself-instead of being empty space, as in the West-is alive with possibility…wabi-sabi suggests that the universe is in constant motion towards or away from potential" (Koren 45).

[179] Andy Warhol as a quintessential BwO represents this Nothingness. See discussion below.

[180] This eroticism induces "a trembling of knowing the unknowable" (Royle 35).

[181] Also see "The Tales of Hoffman" performed at the Berlin Opera in the 1950s.

[182] See my detailed discussion of Spinoza's ethics in "Protean Sexualities".

Like *wabi-sabi* and E.T.A. Hoffman,[181] physicist Stephen Hawking insists on the infinitely relational fertility of flux. He proclaims that everything we need is already within us just waiting to be realized. In this "regime of conjunction and disjunction... new forms of socialization and a new awareness of the capacity of anyone" (Rancière 2006*:* 5), there is magic in witnessing what already exists. When we pay attention to the constantly shifting unknown that is right in front of us, we recognize that, as Spinoza claimed, no one knows what the body can do (*BD* 77).[182] Sigmund Freud's citation of Hamlet, "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy," invokes the infinite relational potential of the ineffable. Community is re-opened, becoming-vulnerable when:

> we find the pathos that impels us to seek *new values*. In sum: the world might be far more valuable than we used to believe; we must see through the naiveté of our ideals, and while we thought we accorded it the highest interpretation, we may not even have given our human existence a moderately fair value. What has become *deified*? The value instincts in the community (that which made possible its continued existence) (Nietzsche *The Will to Power*, § 32, pp. 22).

Instead of being attached, thus constrained by our exclusionary perceptions and the fantasy of answers as destinations, I would like to create environments in which there are nomadic margins that transfigure as they overlap—a continuous folded edge in which several equilibriums co-exist. Recalling

Deleuze's investigation of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz's curvilinear time-space architectural foldings, my work inhabits the stripping away of habit. A peripatetic imbrication which thrives in a conscious awareness of the Law of Impermanence:[183] "...a Baroque mathematical physics whose goal is curvilinearity. With Leibniz, the curvature of the universe is prolonged according to three other fundamental notions: the fluidity of matter, the elasticity of bodies, and the motivating spirit as a mechanism" (Papadakis 5). Analogously, Spinoza's spiritual ethics unfurl as affirmative nomadic thought—we are incessantly undergoing radical transformation.

Within these migratory fields, I feel compelled to discuss what I see as a dangerous phenomenon of digital photography: a reflection of our addiction to certainty and the familiar, and our fear of the ambiguous nature of interpretation.[184] Throughout the 90s, because my photographs explored the unfamiliar or immediately unrecognizable, viewers reduced my images to the categories of pornography or abstraction.[185] Today, viewers assume they are digitally manipulated. Photo-shop is the norm in commercial and fine art photography in which order, rationality, and the familiar are sanctioned as "the real" within the domain of the public and the everyday. As a result of this shift in perception, my photographic images are frequently interpreted as "not real". What I see as my reality through the camera lens invokes Bataille's *coincidentia oppositorum*—a

[183] The law of impermanence straddles multiple temporal networks.

[184] "Showing this ethereal image to my friends and colleagues registered yet another reason why the act and its visual trace are queer. While a few people recognized the image as that of a toilet bowl, many saw it as a breast, some only as a nipple, others as an anus, and still others as a belly button. It is not an image that is epistemologically framed and grounded, but instead, is performatively polyvalent. The fundamental indeterminacy of the image made me feel that its ephemerality and its sense of possibility were profoundly queer" (Munoz 6). Because of the relationships within the image, my photographs explore this queerness as an expansion of possibility.

[185] See my discussion on interpretation and the unknowable noumenon in the section "Inhabiting the Unknown through Ambiguity and Contradiction".



PLATE 15

continual exchange of differences. In fact, nothing is manipulated during the analog developing/printing process which I do myself—now rare among contemporary color photographers. My commitment to Deleuze's non-teleological flux offers a deviation from the tyrannical laws of normalcy that digital imagery may inadvertently impose. The assumption that my photographs are digitally manipulated coincides with our learned compulsion to be categorically certain of the illusion of absolute truth:

> Borrowing from Comolli, I call the visual, hard-core knowledge-pleasure produced by the *scientia sexualis* a 'frenzy of the visible'. …[T]his frenzy is neither an aberration nor an excess; rather, it is a logical outcome of a variety of discourses of sexuality that converge in, and help further to produce, technologies of the visible. ...[T]he very reverse can be true: the very invention of cinema develops, to a certain extent, from the desire to place the clocked and measured bodies produced by the first machines into narratives that naturalize their movement (Williams 36).

What concerns me is how digital imagery is considered the next frontier, the edge of progress in a vertical hierarchy of imagination—obliterating the infinite possibilities of exploring what already exists, while ignoring both the messiness and the magic and intensity of our everyday worlds. My argument is not a dismissal of digital manipulation itself as an art form:

> Since the flesh is the frontier zone in the development of pancapitalism, and the situation and apparatus of invasion change with every passing

> moment, strategic commitment requires a very radical gamble on the part of resistant forces.… by attacking the flesh machine, which has been presented as a progressive boon to humanity, the attacker is immediately put in the position of a neo-luddite. Science and technology in and of themselves are not the problem, nor have they ever been. The real problem is that science and technology are developed, deployed, and controlled by the predatory system of pancapitalism (Critical Art Ensemble 2001: 7).

A recent article published in a philosophy journal presented the predicament of a group of graduate chemistry students. The students had become accustomed to conducting their experiments in a virtual reality, but when they returned to real world lab experiments, they found they were incapable of coping with the multiple variables that are inherent in the unpredictability of our material world. Their false sense of control and habituated perfectionism left them powerless to address the actual messiness of their lived environments. For example, a beaker breaking during an experiment threw the students into a state of disequilibrium. They had been stripped of their capacity to think for themselves.[186] In his "Homo Geneator: Media and Postmodern Technology", Schirmacher states: "Life seems to be the one thing over which we have no control, a force of the universe rather than a human enterprise... Computers may be able to do incredible things, but it is not likely that they can serve as a paradigm for intelligence". This erasure of attending to the unpredictable is consistent with our mechanized world that resists co-

[186] Just as in science departments, art departments are equally falling into the perverse entanglement of the machineries of a modern state. Enrollment for drawing and painting classes has radically dropped. Dwindling traditional art classes are being replaced by new media and design courses—too often students no longer believe they "need" the human body to study drawing or painting (Julia, professional nude model).



PLATE 16

existing conflicting complexities:

> Diversity of the cultural ecology is a desirable state of affairs, specifically in opposition to the accelerating trend towards the uniform digitalization of all sensory experience, wherein an electronic 'reader' stands between experience and observation, and all manifestation is encoded identically (Koren 8).

When we believe that our quotidian existence is inadequate and that within this "limitation" a zone of normalcy, representability, neutrality exists, we eviscerate (*de-cide*)[187] our creative potential and our willingness to jump into the unknown—be fully alive. We feed directly into the machine of self-censorship and acceptable social behavior. The way people see themselves and their worlds in relation to digital photography too often replicates unchecked consumerism. Instead of recognizing or using what we intuitively know, we have an insatiable hunger for more—having it all and yet wanting more—the Stepford Wives[188] syndrome—a reflection of advanced capitalism. For example, Voice of America pumps these values (the masquerade of morality/illusion of neutrality) across the international airwaves. The apotheosis of conformism and humanitarian imperialism is translated as a utopic paragon of "the way things ought to be". Inevitably, eugenics and self-censorship form the center of this automated assimilationist code of being. This reflection is a direct result of our diminishing collective cultural imagination and growing fear, distrust of the unknown i.e. difference. An analysis of digital photography in the context of the uncanny becomes a vital

[187] "The 'functional' sharing that sanitarianism realizes within the interior of the apartment, by ascepticizing each one of its presumed functions, in an exclusive environment—a place for cooking, another for sleeping, for eating, for smoking, for bathing, for the toilet, for rubbish, and so on implicitly accredits the other division, the division that involves appropriation and social classes" (Virilio 100).

[188] In order to create a Stepford Wife, you have to start with fear.

recognition that "the distinction between imagination and reality is effaced" (Freud, *The Uncanny,* 367). The commercialization of our collective consciousness feeds our voracious post-human addiction to material accumulation.

Of course, the specificity of this "our", this "we", must be located. The voraciousness of the 1%, those who have gained the most from the losses of the 99%, has different consequences than the voraciousness of the 99%.[189] But what I am concerned with here is not this radical shift in scale, but the *how of the hinges* of our consumer-driven corporatocracy. The economic collapse of 2008 demonstrates the madness of spectral doubleness—a rhizomatic post-human failed entanglement of the global financial system.[190] "In our globalized world, all economies are linked together" (Prime Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong, cited in *Inside Job* 2010). Whether we are unsnarling the epidemic of mortgage fraud or the implications of embodied energy in an entrenched NAFTA/WTO economy,[191] the politics of eversion[192] manifest as a *détournement*: "What used to be viewed as a conflict of interest is now looked upon as synergy" (Jack Rubman, Telecom analyst). Derivative engineers who originally sought out risk-resistance, ended up creating a product that engendered the highest risks possible—risks without liability.[193] In 2005, Raghuram G. Rajan, the Chief Economist for the IMF, 2003-2007, announced to a meeting of the central bankers of the world, "[d]evelopments in the financial sector have

[189] Giroux critiques a Con Edison billboard advertisement that blames drivers for their fuel consumption rather than taking responsibility as a corporate contributor to global warming.

[190] The affects of this rhizomatic rapaciousness became apparent each time new foreclosures rippled through another neighborhood. A staggering fifteen million foreclosures were estimated because of a transference of risk. The system of checks and balances failed at every point.

[191] "Let's assume we've been successful in passing a national ban on marketing to children. This new law could readily be challenged, and ultimately overturned, by the World Trade Organization. ...Toy companies in Mexico and Canada could sue the US Government through the WTO, claiming that the US ban on marketing to children is an unfair barrier to trade... the WTO makes its decisions through panels of unelected judges who meet in secret and whose decisions cannot be appealed...any US law can be overturned if the WTO deems it a barrier to trade... They gave the WTO far more enforcement clout than any other international body... as corporate power grows nationally and internationally, our ability to protect our children diminishes accordingly" (Alan Kanner, Stop Commercial Exploitation of Children (SCEC)).

[192] What I theorize as a politics of eversion converges with Weber's theatrical space: "Representation is thus turned inside-out, but the audience, conversely, can be said to be turned outside-in" (*LF* 6).

[193] Post-2008 economic crisis, investment bankers haven't

led to an expansion of its ability to spread risks [derivatives]...incentives that encourage bankers to take risks that might eventually destroy their own firms or even the entire financial system" (cited in *Inside Job* 2010). Although perhaps the scale shifts, Bataille's appraisal of the continual non-arrival of destruction[194] is eerily reminiscent of the 2008 crash:

> 'Conspicuous consumption' for Bataille is not a pernicious remnant of feudalism that must be replaced by total utility; instead, it is the perversion of man's 'need to destroy.' The noble, and even more hypocritically, the bourgeois, use the 'destruction' not to destroy completely, but simply to reaffirm their position in the hierarchy. … Production in Bataille's view is clearly subordinate and posterior to destruction: people create in order to expend, and if they retain things they have produced, it is only to allow themselves to continue living, and thus destroying (*VE* xvi).

Weber speaks of modernity as "the more we move forward, the more we move toward destruction" (*Media and The Uncanny* seminar, EGS 2008). In his 2008 lectures on Kafka and Nietzsche at NYU, Ulfers explored Freud's idea of mirage,[195] of a showing that shows nothing. If our contemporary idea of *life* (as Duden claims) is rooted in a spectral doubleness, then life itself is a product of the uncanny. The catastrophe[196] and ecstasy[197] of interdependent becomings is emblematic of this post-human uncanny. We must experience an inherent anxiety at being forced to confront the fact that one's life requires another's pain and death, and that such lives, pains, and deaths are not equally distributed. "[B]odies and worlds

missed a beat. Instead of paying for their crimes—literally and figuratively, they are even more embroiled in even higher stakes. Arendt's foreboding comment, "men are unable to forgive what they cannot punish" (Arendt cited in D. May 88), becomes searingly applicable as we discover the depths of the interrelatedness of economic infrastructures/superstructures. Since the regulators involved were an integral part of the profit chain, it's obvious that these people would not be brought to justice. Not only have they not been made accountable for their actions, they have been rewarded by being invited into the system of checks and balances.

[194] A prime example of this problematic is the push to re-cycle. Recycling gives the "good citizen" permission to consume *more* because it assuages the guilt of waste. We are comfortable with the illusion that our buying habits no longer expand our carbon imprint.

[195] I am drawing the connection among the concept of mirage, fantasy, and the ob-scene (enforced invisibility).

[196] Catastrophes of interdependency range from the economic crisis to the AIDS epidemic to global warming—all outcries of embodied energy.

[197] I witness the ecstasy of interdependency through Butler's ec-static being outside and beside oneself (see "Self-Censorship: Toxic Mimicry, Internalized Fascism, and Phallic Norms") as a way to attend to Ronell's analysis of friendship, discussed in "The Scandal of Ekphrasis: Transfiguration, Collaboration, and Transdisciplinarity".

come into being through one another"; the "preservation of alterity…[is] flesh's ethical possibility" (Sarah Ahmed CSA). Alterity, like vulnerability, enliven the possibilities of a shared corporeal ethic. My body, my words, and my images struggle against the consuming normalization-homogenization that dictates our cultural superstructure—society's drive to identify and identify with, to assimilate, make familiar—what Freud identified as the "double [that] has become an object of terror" (Royle 143). Assimilation nullifies the specificity of the body. The post-human body, one which may display the characteristics of a "body without organs", BwO,[198] presents an uncanny demonstration of our civilization's resistance to a socio-erotic ethic:

> The electronic body oscillates between panic perfection and hysterical aphanisis. The electronic body inscribes the flesh as the abject. At any moment the organic body could fracture and its surface could decay with sickness, ooze, and squirt anti-social fluids. The electronic body has shown ad nauseum that the spilling of guts, the projecting of vomit, the splitting of skin, the eruption of pus, or any sign of the organic, in screenal space exists there only to instill fear, contempt, and embarrassment (Acker 217).

Normalized aesthetics resist the organic abject—becoming-animal, and resist its shift from the uncanny double of terror. Perhaps Andy Warhol represented the apotheosized (if that is possible, not too contradictory) BwO: "I'm sure I'm going to look in the mirror and see nothing. People are calling me a mirror and if a mirror looks into a mirror what is there to see? ...Some critic called me the Nothingness

[198] Deleuze and Guattari describe the BwO as a Gordian knot of plateaus: "… how to make oneself a BwO, and how to produce the corresponding intensities without which it would remain empty…Gregory Bateson uses the term plateau for continuous regions of intensity constituted in such a way that they do not allow themselves to be interrupted by any external termination, any more than they allow themselves to build towards a climax; examples are certain sexual, or aggressive, processes in Balinese culture. A plateau is a piece of immanence. Every BwO is made up of plateaus. Every BwO is itself a plateau in communication with other plateaus on the plane of consistency. Every BwO is a component of passage... anarchy and unity are one and the same things, not the unity of the One, but a much stranger unity that applies only to the multiple… The BwO is opposed not to the organs but to that organization of the organs called the organism" (*AOed* 158).

Himself and that didn't help my sense of existence any. Then I realized that existence is nothing and I felt better" (Warhol 7).

Irrational Wombs

> We have gotten used to being shown no matter what, within or beyond the limited range of human sight. This habituation to the monopoly visualization-on-command strongly suggests that only those things that can in some way be visualized, recorded, and replayed at will are part of reality…new generations are being socialized to see whatever appears on the screen. ...But what if the facts are only modern phantoms? Then, through the interplay of imagination and media, these highly suggestive images take on final shape in the flesh of experience. ...Pictures not only show, but interpret one's body. ...Pregnant women today experience their bodies in a historically unprecedented way. …The more intensive the prenatal care provided, the greater the probability that women are affected in their own bodies by the image they have learned to see on the screen. Ultrasound imaging has come to play a symbolically predominant role in prenatal care…it plays on the fantasy of patients for TV-like inside news; it promises information, certainty, and control (Duden 1991: 51, 75, 97).

In the US, biological events are assumed to be medical crises that involve a generic protocol. Giving birth is the number one reason people go to the hospital. The medicalization of birth is a fifty billion dollar a year industry.[199] Episiotomies are the most common surgery in the US—officially sanctified female genital mutilation. Tearing, rather than cutting, allows the body itself to determine how much it needs to accommodate the birthing process and heals more thoroughly than cutting. Medical interventions that were once only practiced

[199] In contrast, on average a "...home birth costs sixty-eight percent less than in a hospital" (Monroe 22).

on high-risk pregnancies are now automatically imposed on all pregnant women for the convenience of the medical practitioner. It is a statistical fact that the US has one of the highest infant *and* maternal mortality rates of industrial and non-industrial countries.[200] When digital technologies are indiscriminately plugged into the elaborate super-structure of convenience-culture, the actual conditions of the body in question are bypassed.[201] Our imaginations atrophy and are restricted to standardized expectations of the known. Through digital technologies, advanced capitalism institutionalizes a reductionist rejection of interdependency—what Bataille identified as a "cosmic circuit of energy" (*AS 1*).[202] This energy circuit, like the principles of permaculture,[203] is analogous to Buckminster Fuller's conviction of *ephemeralization*—using minimal material for maximum performance. Fuller declares: "[D]o more with less".

A prime example of the ways in which modern digital technology has subsumed our unnameable innate body-knowledge is the hyper-media-tized medicalization of pregnancy and birth, resulting in a post-human transformation of women's psyches, and literally, the dismemberment—an institutionalized *section*ing—of our bodies.[204] *Every* form of popular media educates the public to expect fear, pain, and disempowerment as an inevitability during pregnancy, labor and childbirth—ironically one of the most natural experiences in ones life. Precisely because of widespread disinformation that "experts know more about our bodies than we do", Ina May Gaskin, North America's infamous midwife, confirms this extraordinary perversity when she

[200] "Every ninety seconds a woman dies in childbirth. Ninety-nine percent of those women live in developing countries. ...While the United States spends more money than any other country on health care, it ranks 39th in the maternal mortality rates worse than most comparable European countries and Canada" (Monroe 22).

[201] Grosz reminds us of the bothness of our bodies that technological medicalization neglects to acknowledge, let alone incorporate: "[T]he body itself—is both biological and psychical. This understanding of the body as a hinge or threshold between nature and culture makes the limitations of a genetic, or purely anatomical or physiological, account of bodies explicit" (Grosz cited in Jones 12).

[202] In his *The Will to Power,* Nietzsche theorizes that energy flows in a circular or cyclical pattern. This assertion develops into his concept of eternal recurrence.

[203] The practice of permaculture utilizes "excess". Permaculture applies observations from nature as models of sustainable efficiency for agricultural and architectural complementary systems—a material of *convivencia*.

[204] Cesarean section statistics and maternal mortality rates in the US come from the documentary film, "The Business of Being Born". The Cord-Blood Banking Industry is a new massive money-making venture which undermines the initial relationship between a new born and its mother. In this scenario, immediately after the baby and placenta

states, "…most US women remain convinced that their bodies are poorly made to give birth" (Gaskin 315).[205]

With this perspective in mind, I disagree with Dufourmantelle who, in her discussion of Spinoza, claims: "we were separated in the violence of birth, but apart from that act nothing is separated, no more I, you, we, us, all of you, than the order of things posited in language" (*BD* 98). Zazu's birth, his body leaving mine, was *not* a separation—we became more connected than ever. Reminiscent of Rancière's "together apart", our discrete borders actually (re)connected us. We became a becoming. My son's birth embodied a *disidentification*. In a Heraclitean sense, birth is an integrated process of transformation, not a definitive severing. Birth embodies a remarkable contraction of union and separation—not of splitting away or a sectioning, but an interconnectedness—a lived *différance*.



PLATE 17, MY BIRTH OF ZAZU AND HIS TWO PLACENTAS

are born (vaginally or sectionally) the cord is cut and the cord-blood is collected and frozen. The procedure costs thousands of dollars and is legitimized as a life-saving device—either for the newborn anytime in the future in case of an accident, the blood transplant would be available, or to "save" someone else's life. What is not advertised is that the newborn *needs* that blood. Hospital procedure *requires* that the cord be cut immediately after the infant is born, often followed by forced removal of the placenta that can be life-threatening. If cut too soon (which is the norm), the baby does not receive approximately 10% of its necessary blood. I chose not to cut the umbilical cord for almost two hours after Zazu was born (until the cord stopped pulsating)—both so that he wouldn't need to get Vitamin K shots and so that he and I could continue to remain connected, a significant component to the "scientification of love" (see Michel Odent, *The Functions of the Orgasms*).

[205] The natural expansion of vagina is like that of the penis—tissues are made to engorge and transform. If we are designed for an egg and sperm to come together to develop a human body, why do we assume that we are not designed to bring this body into the world? (Ecstatic Birth Teleconference 2011).

Dufourmantelle's privileging the physical as a lens through which we identify our relations not only aborts our potential chiasmic unity, but is inconsistent with much of her text that emphasizes the multiplicity of corporeal cognition—ranging from the spiritual to the energetic. Additionally, the now implicit language of violence and pain associated with (enforced medicalized) birth has pre-determined the ways in which women and men can experience a miraculous manifestation of Spinoza's concept *what a body can do*. The experience of giving birth is the apotheosis of "What it means to be a human being" (Schirmacher, *Homo Generator*), and ultimately, the most elemental:

> Be with *it*. That is all. Be it. No separation, no refusal. Do not try to run away, to stop, to deny. And mostly, no fear! Rather, allow *it* to take you there…There is nothing to do. Just as in love-making. Open and let go. Surrender. Allow it to happen. Being merely a witness. A bewildered, raptured witness (Frederick Leboyer).

When we let go of our preconceived ideas of the way things "should be", we can witness the miracle—we can inhabit the Dionysian metamorphosis of expansion within contraction.

This prepares us for a nuanced examination of sexuality, pregnancy, labor, and childbirth in the context of a discussion of digital technology and a broader examination of post-humanism. The culture industry and medical establishment have appropriated these fundamentally natural processes. Both men

[206] I chose not to have any ultrasounds throughout my entire pregnancy.

and women have internalized these "new, improved" modifications of natural functions, for example, the current trend of 3-D/4-D ultrasounds[206] during pregnancy—not covered by insurance. Our culture-of-convenience, "values and practices of disposability" (Giroux, truth-out.org), breeds fear of self and other. In her *Disembodying Women: Perspectives on Pregnancy and the Unborn,* Duden re-examines our psychic and corporeal interiority. As a critical historian of technology, Duden unravels the social construction of "life": Technological interventions "...giv[e] embodied reality to managed constructs…certainties that have led [society] into a corner where pregnancy is defined in terms of the modern fetus and then in terms of something called 'life,' for which we are all asked to take public responsibility" (Duden 1991: 4). I concern myself with this problematic not just as a social activist, writer, analog color photographer, but as a new mother who rejected *all* medical interventions during my pregnancy, labor, and birth of our baby boy Zazu—a home-birth on my 40th birthday (see plate 17).

If we were to support both institutional and popular educational systems that encourage intersection, contradiction, and collaboration, we could potentially generate a participatory democracy rooted in the collective and individual psycho-anatomy—one that embraces inherent contradictions of modern technology. A creatively critical citizenship enables and embraces transversal thinking. I see our re-conceptualizing of sexuality and birth as an

essential step along this Brechtian, non-linear path in which carnal intimacy's "temporality is neither that of development (one experience building on the last in order to create a direction or movement) nor that of investment (a relation between means and specific or pregiven ends)" (*STP* 195). Sex, pregnancy, labor, and childbirth are quintessential deterritorialized Nietzschean Moments: "The center is everywhere. Bent is the path of eternity" (Lingis 1998: 87). Incalculable peregrinations (Ulfers) as corporeal cognition in relation to collaborative citizenship deploy a Deleuze-Guattarian commitment to heterogeneous investigations as embodied thinking—rupturing cultural corporeal assumptions, "the scintillating zig-zag path of creative thought...that criss-cross the univocity of Being so as to enable and bring to actuality new assemblages, new concepts, new affects and new interminglings and comminglings of bodies" (Blake 183).

This commitment to investigate and share psyche-somatic subtleties encourages my viewers and pregnant women to re-inhabit their bodies' potential for presence and pleasure—to remember what already exists within themselves and in relation to one another. Gaskin contends: "If we were allowed to witness what really happens when the sexuality of birth is honored, I believe that our extreme fear of birth would begin to subside" (164). A single orgasm is thought to be 22 times as relaxing as the average tranquilizer (Sussman). Most doctors are either unaware of, refuse

[207] When a woman is sexually stimulated, oxytocin flows through her system causing her uterus to contract, either in the form of orgasms or labor contractions. For example, labor can be induced through nipple stimulation or clitoral stimulation—both make the uterus contract. Sex can be used as a conscious tendency for relaxation, induction, and propulsion: a) same body parts (genitals) and hormones involved (oxytocin, relaxin, prostaglandin), b) Natural Expulsive Reflex (NER); Fetal Ejection Reflex (i.e. uterine contractions), c) the lived/embodied concept of the Erotic—the connection with oneself and with the universe—has an opportunity to flourish.

[208] "Libido is not irrational, illogical, or even non-rational; rather it exhibits a logic of its own governed by modes of intensities" (*STP* 196).

to acknowledge, or are trained to ignore the euphoric healing effects of oxytocin, released during orgasm in both men and women, and during birth[207] and breast-feeding. Like the medical establishment, psychoanalysis produces a conceptual system which pathologizes the libido life-drive.[208]

> One can see that eternal recurrence constitutes one of the moments Nietzsche promised at the beginning of his public career in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the moment at which science reaches its limits and, from that 'periphery' men gaze 'into what defies illumination,' and 'when they see to their horror how logic coils up at these boundaries and finally bites its own tail—suddenly the new form of insight breaks through, tragic insight…' Eternal recurrence is a tragic insight—not merely a Nihilistic contemplation, but a braiding of ontological norms—a Dionysian insight, which defies rational illumination but which may arrive at the periphery of logic (ZMERS 14).

The Functions of the Orgasms, Michel Odent's text inspired by Wilhelm Reich's[209] *The Function of the Orgasm,* offers a remarkably specific model of erotic politics as a "tragic insight". Odent contends that the hormone oxytocin is a key component in what he calls, "the scientification of love"—an integral dimension of any compassionate, just society. Orgasm is immanence.[210] Oxytocin, the most critical hormone during orgasm and childbirth, invites the intuitive unconscious—Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva*—to engage. Many women have orgasms during birth, but may interpret them as pain because the sensations are more intense than anything previously

[209] Wilhelm Reich was known as, "...the post-Freudian renegade...sexual communist, militant 'orgast' and, latterly, collector of orgone energy" (Blake 185). Unsurprisingly, the psychoanalytic establishment viewed Reich as having succumbed to mental illness. He saw "orgastic potency" as the key to psycho-physical health and claimed to have discovered orgone, a new form of energy. This subtle biophysical energy could be collected in "orgone accumulators". His patients were to sit inside so they could harness its physio-psychological connecting power. Joining Freud's research with Marx's theories, "Reich's Sex-Pol movement was instrumental in the radical reclamation of Freud" (McLemee). See "Protean Sexualities" for a description of my Yoga and Sexuality workshops that include both Reich and Merleau-Ponty's incorporation of psychosexual health.

experienced and because women (everyone) are conditioned to expect pain.

Remarkably, the same receptors in the brain indicate *both* pleasure and pain! How we conceive of pain is determined through our language of it: pains, contractions, rushes, surges, birthing waves. Just as with language, we cannot separate what we believe about life from what we believe about birth. As I discuss in Chapter Five, protean sexualities refuse hierarchical models of resistance. They serve as a magnifying lens through which we can adjust our social conditioning, *how* we interpret energy through perception and belief. Intention determines our relationship to our corporeal cognition. Speeding and *pushing* through to the "end-result"—the illusory goal (just as with climax-oriented sex)[211] erases the potentiality of an embodied chiasmic language. "Simply from the fact that we have regarded a thing with the emotion of pleasure or pain, though that thing be not the efficient cause of the emotion, we can either love or hate it" (Spinoza 1883: 54). The pain of productivity is completely different from the pain of injury—yet in medicalized, sensationalized birth, we conflate the two:

> Her pleasant physical sensations when the baby feeds not only give rise to uterine contractions, but to a reaction closely akin to eroticism, which in many women stimulates contractions of the muscles of the pelvic floor and activates the glands of the vagina and vulva. I have heard it said that this intrusion of sexual feelings upon the purity of peaceful motherliness has so revolted some women that the conflict has inhibited the milk supply (Dick-Read).

[210] Gertrude Stein's poem, "Lifting Belly" plays with orgasm as immanence—the boundarylessness, the liberation from right and wrong.

[211] See Deleuze and Guattari's elaboration and celebration of Taoist sexuality.

In their immersion of the fecundity of tension-conflict, both Bataille and Caillois theories can be read to better comprehend the depth of the birthing woman's internalized fascism, i.e. the horror of her recognition that her sexuality contaminates the illusory innocence/purity of giving birth:

> Veiled, in the face of oppositions that vertiginously disclose themselves, in these nearly inaccessible depths which are, for me, 'the extremities of the possible' (Bataille 1986: 53).

> It seems that the concepts of pure and impure originally had not been separated from the many sentiments that in their different manifestations stimulate the complementary and antithetical forces, whose *concordia discors* structures the universe (Caillois 57).

When we step out of our own way into a Spinozan *what a body can do,* we can redistribute a structure of excess, the contradiction that involves "bliss born of pain". Sexuality is steeped in this excess: "… the application of sexual energy can make labor more effective and less painful without any use of medication" (Gaskin 239). However, due to the environment of the hospital, the flow of oxytocin is often inhibited and must be given synthetically in the form of pitocin and prostaglandin (which is actually pig semen)—an artificial version of the hormone relaxin given to induce contractions. Pitocin, the synthetic version of oxytocin, is systematically administered during hospital births in which the anonymous woman's body[212] (rendered transparent and universal) is perceived of as ill. As the pitocin overrides the natural production

[212] "Vagina and vulva are aesthetic, not aestheticized, and woman's body is a site of knowledge on woman's terms, not as something "known"-sexually, medically, or aesthetically-by men or man" (Broude 194).

and function of oxytocin, it stimulates the neo-cortex, the seat of all inhibitions—what Ulfers identifies as metaphysical trappings. The sympathetic nervous system kicks in—that which distributes the physical manifestation of fear through a fight, flight, or freeze response. Without blood and oxygen, the uterus cannot function;[213] waste products cannot be properly carried away. The patient laboring woman, now most likely lying on her back with her legs in stirrups (absolutely the most inefficient way to eliminate anything from our bodies—particularly a baby)—is diagnosed as FTP "Failure to Progress" (in midwifery circles known as the "Fear, Tension, Pain" cycle). When we fight tension with tension, when we resist sensation, we create fatigue, which during labor, is often misinterpreted as pain: "uterine contractions will seldom give rise to any pain whatsoever if unassociated with fear and tension"(Dick-Read). Scarry's investigation of the ways in which the political prisoner's body "retains" pain is reminiscent of the Western medical metaphysical paradigm of unchallenged concept of pain.[214] Similarly, the idea that the more we resist the sensation (in the case of labor), the more we immerse ourselves in that which we are attempting to avoid—pain,[215] parallels Butler's unfolding of the ways in which prohibition of language actually generates its conduction:

> The regulation of specific language "*redoubles*" the term it seeks to constrain, and can only effect this constraint through this paradoxical redoubling. ...Thus, the effort to constrain the term culminates in its

[213] Drained of blood and oxygen, the uterus literally becomes white as the layers of its muscles work against each other—again, pain surfaces when we consciously and unconsciously resist what is. Muscles tighten and constrict. Stress hormones such as cathecolomines-adrenalin are secreted.

[214] See Elaine Scarry's *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World.*

[215] Reich focused on de-solving inhibitions. He declared, "[T]he resistance itself becomes the center of the work."

> ery proliferation. ...The act of prohibition thus conjures the speech act that it seeks to constrain, and becomes caught up in a circular, imaginary production of its own making (*ES* 131).

The institutionalized denial of the sexuality of birth is now an absolute given in our totalizing, homogenizing, pharmaceutically-addicted, designer-birth culture. Designer births consist of an elective cesarean section, planned induction, and a tummy-tuck—all performed on the same day.[216] When our normal bodily processes, including childbirth,[217] are neutralized and strained through the lens of pathology, we relinquish our rights and our potential. The concept of *normal* has once again been violently distorted in the service of capitalist accretions.

This domino-effect of intervention cascades from conception (via Viagra) throughout every stage of gestation. Obstetric intervention supports pharmaceutical intervention thereby supporting the vaccination industry. Anesthetics such as sytotec may have irreversible, deleterious side effects, including the death of both mother and child.[218] C-sections are the most common form of surgery on women in the US. Once again, we are "voluntarily" sectioning ourselves as we relinquish the private arena to a coerced public norm.

Sex, labor, and childbirth are quintessentially uncanny events. If we unravel the connections between socialization and innate body-

[216] The US spends twice as much on hospital births compared to other countries.

[217] In 1900, ninety five percent of births were home births; in 1955, home births dropped to one percent.

[218] As an extension of Occupy Oakland, I co-organized the first Bay Area Birth Justice Fair—our theme was infant and maternal mortality due to over-medicalization/ hospitalization of pregnancy, labor, and childbirth. Among the invited panelists was Maddy Oden who has established an educational non-profit for low-income pregnant women in memory of her daughter and grandchild who both died because of the administration of sytotec during delivery.

knowledge, we can witness the fertility of the uncanny—an erotic interplay which embodies the unknown and engages with birth as a sacred sexual act, a dialogic self-sacrifice. The *both/and*[219] uncanny contradictory intersections amongst these events include both the emancipatory possibilities of embodying the erotic (my experiential definition of autonomy and relation) and repressive taken-for-granted assumptions about possibility, pleasure, and pain: The uncanny functions as "[s]eparation at the same time as union" (Kristeva 1982: 110). Nietzsche's *disidentification* once again becomes a mode of intensity within the chiasm of vulnerability.

Fictional Bodies: Probing The Private and The Public

As post-humanism veers between establishing and undermining universal "truths" through visualizing technologies, *scientia sexualis* pleasure-specialists research and construct sexual "facts". *Scientia sexualis* became "a scientific 'discourse of sexuality' purporting to elicit a confession of further 'truths' of sex" (Williams 98). Knowledge of the body was translated as a search for truth. Arendt identified this epoch as one of "Dark Times": "these were times when public figure[s] conceal the truth about what is happening in the world behind noble-sounding obfuscation and double-talk. She quoted Heidegger's epigram on such times, 'The light of the public obscures everything'" (May 120). The confession-quest-for-knowledge being undertaken by "experts" and technicians of pleasure demonstrated a

[219] According to Ulfers, Barthes' version of chiasmic unity in *S/Z* "is an oppositional structure in which the 'wall of antithesis,' on which 'proper' functioning is based, has become porous, leading the 'monstrosity' of both-and, neither-nor"...In order for meaning to function, by establishing the "wall of Antithesis," it is also necessary...that is the "in-between" of undecidability, be excluded, for it is, as such, "outside any classification, any meaning" and therefore a "horror." (Ulfers, *Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought* seminar, EGS 2008). Horror, the abject, abstraction all deviate from the real.

[220] Although my view of pornography differs from Dufourmantelle, I share her vivid description because it resonates across partisan lines—from ultra conservative fundamentalist Christians to 1970s feminists to liberal new age self-help gurus. For example, during a lecture at the East-West Bookstore in Chelsea,

peculiar inversion of the official censor—a *détournement,* forcing the private into the public in order to prove that it "should have" remained private. Like Heidegger's illuminated public and Foucault's *scientia sexualis*, Baudrillard's ecstasy of communication unfolds out of the explicit as obscene:

> Obscenity begins when there is no more spectacle, no more stage no more theatre, no more illusions, when everything becomes immediately transparent, visible, exposed in the raw and inexorable light of information and communication. We no longer partake of the drama of alienation, but are in the ecstasy of communication (1988).

Foucault investigates how the socio-personal *scienticia sexualis* deviates from *ars erotica.* Discursively scientific and confession-based models of Western civilization undercut the specificity of bodily experience through prescriptive behavior and reproductive utility. Identities are stripped of their relationality, rigidified through coercion and its accompanying power structures of replication—institutionalized discourses of medicine, psychiatry, prostitution, pornography,[220] pedagogy, the arts, and ethnic otherness. This system of replication, which renders an idea or an object obscene, parallels the industry of confession (historically the church, now in our modern age, social networking). Rendering our body, the other within, as obscene and the personal/sexual confession as scientific truth, are both institutional mechanisms of disabling the potential of our bodies': "the 'knowledge of

NY, the guest speaker who was discussing his "radical" mind-body healing technique read from his popular new book titled: *Infinite Love and Gratitude.* From it, he read aloud an entire page of global horrors from genocide to child molestation. Among the individual and social atrocities included, to my dismay, pornography. Dufourmantelle declares, "Pornography is not on the side of darkness but on the side of the scorching, shadowless light of midday. It flattens out contours, crushes forms, displays the better to entice, consumes the better to start allover again; it weaves a world in which everything is available and decipherable in pure transparency, in which one's thoughts are readable, opinions laid bare, discussed, lobotomized, a world in which one finally knows what drives desire, in which one can finally be done with desire. Perpetual noon under the eye of no god but the god of mendacious advertising (but a god who is aware of the lies and acknowledges them), a god for whom all flesh is a future commodity" (*BD* 64). In this light, pornography as the "territory of nonlimits" (ibid.) appears to be an institutional device of *scientia sexualis,* "an object of generalized consumption" (ibid.). But, pornography, like whiteness and other dominant cultural constructions, is by no means monolithic. Throughout my argument, I theorize de-solving this myth of unity.



PLATE 18

pleasure,' the pleasure of knowing pleasure" (Foucault 1978: 177) when conducted through socio-normative behavioral techniques actually erases our knowledge by obliterating intuition—the fertility of the unknown.

My exhortation for an erotics of not knowing is not a call for ob-scenity (in its literal *form*) or for privatizing our experiences and interpretations. Nor, is it a call for self-exposure for the sake of sensationalized exhibitionism and consumerism. As we have seen, Foucault stresses that sex has become 'the explanation of everything' (Foucault 1990: 78). My exploration is actually a demonstration of the insidiousness of the reality of Foucault's radical observation, which is central to a serious challenge of current capitalist democracy/corporatocracy. Virilio elaborates on what may initially appear to be in contradiction with Foucault's schizo-analytic reading of contemporary sexuality: "It is in the name of safeguarding modesty and against suspect promiscuity that the isolation and subsequent rupture of social communication has been instituted in the city. ...[C]ollective living seems intolerable" (Virilio 99).[221] Just as the confessional palliates our vulnerabilities, hegemonies perform as subterfuge:

> [S]anitary ideology disguises the most secret deficiencies…The progressive sterilization of all natural factors, the ever-greater repression exercised against physical man…opponents to collective man…constitutes the revolutionary potential…radically transforming social activity (Virlio 99, 100).

[221] See Rancière's inclusion of Deleuze and Guattari's "dissensual community, an aesthetic community [as] a community structured by disconnection" ("Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art", p. 5).

Just as I re-examine multiple institutional entanglements using my own experiences and theoretical arguments *as* an entanglement, I witness Foucault's critique of the '*Logic of Sex*' as a knot that can also be unsnarled while maintaining its Borgesian labyrinth. My intent is to use the metaphor of the Lyotard's Moebius-strip as a practical analytical technique for de-solving the interstitial nodes of multiple power-relationships:

> It is made from the most heterogeneous textures, bone, epithetlium, sheets to write on, charged atmospheres, swords, glass cases, people, grasses, canvases to paint. All these zones are joined end to end in a band which has no back to it, a Moebius band which interests us not because it is closed, but because it is one-sided, a Moebian skin which, rather than being smooth, is on the contrary (is this topologically possible?) covered with roughness, corners, creases, cavities which when it passes on the 'first' turn will be cavities, but perhaps on the 'second', lumps. But as for what turn the band is on, no-one knows nor will, in the eternal turn. (Lyotard 1993: 203).

One site for this process of becoming-the entanglement is an incorporation of Deleuze's philosophy of the productive, connective potential of sexuality. He asserts that Foucault's critique of *scienticia sexualis* evinces the molar organizations that reduce sexuality to sex (Deleuze 2007a: 126). This is precisely the distinction I must make between Foucault's critique of a *contraction* of possibility and my project as a liberatory *expansion*.[222] Irreducibly allusive corpo-visual language unfolds as embodied rhizomatic vulnerabilities. My project, a socio-erotic ethic of erotic politics as

[222] One of the greatest moments of paradoxical vulnerabilities is when a woman has the opportunity to give birth (see "Embodying the Unknown: Birth in the 21st Century"): "There is only expansion now and no limitation is endured. The event tolerates no *measuring,* will not in any way be *contained"* (Leboyer 210).

[223] The uncanny does not respect borders; it functions "in-between" borders (Kristeva 1982: 4)—always already the intermedial.

[224] See Chapter Four, "Violence and the Sacred: Julia Kristeva and George Bataille's Archeologies of Prohibition".

an erotics of the uncanny, advocates actively denuding connections between ideas, between objects; actively recognizing intermedialities[223] as a technique through which we can embrace and engage our vulnerabilities.

For example, the difference between "lack" (established as common law) and "not-knowing" is the difference between censorship and its concomitant absolute truths (such as hetero-normative male orgasm, whiteness, Christian consumers and laborers)[224] and a rhizomatic fertile recognition of balance as paradox, instability, and change. Movement modalities ranging from modern dance to kinesthetic awareness education to performance art emphasize the body in constant flux. Balance is chiasmic—always-already in-between falling. Balance can only manifest in movement, in conflict.[225] Tension is a "positive and necessary part of movement. Tension or 'electricity,' is understood as the energy necessary to move the body. It becomes negative only when it is held unconsciously, which we call 'frozen tension'… the psychological aspects of physical holding patterns. Reich called this psychological/physiological phenomenon 'muscles armoring'" (Becker 4).[226] Juggler-dance-physicist, Michael Moschen uses the "magic" of his acute awareness of his body's shifting relationship to objects and space. Through his focus on performative mathematics as an extension of his fluid physicality, his body becomes a living Moebius strip. Moschen's aesthetics renders him a

[225] In 2010, I collaborated with a professor of architecture on *Engaging Architectural Space: Active Participation in Environmental Passageways/ Kinesthetic Awareness.* We focused on the nervous system as it relates to cultural assumptions and the functioning of musculature and breath—how to perceive and manifest gravity as an ally, working with our bodily intentions, rather than struggling against an inevitable downward pull. I encouraged my students to slow down enough to pay attention to how they move through space—bringing consciousness to actions and thoughts that are normally automatic and often inefficient. I used students' performative explorations and my photographs as pedagogical devices to examine taken-for-granted spaces and structures that are constitutive of our everyday worlds. Staccato suspension of time/ space offers a "home" within displacement/ dislocation/disorientation: undecidability can never be neutral, must always-already be becoming balanced—it "constitutes the medium in which opposites are opposed, (and) the movement and the play that links them among themselves, reverses them or makes one side cross over into the other…" (Derrida 1981: 127).

[226] Reich, the father of somatic psychology that integrates fluid intuition, the energy of the libido, and cognitive awareness, explored the gendered manifestations of our socialized mind-body split.

physical embodiment of Nietzche's chiasmic unity and *disidentification*: "He refers to this "far from equilibrium" situation by the term *Indifferenzpunkt* out of which comes creation via destruction/de-differentiation" (ZMERS 7). *Disidentification* generates a pause at the moment between separation and connection—the indeterminate, intermediality of *kairos*.[227]

Equally, Irigaray's play with the concept of wonder[228] invokes this sense of balance: "Wonder is the motivating source behind mobility in all its dimensions" (2005: 63). Philosophy, like wonder, must move—constantly shifting its points of balance: "Philosophy is and has always been a struggle" (*BD* 99). As I theorize further in Chapter Five, the Moebius-strip allows us to "realize desire outside the binary frame of reference that keeps desire and lack locked in opposition. ...[W]e can glimpse the infinite dimensions to this 'immense membrane of the libidinal 'body'" (Bristow 137).

Prostheses and Parasites

I investigate both the dangers of prostheses as a process of replacement (toxic mimicry—a neoliberal homogenizing prosthetic ideology), and as a *détournement*, a Leibniz-like enfoldment—amplifying the inside as it bears itself on the outside. Within the context of contradictory prostheses, I focus on the tripartite problematic of ethnic, sexual, and aesthetic convergences. Jewishness is not an addendum to mainstream Christian culture;

[227] Like the hesitation of *kairos,* the uncanny requires movement, "[n]o point of view is proper and self-contained; hence the inevitability of a prosthetic supplement, of a *Perspektiv.* But like the commodity, this *Perspektiv* can never be definitely appropriated: it only *is* in *circulating,* and in circulating it merges with and diverges from other perspectives. Such circulation never comes full circle, and; therefore leaves no place undisturbed, no body whole (*LF* 18).

[228] See Irigaray's elaboration on wonder and misrecognition in "Inhabiting the Unknown through Ambiguity and Contradiction".

homosexuality is not a homo version of heterosexuality; just as feminism, like female ejaculation (discussed in PART I, Chapter One and PART III, Chapter Five) is not an external device simply fastened onto our phallic-centered status quo. The phallo-normative, derivative of Foucault's *scienticia sexualis* renders visible and public the ob-scene, the unfamiliar, the private. Equally, in the aesthetic realm, both shock-art and art-for-entertainment conjure a collective passivity.[229] Contra this fascist practice of "enforced stultification" (Rancière), the politically productive use of the aesthetic prosthetic is not about summation, but about transformation. Nietzsche intones: "To live—that means for us to change all that we are, constantly, into light and flame...that art of transfiguration-this is philosophy" (*Gay Science* cited in Simpson 43). In my discussion below, I emphasize the inherent political nature of aesthetics and its consequent enfoldments. "[T]he aesthetic *as a political domain* (articulated through the aestheticization of the particularized body/self, itself embedded in the social" (Jones 13) reminds us of the potency of our interconnectedness. I am interested in the moment when the prosthetic departs from an internalized adjustment to the norm to prostheses as engaged hybrid identities (i.e. relationalities) and fertile intersections of multiple selves interacting with multiple others. Žižek defines sex as conjoined prostheses: "sex is not a natural given but a bricolage, an artificial unification of heterogeneous discursive practices" (Žižek 1994: 160). Sex,

[229] Unfortunately, there are an infinite number of examples of (particularly contemporary) artists whose work displays some variation of vulnerability, but a vulnerability without the uncanny. Spencer Tunick's photography offers a clear illustration of this species of vulnerability. When I, along with hundreds of other naked men and women, modeled for Tunick at Burning Man in 1999, I recall feeling like I was taking a Vinyasa yoga class in San Francisco—a social scene for fun, but not a lot of substance.

like art, politics, and philosophy, emerge through a "non-metaphysical living "to-come" (Schirmacher on Derrida) a kind of consciously embodied *détournement. Détournement* becomes "eternal recurrence"[230] imagined as a sensual apprehension of the world knowing the world from the inside out as a form of common sense "unjudgments".[231] These unjudgments counteract the reification of rationalism—knowing the world from the outside in, in which the world is reshaped, reconstructed to fit scientific hypotheses,[232] media sound-bites, educational reductionisms.

1992. Westchester/Yonkers, Sarah Lawrence College. "Politically Correct" language and behavior dominate how we choose to and choose not to interact with one another on campus. Judgment becomes the filter through which we engage with one another. Butler delineates this collusive imposition of silencing (thus maintaining a voice rendered monolithic) in the context of Jurgen Habermas' notion of consensus as it relates to democracy; however, I cite her words to support my position:

> For if one always risks meaning something other than what one thinks one utters, then one is, as it were, vulnerable in a specially linguistic sense to a social life of language that exceeds the purview of the subject who speaks. This risk and vulnerability are proper to democratic process in the sense that one cannot know in advance the meaning that the other will assign to one's utterance [and] what conflict of interpretation may well arise, and how best to adjudicate that difference (*ES* 87).

[230] "[T]he eternal recurrence of the same argues that not only has all we experience already happened an infinite number of times, but it is also happening for the first time, or still happening for the first time...infinite repetition of everything is both a logical inevitability and a logical impossibility" (ZMERS 11-12).

[231] "Kafka sees 'literature' as a way of 'unjudging,' and thus deconstructing, the 'judged' version of the real towards its originary 'unjudged' (undecidability)" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).

[232] "Humanist and secularized, the emerging Renaissance world view supported a territorial vision that deprived nature of its magic, instead stressing hierarchical control over plants and animals through the rubric of utility and science" (Paula Young Lee, "The Slaughterhouse and the City", *Food & History*, vol. 3 nt. 2, 2006: 7-25, 9).

Language is rendered both resolutely oblique and exacting. Language becomes dangerous—we all watch our backs as words trip around our tentative tongues—stumbling and simultaneously insisting self-righteousness. Identifying my commitment to social change and coalition-building through my Sephardic identity, I clamor through a morass of ethnic and racial binaries—all senses conformed to fear. For example, the over-used, de-politicized term "Judeo-Christian" illustrates dangers of rendering ethnicities as de-historicized appendages to unexamined normativity. This misnomer rewrites history. There is no such thing as "the Judeo-Christian tradition". Such a term is conveniently useful for the historical scapegoating of Jews. It feeds divide-and-conquer tactics. Rather than investigating how the invisibility of whiteness has become the perpetrator in ethnocentric acts, when whites[233] too often use the term, they are subsuming and mis-representing the history of Jews so that both people of color and not of color blame Jews. Rather than investigating the foundations of the concept and impact of whiteness and holding whites accountable, people of color too often use the term to separate themselves from Jews so that they can point the finger at the Jew-as-oppressor.

Revisionist history feeds ethnic erasure. Jews don't inhabit a liminal zone, Jews *are* a liminal zone. I am witnessing Jews as *ungeheures*—monstrous—an implied otherness which makes the concept of a univocal identity or category impossible. Both in our survival

[233] Although I insist on specifying who makes up the racial category of "white", in this case, I use the general term "white" to refer to those who engage in the power dynamics of *splitting/deciding* the interplays among the sub-altern.

techniques of hiding[234] and passing,[235] we simultaneously exist and do not exist—we are both present and absent; a private simulacrum of our own public positioning: "What we thought were sensations have become ghosts, transfixed in a flash, mere afterimages..." (Zummer 5).[236] By their very nature, Jews are seen to be too visible, which makes them utterly unpresent and fictitious. In the eyes of everyone: whites/non-whites, people of color/people not of color, however labeled, including European Jews themselves from Israel and the US, Jews represent the quintessential transgressor: always and already, a priori out of place—from liberal-to-radical leftists to raging right conservatives. To be Jewish, whether or not you live in Israel, regardless of one's politics, one is equally as homogenized as one is demonized.

"The angel[237] is a sub-altern creature of gaps and transitions, of exchanges, noise and information, like Michel Serres' other famous figure, the parasite, for whom: "Our chance is on the crest. Our living and inventive path follows the fringed, capricious curve where the simple beach of sand meets the noisy rolling in of the waves. A simple and straight method gives no information" (Blake 192). Both images of angel and parasite as equivocal are reminiscent of the Jew. The Jew exists as one who is suspended in the interval between beings, neither here nor there. "The angel and the parasite are creatures of the intermittent, of the transition" (ibid.). "[B]ringers of proximity…intervals…pauses… lingering trails of connection" (ibid.). To be clear,

[234] For example, as small children, 1943-45, my father and his brother and sister hid from the Nazi invasion in a closet in Paris; and, later found refuge in a convent in Rome.

[235] See my discussion on passing as an Arab in North Africa in "The Scandal of Ekphrasis".

[236] As an allusion to the Holocaust, see the poem T. Lucretius Carus, *De rerum natura (*cited in Zummer).

[237] "For Irigaray, the angel is a medium, a membrane, a skin, a fluid, a mucous, that enables communication and erotic encounter" (Blake 192) that, like the interval, I explore in my photographs. See "Viscous Expectations", one of my photographic series from 2007.

I am pulling these defining characteristics out of Blake's context in *Deleuze and Sex*, having nothing whatsoever to do with Jewish identity or our experiential realities. But Jews fit (and Jews rarely fit) the metaphor of the angel and parasite to an excess. We are prosthetics annexed onto Western societies; we cross-culturally and cross-psychically inhabit the intermedial.[238] We are ob-scene.[239] The internalized diasporic tendencies[240] of Jews render us the quintessential relations of "eternal recurrence". Kafka's characters consistently embody emblematic Jewish characteristics of liminality:

> …I'm the most Western-Jewish of them all. In other words, to exaggerate not one second of calm has been granted me; nothing has been granted me everything must be earned, not only the present and future, but the past as well…If the Earth turns to the right-I'm not sure it does-then I would have to turn to the left to make up for the past (Kafka 1953: 217).

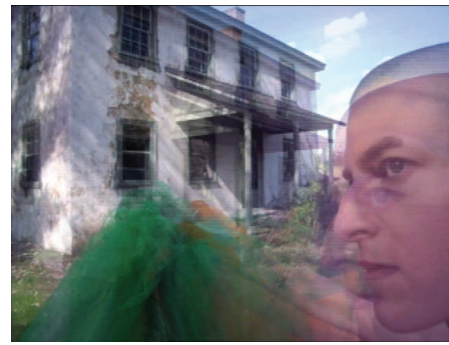


PLATE 19, VIDEO STILL, *MAGNOLIA*

We create a prosthetic system of identity-originating-homogeneity, the fantasy of unity (Nietzsche) / consensus (Habermas), which defines our sense of worth: "At bottom, man

[238] My own self-imposed nomadic homelessness has manifested literally in sites of infinite transitions: airports, train-stations, and harbors. In "Digesting The Stranger Within: The Dialectics of Self-Sacrifice", see my description of living nowhere and everywhere simultaneously.

[239] No matter how many menorahs illuminate the windows of US Jewish homes, they only perpetuate a fantasy of visibility without persecution.

[240] I am referring here to hundreds of years of enforced wandering and associating this behavior with Book 3, the section titled "The Wanderer" in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. The connection with Jews is mine, not Nietzsche's.

has lost his faith in his own value when no infinitely valuable whole works through him; i.e. he conceived such a whole in order *to be able to believe in his own value*" (Nietzsche *The Will to Power*, § 12, p. 12).[241] Clinging to this fantasy of wholeness, we inadvertently are *becoming-prosthetics*—overdetermined subjects who are attachments to an indifferent norm.[242] In the context of my argument, the "we" includes Jews, queers,[243] women, and artists whose edges co-mingle across the prosthetics of the uncanny. This uncanny generates both community and alienation.

Paul Ricoeur's "Soi-Meme, Comme Un Autre"[244] can be read through the lens of Nietzsche's anti-egalitarianism potentially challenging the "tendency in Western discourse which privileges masculine 'sameness-unto-itself' as the basis of the feminine as other only in relation to masculine sameness, that is, not as a different mode of signification" (1977: 221). Disproportion, the fertile asymmetry of non-unitary representations of signification and identity, opens the space for the fecundity of *disidentification*: "Good friendship demands a strong measure of rupture in reciprocity or equality, as well as the interruption of all fusion or confusion between you and me" (*LL* 28). The prosthetic demonstrates the post-human both/and of resisting superimposition while engendering self-emergence.

My self-portrait images play with these polyvalent prosthetic voices—a portraiture that invites a plurality of identifications

[241] See my reference to Galileo on page 96.

[242] Language operates to normalize sexuality rendering the confines of the ideal feminine subject: "a multiple, shifting and often self-contradictory identity, as object not divided in, but rather at odds with, language" (Teresa de Lauretis cited in Bociurkiw 19).

[243] "Queerness does not depend upon the sexuality of the practitioners per se, but rather the extent to which *any* liaison (straight or gay), exposes and makes visible hetero-normativity'… the actual sexual practices seen are transgressive only for the fact they make visible the 'normal' conventions of the sexual scene" (Pearce 1998: 15, 9 cited in Beth Johnson. "Realism, Real Sex, and the Experimental Film: Mediating Eroticism in *Georges Bataille's Story of the Eye*" in *Realism and the Audiovisual Media,* eds. Lucia Nagib and Cecilia Mello, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009: 135-151, 140).

[244] See "Ladies Shot and Painted: Female Embodiment in Surrealist Art" *Surrealism and Women*, Mary Ann Caws, Rudolf Kuenzli, and Gwen Raaberg, eds. Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1990.

through the unfamiliar and *disidentification*. Irigaray's woman illustrates my self-portrait practice: "Woman has sex organs just about everywhere…she experiences pleasure almost everywhere. The geography of her pleasure is much more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more subtle, more complex than is imagined" (Schor 55). Thomas Zummer has written of my photographic corporeal cartographies:

> [Alhadeff's] integration of the intellectual and sensate is a genuine, unique and powerful critical disposition, where issues of abstraction and embodiment are inextricably bound together, creating a site—in the register of one's own materiality—where political, critical, social, theoretical, and aesthetic issues and practices commingle (2010).

My formal compositions are imbricated "interruptions".

Freud's discussion of the uncanny in relation to "an excessive likeness to the living" (141) is an extension of my concern with modern digital media. "One of the surest devices for producing slightly uncanny effects through story-telling…is to leave the reader wondering whether a particular figure is a real person or an automaton, and to do so in such a way that his attention is not focused directly on the uncertainty" (Freud quoting Jentsch 135). Immanuel Kant, according to Weber, was compelled by the unsolvability of problems. Kant is considered a "terrible philosopher because he ties himself in knots" through parenthesis within parenthesis.



PLATE 20

Ronell asks, "What is a parenthesis?" She auto-responds: an "allergy", "secret punch of assertion"; I elaborate: an apotropaic 'mais, oui', an irritation, a temporal dimension that announces an abyss, a 3D sphere, an intrusion, hiatus, suspension. This slipping or "tripping up", as Ronell would say, becomes an uncanny act. Like the abject, the theater frames. The theater, that which oscillates between narrative and poetry, "rethinks space and self" (Weber). In the context of Brechtian theater, the "uncovering (making strange, or alienating) of conditions is brought about by processes being interrupted…interruption is one of the fundamental methods of all form-giving. It reaches far beyond the domain of art. It is, to mention just one of its aspects, the origin of the quotation. Quoting a text implies interrupting its context" (*What is Epic Theatre?* pp. 18-19 cited in Weber 2008: 99).

Congruently, in the visual realm, Benjamin formulates interruption in relation to sequence—a montage of cuts, a montage of textuality that offers an open quality of the signifying process. Interruptions are differential, relational—they become symbiotic parasites that transform their host, their illusory origin.

> Modes of greatest intensification of bodily zones occur, not through the operations of habitual activities, but through the unexpected, through the connection, conjunction and construction of unusual interfaces which re-mark orifices, glands, sinews, muscles differently, giving organs and bodily organization up to the intensities that threaten to overtake them, seeking the alien,

> otherness, the disparate in its extremes, to bring into play these intensities. The interruption and interaction of a surface with another, its disengagement from the circuit of organic functioning (where it operates within a hierarchical and systematic whole) so that it realigns itself in different networks and linkages perform as the intensification of libidinal circulation that Lingis seeks (*STP* 198).

Like prosthetics, interruptions become the stranger that gives form to the recognizability of the familiar. A prosthetic approach challenges the duplicitous concept of equality[245]—"the utopian myth of wholeness and normality in art and the human body" (Garoian). When we evert the traditional use of prosthetic devices—that of re-normalizing the body, both in terms of aesthetics and productive functioning—to render grotesque through movement, exaggeration, and excess, we actually give ourselves a chance to reclaim our bodies. Once again, we witness the prosthetics of the uncanny.

In contrast to using the prosthetic as a relational device for social change, one that fleshes out our radical interconnectivity, too often contemporary art offers a one-dimensional, flaccid presentation of the grotesque, the vulnerable, the deterritorialized, the uncivilized, the unfamiliar. Rather than empowering viewers through empathy, compassion, and reflection, this work actually reifies the homogeneity of the status-quo. Cindy Sherman's internationally acclaimed photography is a flawless example of diminishing the fecundity of the grotesque.

[245] Contra, *ijtihad*, independent reasoning, one of the gay men asks: "Why do they think the sky has to be the same color for everyone?" (Parvez Sharma's *A Jihad for Love,* documentary on gay relationships in Moslem North African countries, 2007).

Like the decontextualized, stripped sound-bite, her images offer easily digestible one-liners, making viewers feel "they get it". Yet, she is presented as a radical, cutting edge, activist, surrealist feminist artist—seemingly pushing visual and conceptual limits. Barbara Kruger's aphorisms are equally unproductively reductive. Like Sherman, Kruger's medium and message is neither nuanced nor elliptical. Both artists were integral to a predominately male ethos of the 1990s art world.

The deflated use of the prosthetic (the sound-bite, aphorism) in the arts has similar socio-political implications to the insidious illusory activism of the US Green Movement in which convenience-consumer culture is simply green-washed and no sustainable social change is realized. There are unfortunately too many examples of this duplicity—ranging from Obama's energy policies[246] to Ben and Jerry's Buy-Ice-Cream=Save-the-Environment campaign to Benetton's perverse advertising schemes.[247]

> Deleuzoguattarian molecular/molar and minoritarian/majoritarian double articulations constitute discursive anomalies that parody and destratify socially and historically constructed, rarified representations of sustainability of which deceptive *greenwashing* practices of eco-marketing are an example (Garoian 12).

The neoliberal eco-marketing appropriation techniques of the US Green Movement are reminiscent of Slater's *Toilet Assumption.* We render ob-scene—flush away what doesn't fit our comfort level—while proclaiming self-

[246] On March 31st, 2010, Barack Obama gave a press conference at Andrew's Air Force Base highlighting his commitment to the burgeoning bio-fuel industry—a farce, considering for the past forty years, the research on alternatives to the tyranny of oil has continually been silenced. Proclaiming the "greening" of the military, Obama stood in front of a F18 fighter jet and "light armored vehicle" (a tank) both fueled by biodiesel. Just a few months later, Obama lifted the offshore drilling moratorium that had protected the oceans and shores from corporate greed. Hypocrisy continues to reign. For an in depth analysis of the devastating impact of the Gulf Oil spill, see Antonia Juhasz's *Black Tide* (Hoboken: Wiley and Sons, 2011).

[247] For a brilliant critique of Benetton's advertising techniques which rely heavily on cultural appropriation, see Giroux's "Benetton's 'World without Borders': Buying Social Change": **"**Diversity is good...your culture (whoever you are) is as important as our culture (whoever we are)" *Colors,* no. 1. Equality functions through anonymity—an erasure of difference; at the same time it valorizes difference.



PLATE 21

righteous action. Neoliberal productivity thrives in a *détournement* of the politics of eversion.[248] Žižek critiques Naomi Klein's very well received *No Logo,* in which Klein expounds on the irony of reifying, rather than dissolving power structures in a neoliberal context. Žižek argues that *détournement* exposes the possibility of a pause in which the citizen-subject depends on ostensible agency. This pause is a condition for ideology to insinuate itself. This eversion of *disidentification* fuels complicity with the very systems being critiqued.

2010. Berkeley. Prior to my lecture at the Cultural Studies Association Conference, one of the presenters spoke about the neoliberal capitalist tendencies of feminist-owned and operated sex toy/book/film stores. Once again, my personal experiences clearly demonstrated the theoretical investigation at stake. After having worked for four years on the Outreach Team at the pioneering sex-positive feminist adult toy store, Good Vibrations, where I wrote curriculum and taught sex education workshops to a variety of communities, I was fired because my language was (and this was the official reason on my termination papers) "too academic". In other words, I wasn't pushing the products. Instead, I focused on our individual and collective psycho-anatomy(ies) and its socio-political implications. Good Vibrations, on the other hand, was focused primarily on packaging sexual liberation as commodity—empowerment through consumption. My pedagogical approach

[248] For example, I recently engaged in litigation for a peculiar incident of censorship reversal. In late 2011, seven years after I shot my *Gestation Project* series (see plates 10, 49, 50, 51, 56,72), I was alerted that one of my models may lose her high-school teaching job because the photographs I took of her naked and pregnant at the San Francisco zoo in 2004 were on-line in a commercial context. This perverse reversal of parading the unseen was perpetrated by an award-winning digital storytelling MAC/Apple product called MemoryMiner. This archive/genealogical device organizes "what they know and…what they don't know" (MemoryMiner website). Ironically, MemoryMiner's primary clients are educational institutions. In particular, they have a comprehensive program for school grants—the very venues that have repeatedly censored my work. And now those very images (naked pregnant women in public venues) were being used to advertise digital media for educational institutions and programs. This twisted incident is reminiscent of *scientia sexualis*—an enfoldment of unwitting name-identifications as a form of the public confessional. In MemoryMiner's program, each model had a box outlining her head with her full name printed across the box. My intent has always been to "normalize nudity", but to use my images (without my permission) in the context of digital archeological name-seeking reeks of neoliberalism.

to more extensive learning was considered unnecessary and disruptive. Art, health, the environment, sexuality are commerce. Each is reduced to the lowest-common-denominator of easily consumable prosthetic habits:

> But it is our hunger that we would still like to tame. To nourish, to appease, to nurse. To consume, to lull, to pulverize. The terms of our free-market consumer societies are unequivocal. They occupy the entire space of this hunger so they can try to satisfy it even before it appears as hunger, even before the space of desire can begin to stammer out what it knows about the Other: the Other is always beyond all possible monopolization (*BD* 82).

The neoliberal enterprise of the self derives from our socialized addiction of the familiar—determining legitimacy or lack. Security and Exchange Council Chairman, Christopher Cox stated in 2005: "In this amazing world of instant global communications, the free and efficient movement of capital is helping to create the greatest prosperity in human history" (cited in *Inside Job* 2010). Concomitantly, the vulgarities of the global economic crisis culminating in 2008 continued to mount. As I discuss below, our globalized new world economy reflects a post-human phenomena.[249] Neoliberal ethics seep from an ingrained anti-intellectual fiction.

2009. Udaipur. I am purchasing chiku fruits from a street vendor. In my obsessive (and infinitely impotent) attempt to not add another plastic bag to the plastic-bag-island twice-the-size-of-Texas floating in the Pacific Ocean,[250] I hand the vendor my used plastic bag to fill with

[249] The hilariously effective inverted performative techniques of the Yes Men are a prime exposé of the absurdity of our current global relationships. For example, dressed in three-piece suits, they present themselves as CEOs of a major corporation intending to lobby Congress. They unfold outrageously grotesque propositions that mirror actual corporate horrors and are taken seriously by legislators.

[250] The last report I could find was dated 2007. Its current size, five years later, only further demonstrates our society's abhorrent addiction to waste.

chikus. He looks at me sardonically, whips my plastic bag onto the enormous pile of trash he is standing on, and proclaims: "This is India!" Less than a week later, I am traveling to lecture at The Cultural Studies Association Conference in Kansas City, Kansas. On the plane, I am surrounded by more obese passengers than not. Each time the airline attendant passes he hands out another round of plastic cups. I flash back to the chiku vendor and his unapologetic proclamation. No hiding, no ob-scene. No mendacious values. Everything in India was in-sight. Everything.[251] Virilio's *Sanitary Ideology* presents another variation of Slater's *Toilet Assumption*—the now implicit fear and eradication of what we culturally deem as useless. Virilio explores another twist in our *détournement:*

> The devaluation of waste is contemporary with the industrial economy. Waste, which for previous economies, was a source of wealth and a basis for sedentariness due to its recycling potential, is now becoming, with this industrial mutation, unhealthy, dangerous and non-recyclable. It has to be evacuated, hidden or incinerated (98).

Prosthetics potentially parallel the political potency of the contradictory aspects of post-humanism.[252] In "Heinrich von Kleist's *Uber das Marionettentheater*...if one cuts off the limbs of humans and replaced them with protheses, one would get better dancers—the more inanimate, the more reliable" (Garoian 83). San Francisco-based dance company, Kunst-stoff (with whom I collaborated for several years), instinctively comprehends body

[251] For example, people deficating along the train tracks as it sped past the villages. Both Baudrillard's not ob-scene and Bataille's shit (see *Formless* p. 29) are literal reflections of the real. "Symbolic hierarchies reveal themselves in the cinema by regulating what can and cannot be seen. …In *Le fantome de la liberte* (1974), Buñuel mocks this anomaly by inverting it, making eating the disgusting private act and excretion the open, sociable one. Nonfiction films are not immune to these taboos, despite their commitment to actuality. In many respects they are even more limited because they are more constrained by their portrayal of real people and the need to respect their privacy. Both fiction and nonfiction however—even including pornography—steer well clear of the ordinariness of our actual daily experiences, particularly in relation to our own bodies" (MacDougall 19).

[252] This fertile *détournement* includes the life techniques of collective intuition. Schirmacher's variation of being utterly present, of artfully living requires "overcoming limits, genres, genders, borders, distinctions". He professes that labels are constructed so we can rid ourselves of them. I associate Schirmacher's call for life-techniques as becoming prosthetic—whether recognizing that "there is no difference between breathing and working with the computer" (EGS, 2008) or activating the potential agency of inhabiting my Jewishness as a prosthetic. These juxtapositions reflect Kristeva's *carrefour.*

parts as irreducibly metaphoric: for example, two arms "gnash" together in a surrealist collision. In contrast, the prosaically popular Paul Taylor Dance Company refuses to *use* the human form as anything beyond a typical taken-for-granted body: an arm is always an arm, a leg always a leg. Taylor's choreography's predictability generates homogenized, monolithic, easily digestible totalities of art as "accessible" entertainment. In contrast to the "enforced stultification" (Rancière) of consumable art, Cage's music plays with the paradoxes of expectation: "Art goes in all directions...You never impose a previously determined measurement" (Cage 129). This of course limits both Kunst-stoff and Cage's audience. Through his narrator in *L'Histoire de L'Oeil,* Bataille bemoans:

> To others, the universe seems decent because decent people have gelded eyes. That is why they fear lewdness. They are never frightened by the crowing of a rooster [which strikes Bataille's narrator with an overwhelming nausea] or when strolling under a starry heaven. In general, people savor the 'pleasures of the flesh' only on condition that they be insipid (42).

Bataille, Kleist, Kunst-stoff, Cage, and Taylor fall under the rubric of paradoxical post-humanism. I associate my photographs as Kleistian: the artificial is more real, more natural than the natural:[253] "Protheses...seem more like reflections of essences or fates than like replacement parts" (Wills 93). I associate my photographs as Cagean: his " 'music of reality' is intrinsically oriented to an open-ended, horizonless future, simulating the 'real'

[253] The artificial and natural are not separate. Rather, their integration offers what Schirmacher refers to as the "art of living"—being in awe and also being satisfied by the human ability to decide. He argues that our deciding power, our ability to analyze without judgment is a life technique.

or 'life.' As Cage writes about his music and his life, which could be extended to music and life as such: 'I try to make my music resemble my life. May it be free and without goal!' (Cage 149 cited in Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).

The constitutive quality of this non-teleological flux is an immersion in the prosthetic as a willingness, a joyfulness of *inhabiting* the unknown—a parallax view of and from artifactuality.[254] As I discussed in the context of digital technology, my images from the 90s were confined to the category of abstraction within the rubric of superimposed normalcy, neutrality. "But all that functions only because of prosthesis, because the whole never was anywhere...because the parts were always already detachable, replaceable" (ibid. 15). Uncanny prostheses perform a dialectical relationship that functions beyond themselves. Thesis, anti-thesis, prosthesis operate as "the sense and functioning of articulations between matters of two putatively distinct orders: father/son, flesh/steel,...nature/artifice" (ibid. 89) and simultaneously beyond those dualities. My images catalyze these prostheses as open-ended simulacrum.[255] "What is imitated is more real, more essential, more true, etc. than what imitates. It is anterior and superior to it" (Derrida 1981:191). Vulnerability and the seemingly unfamiliar unfold into a field of Deleuzian corporeal topologies.

2009. Saas-Fee. Rancière introduced his *Aesthetics and Politics* seminar at the European Graduate School with images of free-floating

[254] Linked to undecidability, *artifactuality* is a reference from Bernard Stiegler and Jacques Derrida in the book *Echographie de la télèvision* [Polity Press].

[255] In the 1980s, the puppeteer Theodora Skipitares performed this *détournement* at the Lower East Side's La Mama Theater. The gesture embodied the uncanny prosthetic. A puppet sits on a stool in a spotlight facing the audience, narrating her rape as she invokes Nietzsche: "You know when they say that what doesn't kill you makes you stronger? They're wrong". As the puppet tells us her story, she wipes a strand of her hair from her wooden cheek. The inciveness of that gesture still haunts me almost thirty years later.

hybrid human-architecture in which buildings and the camera's eye inhabit the "both/and" of Haraway's cyborgs. The scopophilic desire of the camera, like the telescope, fuels illusory equality. Such explicit Heideggerian enframing of the uncanny prosthesis coerces the private into the public:

> …the telescope would be the technical device predestined to produce, in the here and now, the impossible desire to make the invisible visible, so as to discover everywhere the Same. But instead of the same…what the prosthesis brings closer is the inescapability of *separation*: the separation of eyes from sockets, of the *perspective* from that which it reveals and that which sees through it (*LF* 18).

Physically and psychologically homeless and uncertain, these nomads of simulacrum embody and stage contradictory tensions between the quotidian/the *festival,* containment/mobility, past/future, life/death. Schirmacher declares:

> There is no final word in the artificial lifeworld, and homo generator 'being him or herself, only more so'-is used to indirect communication. We have to take the ironic laws of media evident in a postmodern world both seriously and not seriously. Aesthetics simultaneously perceive success and failure in communication technology and experience media as our body living playfully in oppositions (Schirmacher EGS website).

The plasticity of the tensions of the human body mobilizes "an incessant vanishing point" (Ronell's introduction to *BD* xx) of corporeal chiasmic unity. Once again, we are simultaneously confronted with a

Nietzschean overfullness of body anomalies as they rub against the neoliberal universalized commodified body locked in lack. This overfullness offers another example of Nietzsche's will to power in which a quantum entanglement informs the fuzzy logic of process. The Modern Well-Being Industry[256] now epitomized by the yoga-industrial complex[257] rivals the cultural tyranny of Nazi obsession with the "perfection" of the mind and body—the training of Hitler Youth. I recognize the grotesqueness of my claim, but must emphasize the hypocrisy, albeit useful,[258] of the neoliberal appropriation of Eastern philosophies and practices.

1982. Boulder. I just turned eleven years old and after five years of living in Texas with my mother and step-father, I am sorely in need of stress-relief. I discover the practice of yoga. The classes are held in the wrestling gym of the University of Colorado rec center—low ceilings, padded walls, a peculiar man-stench hangs in the air. My teacher, who calls herself Shanti, lights candles as we lie on our backs and chant. I try to breathe through my feet, my anus, the back of my skull—anything to avoid the smell of college-wrestlers moldy sweat. Later, she teaches me about water, digestive enzymes, and nutrition. The word yoga means to yoke, to join—and for me, references Derrida's undecidable. Undecidability "is the 'between', a double, contradictory…value… articulating and combining under the same yoke, *huph'hen*, two incompatible meanings…" (Derrida 1981: 221-22).

[256] Ranging from Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain* to John Harvey Kellog's holistic vegetarian sanitarium, well-being has historically been institutionalized in the West. For an overview of the tyranny of purity, see Robert Proctor's *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*.

[257] Twenty million people now practice yoga in the US.

[258] My comments must be understood within the context of my own history of teaching yoga to clients with chronic health conditions that are sometimes life-threatening. See www.carajudea.com/yoga. Additionally, I recognize the controversy surrounding Irigaray's physical and theoretical practice of yoga. I unequivocally support her practice.



PLATE 22A

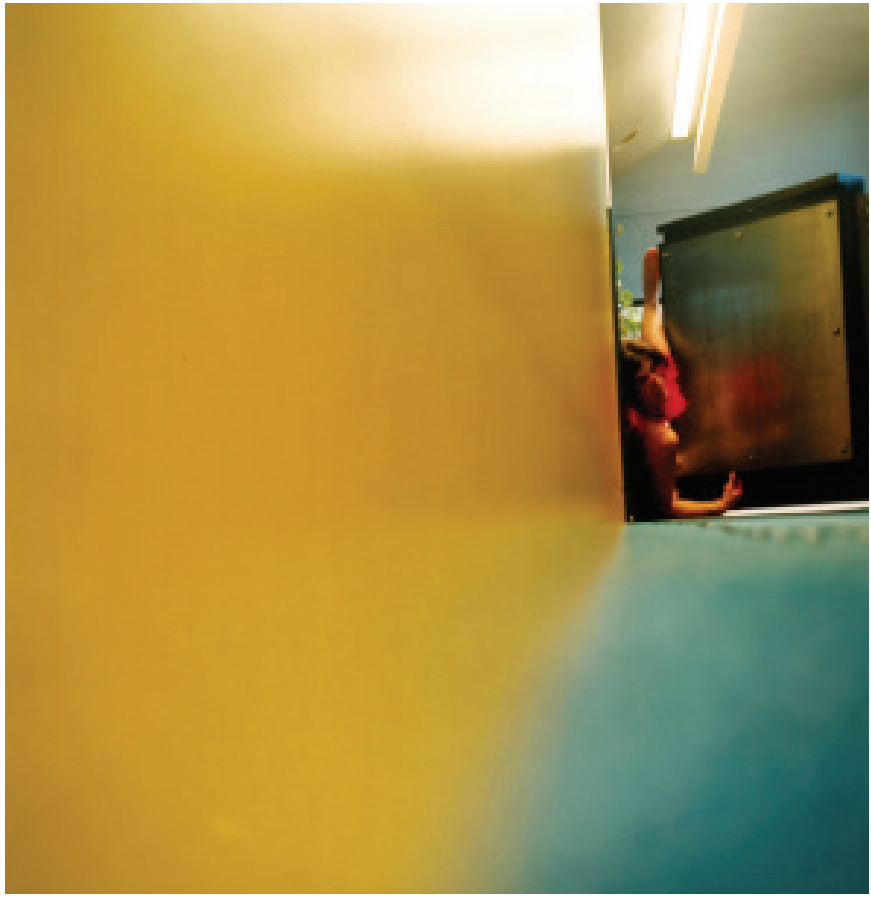


PLATE 22B

One of the most grotesque contemporary examples of gender toxic mimicry is the multi-billion dollar industry of yoga. The new documentary film on yoga and women, "Yogawomen", looks at gender through a western feminist lens which fails not only to recognize the cultural specificity of women's roles in India, but also demonstrates a blatant disregard for the capitalist appropriation of yoga. The film displays packed mat-to-mat classes of intensely focused spandex-bound, yoga-geared, homogeneous-bodied women. It espouses how the current state of the yoga industry has offered an opportunity for woman to develop a sense of self-authority. The film neglects to discuss the extraordinarily common concerns of psyche-soma disorders associated with those who practice: orthorexia nervosa—is an obsession with health, with purity that afflicts many yoga zealots. I teach Iyengar yoga to people with chronic diseases to help engage their kinesthetic awareness. On the other hand, yoga, like art, has become a form of entertainment—stripped of its pedagogical underpinnings. The phenomenally profitable trend of yoga, essentially yogaerobics, feeds on and into the absurdities of our narcissistic culture—not just in the West, but throughout the Far East as well.

2005. Seoul. Capitalism is alive and well in South Korea. Fifteen years after her reign, Ms. Korea 1994 runs Pure Yoga. She is still a celebrity and continues to open spas throughout Asia. Although she does not practice yoga herself, her yoga videos are the

best-selling videos throughout Korea. Western-style manufactured beauty and weight-loss regimes prevail in yoga studios across Seoul. Pure Yoga is located on the second floor, above Ralph Lauren, and between Rolls Royce, Louis Vuitton, and Gucci. And this absurdly high-end yoga studio charges $40 for a drop-in, four times more than other studios in Seoul.

After teaching the trainees a four-day intensive, I get a taste of the stress they are under. I am told that during the teacher training intensive, several of the students were vomiting. Judged by Ms. Korea 1994 for their Teacher Test, they are required to hold some of the most physically challenging poses—between 7-10 minutes. The entire training is asana practice: no anatomy, no philosophy, no communication—no teaching skills. During the teacher-training workshop I teach I describe the interdisciplinary curriculum that The Iyengar Yoga Institute in San Francisco offers. At this point, my translator, Ms. Korea 1994, stops translating. Apparently, one doesn't make money from examining complicated knowledge.

II

Intermedialities: De-Solving the Tyranny of Normalcy

"When stillness culminates there is movement."

Trinh T. Minh-ha

3 Vulnerability and the Politics of the Imagination

We live in a culture that institutionalizes mass consumption rooted in an arrogant inertia of non-thinkers.[259] If we think, we will discover that we are vulnerable and that we are accountable to one another; that we are the "self-same body that loves, thinks, and is delirious, that eroticizes, infinitizes, and questions..." (*BD* 23). Within the practice of my writing, visual work, and commitment to

[259] "Thrilling to its rhapsodies, [American radical thinkers] felt confirmed in their judgment that pious, stultifying America was no place for a serious thinker. Ratner-Rosenhagen…writes, 'Many years before members of this generation were 'lost' in Europe, they felt at home in Nietzsche, and homeless in Modern America" (A. Star 10).

public body consciousness,[260] I continually ask the following questions: "How do we rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures of fascism? How do we ferret out the fascism that is ingrained in our behavior?" (Foucault's introduction to *AOed* xv). As a means to resist and deracinate the fascism within, my intention is to amplify the miraculousness of the quotidian. Bataille, like Freud, believed in a creative channel for consumption:

> The accumulation of wealth leads to overproduction, whose only possible outcome is war. Unless we consider the various possibilities for consumption which are opposed to war, and for which erotic pleasure—the instant consumption of energy—is the model, we will never discover an outlet founded on reason (*TE* 149).

Our imaginations offer the potential to incite resistance and regeneration. In her *Precarious Life,* Butler urges us to expand our relational comprehension of the potential of physio-psychological vulnerability:

> reimagining the possibility of community on the basis of vulnerability and loss…This means that each of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies—as a site of desire and physical vulnerability, as a site of a publicity at once assertive and exposed. Loss and vulnerability seem to follow from our being socially constituted bodies, attached to others, at risk of losing these attachments, exposed to others, at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure (*PL* 20).

[260] My body consciousness workshops are not about accessing the consciousness as normative, conceptual, and logic-based. Rather, they are about accessing the creative intelligence that lies beyond consciousness—embracing the liminal unconscious (although not exclusively) of dream-logic. Perhaps body consciousness workshop is a misnomer. I would like to reframe the concept of consciousness to encompass the unconscious dream-world. They are not about rendering the body conscious i.e. imposing Nietzsche's concept of an "illusoriness of selfsameness" (ZMERS 27). They are not about comprehending the body, nor restricting the body to the limitations of Being/self-same being maintaining the implicit mind-over-matter hierarchy on which our culture relies. Rather, these workshops explicitly separate the body from the mind in order to be able to witness habitual behavior and then develop new neurological grooves. By examining the traces and evertedness of the micro throughout the macro (see my references to Charles and Ray Eames pp. 93, 208, 308), I scrutinize the production of consciousness. Similarly, I de-form/de-solve the illusory unified concepts of whiteness, masculinity, pregnancy, and pornography.

Becoming-Vulnerable

1991. Yonkers. I began to explore how individual bodies are teleologically constructed by social bodies. My work with eleven and twelve year old boys at PS 30 in Yonkers, New York became the field work of my undergraduate thesis: *Corporeal Politics*. I conducted the first of a series of body consciousness workshops: an after-school program entitled, "Ecology and Community".[261] Because the school board was monitoring my program, I had to be vigilant and avoid all references to "the body". "Ecology" became my chosen euphemism. The very word, body, was rendered ob-scene (off stage, silenced), which was in fact the purpose and subject of this series of classes.

We questioned the ways in which we are taught to be ashamed of and disconnected from our bodies and our relationships with other bodies: "They have taught you to be afraid of the abyss, of the infinite…" (Cixous 1991: 40). Fear restricts the infinite potentialities of open readings. Similarly, "We are programmed to avoid contact with our own wildness" (*KKT* 98). This becoming-animal performs the interpenetrations of irreducible difference. By disassembling embodied energy, we investigated how these issues are directly relevant to our lives and the ways in which we have internalized these shared assumptions and experiences. The boys and I were actively intervening in the social construction of our bodies:

[261] See the article written about my project in The New York Times: *P.S. 30's Helping Hands: College Mentors*, Penny Singer, May 24, 1992: 31.

> One of the big challenges that we're going to have to figure out in this country and in democracy is the role of individuals and communities- individuals and their freedom and communities and their rights, or standards. How do we make those two things come together in some way that still allows us to be very different but live together? (David Mendoza cited in Suzanne Lacy 39).

We explored the embodied energy, the nodes of interconnection**,** by making connections between what and how our bodies perceived—sweat, tears, farts, laughter.[262] They participated in a series of layered activities that exposed the relationship of shame to these natural functions, where the inside becomes the outside of the body. We examined the politics behind the technologies that our bodies commonly came in contact with—for example, how the metal of the door-knobs and cabinet handles had been imported from Bolivian tin mines. Their exercises explained the embodied energy of what they ingested on a daily basis: cafeteria milk in individual wax cartons—on one hand the agribusiness-dairy industry, on the other hand, the visceral process-interaction of milking a cow.[263] These fifth and sixth grade boys, who had only known the confines of the inner-city, closely examined *Verhängnis*—Nietzsche's web-like world of interconnectedness.[264] The boys wrote, spoke, and drew their conceptual and somatic readings of radically holistic relationships:

> Methodologically, the 'intermedial' approach to 'being in common' does not focus on the shared identity but promotes research on the epistemological, ethical, and political status of *inter* (the in-between)—the term evoking the competing

[262] See Schirmacher's reading of laughter (Susan Sontag), and poetry (versus knowledge: we don't know what it is but we know it is right) in relation to the uncanny and identifying the abstract/the unfamiliar (EGS seminar 2008).

[263] The culture industry in which entertainment reigns is rooted in colonialist acquisition—everything we materially and psychically take for granted: metal knobs to privatization of water to agribusiness to fossil fuels. Sandoval invokes Barthes' rhetoric of supremacy of The Privation of History: abstracted from material history of what has been and what will come, "all is left for one to do is to enjoy this beautiful object without wondering where it comes from... this rhetoric of supremacy colonizes the colonizer's consciousness as well...The privation of history thus inoculates consciousness—it procures a little tantalizing difference—but not too much; it protects and tames the colonizer's imagination as viewer" (*MO* 119-120.1). See my discussion of de-monolithizing the constructs of whiteness and pornography. Also, see my investigation of the viewer as colonizer in my argument about digital photography and pre-determined (image) realities.

In radical contrast to appropriating "exotic 'primitives'…as festive objects for Western consumption as entertainment"(ibid.) see *The Story of Stuff Project*: http://www.storyofstuff.org/ for a lived awareness of this embodied energy—a "seventh-generation" perspective in which

we intend to maintain and respect our mutual environments for seven generations.

[264] I theorize *Verhängnis* in both "Protean Sexualities" and in "Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations". For visual manifestations of *Verhängnis,* see Eva Hesse's web-like installations. Literary manifestations include Jamaica Kincaid's novels; political manifestations include Rachel Carson's activism; corpo-spiritual manifestations include Deepak Chopra's unity consciousness and healing through quantum physics.

> claims of relation, separation, interval, multiplicity, singularity, difference, and community (Oosterling and Ziarek 1).

What are the implications of boundaries no longer being distinct and measurable? When we learn the necessity (both personal and political) of strategically expanding and contracting these boundaries—knowing when to hold on and when to let go—we can experiment with vulnerability to develop a critical, collaborative, and sustainable culture:

> Imagine if art, science, history, mathematics, geography, and other subjects in schools were to compose a disjunctive curricular rhizome; where an exploration of their differences and peculiarities could be played with, experimented, to improvise, heretofore, unforeseen associations and understandings; where learning about the environment functions as a verb rather than a noun; in other words, learning as a process of becoming-other and becoming-sustainable? (Garoian 22).

Both Freud's discussion of "the unmistakable sanctions of reality" (Royle 147) and Wolfgang Sach's remarkable anthology of social and environmental justice activists titled *The Development Dictionary: A Guide to Knowledge as Power* are central to this investigative process of

> sign reading; deconstruction and reconstruction of signs; an ethical commitment to justice; and the differential movement that keeps all aspects of being in motion and mutation. …This recurring function depends on correlations, conversions, and transfers of meaning. The methodology of the oppressed is that interfacing; it demands the recovery of meaning through movement…the



PLATE 23

> bursting of the self and its re-formation through mutation, and in the differential intervention of that self into social categories for the sake of the reapportionment and conversion….colonizations of gender, sex, race, class, or any social identity or styles of analysis, transform and generate a differential form of social movement that is bent on coalition between subordinated constituencies and which is capable of transforming the politics of power (129).

Contrasting with an adherence to standardized terminology, the embodied subject operates as the intermedial, through the relational, and plays among the fields of meaning as infinitely interpretable. Balance in "incessant motion but flowing nowhere" (NAF 12) reorients vulnerability through a performative relational imaginary. Minh-ha's discussion of the complexities of self-expression illustrates this kind of radical feminist aesthetic:

> Here, no duality is inferred in the Two, no uniformity implied in the One, but above all, no compromise meant by 'middle.' Rather, what is involved is a state of alert in-betweenness and 'critical' non-knowingness, in which the bringing of reflective and cosmic memory to life-that is, to the formlessness of form-is infinitely more exigent than the attempt to 'express,' to judge or evaluate (1991: 234).

Similar to Nietzsche and Derrida,[265] a lived example of this shift from Being to Becoming took place with many artists from the 1970s-90s who "approached race, whiteness as well as blackness, as a creative medium. Race [was] treated as a form of performance; an identity that could, within limits, be work or put aside; and as a diagnostic tool

[265] Derrida's version of Nietzsche's translatability to the beyond demonstrates "a third irreducible to the dualisms of classical ontology… whereby Becoming negates Being" (Derrida 1981: 165).

to investigate social values and pathologies" (Cotter 32). Like these artists[266] who engage with "race as a form of creative non-fiction" (ibid.), my visual work plays with assumptions that are unwittingly accepted. An open-ended, a-teleological fertility of contradiction nourishes the vulnerability of malleable identities. As they morph, identities infinitely "lose" their identity:

> There is no teleology in Nietzsche's universe—nothing comes to an end. The process that is the world, that is reality, is incessant…. The incessant process, the continuous "Becoming" of the universe, leads to nothing in the end, for there is no end: "becoming aims at *nothing* and achieves *nothing*. …as with everything in Nietzsche's conception of the universe, it is riddled with its own opposite—the intricacy of opposites is the principle of relation in Nietzsche's understanding of reality (NAF 3, 4).

Audre Lorde's *Erotic Politics:* The Erotics of the Uncanny

When scholars and activists deploy anti-racist 3rd world feminist theories, we are invoking Sandoval's *Methodology of the Oppressed* that "seeks to make the postmodern de- and postcolonial" (202.3). My photographic work and body consciousness workshops integrate the philosophical and psycho-anatomical in order to engage both multiplicity and specificity of citizen-subjects' agency in a heterogeneous democracy:[267]

> Critical pedagogy does not work towards some grandiose endpoint of an ideologically perceived world history but rather attempts to make understandable the indefinite and to explore

[266] For example, Adrian Piper, Dred Scott, Ellen Gallager, Kara Walker, Conwell Houston, Fred Wilson, and Deborah Willis to name a few.

[267] Mainstream's media's representation of The Occupy Movement demonstrates how the public has been taught and has ingested fear of thinking. My conclusion illustrates the multiple ways in which this movement refuses to comply with institutionalized thought-phobia.



PLATE 24

> other modes of sociality and self-figuration that go beyond dominant language formations and social organizations (McLaren 215).

In such a democracy, all authority must be within ourselves—the swarm (a Deleuzoguattarian *occupation*) that configures the body politic. By engaging "critical social theory, literary criticism, and personal narrative to counter the hegemony of 'objective' legal language" (*DE, DB* 161), I am attempting to open up a polyvalent approach to (re) charge psychosocial formations. This is Audre Lorde's erotic politics—a psyche-somatic boundarylessness of compassionate insurgency which insists on each of us inhabiting an unrelenting commitment to "co-implicated" (Grosz) empathy—another version of Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva*. Analogously, "Nietzsche claimed that he had always written with his whole body, his whole life, and that for him there was no such thing as a purely intellectual problem; all truths were truths of blood" (*BD* 66).

Emancipatory relationships unfold as Glissant's "modern form of the sacred". I apprehend this faculty of contingent relations—a confluence among Lorde's erotic politics, Haraway's both/and cyborg feminism, Murray Bookchin's social ecology, Nietzsche's chiasmic unity, Freud's uncanny, Kristeva's *carrefour*, Deleuze and Guattari's rhizome, Grosz's continual non-arrival. The list goes on, including Foucault's principles for political desire, Barthes' *punctum* to political being, Hayden White's power of the *middle voice*, Gloria Anzaldua's *mestizaje*,

Sandoval's *methodology of the oppressed*, Minh-ha's *third interval*, LudwigWittgenstein's *Immortality of the Never-Ending Moment*. My theoretical and body-based work investigates how these philosophical congruencies lay the groundwork for collaborative citizenship through a conscious integration of the erotic into the everyday. Embodied energy is implicit in erotic politics:

> When a number of bodies...are so constrained by other bodies that they lie upon one another, or if they move...that they communicate their motions to each other in a certain fixed manner, we shall say that those bodies are united with one another and that they all together compose one body or Individual (Spinoza's *Ethics* cited in *APGD* 132).

This composite body resonates with a surrealist improvisation. My images have frequently been identified as surrealist and as uncanny. Like Hoffman's *Sandman*, they "penetrate domestic space" (*LF* 8). They play with a collaborative ethics of prosthetics and eroticism that refuse authenticity, equalization, and identification both in the Nietzschean sense of *disidentification* and in the Foucauldian analysis of *scientia sexualis*. Thriving in the excess of the other as it intermediates with the self,

> ...we learn about merging the one with the other, as in the surrealist game of "l" *dans l'autre*," the one in the other, where one object is considered as augmented by the other and each rendered more interesting: their union is not forced but imaginative, and multiple in its possibilities (Caws 275).

The post-human techno-body is a counterpart to Buckminster Fuller's idea of "total use": a wholly non-hierarchical approach to conjoining our bodies with space and our bodies with objects. His approach reflects Buddhist and Judaic perspectives that the divine exists in all things—God is a quantum fluctuation. I am here defining God, a divine, that which we deem important, valuable, worth investigating, being respectful of—in relation to the other both as same, and different from the self, i.e. the uncanny. God is the uncanny. This hyperbole recalls Baudrillard's "Murder of the Real" and clearly, Nietzsche's "God is dead". There is no *difference* between the mundane and the sacred.

> By creating hybrid contaminations, intensive convergences, and libidinally charged linkages, techno-body questions the dualisms of functionality and eroticism, production and waste, moderation and excess, human and inhuman, organic and artificial, masculine and feminine (Oosterling and Ziarek 69).

My images play with these non-linear accretions.

Aleatory surrealist techniques[268] amplify the protean fertility of the sub-conscious. This world which incubates a seemingly illogical Dionysian approach[269] using "an element that has nothing to do with either repetition or variation; something which does not enter into the battle of those two terms, and which rebels against being placed or replaced…: That term is chance" (Cage 45). From this spectral position which accommodates chance, we can examine Spinoza's focus on relationality:

[268] These techniques may include mind-body investigations/modalities ranging from improvisation to string theory: "the study of improvisation is like the study of chaos, there is some order there but where?" (Becker 6). Reich was the first psychotherapist to address the intricacies of the mind in relation to the body, including stream of consciousness healing intensities.

[269] "Dionysian vision [is] of continuous flux, the flux of incessant moments of time that somehow are always new and yet always the same" (NAF 16).

"Spinoza is the philosopher of an infinite body, a body not separated from substance, that is, not differentiated from God" (*BD* 72).[270] Similarly, Deleuze's concept of the swarm incites immanence. The swarm equally recalls what is *felt*:

> …what if the global networks that are commonly invoked to speak about flows of people, ideas, capital, and commodities were thought as a mass whose organization is not reducible to the regularity of the grid or the mesh, and has properties such that, like felt, we could find an important provocation: the possibility that all spiral strands in a swath of felt cohere without necessarily connecting, even the most ostensibly connective meshworks might well have nodes that will never touch, that will maintain a tense and tensile proximity without ever connecting? ...The word text and textile share the same etymological root, the Latin verb texere, meaning to "weave." Felt has a different composition altogether. It is a non-woven fabric, a body without axes, created through the multiple random interlockings of spiral strands. The material owes its structural integrity to the chance bindings among its irregular spiral fibers. Felt is arrived at through leaving-to-chance – even if it is a methodical and meticulous leaving-to-chance…. (Thompson 22).

Henry Miller also invokes the affectivity of the swarm in his novel *Sexus*, "We must die as egos and be born again in the swarm, not separate and self-hypnotized, but individual and related" (337). This social ecology of erotic politics[271] challenges and reconfigures monolingual containment of pleasure and vulnerability—unknowable alterities—and ultimately whether or not the citizen subject has the will to become the citizen warrior. The erotics of not knowing,

[270] Perhaps it is not ironic that Spinoza developed his theoretical commitment to nonseparation while he lived in exile for most of his adult life: "...what violence is required to conceptualize this nonseparation as Spinoza did, what violence for the one whose initial wound lies here!" (*BD* 98).

[271] Hamid Sharif Williams, "Conjuring Black Funk: Uses of the Erotic as Decolonization and Liberatory Praxix," explores the intentional relationship with multiple, over-lapping bodies in Ancient Egypt—including spiritual, divine, conscious bodies—in which all sensations are about self in relation to other. In contrast to maladjusted communities based on structural inequality, Williams presents the concept of Funk within the historical context of the Creole language of critiquing and re-envisioning—a political movement rooted in satire, hyperbole, rhythm, erotic as absurd. He investigates George Clinton's use of humor and performative criticism that envisions a socially just, liberated world rooted in sensual awareness. During the *Exploring the Erotic Conference* (Salzburg, 2009), both Williams and I conducted body consciousness workshops addressing the implications of body awareness on emancipatory politics. In Brooklyn, 2002, Williams established Black Funk: The Center for Culture, Sexuality, and Spirituality.

of continual non-arrival at a stable conclusion, solution, fulfillment, or consummation of identity creates an ongoing balance between precision and ambiguity. Ronell inserts Paul de Man's "formulation concerning a language that always thrusts but never scores" (2001: 50). This balance reinforces the tension within the image and experienced by the viewer. It serves as an internal cohesion within my images while fragmentation, doubt, and disorientation construct those very images. Tension is always relational, it is simultaneously confrontational and yielding. Anticipation in tension can become more real than what is "seen" or "felt". Analogously, Freire posits pedagogy within a field of both/and:

> Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world (1997: 53).

Literate audiences fuel the contradictory nature of both post-humanism and education/critical pedagogy. Walter Benjamin makes a similar case when he compares the optical unconsciousness of photography to the instinctual unconscious of psychoanalysis.[272] "Psychoanalysis...is a theory of the uncanny with 'practical applications'... the uncanny is above all...about education and learning to live" (Royle 33).

I recently designed a course, *Body Consciousness and The Politics of the*

[272] See my discussion in "Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations: Molecular Meat Round Two/Second Course" which parallels Hans Bellmer's concept of the 'physical unconscious' to Benjamin's 'optical unconscious'.

Imagination, which addresses a "dissident transnational coalitional consciousness, or what Haraway calls an 'earthwide network of connections" (*MO* 174.5). Through a multidisciplinary lens of the erotic, my students and I investigate the following questions: What happens when imagination becomes more threatening than reality? How do we transform theory into practice? How do we cultivate an aesthetic and ethical life, and how can we foster an artistic and sociological imagination in the face of corporatized education, mass consumption, and contradictory digital technologies? How can we embody vulnerability and use contradictions to inform our individual awareness as a social commitment to emancipatory politics? I ask these questions in the context of my investigation of post-humanism because my course responds to Haraway's entreaty to realign "our 'technics' (material and technical details, rules, machines, and methods) with our 'erotics' (the sensuous apprehension and expression of love as affinity)" (ibid. 172.3):

> The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom with all its limitations remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labour for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom (hooks 1994: 207).

Oppositional consciousness in conjunction with subversive collective and individual action

lays the groundwork for a post-human society that thrives on contradiction, ambiguity, and the potential of paradox without resolution: "It's the positive practice of freedom, not the negative struggle against a particular oppression, that has lifted me above a mutilated existence" (*ON* xxvii).

Just as the prosthetic as a *détournement* offers liberatory potential, "the anomalous is a position or set of positions in relation to a multiplicity" (*TP* 243-244) that offers an unexpected way of viewing our individual and social agencies. Inhabiting an anomalous state clarifies the roles we play (consciously and inadvertently) and fortifies us against the insidious politics of shame.[273] For example, the legalities of public breast-feeding demonstrates how hyper-mediated institutionalized fear of our bodies and ignorance about the critical role of breast-feeding in public health[274] and individual well-being[275] play an enormous role in how knowledge is developed through abject conditions of self-shaming:

> In his provocative 2003 article, "What Can Disability Learn From The Culture Wars?", Disability Studies scholar Tobin Siebers, draws on recent debates about controversial art to suggest that aesthetic judgments are fundamentally also judgments about what kinds of people 'deserv[e] to be included in our culture' (182). Art that gets labeled as 'disgusting,' he contends, repulses not on the basis of some objective aesthetic violation it commits, but rather because it visually reminds its viewers of exactly those bodies that mainstream culture wants to make politically *in*visible" (1). The social model of disability suggests that 'disability is not about biological

[273] Because Eastern and Western cultures conflate modesty and shame, medical students were instructed to work by "feeling…without seeing the part", (MacDonald 36-37). Japanese medical ivories of female patients' ailments were used as prosthetics buffers between the doctor and his potentially lecherous imagination or the patient's gendered inherent indiscretion. Such medical practices compel me to ask: How can we distinguish between modesty and shame; shame and dignity?

[274] The number one public health alert in the US focuses on vaccinations. The term "immunizations" is indiscriminately used in both popular media and medical contexts and deceitfully implies that the vaccinated individual is immune. The verbiage itself is misleading and statistically inaccurate. Additionally, the national "Well-Child Program"… penalizes pediatricians who do not fulfill their annual quota of vaccinated clients. The cornerstone of our public health system is based on coercive misinformation. Once again, the poorest sectors of society are punished if they opt out of the tyranny of vaccinations. For example, to receive foodstamps, parents must prove their children have been vaccinated or offer a religious rationale that defends their decision. All economic classes are subject to being ostracized by their peers who have internalized "public health" pharmaceutical fear-tactics. Additionally, formula-fed babies' (who have been vaccinated) risk of contracting a disease is exponentially higher that breast-fed babies (whether

> normalcy, but rather about the status of the body in relation to the demands of its environment… how a person's body conforms or fails to conform, environmental demands. …The lactating body signifies interdependence and violates expectations of worker autonomy (Nemeck, Cultural Studies Association Conference 2010).

How we raise our children is critical to our agenda for radical social justice. Petroleum-parenting, what I identify as the choices that parents make that contribute to both environmental destruction and body-phobic institutional practices, include how we give birth, how we engage in breast-feeding, how, or whether or not we vaccinate our babies/children, and how we choose to diaper our infants/toddlers. These seemingly benign behaviors, in fact, maintain our cultural inertia. Intricate systems of metropolitan capital dominance colonize both the human body and our earth body.

2011. Oakland. About thirty mothers gathered outside Target's new store to collectively breast-feed our babies as a show of solidarity and protest of corporate policies outlawing breastfeeding on Target premises.[276] As protocol for new hire orientation in corporate environments, employees are required to follow procedures to escort any breast-feeding customers out of public sight. Breast-feeding women are thus rendered obscene. Breast-focused mainstream retailer Victoria's Secret also follows such policies. Breasts in this context are commodified only for visual consumption, and not for utilitarian purposes. The public is prohibited from posting on

or not they have been vaccinated).

[275] There is vast statistical data to substantiate the critical necessity of breast-feeding. The medical, physiological, psychological, and sociological imperative of breast-feeding for both baby and mother cannot be over-estimated.



Early Latch, a few hours after my baby Zazu's birth



Zazu and me, two years later with Ari and Xandréa—I am including this image as a response to the cover of TIME magazine May 2012 issue: "Are You Mom Enough?"—another institutionalized misogynist attempt to perpetuate divisiveness among women as we navigate parental choices and pressures.

[276] A few weeks prior to this national "Nurse-In", a woman in Target in Houston who was breast-feeding with a blanket covering her chest and sitting in a corner of the store was asked to leave. When she called the Target corporate headquarters to



PLATE 25

Facebook images of ourselves breast-feeding our babies. Such images, and astonishingly even photographs of a placenta, are censored and the woman's profile is marked as "suspicious", under surveillance, and her FB account potentially dissolved. Having violated FB's "Rights and Responsibilities" for nudity, she is "locked-out".

Breast-feeding engenders such institutional fear because it exhibits the uncanny *carrefour*[277] of the abject. This corporatized body-phobia that insinuates the abject plays out the politics of eversion. An everted domesticity deterritorializes a precarious interiority. Throughout Royle's book titled *The Uncanny,* I found numerous examples of how my photographs deploy Jacques Lacan's neologism, *extimité.* Mladen Dolar's interweaving of Lacan's *extimité* and the uncanny demonstrates why my photographs have been frequently censored in multiple (art and general public) venues on both US coasts:

> *Extimité* points neither to the interior nor to the exterior but is located there where the most intimate interiority coincides with the exterior and becomes threatening, provoking horror and anxiety. The extimate is simultaneously the intimate kernel and the foreign body: in a word, it is unheimlich—(uncanny) (Dolar cited in Royle 30).

Consistently, peoples' fear of their own imaginations,[278] those "shadowy doubles", surface as a kind of cultural madness. In this case, the individual consciousness (in)forms the social consciousness.

make a formal complaint, they told her breast-feeding is unacceptable inside Target stores. "Good Morning America" ran a story on the women around the country who spoke out with our bodies. Also, see the cover photograph of *SF Gate* in which I am breast-feeding Zazu outside of Oakland City Hall during World Breast Feeding Week 2011 (http://insidescoopsf.sfgate.com/blog/2011/08/09/is-it-ok-to-breastfeed-in-restaurants/#.TkNumXTXCvQ.email). This particular controversy revolved around breast-feeding in restaurants. Many breast-feeding women across the US are cited for indecent exposure or public nuisance. The fact that it is even a question of whether or not mothers have a right to feed their babies in a restaurant reaches the height of the grotesque irony of our culture's body-phobia. 44% of interviewed mothers feel shame breast-feeding in public (Bump.com 2011 survey of 1,600 women).

[277] See Hans Bellmer's fixation on the anagram where he played with the spaces between exterior/interior body drives, discussed in *Magnifying Mirrors: Women Surrealists and Their Partners.*

[278] I discuss this phenomena in detail in "Aesthetic Obscuratism: The Ineffable, The Incomplete, *L'Informe".*

In his explanation of *extimité,* Žižek reminds us of Lacan's *extimité* in the context of Derrida's *pharmakon*—a manifestation of chiasmic unity.[279] In the context of Derrida's *pharmakon*, Žižek expounds on *cogito*—the fantasy of a unified self—as an escape from the "hyperbolic moment of universal madness" (Žižek's fourth lecture in Ronell's *Antigone and Hegel* lectures, NYU 2009). Our poison is our cure, just as the familiarity of exile can become our home. Žižek asserts that Hegel views habit as the opposite of freedom, creative choice, while insisting that there is no freedom without habit—we need to learn to practice freedom. Through conscious contradictory practices of habit we can re-appropriate our bodies. Hegel tells us that we become human through habit (ibid.). Žižek cites Catherine Malabou's "becoming essential of an accident" as a "prosopoetic compulsion"[280] that undoes ego by demanding that we experience what is in front of us in the present, not only through a habitual, taken-for-granted assumption rooted in familiarity, but through a "mechanism of self-feeling" (ibid.). Nicholas Royle cites Adam Bresnick: "The uncanny is also the experience that momentarily undoes the factitious monological unity of the ego" (117). Since I began exhibiting my photographs in the early 90s, I have had to navigate this "cognitive mise-en-abyme" (ibid. 37)—a paradoxical and dialectical relationship between habit and creative intelligence.

[279] Ulfers explores "chiasmic unity" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009), the ""third' that 'precedes' any dualistic or oppositional structures...difference without any decidable poles, without any independent, irreversible terms. ...[A] medium as element enveloping both terms at once; a medium located between the two terms. It is an operation that both sows confusion between opposites and stands between the opposites 'at once'". Congruently, in his *Dissemination*, Derrida identifies this *felt*ed terrain as "pharmakon" or "difference". For an exploration of Derrida's *felt*edness see pages 166, 209, and 312 in this text.

[280] "Prosopoetic compulsion" is Bresnick's term relating to "the compulsion to enliven the dead letter of fiction by reading figuratively, for, in the concise formulation of J. Hillis Miller, prosopopeia is the trope that 'ascribes a face, a name, a voice to the absent, the inanimate, or the dead'" (Adam Bresnick. "Prosopoetic Compulsion: Reading the Uncanny in Freud and Hoffman" in *The Germanic Review,* Vol. 71, 1996: 114-32).

Inhabiting Ambiguity and Contradiction
2005. Lyon. During my lecture at the Contemporary Museum of Art in Lyon, France, one of the curators from the Lyon Biennial told me how much he liked my photo of an old woman. I responded by informing him that "the old woman" is actually a young man. What interests me is not his interpretation of age or gender, but how he reacts when he discovers that his taken-for-granted supposition is actually the opposite?



PLATE 26

A similar inversion of reality occurred the first time my photographs were censored. A female viewer categorized my photos as pornographic, insisting they be removed from the exhibition because she was offended by what she thought was a penis—in reality, the offending "penis" was the chin of my mother, the model in the image.



PLATE 27

Another example of how commodified hegemonic practices distort our self-perceptions and how difference is institutionally neutralized was when my photographs were censored in San Francisco's City Hall. As I installed my three-month exhibition, one of the city supervisors warned me that Mayor Willie Brown could not be expected to walk past an image of a vagina everyday on the way to his office. The so-called "vagina" actually was a close-up of my armpit.

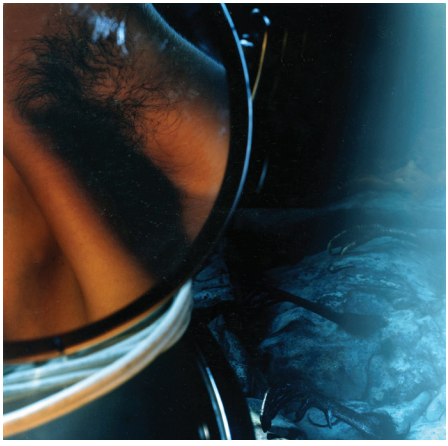


PLATE 28

Interpretation is performative. "Everyone is aware that life is parodic and that it lacks an interpretation. Thus lead is the parody of gold. Air is the parody of water" (*The Solar Anus*). The "…irony of the 'ridiculous' is an important element in Arendt's power to disturb readers into thinking" (Kerr 19). For Arendt, true thinking evolved from story-telling and poetry. Whether a sexual/gender or racial/ethnic misrecognition emerges from an interpretive event, the viewer experiences the potential to be fully alive, to "know what a body can do" in Spinozan terms. Irigaray invites misrecognition as a process to dwell within wonder. She includes Descartes' *The Passions of the Soul*: "When the first encounter with some object surprises us and we judge it to be new, or very different from what we supposed that it ought to be, that causes us to wonder and be surprised" (Irigaray citing Descartes 2005: 63). Unfortunately, when viewers' expectations/assumptions are not met, rather than experience "wonder and surprise", they feel threatened, thus they silence the object of their fear.

Reading, in contrast to the homogenizing tendencies of interpretation, serves as a shifting point of non-arrival. Reading is a dialogue with the unknown. Reading engenders *smooth* fabric—it is "infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction; it has neither top nor bottom nor center; it does not assign fixed and mobile elements but rather distributes a continuous variation" (*AOed* 475-6). The polysemy of language (verbal, visual, corporeal languages)

is uncontainable, a priori/always-already excessive. Embodied interruptions intersect as stammerings and hesitations becoming hybrid accretions of uncertainty (from the hyperbolic to the whisper-echo-memory to silence and negative space). Ronell's reading lurches us through her staccato constellation of possibilities. There cannot be "comforting smoothness of interpretive syntheses", only the logic of autobiography, the logic of interferences, interruptions, crossings as a reading [which] is the spanking, the syncopation and the disturbance (Ronell 2001: 54). My photographs, in particular my self-portraits, engage the erotics of not-knowing, this logic of autobiography which can only be read, never interpreted.

> The stress of not-knowing, the point of its own crucial dumbfoundedness, never leaves a text though acts of interpretation may appear to achieve a suspension of its essential self-ignorance. Interpretation masters interference and the contingencies of textual disturbance. It does not allow for the stammers and stalls that reading, as understood by de Man, necessarily confronts. Reading enters the zone of non-understanding and tries at some level to manage the distress that the text releases. The style of management has little to do with repression, however, which would be the favored house policy of interpretation (ibid. 52).

The repressive tendency of interpretation insists upon de-ciding an unequivocal arrival. Like sexualized interpretations *(mis-recognitions)* of my self-portraiture, my body consciousness workshops invite participants to read their relationships to their environments. Engaging

with a Nietzschean subjectivity, my workshops wield "ploys of overt contradiction, to propose what is unequivocally meant" (NAF 1). They integrate both the philosophical and the psycho-anatomical into an organism that illuminates how to thrive on contradictions and ambiguities in our congested existences.[281] The mind's natural tendency is to be preoccupied with the outside world—magnetized towards what Spinoza identified as "fluctuations of the mind". When we cannot separate ourselves from our reactions, we are no longer committed to the practice of becoming in the present. Consciousness as *disidentification* facilitates the practice of becoming and functions on the plane of immanence (Deleuze).

When people resist the unfamiliar and become unwittingly frozen in the habitual (Spinozan), tension is stored in muscles, diaphragm, and the nervous system (Reichian). This interpretation of habitual behavior develops into an attachment to ego (Freudian)[282] which may have detrimental short and long term effects on our psycho-neuroimmunology—our body, mind, and emotions. Since a lot of us are addicted to stress—to the chemical endorphin high—we tend to confuse feeling energized with nervous system stimulation. I encourage participants in my body consciousness workshops to slow down enough to find connections within their own bodies, between themselves and others—to develop self-awareness by paying attention to the present moment.

[281] Freud's analysis of "the unmistakable sanctions of reality" (Royle 147) and Sach's *The Development Dictionary* are both central to this investigative process of enfolded *détournements*.

[282] According to Freud, a variation on the uncanny takes place during a "disturbance of the ego…a regression to times when ego had not yet clearly set itself off against the world outside and from others" (Royle 143). As an introduction to my body consciousness workshops, I tell the following story to illustrate the impact of ego: Once a month, a group of scientists and general public gather to listen and discuss specific scientific topics/ current research projects during an event called Café Scientifique in Greenwich Village, NYC. I went to one of these lectures-discussions given by a Harvard-based biologist who had recently returned from South Africa for her extensive study on the underwater mating rituals of South African frogs. A lot of her lecture consisted of sound demonstrations of clicking and clacking made by male and female frogs—variations of acoustic aphrodisiac rappings and anti-aphrodisiac tappings. She told us a story of a female and male hitting it off—about to mate/ pro-create, when another clacking or clicking male enters the scene. The first male becomes pre-occupied with the second male and the two males, now completely focused on who should and shouldn't be there, ignore and eventually forget about the female frog—she swims away—no sex, no babies. My question to the biologist was: From the most basic forms of life, in this case, South African underwater

> We need 'unities' in order to be able to reckon: that does not mean we must suppose that such unities exist. We have borrowed the concept of unity from our 'ego' concept—our oldest article of faith. If we did not hold ourselves to be unities, we would never have formed the concept 'thing' (Nietzsche *The Will to Power*, § 635, p. 338).[283]

Adaptability, rather than attachment to a 'thing', is a central aspect of this practice. This is a definition of "commitment"—a willingness to jump into the multiplicity of the unknown with an open mind/heart. Like Cixous, I practice a radical aesthetics of attention, a "politics/poetics of attention" (1991: 189). Schirmacher corroborates: "Language needs to be poetry,". Rather than a honing in on singularity or unity, I distinguish this attention as one of expansive playful[284] reading:

> Reading involves the undoing of interpretative figures, to the extent that it questions whether any synthesis, any single meaning, can close off a text and adequately account for its constitution. In contrast to interpretation, which involves a development over the course of a narrative towards a single figure reconciling all its diverse moments, 'reading states the logic of figures and the logic of narratives to be constantly divergent' (E.S. Burt 192 cited in Ronell 2002: 53).

The erotics of not-knowing "*noumene*, the reality that eludes knowledge" (*BD* 36) provides a fertile framework through which I invite my viewers to engage with my images. Similarly, "De Man arranged for a new alignment of the constative and performative edges of language where the constative (discovering, unveiling, pointing out, saying what is) is always shown

frogs to us, humans, is our "need" to be Right, our Ego, more important on the evolutionary scale than Reproduction? Does our need to be right, to know the answers supersede all else?

[283] See the critique of the fascistic fusion in "One World" from *The Development Dictionary.*

[284] Philosopher, developmental psychologist Alison Gopnik tells us how play is actually a sophisticated process of engaging with multiple awarenesses: "Consciousness narrows as a function of age...As we know more, we see less…Four-year olds are actually better at finding out an unlikely hypothesis that adults are when given exactly the same test…adults attention and consciousness look… like a spotlight. So what happens for adults is we decide that something's relevant or important, we should pay attention to it. Our consciousness of that thing that we're attending to becomes extremely bright and vivid, and everything else…goes dark…what happens when we pay attention is that the prefrontal cortex, the... executive part of our brains, sends a signal that makes a little part of our brain much more flexible, more plastic, better at learning, and shuts down activity in all the rest of our brain. So we have a very focused, purpose-driven kind of attention. If we look at babies and young children, we see something very different. I think babies and young children seem to have more of a lantern of consciousness than a spotlight of consciousness. So babies and young children are very bad at

narrowing down to just one thing. But they're very good at taking in lots of information from lots of different sources at once. And if you actually look in their brains, you see that they're flooded with these neurotransmitters that are really good at inducing learning and plasticity, and the inhibitory parts haven't come on yet. So when we say that babies and young children are bad at paying attention, what we really mean is that they're bad at not paying attention. So they're bad at getting rid of all the interesting things that could tell them something and just looking at the thing that's important" (TED TALKS).

[285] I elaborate on these interpretive projections in my discussion of racial profiling and my Sephardic identity.

to be unsettled by the performative intrusion (producing, instituting, transforming)" (Ronell 2002: 45). When attempting to "understand" my images, viewers used to ask me "what is that?" (Now, because of how I use deep space, they ask, "what is happening?"). I rarely knew how to answer them. Does knowing what the objects are limit the viewer's potential experience, their relationship with the image or allow them to enter unknown and unexpected territories? Bataille writes, "mystical experience reveals an absence of object" (1986: 23). How does projection fill the gap of the absent object?[285] Both a Nietzschean absence and becoming are eternally approaching a "new infinite": "Rather has the world become 'infinite' for us all over again, inasmuch as we cannot reject the possibility that *it may include infinite interpretations* (Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, § 374, p. 336). If the world and its possible interpretations are infinite, then as viewers/citizen-warriors, we embrace the opportunity to allow ourselves to become-vulnerable—expanding into the miraculous of the norm.

> ('The order of the signified is never contemporary, is at best the subtly discrepant inverse or parallel—discrepant by the time of a breath—from the order of the signifier'), Krauss explains how, for Derrida, this spacing can be 'radicalized as the precondition for meaning as such, and the outsidedness of spacing…revealed as already constituting the condition of the 'inside' '(Krauss 1985:106). Thus 'spaced,' she continues, the photographic image is deprived of the sense of presence which—since it is the mark of the object—we have counted on. Doubling, or the showing of this space by a double imprint, is the



PLATE 29

> most important strategy in surrealist photography for letting the sense of difference and deferral penetrate the image (and so, we might want to add, the imagination). 'For it is doubling that produces the formal rhythm of space—the two-step that banishes the unitary condition of the moment, that creates *within* the moment an experience of fission' (109). Doubling destroys the impression of singularity, of the original (Caws 265).

Jacotot, like Milan Kundera, resists the compulsion to know the right answer: "Nothing is more foreign to me than allegory, a story invented by the author in order to illustrate some thesis" (Kundera 235). Like Kundera's polyphony novels, my photographs offer an open field of projection "in which various stories mutually explain, illumine, complement each other". Interpretation, like allegory, too often reinforces a totalitarian "cult of the future" and an institutionalized "mistrust of thought". Kundera's warning against totalitarian morality echoes both Habermas' concept of consent and Freire's problem-posing education:[286]

> Habermas insists that reaching consensus requires that words be correlated with univocal meanings: 'the productivity of the process of understanding remains unproblematic only as long as all participants stick to the reference point possibly achieving a mutual understanding in which the *same* utterances are assigned the same meaning.' But are we, whoever "we" are, the kind of community in which such meanings could be established once and for all? Is there not a permanent diversity within the semantic field that constitutes an irreversible situation for political theorizing? Who stands above the interpretive fray in a position to 'assign' the same utterances the same meanings?

[286] See my discussion of the operations of the Occupy Movement's working groups.



PLATE 30

> And why is it that the threat posed by such an authority is deemed less serious than the one posed by equivocal interpretation left unconstrained? (*ES* 87).

When thought becomes unproblematic, unencumbered by interruptions, contradictions, and ellipses, we participate in the tyranny of clarity. This quest for commonsense and ease manifests in every enfoldment of the public-private's coercive interpretation of our bodies. By amplifying a different species of coercion, my photographs attempt to decode and engage a fertile field—a deep space of tensions that plays with the enigma of consciousness. The ways in which my images have been interpreted demonstrates Derrida's art as seeing[287]—reflecting Barthes' *studium* in contrast to *punctum* which escapes control of a photographs intended meaning. The "disrupt[ion of] the image's coding within the frame" moves beyond speech into the non-symbolizable condition[288] of the real in relation to the uncanny (Krauss 193).

[287] I read Derrida's art as seeing in the context of museums as institutional agents for prostitution of the arts-as-entertainment, see "Inhabiting the Unknown through Ambiguity and Contradiction".

[288] Being Sephardic, a minority within a minority, is a non-symbolizable condition.

"I feel messy…"

My maternal grandmother, just before her death.

4 Violence and the Sacred: Julia Kristeva and George Bataille's Archeologies of Prohibition

Paradoxically, vulnerability disrupts and threatens the violence of normalcy and the taken-for-granted. By exploring the contradictory nature of violences enacted by and upon individual and social bodies, we can discern the socio-political potency of the sacred in the form of

vulnerability. The threefold confabulation among vulnerability, difference, and the sacred undermines the public sphere's hegemonic prohibitions. What emerges is the transgressive practice of art as conscious attention to what is beyond language, beyond metaphysics.[289] In Bataille's words:

> *the fullnesss and reality for the game man plays* are consequences of his overstepping what is prohibited. …[T]he relationship between prohibitions and work: prohibitions preserve intact—if and when possible, and as far and for as long as possible—the world work organizes and shelters it from the disturbances repeatedly provoked by death and sexuality: the enduring animality in us forever introduces raw life and nature into the community: prohibitions exist to quell these uprisings and spread oil on the sea of insurgent animal passion and unruliness. ...Prohibition—that scandal of the mind, that paralysis, that stupor—could not simply of a sudden cease to exist. Scandal and stupor plodded on, but life outdistanced them just as play outdistanced work. …*Transgression,* I think, ought to be applied only to an act committed, not because of a want of sensibility, but, to the contrary, knowingly, despite the toll it is certain to exact. …It is the state of transgression that prompts the desire, the need for a more profound, a richer, a marvelous world, the need, in a word, for a sacred world…In one respect, play is the transgression of the law of work: art, play and transgression come not singly, but every time joined in defiance of the principles presiding over the disciplined regularity of work. …[T]o bring work and play, prohibition and transgression, the profane season and the riot of holiday, into a kind of delicate equilibrium within which contraries blend, play takes on the guise of work, and transgression contributes to affirming prohibition. …[T]ransgression only begins to exist when art itself becomes manifest (1955: 37).

[289] Western metaphysics is representational thinking embedded in "state philosophy". Similarly, in his depiction of how a pregnant woman generates apprehension, expectations, anxiety, and fear through imagining "the worst", Leboyer reminds us "[a]ll troubles come from the mind, from having ideas, from trying to imagine" (198). The same could be said of those who have censored my photographic sessions and the photographs themselves as tangible objects to be rendered ob-scene.

[290] In *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, Arendt recognizes the violence of the everyday as society's inbred fear of multifarious thought.

Violence can be scrutinized in relation to the playful, transgressive sacred by examining its paradoxical realms: vulnerability on one hand and normalization on the other. The violence of vulnerability gives birth to one's self through a recognition and embodiment of the contradictions of the uncanny.

> …one might argue that the communicative sphere of language necessarily posits a realm of obscenity that it seeks, with always partial success, to keep rigorously excluded from its own operation. This attempt to purify the sphere of public discourse by institutionalizing the norms that establish what ought properly to be included there operates as a pre-emptive censor. Such efforts not only labor under a fear of contamination, but they are also compelled to restage in the spectacles of public denunciations they perform the very utterances they seek to banish from public life. Language that is compelled to repeat what it seeks to constrain invariably reproduces and restages the very speech that it seeks to shut down. In this way, speech exceeds the censor by which it is constrained (*ES* 129).

Entropic Excursions

The violence of everyday[290] mediocrity and so-called neutrality exposes the intersection, the *carrefour,* of entertainment, consumerism, and ethnocentrism as a collective violence through which we are conditioned to disavow our bodies and consciousnesses. Entertainment (the violence of diminished collective imagination; internalized mediocrity), consumerism (the violence of the culture of convenience—that which is easily identified/categorized and possessed) and ethnocentrism (the violence of assuming the ethnically, sexually, and economically *neutral* individual body of the Christian, "white",

heterosexual, 9 to 5 "productive" worker)[291] invisibly co-exist within the rubric of the ostensibly typical and everyday. When we render these assumptions visible by highlighting the coercive practices bound into our everyday.[292] These blindingly bright (see Heidegger's public in "Fictional Bodies: Probing The Private and The Public") axioms go unnoticed until we examine their contextual affects/effects. This framing of representation becomes the violation. Once again, another *détournement.* Weber tells us that what is *cut* out of the frame creates anxiety. Ego is always looking inside the frame—reifying the finitude of human perception and thought (EGS 2008). Just as the abjectification of the official diagnosis magnifies pathology,[293] the citizen-warrior violates the transcendent-universal when we demarcate its seemingly seamless cohesion, it's history of exclusions. Thus, rupturing the substantive, the ego, the expected, we embody erotic politics: "To violate is the secret of eroticism. On any scale, eroticism is the domain of violence, of violation [both physical and moral]. …Eroticism is born of interdiction, it lives on interdiction" (Roger Shattuck citing Bataille 241).

Bataille's cohort Caillois offers an inversion of order in his discussion of the *festival*. He describes how/why Western cultures have sublimated not only eroticism, but it's communal manifestation—the *festival*. When we examine how industrialized society has appropriated eroticism and the *festival* into the everyday, we can witness another stage of acute cultural somnambulism:[294]

[291] These neutral bodies deny hybrid, heterogeneous identities and experiences while they reify hegemonic forms of clarity: "The organism is…the judgment of God, from which the medical doctors benefit and on which they base their power. The organism is not at all the body, the BwO; mutilation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labor from the BwO, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences" (*AOed* 159).

[292] For example, our socio-corporeal addiction to chairs commits infractions on both the individual and social body. In her *The Chair: Rethinking Body, Culture, and Design* (New York: Norton Publishing House, 1998), Galen Crantz argues that one of the downfalls of Western civilization is our status-obsession marked by the chair. Also, see Ivan Illich's *Deschooling Society,* Calder and Boyars. New York: Random House, 1971.

[293] See Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations: Molecular Meat Round Two/ Second Course".

[294] Analogously, Foucault's claim that sex has been overworked in the 20th century parallels Žižek's perspective on Hegel's "cunning of reason". See my elaboration on international development politics throughout Part I: Embodied Energies: Convenience Culture and the Violence of the Everyday.

> when these exhausting and ruinous festivals are abandoned, under the influence of colonization, society loses its bonds and becomes divided. One exists in a time in which one's only obligation is to spend and be spent in it. Acquisitive motives are no longer admissible, for each one must squander and waste his wealth, food, and sexual and muscular vigor in competition with others. But it seems that in the course of their evolution, societies tend towards indifference, uniformity. …General turbulence is no longer possible. It no longer occurs at fixed times or on a vast scale. It is as if it were diluted in the calendar and necessarily absorbed in monotony and regularity. The festival is then succeeded by the vacation. To be sure, it is always a time of free activity, of interruption in the pattern of work, but it is a phased of relaxation, not paroxysm. The values are found to be completely reversed. …Vacations (as the very term indicates) appear as a void, or at least an easing of social activity. By the same token, they are powerless to satisfy the individual. …The happiness they bring is primarily due to freedom from the boredom of which they are a distraction, from the obligations of which one has been freed. To go on vacation is first of all to flee care, to enjoy a 'well-earned' rest. In addition, one is isolated from the group, instead of entering into communion with it, at time of exuberance and jollity (Caillois 127).

Considering its monotony, reductionism, and violence, Caillois, like Bataille, identifies relaxation as a perverse form of entertainment in that there is only "regulated tranquility and obligatory violence" (ibid.). The paradoxical totalizing encroachment of relaxation[295] becomes vivid when we examine art world politics. Contemporary societies' expression of the *festival*—as the absence of becoming—offers no "collective effervescence" as one finds in the erotic release of paroxysm, which requires utter

[295] Schirmacher's reference to *gelassenheit* as being relaxed, self-surrender, precedes Bataille and Caillois' critique of the contemporary vacuum of relaxation/vacation.

presence and participation. In our community-by-co-opt digital age, we must ask the same questions raised by Bataille's conflicting, co-implicated orientations of both his *Acéphale* and his *Collège de Sociologie:* "how radical is this expenditure if it merely fulfills another need of society and through this fulfillment guarantees society's perpetual subsistence?" (*VE* xxii). The appropriation of the *festival* and the carnival parallel neoliberal green-washing (discussed in Chapter One and the concluding chapter).

Rather than addressing the cultural enormity of advanced capitalism in this context, I am choosing to apply the term consumption, specifically because of the manifold, precariously contradictory connotations of the act of consuming—particularly in the face of Bataille's interdependent concepts of eroticism and global economics:

> *'J'exposais le rapport de la production a la consummation (a la consomation improductive).'* Bataille opposes *consumation*- a noun that doesn't exit in French- to *consummation* or consumption proper. His neologism recalls the etymological sense of consuming, as in a fire that utterly destroys. It is his own concept of fire, sacrificial consumption, with a sense of nobility, as opposed to the bourgeois consumption of production and accumulation. Hereafter, Bataille consistently uses *consummation*, which will be translated here as nonproductive (or useless) consumption (*AS vol. 2,3* 431, nt. 1).

In contrast to socio-political implications of violent consumption, Bataille's "intellectual violence" delivers the possibility of perceiving violent acts whose effects move beyond the

realms of good and evil. This beyond evokes horror. Kristeva defines horror as an uncanny disturbance of refusing binary codes such as something/nothing, complete/incomplete, composition/decomposition, ego/other, inside/outside. Weber concurs, "For it is only in this forced and violent opening, which can also entail violence and even disintegration, that there is space for something else to happen" (*LF* 28). All transformation is inherently violent—a "cascade of negations" (Jonathan Katz on Agnes Martin). Kristeva prods us: "As everyone knows, every negation is a definition" (Moi 274). The allusive negation-difference dialectic of affinity generates vulnerability of the sacred. We are ourselves only in relation to others, and that relationship is an act of violence in that it agitates the known, disassembles the familiar—the received [and perceived] order of things: "It has been demonstrated that the sacred, in ordinary life, is expressed almost exclusively through taboos.[296] It is defined as 'the guarded' or 'the separate.' It is…protected by restrictions destined to prevent any attack upon the order of the universe, any risk of upsetting it or introducing any source of disturbance into it. It seems essentially *negative*" (Caillois 100). Sacred acts embody "intellectual violence": "Violence' overwhelms us *strangely*…what happens is foreign to the received order of things to which this violence each time stands in opposition" (*TE* 32).

This dialectic of violence and relational awareness births the violence of separating expectation from the unknown as it sabotages

[296] Below, I discuss the taboo in the context of the wound.

the insidiously internalized societal patterns of representable knowledge. Perhaps unwittingly, Schirmacher exhorts the student body at EGS to consciously engage with the uncanny. He proclaims: "You are not here to follow your convictions!" My awe-inspiring Iyengar yoga teacher, Judith Lasater would similarly gesture: "Do what you would never do!" Do the opposite of what you normally do—react in the opposite way from which you would habitually react. The parodic power of sanctity thrives in Schirmacher and Lasater's provocations. Everting the habitual sanctity of normalcy mirrors the function of the village idiot who does not fit because s/he is not invisible, but is instead doing the opposite of social norms/expectations. Embodying confusion and consciously performing oppositions as a vulnerability tactic for personal and social change offers collective rhizomative transformations. An enfoldment of Hegel's "cunning of reason" yet again emerges:

> Forbidden and extravagant behavior does not seem to emphasize sufficiently the difference between the time of release and the time of control. Contrary acts are added to them. One tries to act in a way exactly the opposite of normal behavior. The inversion of all relationships seems manifest proof of the return to chaos, the epoch of fluidity and confusion. ..."Slaves eat at the master's table, ordering them about and mocking them, while the latter serve and obey them, submitting to their affronts and reprimands (Caillois 122).

The Spectacle of the Invisible: Ob-scenity and The Explicit[297]

Rosemary Jackson's examination of fantasy probes prohibition as it veers between the private and the public: "The 'FANTASTIC' derives from the Latin, *phantasticus*…meaning to make visible or manifest" (13). Jackson's *monstrous* scene/seen mirrors "Baudrillard's statement concerning contemporary obscenity in the realm of vision: 'The disappearance of this scene [of seduction] clears the way for a principle of obscenity, a pornographic materialization of everything' (Baudrillard 2005: 69)" (ibid. 8). By extension, the excess and violence of casino capitalism[298] rages on as it collides with Foucault's confession, *scientia sexualis*—consuming *ars erotica.* With the "birth" of cinema, one "lives in a sort of frenzy of the visible. …The whole world becomes visible at the same time that it becomes appropriatable" (Materialist historian, Jean-Louis Comolli, cited in Williams nt. 1, Chapter 2). Once we witness both the collusive, punishing violence of the blindingly bright (Heidegger), the explicit violence of the everyday, we begin to track the *détournement* of prohibition:

> The foundation of eroticism is the sexual act. Now, this act is subject to a prohibition. It's inconceivable! Making love is prohibited! Unless you do it in secret. But if we do it in secret the prohibition transfigures what it prohibits and illumines it with a glow, at once sinister [The lighting of obscenity, like that of a crime, is lugubrious]... and divine: In a word, it illuminates it with a religious glow...The prohibition gives its own value to what it prohibits...Prohibi-

[297] I explore in detail the concept of the explicit in my discussion of my specific censorship incidents.

[298] See Giroux's new book: *Zombie Politics and Culture in the Age of Casino Capitalism.* New York: Peter Lang, 2011.



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> tion gives to what it proscribes a meaning that in itself the prohibited acting never had (*TE* 67).

Consistent with Butler's argument that censorship produces speech, and inversely yet with the same consequences, Schirmacher's conviction that citizens must control the application of technology, prohibition and transgression oscillate in the auto-circumscribed paradoxical zone of explicit obscenity: " If *all* erotic behavior is by definition transgressive and violent, then there is no such thing as perverted or pathological eroticism, just as there is no normal, nonviolent, loving eroticism" (Shattuck on Bataille 241). This recognition shatters the illusion of neutrality—thereby opening into *pulsion*—a chiasmic field of distributed excess, of becoming-vulnerable. Like Bataille, Kristeva seeks to dissolve normative hierarchies that attempt to inhibit the excesses of our bodies:

> …Kristeva, anxious to forge a connection between the somatic and the psychic (and thus ultimately, the symbolic), sees the pulsatile beat of the drives as the bridge between the body's flexion—the spasmodic movement of the glottal or anal sphincters, for example—and the repetition necessary to language's fundamental spacing, or articulation. It is from this beat that Kristeva sets up what she calls a 'chora': The *chora*, as rupture and articulations (rhythm) precedes evidence, verisimilitude, spatiality, and temporality (Krauss 221).

Kristeva's chora is a becoming-vulnerable—ob-scene in that it exists in an interdeterminate, unknown field. A chora, like the uncanny, is lived unrepresentability. The uncanny is "a

vision that resists any representation, if the latter is a desire to coincide with the presumed identity of what is to be represented. The vision of the [uncanny] is, by definition, the [signifier] of an impossible ob-ject, a boundary and a limit" (Kristeva 1982: 154). It is uncategorizable, unnameable: "All men share an instinctive dread awe of complete darkness. That terror is 'sacred', obscure light suggests what is religious...these places are still able to cause an inner distress not at all unlike the anguish connected with sacred rites" (Bataille 1955: 56). Within the framework of Bataille's exploration of ancient prohibitions in which "prohibitions [are] opposed to the free satisfaction of animal needs" (*AS vol. 2,3* 58,) "…the greatest repugnance has an archaic character" (ibid. 65). The *chora* occupies the space of man/woman as animal, pre-labor, what Bataille defines as the negation of nature: "man, designating the object, has been wrenched out of the world of nameless feeling—of sensibility" (ibid. 28). The *chora* embodies the ineffable obscenity of the mind-body connection, a messy merging of the somatic with the psychic: "[Men] had to subtilize it, withdrawing it from the light and confining it in darkness where it is hidden from notice. The place of filth is in the dark, where looks cannot reach it" (ibid. 62).

Twists and folds of *détournement* form, reform, and *informe* the dialectics of society's reactions to the sacred: "*Human* existence commanded an abhorrence of all sexuality; this abhorrence itself commanded the attractive value of

eroticism….for *humanity* would cease to exist the day it became something other than what it is, entirely made up of violent contrasts" (Caillois 18). But, the blinding invisibility of the sacred offers the possibility of generating socio-political power for those who consciously choose to re-appropriate it—for example, Fatimah Mernissi's discussion of the veil as a device of agency and not of oppression parallels Butler's critique of Badinter's ban on the burkha. *In Beyond the Veil,* Mernissi claims that the veil is actually a mechanism of self-empowerment and not submission.[299] Analogously,

> a veil can mean...a woman's negotiation between private and public space. It's about the right to 'appear'—to appear as who you are—and it's clear that you need the right to 'appear' in order to take part in democratic life. ...A real feminism would extend our 'universal' principals (Butler cited in "Against Nature: Elizabeth Badinter's contrarian feminism" in *The New Yorker,* July 25, 2011).

Just as the term *obscene*, refers to acts so awful that in theater they could only occur *obskena*, "offstage", out of public view, the uncanny are frequently "things which have been kept secret" (Freud 1919: 129). This definition further reveals the inherent contradictory motivations of those who censor. Freud emphatically emphasizes the integral element of repression,[300] followed by exposure in the uncanny:

> …this uncanny element is nothing new or strange, but something that was long familiar to the psyche and was estranged from it only by

[299] Both male and female, the characters bearing veiled heads in my photographs are in a state of incubation. Their absented faces fester with contradictory readings. Deleuze and Guattarian scholar, Michael Shapiro, read these effaced faces through the lens of *faciality* and *landscapification*—— an always-already morphological intervention.

[300] Foucault's "repressive hypothesis" is all too applicable in our neoliberal marketing of the private. Pleasure, public sex, and "non-productive" sexual activities are both pathologized and systematically spectaclized.

> being repressed. The link with repression now illuminates [the] definition of the uncanny as 'something that should have remained hidden and has come into the open' (ibid. 148).[301]

Lacan's Real witnesses this obscenity:[302] Žižek determines "one of the definitions of the Lacanian Real is that it is the flayed body, the palpitation of the raw, skinless red flesh" (1994: 116).

The elliptical unfurling and enfolding of prohibition-the obscene-the invisible *trialectic*[303] can become a *felt* emancipatory intensity for political change. By reminding us of our responsibility to expand what we think we see,

> Obscenity is a relation. ...This is obscene if some person sees it and says it is; it is not exactly an object, but rather a relation between an object and the mind of a person. ...[T]hese situations are unstable; they always include ill-defined elements, or if they have some stability, this involves a degree of arbitrariness (*AS 2,3* 54).

What I am identifying here as a *trialectic* is a manifestation of Kristeva's concept of the *carrefour*. Moving beyond the dialectic into a territory of the infinitude of an elliptical continuum, the *trialectical chora* eminates these multiple enfoldments. Positioning obscenity in relation to the tenuous vulnerable and its concomitant sacred acts establishes the groundwork within which we can learn to embody the potency of Kristeva's *carrefour* as the erotics of the uncanny. It is the sacred ambiguous dialectic of prohibition and transgression that renders vulnerability as

[301] Also, see Freud's *The Uncanny*. Penguin Classic Series, New York, 1919, trans. and ed. James Strachey, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985: 132.

[302] Conversely, as I discuss in "Practicing (Anti-) Critique: Emancipatory Pedagogies and Becoming the Impossible", ec-stacy and beauty hover outside oneself.

[303] My term, the *trialectic,* offers a rhizomatic approach to exploring the body in society. This simultaneity of enmeshed contradictory narratives provokes the potential for an emancipatory erotics.

strength, and not a handicap to be overcome or denied. Through my writing, yoga teaching, and my photographic process, I position vulnerability as a key to moving beyond self-censorship into socio-erotic coalitional intensities.

The inclusion of my work as a yoga teacher and practitioner is a critical element in this thesis. Both the history and lived relations of yoga[304] articulates the radical deployment of contradiction:

> [I]n 1938, a friend initiated me into the practice of yoga. It was on this occasion that I discerned, in the violence of this image, an infinite capacity for reversal. Through this violence—even today I cannot imagine a more insane, more shocking form—I was so stunned that I reached the point of ecstasy. ...From the most unspeakable to the most elevated. ...What I suddenly saw, and what imprisoned me in anguish—but which at the same time delivered me from it—was the identity of these perfect contraries, divine ecstasy and its opposite, extreme horror...only an interminable detour allows us to reach that instant where the contraries seem visibly conjoined... (*TE* 206).

The same year, Bataille wrote "The Obelisk". There is "a fall from a timeless pyramidal elevation of godhood, kingship, and power, a fall that is nevertheless inherent in the constitution of that elevation" (*VE* xxi). The temporal simultaneity of the always-already recognizes our movement "Backward, sideward, forward, in all directions" ("The Obelisk" in *VE* 214). Bataille introduced meditation as a way to write the unwritable,

[304] Irigaray has been both condemned and lauded for her commitment to theoretical, psychoanalytical, spiritual, energetic, and physical practice of yoga. See Tamsin Lorraine's *Irigaray and Deleuze: Experiments in Visceral Philosophy.* New York: Cornell University Press, 1999.



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these binding boundless contradictions. He wrote about the

> account of the individual's contact, through meditation, with joy, dread, war, and death ("The Practice of Joy before Death" [1939]). This radical negativity finally does not have any usefulness to society (such as acting as a safety valve to let off harmful pressure), but is instead identifiable with mystical experiences that involve a disbelief in the very existence of God (*VE* xx).

Additionally, in 1938 Bataille's cohort André Masson, who drew the headless figure, BwO, representing *Acéphale,* a rendering of a "painted, caged, and captivated" mannequin for a Surrealist Exhibition. Like my "Gender Adaptation" 1994 photographic series of socio-biologically challenged women, Masson's mannequin is represented thus: "[o]ver the joint of her thighs is a complicated decoration for a double thrust of hiding and priding" (Caws 263). Destabilized significations produce a co-mingling between the explicit and the ob-scene. Such dangerous, unstable conglomerations of vulnerability devise the uncanny. This chimerical uncanny both seduces and repulses—opening the space for deterritorialized relationalities. Eroticism is rooted in contradiction and difference as opposed to US-style sensibility and the ideology of culture-of-convenience homogenizing verticality:[305]

> …lacking knowledge of [differences] and being unable to discern their precise meaning, we could not know anything about eroticism; we could not even know anything about human specificity. ...Eroticism is a closed book to us so

[305] See Krauss in *Formless: A User's Guide.* New York: Zone Books, 1997: 26.

> long as we do not see man's beginning in the repugnance he felt for a nature that was filthy in his eyes. We generally do not see it for the reason that, in our day, nature attracts men supersaturated with a civilization that is nature's complete opposite (*AS 1* 69).

In the name of progress, development, industrialization (humanitarian imperialism), instinct and "natural" bodily functions are degraded to the point of annihilation: we "obliterate the traces of any natural corruption" (ibid. 63). Like Kristeva's unnameable chora, vulnerability is uncivilized: animal-like and deterritorialized—a horizontal montage. "[This] vector of deterritorialization is in no way indeterminate; it is directly plugged into the molecular levels, and the more deterritorialized it is, the stronger is the contact; It is deterritorialization that makes the aggregate of the molecular components 'hold together'" (*TP* 324).

Within my photographic work, the grotesque or disarrayed body of the other/the unfamiliar/ the immigrant/ the socially inappropriate female/ the "monster" is intended to dislocate pre-determined categories of identification:

> Suddenly I was filled with a turbulence that knocked the wind out of me and inspired me to wild acts...in the depths of the flesh, the attack. ...An urge shook my body, changed my rhythms, tossed madly in my chest, made time unlivable for me...Who's striking me? Who's attacking me from behind? ...Who's changing me into a monster?

These urgencies from Cixous conjure the fertility of the stranger within. Collaborating with oneself challenges the tyranny of clarity,



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subverting the violence of transparent representability that easily digestible taxonomies reify. Assumed neutrality diminishes the potential for a critical pedagogy rooted in participatory democracy. Transparent representation feeds the fantasy of neutrality; the violence of mediocrity permeates our everyday interactions and expectations. Like Kristeva's unnameable chora, my images attempt to play with signification, the symbolic, transparent intelligibility, unraveling my encounter with my own monstrosity. Bataille implores, "[h]e is not me but he is more than me: His stomach is the labyrinth in which he has lost himself, loses me with him, and in which I discover myself as him, in other words as a monster" (Taylor 237). Because the word monster shares its root with the verb to demonstrate,[306] creating a spectacle breaks up pre-determined taxonomies—establishing a space where we can reflect on our differences and similarities: libido, erotic desire, the orgasmic body are monstrous. They "cannot be recorded or stored, cannot be the site for the production of information or knowledge. ...Desire's turbulent restlessness defines coding into signs, significations, meanings; it remains visceral, affective..." (*STP* 196). By "demonstrating" the unnameable, the unknown, the spectacle disavows the neutral, undermining our societies' masquerade of morality. Rather than referring to Guy Debord's use of the term "spectacle" as an erasure of consciousness,[307] the inability to distinguish between representation and that which is being represented, I am drawing on Barthes' use of the term spectacle in "the

[306] "...a certain 'showing' (from Latin *monstrare*) or representation becomes monstrous when the showing (representation) no longer refers to a substance (a 'something') or the absence of a substance (a no-thing). ...what is neither a thing nor a no-thing, or both a thing and no-thing" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).

[307] Just as I argue that there are multiple definitions of anything (whiteness, pornography, etc.), the concept of spectacle is also varied. For Debord, the spectacle is used to depoliticize and pacify. It stupefies and distracts citizen-subjects. "The spectacle is not a collection of images." Debord writes. "[R]ather, it is a social relationship between people that is mediated by images." Guy Debord, *Préface a la quatrième édition italienne de "La société du spectacle"*. Paris: Editions Champ Libre, February 1979. Congruent with Barbara Duden's arguments about visualizing technologies and my anti-critique of the potentially insidious dangers of how we (mis)use digital photography as dissolution of our contemporary imaginations, Debord claims, "passive identification with the spectacle supplants genuine activity".

[308] "[I]n its opening up of the interpretive relation and its active solicitation of spectatorial desire—provides the *possibility* for radical engagements that can transform the way we think about meaning and subjectivity (both the artist's and our own). In its activation of intersubjectivity, body art, in fact, demonstrates that meaning is an exchange and

Other [who] threatens to appear in full view". Thus, in Barthes' discussion, the Other cannot be obscene, the chora, the *carrefour*—that explosive enfolding of Otherness cannot be obscene—rather, ethnocentrism and its illusory neutrality literally manifest as the obscene.

My commitment to this disavowal of neutrality compels me to help pry us loose from our societal addiction to the familiar and our fear of interpretation as inevitably multiple and contradictory[308]—the monstrous, the spectral, the uncanny, the stranger within. In his book titled, *The Uncanny*, Royle reminds us that the experience of oneself as a foreign body becomes an uncanny process of being; an otherness within, this monstrosity of one who lives as the nomad in perpetual exile. The public display of disjuncture, the spectacle of otherness, amplifies the presence of the unknown. "The etymology of the term monster is related to moneo, 'to warn,' and monstro, 'to show forth'" (Stewart 108). My images elicit and nourish that excess, fear, sensuality of monstrosity that may constitute the "unknown," the uncategorizable. No matter to what degree the unknown is manipulated and assimilated, it is perpetually unknowable. In multiple contexts, my images play out the irrelevance of what "the objects" are;[309] rather, I am interested in what is evoked by the relationships among the objects. The object exceeds its own instrumentality. Congruent with Barthes' deracinating "the security of home" (Barthes cited in *MO* 152),[310] difference, aesthetic obscuratism,[311] the ineffable, the incomplete, and *l'informe,* the uncanny destabilizes purity.[312] Like Barthes,

points to the impossibility of any practice being inherently positive or negative in cultural value. …By surfacing the desires informing interpretation, it encourages a 'performance of theory' that aims 'to replot the relation between perceiver and object, between self and other,' [see footnote 43] illustrating what is at stake in such claims by encouraging acts of interpretation that themselves are performative. And it opens out subjectivity as performative, contingent, and always particularized rather than universal…" (Jones 14).

[309] In their attempt to orient themselves within the photograph, viewers tend to want to know what the individual subjects/objects are: a dried octopus' tentacle gently crawls into or grows out of her nostril while...; his toes, bound in a latex glove, twisting her swollen tongue while...; her nipple hairs reaching out from behind the compressing gridded glass while... . All three constructions are precariously reflected into my grandfather's two-way magnifying mirror.

[310] In contrast, the uncanny revels in "the abyss of absolute difference" (*MO* 121).

[311] See Koren's *Wabi-Sabi for Artists, Designers, Poets & Philosophers*.

[312] "Everything that is touched by a holy person is consecrated by this very act and can only be used by him. It suffices for him merely to name an object or bring his hand over it, and this removes it, to his profit, from the public domain. No one dares use it any more. Contact with it

Glissant's "ecstatic difference" challenges the insidious appropriation of the other that institutionalizes the neutralization, thus erasure of difference. Glissant conjures

> revelatory wanderings...spiral retelling...dialectics of rerouting, asserting, for example, political strength but, simultaneously, the rhizome of a multiple relationship with the Other…basing every community's reason for existence on a modern form of the sacred, which would be, all in all, Poetics of Relation (16).

This Spinozian ethological perspective also reflects the embodied energy, the social ecology, and the erotic politics that can contribute to the revamping of our collective consciousness.

Lorde invokes the imperative for self-investigation and recognition of difference not as opposition, but as fertile grounds for contingent encounters: "I urge each one of us to reach down into that deep place of knowledge inside herself and touch that terror and loathing of any difference that lives there". Lorde's urgent call is at the core of my work—my photographs, self-portrait videos, yoga teaching,[313] and theoretical practice. When we touch that difference, we inhabit the creative potential of the erotics of the uncanny.

> The more intense the force, the more promising its efficaciousness. From this derives the temptation to change defilement into benediction, to make the impure an instrument of purification. …Horror is changed to trust. …The more impure it is, the more potent it is considered…the more repugnant and dangerous the remedy, the

is fatal. The divine and the accursed, consecration and defilement, have exactly the same effects upon profane objects. They render them untouchable, withdraw them from circulation, and communicate to them their formidable qualities" (Callois 42).

[313] One definition of yoga is to bear an attentive presence.

more efficacious it is. …By violating the most sacred of taboos, man acquires the perilous co-operation of supernatural forces, almost like signing a pact with the devil in order to become a sorcerer (Caillois 45-8).

The Passion According to Teresa of Avila

...my sole occupation is torturing and being tortured...namely, to get the damn word out of the damn mouth
Franz Kafka

1991. Westchester County. Immediately following my first photo session in the woods with the cicadas and my naked pokeberry juice covered friend, my skin erupts with an itchy, pusy, peculiar allergic reaction. The more I look like I have been infested with flesh-eating parasites, the more I cannot resist photographing my body's newly acquired monstrosities which I unapologetically flaunt. My initial skin affliction escalates into an enormous amber pustule, the size of a 50-cent piece, which grows in the middle of my left shin. As it continues to swell, I feel the infection eating into my tibia. My aching leg bone awakens me in the middle of the night—[314] I am becoming rotten flesh. Although and because I am convinced I have gangrene, I feel compelled to photograph my own decay. The more the inside oozes to the outside, the more provocative the image, the greater my compulsion—I am struck by the uncanny familiarity of this *trialectic*. "[Teresa de Avila]

[314] Over twenty years later, I can still feel the phantom pustule eating through my leg flesh/bone—a prosthetics of memory.

also claims that her ecstasy attacks her heart and especially her entrails—and the body has a considerable share in her experience of 'spirit' " (MacCormack 208). This collaboration between my mind and body has served as a perverse demanding gift, provoking me to relentlessly photograph my body in flux. For the past 20 years, my body has generated inexplicable skin afflictions that have become central to my photographic material. The wound has become my most generous creative material. I am both horrified and thrilled by these fecundities.

> Even as I write this I feel ashamed at pouncing on you with a narrative that is so open and explicit. A narrative, however, from which blood surging with life might flow only to coagulate into lumps of trembling jelly. Will this story become my own coagulation one day? Who can tell? IF there is any truth in it—and clearly the story is true even though invented—let everyone see it reflected in himself for we are all one and the same person... (Lispector 12).

I resonate with Cixous' muse, Brazilian Jewish novelist Clarice Lispector: "I am alive like a wound, a flower in the flesh" (21).[315] Wounds are an outward expression of the abject. Wounds, the inexplicable, the ineffable, the undecidable, the unknowable, become a direct passage between the concealed and the revealed, a dynamic tension between the public and the private. Wounds ooze the uncanny—the fertility of ultimate uncertainty. Wounds seep *écriture.* I construct my images as I imagine Bataille must have lived his writing: an inherent openness to others,[316] a "wound beauty", a vulnerability that allows space for the capacity of being

[315] In *The Doctor,* "the boy as a 'text' that Kafka terms irreducibly 'allusive' ('*andeutend*'='playful,' only 'hinting,' and therefore elusive), as embodied by the 'playfulness' of the boy's 'wound' that is simultaneously a 'blossom'/'*Blume*'='flower' (240) (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).

[316] Since vulnerability implies experimenting with the unknown, it also implies chance. "In terms of his music, Cage speaks in this context of a 'network of chance operations' (Cage 79). The oxymoronic aspect of the term 'chance operations' alludes simultaneously to all that exceeds or escapes our designs ("chance") and to the reasoned process by which a design is put into effect ('operations'). What this means in terms of Cage's practice, is the escape from "precise cause-effect relationships" and 'exclusions, radical alternatives between opposites' (ibid. 94). Chance operations, because they free the artwork from the straightjacket of cause and effect, will also bring about 'interpenetration and non-obstruction' (ibid. 46). In other words, Cage views his chance operations as a kind of emancipation, dissolving structures that immobilize, restoring them to what he calls 'openness' " (Ulfers, *Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought* seminar, EGS 2008). Like Cage, Nietzsche's "infinite interpretations" offer "[a] world open to potentially infinite interpretations... one without the institution of a given, unalterable meaning stemming from the metaphysical source of meaning" (NAF 9).

wounded—of being receptive, fully alive, a textual *jouissance*. The wound is both/and. It inhabits the dream-logic[317] of the monstrous, the abject. Wounds produce intersections of potential becomings, of an openness to vulnerability— Kristeva's *carrefours*. A wound festers with possible contamination—a "promiscuous crossing" that enables the other to infiltrate, producing fertile grounds for difference to germinate. Wounds embody an uncanny erotic politics, a chiasmic unity (social ecology)— *flechten:* an interweaving of everything within everything. Wounds convey a circumlocution, metaphoric Gordian knot. The chiasmic unity of 'wound' is monstrous ('ungeheuer') in its 'both-and' aspect that refuses a 'decision' to intervene ('judgment') (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). Since civilization distinguishes the human itself as separate and more evolved from the animal, civilization cannot tolerate the wound, the other, the metaphor. A wound is a supposed defilement of the illusory integrity of flesh. Bataille declares: "We look down on [primitives] from our sanitary installations, and we give ourselves the impression of an unassailable purity" (*AS 1* 66). Corporeal, aesthetic, and racial purity safeguard the stable home of the familiar.

Corporeal border crossings denote an ever-changing continual non-arrival in which flesh is always becoming, never total nor pure:

> phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty... [theorized a] notion of 'flesh' as a chiasmic intertwining of body and world that has the potential to elucidate the various corporeal politics of con-

[317] "The 'both-and' aspect that adheres to dream thoughts as a consequence of the lack of 'either-or,' is described by Freud in terms of 'condensation' and 'displacement,' terms that refer to the absence of atomistic (isolated, independent) structures in dream thoughts. In other words, the 'units' that constitute dream thoughts are always already a 'condensation' of at least two contradictory elements, prior to being opposed individual ones, and a 'displacement' from themselves (a-centered), prior to being unitary" (NAF 313-43).

> temporary transnational mobilities...'Flesh is not matter, is not mind, is not substance. To designate it, we should need the old term 'element'…. that is, in the sense of a *general thing*, midway between the spatio-temporal individual and the idea, a sort of incarnate principle that brings a style of being wherever there is a fragment of being.[318] The Flesh is in the sense an 'element' of Being' (Merleau-Ponty 139 cited in "The Flesh of the World: Organ Transplantation and the Ethics of Substitution in Claire Denis *L'Intrus*", Cathy Hannabach, Cultural Studies Association Conference 2011).

In his *Saving the text: literature, Derrida, philosophy,* Geoffrey Hartman explores an uncanny counter-violence within language. He posits that literary and poetic language involves a "subtle knot that perplexes" (100). This language within a language, like the stranger within and the minority within a minority,[319] "inflicts a trauma on a language that believes it has totalized and purified saved/salved—itself in a unified meaning, beyond the 'wound' of equivocity inherent in all language, but most eloquent in 'literature'" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU).

The interpenetration of Bataille's commitment to paradoxical violences with Kristeva's analysis of 15th century saint, Teresa de Avila, provides a framework for discussion of the sacred and the everyday. Interrogated during the latter part of the Inquisition, Teresa de Avila's heritage presented a disfiguring amalgamation of entangled identities. She was, in fact, the daughter of a "New Christian", a Jew who was forced to convert to the Catholic Church. Inquisitional laws of purity of blood, *limpieza*

[318] For the purposes of my argument, I translate this Being as a Nietzschean *becoming*.

[319] See my discussion of being a Sephardic among Askenazic Jews in "The Scandal of Ekphrasis: Transfiguration, Collaboration, and Transdisciplinarity".

[320] "In *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Routledge, 1993. [1966], New York, 2002) anthropologist Mary Douglas demonstrated how symbolic categories such as 'filth' and 'cleanliness' contribute to a collective sense of order…the repudiated Other. …Though symbolic, the boundaries between categories are themselves inseparable from the lived experience of real space, which includes the architectural articulation of order inside the public sphere" (Lee 10).



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de sangre, established illusory restrictions—boundaries within self and between self and other[320]—a desperate attempt to maintain a false integrity as a separation from the other, from that which is contagious and contaminates. The trials to determine *limpieza de sangre* (pure blood) became a community ritual of separation, of designating the individual as a static known entity. In contrast to the "purifying", de-ciding rituals of civilization,[321] embodied democracy hinges on the "coherent disorder" (Bataille 1955: 73) of continually "engendering a new self" (Kristeva *The Passion According to Teresa de Avila,* Keynote Lecture, *La Pensée Fécunde* Conference, Berlin 2009). With the guilt and shame of a convert zealot, Teresa de Avila ingests, inhabits, embodies this stranger within:

> Drastic fasting, penance, flagellation—often using bouquet nettle on open wounds, convulsions even to the point of epileptic comas which take advantage of neuronal and hormonal states: I've only named a few of the sadomasochistic extravagances that mark these on-going 'exiles of the self' in Him (to borrow one of Teresa's expressions) or this transference towards the Other (to use my terms) (ibid.).

Exile of the self and orgasmic potentiality merge in Lacan's proclamation that (doubtless) Teresa de Avila is cumming in Bernini's statue of her in Rome: "It is clear that the essential testimony of the mystics is that they are experiencing [*jouissance*] but know nothing about it" (Lacan 1982: 145). Teresa is immersed in an erotics of not-knowing, emanating libidinal economy.[322] Teresa "is

[321] "Barthes writes of the violence necessary for meaning to appear. Meaning is viewed here as derived from the separation of opposites (a 'judging'), the putting in place a paradigm of antithesis, that is 'the paradigmatic slash mark which permits meaning to function (the wall of Antithesis), life to reproduce (the opposition of the sexes), property to be protected (rule of contract).' In order for meaning to function, by establishing the 'wall of Antithesis,' it is also necessary that 'the neuter,' that is the 'inbetween' of undecidability, be excluded, for it is, as such, 'outside any classification, any meaning' and therefore a 'horror'" (Barthes , *S/Z* 215, Ulfers, *Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought* seminar, EGS 2008).

[322] See footnotes 174, 452, and 477.

outside of time within the folds of the self she does not know" (MacCormack 208). The immanence of orgasm inseminates an erotics of the uncanny. This uncanny becomes a sacred commitment that ruptures the civilized, democracy-as-it-is violence of the taken-for-granted. To be civilized (i.e. the *unsacred* holy trinity of ethnocentrism, entertainment, and consumerism) is to adhere to the violence of representability, pre-determined agendas, and reductive reasoning.[323] Again Bataille roars,

> [t]he person who protects himself the most anxiously from the various forms of defilement is also the person who enjoys the greatest prestige and who has the advantage over others… he stands morally above the man who is careless about safeguarding himself and who lives like an animal, in filth (*AS 1* 67, 68).

In this context, I am consciously conflating "civilization" with the civilizing/colonizing historical agendas of the Christian ideology. The public domain is taught to live in horror of the stranger within—the "natural defilements" (ibid. 66) that our own bodies produce (the abject) and are produced by (sex and childbirth)[324]—that which inseminates vulnerability.

> [The] three aspects of the Christian faith—which the mystic highlights….simultaneously provoke, accompanies and modulates the accidents incurred by the untangling of drives, which is to say the dissociation of the erotic drive and the death instinct somatization, perversion, sublimation (Kristeva *The Passion According to Teresa de Avila*).

[323] Neoliberalism keeps us safe within the comfortable confines of the familiar, the neutral: "[T]he citizen-subject can be painlessly, effectively, and pleasurably 'inoculated' against incorporating any unlikeness that might transform or subvert what is" (*MO* 121). My argument on the politics surrounding *The Art of the Steal* illustrate Sandoval's elucidation of Barthes ' inoculation theory.

[324] For an extended discussion of our society's contemptuous institutional behavior towards sex in relation to childbirth, see my forthcoming essay, "Reading the Impossible in the Age of Petroleum Parenting".

As an archeologist of prohibition, Bataille thrives within a specificity of entangled drives. He both tightens and loosens the knot:

> Never do [the pre-historians] pose in general terms the problem of the transition from animal to man, from twilight to conscious life. This matter belongs to another domain, one which science judges by definition suspect: psychology being none too trustworthy, the matter is tossed into the lap of the philosophers: the scientist has successfully kept out of difficulty. ...But it does not as a rule occur to sociologists—or to specialists in the history of religion—that the numerous prohibitions they list, compare and often analyze have, rather than many individual explanations, one encompassing explanation which implies, in a larger sense, the transition from the animal state—in which there is no such thing as a prohibition—to the human state—in which prohibitions are plainly the cornerstone of humanized patterns of behavior. Once again, the sociologist and historian of religion focus every time upon particular taboos without first reminding themselves that, generally speaking, human life stripped of prohibitions is unthinkable...This categorizing dominates the processes that go into forming the human; we are placed squarely before them when we turn our gaze upon those distant times, where—of Lascaux is the golden hour: the hour of full-grown man (1955: 31).

The both/and, the ambiguity of the sacred, as both prohibition and transgression, distinguishes human from animal. It is this process of thriving on contradictions, of allowing ourselves to be filled with awe and fascinated terror that invites the *carrefour* of the wound. We mistake prohibition in the public sphere for a moratorium, rather than experiencing it as a visible invitation to

transgress: "Taboo refers to an object, place, person, or action in which 'holiness and pollution are not yet differentiated' " (Frazer cited in Shattuck 30). Caillois defines taboo as always and already relational: "…taboos are created in order to protect the *ordo mundi*, the universal order of both nature and society" (8). He goes on to clarify the contradictions:

> The more primitive civilizations do not separate linguistically the taboo caused by awe of sanctity from that inspired by fear of defilement. The same term evokes all the supernatural powers from which one ought to stay far removed, whatever the motive". 'Blessed or accursed', 'miraculous or incomprehensible' impartiality is expressed using the same term for both: The natives not only apply it to missionaries and the Bible but also to the supreme impurity represented by females at times of menstruation. … One desires to approach and possess it at the very moment in which one is keeping a proper distance from it (ibid. 36).

The so-called uncivilized human is as a wound, like the animal, existing in a time and in a language that is not clear-cut, not comprehensible, nor containable—their seepage demands attention**.** In Bataille's textual *jouissance* and Kristeva's *écriture*, wounding is wholly different from cutting. Wounding enlivens, it bursts forth, re-vivifying—reminding us that life is in constant flux, always gaping, incomplete; while cutting lives in the prison of conceptual language. It simplifies, categorizes, judges, reduces, arrives at a decision along a predetermined path. When we de-cide, when we uphold the tyrannical standards of a language of conceptual

understanding (the politics of clarity), the illusion of truth, ostensible neutrality, we judge, we cut off Other possibilities, we shut down the fertile liminal zone of undecidability.[325] Butler's account of the "origins" of censorship emphasize predetermined de-cisions:

> …those rules, 'decided' prior to any individual decision, are precisely the constraining conditions which *make possible* any given decision. Thus, there is an ambiguity of agency at the site of this decision. The speaking subject makes his or her decision only in the context of an already circumscribed field of linguistic possibilities. One decides on the condition of an already decided field of language, but this repetition does not constitute the decision of the speaking subject as a redundancy. The gap between redundancy and repetition is the space of agency (*ES* 129).

Undecidability, like artifactuality, inhabits this gap, a potential life-affirming shift from "seriousness to play". J. G. Ballard conjures the writer as an active dreamer, what I see as a playful prosthetic donor: "The fiction is already here, and the role of the writer is to invent the reality". This intrusion of the chiasmic/poetic on habitual dichotomous classifications invites a "'playfulness,' that eludes the 'proper' or 'propriety' inherent in the very concept of 'property'" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). Property,[326] ownership, entitlement, all point to the illusory integrity of the individual—contained and uncontaminated. The wound embodies the art of the allusive. As Kristeva and Catherine Clément explore in *The Feminine and the Sacred,* does then, the sacred oscillate between

[325] Undecidability positions us "before ...determination,... in [an] ambivalent, indeterminate space... which in *logos* remains... potentiality...." (Derrida 1981: 115). The word insect (from Latin animal *insectum*) literally translates as 'divided animal' or 'cut up or into' from the segments of its body (head, thorax, abdomen). Kafka's monster-insect inhabits the post-humanist both/and: both the cut of judgment (see page 224) and the amassed horror of the undecidable.

[326] In contrast to properties, capacities and tendencies are infinite (Delanda, *Gilles Deleuze and Science* seminar, EGS 2008).

the wound and the cut? Is the sacred, then, the tear—the *laceration*?[327] The writings of Lispector exemplify the transformative power of the sacred wound that embodies the allusive, the undecideable. The wound and its potential can only exist at the *carrefour* of a chiasma of contradictions: polyphonic multiple bodies, multiple I's, multiple manifestations of (sacred) violence. The writer must thrive in this zone between inside and outside the home—the individual as home—what Freud describes as "unheimlich", "uncanny". Vascillating within this undecidability, "the writer is a wound that wounds" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).

This uncanny dialogue among our rhizomatic vulnerabilities generates "the possibility of refiguring the sacred by rethinking the interplay of art, ethics, and religion... [in order to]...revitalize the experience of divinity in a secular world" (Taylor 10, 18).[328] Revitalization of both individual and social bodies requires "interpenetration of reason and bestial unreason" (*VE* xii) which fertilizes folds of mind-body awareness. There is no hierarchy within these multiple entwinements of body intelligence and body wisdom—a poetics of relation. In the context of Teresa's ecstatic religion, Kristeva invokes D.W. Winnicott's term "psyche-soma":

> state of *regression* where the thinking individual loses the contours of his/her identity and below the threshold of conscious becomes a 'psyche-soma'. …Another kind of 'thought' results from this, a non-thought, an under-

[327] Ronell writes: instead of the Heideggerian *Volk*, "... we have *laceration*, the cuts and break-off points that punctuate communication, much of which is handled in Nancy's reading of Bataille, where he draws up a plan for an untethered community, shifting grounds of the desired erasure of difference" (*LL* 27).

[328] Being an artist emerges from my sense (in Rancière's theorization of the sensual) of Jewishness.



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> water dive which the term 'mind' does not convey as well as 'sensorial representation' or the 'psyche-soma': as if the reasoning 'mind' went from *being in the world* to an 'imaginary elaboration' whose locus is in the entire body, *touching-feeling the outside and the inside,* both its own physiological functions and the outside world…the psyche is body (soma) and the body (soma) is psyche (Kristeva *The Passion According to Teresa de Avila*).

Digesting The Stranger Within: The Dialectics of Self-Sacrifice

My body as meat[329] self-cannibalizes—[330] digesting the stranger within. Teresa de Avila forces me to recognize what Bataille insisted on in his *Tears of Eros*:

> ...the end of reason, which exceeds reason is not opposed to the overcoming of reason. In the violence of the overcoming, in the disorder of my laughter and my sobbing, in the excess of raptures that shatter me, I seize on the similarity between a horror and a voluptuousness that goes beyond me, between an ultimate pain and an unbearable joy! (20).

My self-portraits, diaristic, personal narratives, compulsive storytelling as the uncanny (Royle 12), illustrate the amplification of self as abject. I play with these visual auto-excursions in the context of my Jewishness and my uncategorizable sexuality. As discussed in "Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations: Molecular Meat Round Two/ Second Course", both the abject and my self-portraiture perform Heidegger's concept of *gestell* (enframing, magnifying). Through my camera's eye, an extension of my own, pointed at and shooting my own body, I learn to see

[329] Self-portraiture is central to my discussion in detail in the final chapters.

[330] Marina de Van, the director, producer, screenwriter and primary actor of the 2002 film, *Dans Ma Peaux,* and I have discussed a potential visual, still-moving collaboration stemming from the morcellated body.



PLATE 36

(in the Derridean sense). Zummer cites Virilio, "Machines for seeing modify perception". In his course "History of the Gaze", which I attended in 1994 (see footnote 70), Illich roared against the memory-annihilating tendencies of the camera. Zummer extends Illich's rant: "Photography is an art of memory, a prosthesis to our own recall. Paradoxically, it induces recognition in us of things which we cannot remember, which have preceded us, or taken place elsewhere, which we know only through reflections or reproductions, or which we might suppose or imagine to have existed" (2001). Self-contamination seeps as auto-infestation and eternally recurring contamination, a continual re-infection in which one cannot quarantine oneself from oneself. One "knows" oneself by surrendering to verisimilitude, to the impossibility of knowledge, comprehension, arrival. The camera demands Socrates exhortation "*Gnoti seauton*'—know thyself":

> you who are concerned about the world, about appearances, about politics, you must be concerned first of all about yourself. Turn towards that self with which you must be concerned; know yourself. Know who you are. To discover this 'self' of which Socrates speaks, Plato's text uses the metaphor of the eye. If the soul is like the eye of knowledge (french *conaissance),* we must ask under what conditions and in what way an eye can see itself (*BD* 19).

1994. Happy Valley. My first major incident with censorship occurred at the Penn State University Library, named after William Pattee who, ironically, was known for his defense of freedom of speech. The close-up images of

a woman's upper thighs cradling a variety of objects (glass vials with sea sponges, shrimp shells with a duck bill, my grandmother's dentures from WWII, with photo test-strips and a bulbous gourd wrapped in green latex gloves with cantaloupe seeds) were labeled offensive, obscene, and even pornographic. The subject's thighs, I was later told, were too hairy for the audience's sensibility, thus the gender was unclear to viewers. Extreme viewer discomfort led to the removal of my photographs. There was no way a woman could have that much body hair, so the subject must be a man who I emasculated,[331] viewers' imagined, by pulling his penis back between his legs:

> Not to be one's true sex is a crime against the law of pure difference. Mary Douglas' definition of dirt as that which is (culturally determined to be) out of place describes Jennifer Miller's beard. Hair is a waste product of our bodies, like menstrual blood and toenails. A man's beard, evidence of masculine flow, is best kept shaved or trimmed into a sculpture. A bearded woman [or a woman with hairy upper thighs] evidence of flow across sexual difference, is cultural feminism's abject (*DE, DB* 174).

The subjects in each of my photographs in my series, "Gender Adaptations" have been *interpreted* as the opposite gender. The images in "Gender Adaptations" have been censored more than any other of my photographic series:

> We patrol gender expressly because our claim to normality (i.e. conventional humanness) has been made to rely on it...it requires obscuring and rhetorically naturalizing a particular stand-

[331] The relationship between myself as the artist apparently castrating my subjects must not go unnoticed. See Weber's introduction, "Uncanny Thinking" in his *The Legend of Freud,* in which he theorizes on the "narcissistic 'expectation' of a self that wants to see itself as intact, whole, and autonomous" (5-6).



PLATE 37

> point which is then allowed to define abjection... given the co-existence of 'other' discourses that rearticulate dominant terms from 'other' positions that dominant ideology would assign to the abject), a particular subject materialization may be considerably more complex than such a regulating discourse would suggest. Part of what dominant ideology expels via assignments to *its* abject is, in fact, formative *counter*-discourse (*DE, DB* 174, 175).

During the course of this particular exhibition at Pattee Library, initially, five of my photographs were censored; the images were removed even though they had been accepted through the official review process. Not satisfied with partial removal, library staff vehemently challenged the entire exhibit calling the works 'degrading to the human body,' 'immoral,' and 'inappropriate for a university library.' Given that the term 'explicit' generally refers to what is perceived as 'clearly defined', easily identifiable, 'precise,' I find it ironic that the protest demanding the removal of my exhibit labeled my work as 'sexually explicit'—they were threatened by the ambiguity of the images, yet they defined the work as explicit. Congruently, Weber navigates multiple contradictions embedded in the uncanny: "the dream constructs its *disfiguration,* its *Entstellung,* and is generally all the more deceptive for its apparent clarity" (*LF* xv). Did those who found my photographs 'offensive' feel threatened by what they "actually saw," imagined they were seeing, or by how and what I was actually photographing?

By sharing specific stories of how my analog images have been *interpreted*, I intend to demonstrate the contradictory insinuations of digital media on our social imaginations. The ambiguous nature of public reception should be integral to the problematics of digital media and communications curriculum in universities. Derrida describes "an experience of teaching...that perhaps goes beyond known or coded marks, beyond the grammar and spelling...of sexuality...beyond the binary difference that governs the decorum of all codes, beyond the opposition feminine/masculine, beyond bisexuality as well, beyond homosexuality and heterosexuality which come to the same thing" (Derrida cited in Royle 66). My intention was neither to shock my viewers, nor to specifically fabricate cross-gender identities, nor create artifice; but rather, to play with relationships amongst actual, liminal anatomical characteristics. I seek to circumscribe**,** thus amplify (as in the practice of the abject), the liminal in order to encounter/engage with the real: Žižek tells us that "...Deleuze's Spinoza is the Spinoza of the real, of 'anarchic' bodily mixtures" (2005: 188). Resonant with this viscous carnal anarchy is the insurgency of chiasmic collusive contentious contingent collisions—Nietzsche's *Verhängnis.*[332] The micro/macro, individual body/social body as a collective of singularities yet again conspires as the sacred.[333]

> The 'real' world of reason and labor, according to Bataille, is not original but emerges from an obscure primal 'world' that is sacred…Religion addresses this primal desire through myths

[332] Eva Hesse's 1970s sculptures are material manifestations of *Verhängnis,* Nietzsche's world of interconnectedness.

[333] I revisit the possibility to c*on-spire, to* breathe together as *convivencia,* in my discussion of the emancipatory potential of *conatus* in "Protean Sexualities: Female Ejaculation as Social Emancipation".

> and rituals designed to bind believers back to the sacred origin...Recalling Nietzsche's Dionysian realm, Bataille claims that 'the immanent immensity, where there are neither separations or limits….has the passion of an absence of individuality'. The erasure of the individual entails a violence that provokes terror. Violence and the sacred join in sacrifice (Taylor 233-4).

Within the interstices of the post-human, this contradiction of the sacred yet perverse fantasy of individuality demands an examination of relationality: "the sacred involves right or wrong action and is imbued with the opposing qualities of pure and impure, holy and sacrilegious" (Caillois 37). This shedding of the ostensible individuality[334] reveals that pure autonomy cannot exist, that "we are...neither self-sustaining objects nor subjects in the world, for nothing is a self-sustaining object" (NAF 12). This self-sacrifice,[335] not only in the sense of release of entitlement and ownership, but also as precisely the openness of vulnerability, if used consciously can become an explicit and emancipatory strategy for erotic agency: "In *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche dismisses the reality of the *principium individuationis,* the principle of individuality, of the integrity of the object and its individual presence. There are, for Nietzsche, no "things," no existences that stand apart in any way from all of existence. All exist only in the web-like structure of *Verhängnis* and exist in no other sense (NAF 12-13). What emerges then, is a recognition of our species' de-centrality—deterritorialization establishes this new community[336]—an ever-unfolding statelessness of becoming. Within

[334] The Occupy Movement's "protests also embody the desire for new forms of collective struggle and modes of solidarity built around social and shared, rather than individualized and competitive, values" (Giroux, truth-out.org). In the concluding chapter of this essay I discuss the implications of such a collective uproar.

[335] *Verhängnis* is the key field of reference for all of my work—ranging from my body consciousness workshops with disenfranchised, inner-city children to my commitment as a sex activist.

[336] Once we no longer see ourselves as *the* static center, we release our imposed values that "privilege our image on our vision of the universe" (NAF 19); we generate a Galilean potential for community.

this field of vulnerability, we are embedded in an interdependent rhizomatic dialogue. A dialogic self-sacrifice, inherent in the erotics of the uncanny, becomes *a practice of the abject* that provokes terror because it shows, demonstrates, monstrifies how we are all connected. This sacrifice invites collaborative citizenship in which "the experience of oneself *as* a foreign body" (Royle 2) is paramount. For example, *Jihad* is incorrectly translated as a holy war. It actually means a struggle, a process: *Jihad Ul-Nafs*, a struggle with the self. In his *The Temptation,* the Romanian philosopher E.M. Cioran writes, "[t]o pulverize the acquired, such seems to me the essential tendency of the modern mind. …It is by undermining the idea of reason, of order, of harmony that we gain consciousness of ourselves" (133).

Erasure of the individual/ego involves an active process of inhabiting co-existing contradictions—my *pulsion*. "The uncanny is a crisis of the proper: it entails a critical disturbance of what is proper (from the Latin proprius, 'own'), a disturbance of the very idea of personal or private property including... one's so called 'own' name..." (Royle 1). In Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, the genie exclaims "To give a thing a name, a label, a handle, to rescue it from anonymity, to pluck It out of the place of namelessness, in short, to identify-well, that's a way of bringing the said thing into being" (63). Throughout this dissertation, I explore the relationship of having a name to having a home and the implications of namelessness in the context of homelessness

(both material and psychological), the unclassifiable, exilic the monster, *ungeziefer* (within the framework of Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).

Freud's exploration of *heimlich* and *unheimlich* elaborates the possibility of the 'familiar' as "local, native, domestic, (feeling) at home" (Royle 159). Once again, I am struck by the connection of the uncanny with the seduction of homelessness and the impossibility of rejecting homelessness.[337] During "The Power of Exile" panel discussion at EGS in July 2008, each of the EGS panelists explored absence as where home is.[338] Weber defined nomadism through its ambivalence with itself. His discussion of the compulsion to be in exile reminded me of my own itinerant trajectories over the past several years. I have chosen to dwell in the elsewhere, to take on homelessness as my permanent residence. Sandy Stone warned the audience of the danger of making exile/alienation one's foundation.[339] She cited Ursula LeGuin's question: "What would it mean to be always coming home?" I must ask (myself): What are the implications of always leaving? Ulfer's illustration of nostalgia, when he stated, "In traveling, you're always on the way home," leaves me even more riddled. I can't decipher whether my response is a confusion of impotency or a confusion as a state of grace in which exile reveals itself as fecundity, as the Spinozan possibility to fully live, a Nietzschean joyful affirmation of life in which we imbibe the liberatory potential of witnessing—Derrida's seeing as art—becoming-contradiction.[340]

[337] See my integration of Homi Bhabha's elsewhere and the beyond in Chapter Four.

[338] I would like to further explore the relationship of *Querencia*—longing, memory, reconciliation with the Truth and Reconciliation events held in San Francisco's Unitarian Church in 1999. Specifically, I refer to the South African woman's story in which she explicitly distinguishes herself as a subject, not a victim.

[339] See Glissant's discussion on internal exile errantry: "*Errance* for Glissant, while not aimed like an arrow's trajectory, nor circular and repetitive like the nomad's, is not idle roaming, but includes a sense of sacred motivation" (211, nt. 1). Errantry is the "desire to go against the [monolingual] root" (15).

[340] See Glissant's unraveling of "the duality of self-perception (one is citizen or foreigner)" (17).

After having moved fourteen times in the past three years and having visited/lived in eight different countries in 2009-2010, I must further demand of myself a commitment to investigating these questions of the *heimlich* in the context of exilic mobility. Does my unrelenting commitment to Grosz's concept of continual non-arrival, my compulsion to be in exile (Weber, *Power of Exile* panel, EGS 2008), determine my choice to live home as rooted in lack? In my urgent attempt to resist (I am aware of the collusion of resistance) conforming to US-style capitalist convenience- culture, have I unwittingly submitted to what Deleuze and Guattari, in their community manifesto, *Anti-Oedipus,* claim to be the nature of lack in the average western family—i.e. home?! In my attempt to buck "the system"[341] (while recognizing DeLanda's avowal that there is no "the system"), have I become as predictably conventional as Donna Reed in "Leave It To Beaver?" Is my addiction to flux and the unknown a perverse reversal, an everted arrival at the illusory self-sameness, of Norman Rockwell's uncontaminated, safe world—that actually lands me, not in a subversive (I am aware of the collusion of subversion) socio-political act of consciousness, but rather, as a duped US automaton?

I must resist my own hesitations. Like Stone, my commitment to nomadism is pedagogical, thus undeniably political. I am *living* that flux of identity manifested in relationality—the fertile, excessive fluidity of contradiction and ambiguity. Integral to Nietzsche's perspective

[341] This includes my commitment to bartering 95% of services and material items I come in contact with (which I write about in my forthcoming book, *The Cost of Cutting Corners*) and choosing to raise my son in conjunction with these theories—for example, breast-feeding until he self-weans or until he is four years old (whichever comes first), choosing not to vaccinate him, positively influencing his psycho-biology as an infant by having sex near him, sleeping and bathing together, practicing Elimination Communication ("early" potty training) and being diaper-free as much as possible. My commitment to leave a negligible trace on the planet includes never using disposable diapers (see the politics of the disposable diaper in the context of Elisabeth Badinter internalized sexism and corporatism on pages 66-69), and practicing Attachment Parenting—never using a pacifier and never putting my baby in a stroller, but carrying him on our bodies wherever we go (See Epilogue).



PLATE 38

of the *Verhängnis* is that knowledge is always a process of conflict and relational tension. Encounter and re-invention. The closer we get to home, the more fragmented we become; the concept of home changes, the concept of its path changes. Whether these conflicting trajectories are those of the transexual (like Sandy Stone), or my own, I must remember that my self-imposed exile is eliciting Bataille's imperative to "open up consciousness of the self " (*TE* 142).

Following Heisenberg's "unsharpness" principle (Ulfers), I am the parabolic wandering Jew. My eternal sense of wondering fully inhabits my eternal sense of wandering.[342] Kafka's internalized exile from Jews manifested as an exile from himself. As a Sephardic outsider in Amsterdam and a heretic in the Sephardi community, Spinoza encountered himself as a foreign body. Both Spinoza's exile from the Amsterdam Jews and Arendt's exile from the American Jewish community were bound by a perverse twist: each was ousted from their spiritual community precisely because the politics they were espousing were at their core Jewish in nature. Spinoza and Arendt's harsh but just interrogations of their communities and their staunch defense of social justice reflected the very principles of Judaism that they learned from the Jewish congregations that judged them socio-philosophical heretics. Spinoza and Arendt were quintessential Jews[343], *not* betraying Jews or their Jewish communities, as mainstream history has interpreted.

[342] Ulfers describes this quantum physics approach to living as one in which we never stop being amazed (EGS 2008). Congruently, Schirmacher's elaboration of life-techniques insists on claiming our capacity to be in awe. I discuss variations of Schirmacher's life-techniques throughout my argument.

[343] In the context of this paper, I emphasize liberal and radical Jewish thinkers and activists' cultural, not religious *sense* (as in Rancière's sensual community) of being Jewish. I do not delve further into the "extremely problematic" (Richard J. Bernstein's *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish Question* 28) distinction Arendt makes between Judaism and Jewishness, but simply choose to point out the controversy.

> Even should one decide that Spinoza cannot be considered a Jewish Thinker—that he belongs only to the greater world but not particularly to the Jews—the process of drawing this conclusion reveals the tangled difficulties of coming to terms with the meaning of Jewishness. Spinoza certainly struggled with these issues, though one must probe beneath the mathematical austerity of his system to discover the buried signs of his struggle. Perhaps the indication that he wrestled with the question of Jewishness is in itself sufficient claim to Jewishness. And perhaps, too, the sense of an intense, if covert, conflict over the issue of Jewish identity provides at least part of the explanation of why generations of Jews have felt a mysterious kinship with this philosopher whose system would seem, on the surface, to offer no special meaning or message for Jews (Goldstein 14-15).

Spinoza and Arendt acted on a Nietzschean "plurality of impulses" (*Will to Power Sections 484-485)*—debunking absolutes of Good versus Evil. They exhibited a fluidity that thrives on liminal consciousness as an emancipatory technique— embodying their Jewishness. Arendt specifically spoke of the core of Judaism—intersubjective freedom as essential to participatory democracy (May 88). "[S]he came into politics not as a left-wing intellectual, but as a Jew. ...Her relentless commitment to question mirrored her inherent Jewishness as a "matter of course" (ibid. 111-12).[344]

Because of my hybrid, outsider status, I recognize how our bodies straddle the private and public—forming the *l'informe* of the intermedial. This characteristic of collaborative citizenship[345] is at the core of Jewish relationality. For example, Arendt

[344] My future research includes an investigation of the psychosocial dynamics of iconoclasm, Jews, and the pathologized other. See Douglass Rushkoff's *Nothing Sacred: The Truth About Judaism*. New York: Crown Publishing, 2003.

[345] Similarly, Nietzsche wrote, "There are no facts, only interpretations" (cited in Deleuze 1983: 54).

sought to actively inhabit her "Jewish mind" which she identified as a "sovereign mind". Arendt determined that a mind that engages with a "silent dialogue within oneself" is the most important form of thinking and as a definition of morality—i.e. agency, participatory democracy: "Then she pauses, and you can actually see in her face how much she is mentally enjoying what Kant referred to as the 'enlarged mentality' of opinion sharing, consulting, paying calls on other points of view: '*Aber sehen Sie mal!* [But look sharp!] Here is the other side, another perspective" (Young-Breuhl cited in Kerr 19). I would identify, for example, the dual thinking of both condemning violence and asking how it was formed (*PL* 15), as a radically Jewish attribute. Questioning[346] indicates that we are conscious becomings, co-animating one another, recognizing and engaging with thought's infinite fluctuations. Arendt's commitment to co-implication engaged "debate and deeds in the realm of action, so in the realm of thought it is proper for them to join together in common contemplation of the universe. The world of thought is not one of secrets, but is open to the minds of all men" (May 129).

In Steve Levine's words, this "thinking as coming close to the body" emerges from "a chaotic multiplicity" which welcomes the stranger. Within such a contingent encounter, the uncanny plays out vital heterogeneity. Collaborative citizenship is deeply rooted in a commitment to social thought and thought-exchange. A dialogic self-sacrifice refuses to

[346] "The stupidity of people comes from having an answer for everything. The wisdom of the novel comes from having a question for everything...The totalitarian world…is a world of answers rather than questions… all over the world people nowadays prefer to judge rather than to understand, the answer rather than ask, so that the voice of the novel can hardly be heard over the noisy foolishness of human certainties" (Kundera 237).

play into institutionalized perils of thinking, while relying on movement and mutation. As his avowal of Judaism, Douglass Rushkoff tells us, "[t]he only way to relate to…a constant state of evolutionary flux is through intelligence... Through intelligence, we develop compassion" (201). Since Judaism is neither mandated nor definitive there is substantial opportunity for inquiry and debate—an approach to relational thinking and behavior that can also be found in Spinoza's *The Ethics*:

> When the human mind regards external bodies through the ideas of the modifications of its own body, we say that it imagines; now the mind can only imagine external bodies as actually existing. Therefore, in so far as the mind imagines external bodies, it has not an adequate knowledge of them (38).

Spinoza's active affectivity lends itself to becoming-vulnerable. Dufourmantelle witnesses this unknowable alterity: "we perceive the very existence of external bodies by

> the way they affect our own body. …A proposition to which Freud would readily assent" (*BD* 73).

Practicing the Abject: Molecular Meat Round One / First Course[347]

Late 1994. Happy Valley. I am in the mirrored bathroom of philosopher, anthropologist Alphonso Lingis[348] photographing three friends (one of whom recently had radical knee surgery and whose entire leg looks

[347] Deleuze writes: an "eschewal of unity constitutes *molecular* thinking where multiplicities of difference deterritorialize and reterritorialize irreducibly and interminably as heterogeneous forms contrary to *molar* multiplicities, which inevitably proceed toward stasis and totalization" (*AOed* 308). Additionally, the practice of "molecular gastronomy," an alchemical process of cooking food, not only employs a chemists tool box of apparati but also presents the palette with unexpected tastes and aromas, not unlike the surrealist magician.

[348] Grosz speaks highly of Lingis, the "translator of phenomenological theory (most notably, Merleau-Ponty and Levinas), the only professional philosopher I have read who writes openly yet philosophically, and at great length, about orgasm, bodily pleasures, lust, and sexuality in its many permutations and extremes (transvestism, transsexualism, prostitution, pornography, pederasty, and sadomasochism among them) (*STP* 189). It was an honor for me to photograph in his home and participate in his private parties.

battered with purple, green, and deep yellow bruises). Our photo site is composed of floor, ceiling, and walls of mirror. The rest of his home is overflowing with fertility gods and goddesses that Lingis has retrieved from around the world. I am again struck by the ironic play between violence and creation.[349] The same year I learn about Temple Grandin's invention. In the mid 60s, Grandin invented the "squeeze-machine": a more humane process of slaughtering animals, particularly cows, destined for agribusiness production and consumption. As I learn more about Grandin's autism and the relationship of her autism to her revolutionary invention, I get a clearer sense of how my own corporeality and

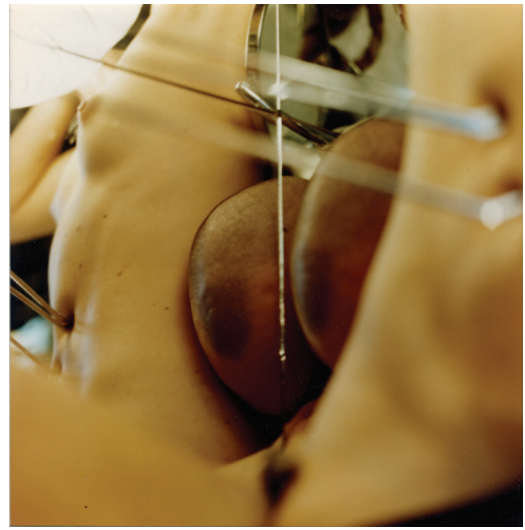


PLATE 39A

[349] One interpretation of a Hindu creation myth is when Brahma creates Sarasvati, the earth. He wants to have sex with her, but she tries to evade him by continually transforming herself into another creature. With each transformation, Brahma tracks her down: "She became a cow, but he found her and became a bull. He made love with her [i.e. raped] and cattle were born. Then she became a mare and he a stallion, she an ewe and he a ram. So the continued creating all the creatures" (Priya Hemenway, Hindu Gods: the spirit of the divine. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2003: 27).



PLATE 39B



PLATE 39C

visual work slip between eroticism and death. I experience meat, flesh, vulnerability as a raw craving, a link between Eros and Thanatos.

> ...The struggle between eros and death, between chance as the unbridled upsurge of endless possibility and chance as the ultimate version of determination and control (what Aristotle would speak of as one form of causality, namely, the automaton), can be seen figured here in the very objects to which this name—corpse—was applied (Krauss 64).

Grandin sees the corpse of both human and animal as unequivocal meat while devoting her life to making the bridge between life and death as respectful and responsible as possible. Grandin's squeeze-machine, the deep pressure device designed to relieve anxiety, is used not just for industrial farm animals walking the plank, but to help ease human beings diagnosed with autism.[350] Because my nervous system is so intimately connected with my erotic sensibilities, the squeeze-machine becomes a reference point that forces me to consider my own sexual desires within the context of death. Reconciling my sex-drive/death-drive feels to me like Grandin's animals going to slaughter: a Butoh-like surrender without fear. Only when I consider how physical pressure arouses me, only then do I allow myself to settle uncomfortably into the exquisite tension between Eros and Thanatos.[351]

Suspended within an infinite flow of Dionysian metaphoricity, I translate this tension from a libidinal-somatic intensity into my visuals and text that pulsate with multiple, integrated, suspended oppositions. Charles and Ray

[350] Ironically, Grandin's original design for the squeeze-machine was destroyed because she was "accused" of receiving sexual pleasure in the process of her nervous system calming down.

[351] In her *Space, Time, Perversion,* Grosz elaborates Freud's mathematical theory of the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1919) (*STP* 200-1).

Eames' *The Powers of Ten,* like Leibniz's cohesive elastic body, plays with the simultaneity of the micro and macro: "Dividing endlessly, the parts of matter form little vortices in a maelstrom, and in these are found even more vortices, even smaller, and even more are spinning in the concave intervals of the whirls that touch one another" (Deleuze and Conley 5). Eroticism, as sex among bodies, as aesthetic commitment, and as socio-political motivation, simultaneously merges and emerges. From the most basic cell to the infinitely expanding and contracting cosmos, sex is the "recombined as the product of accident, mutation and cannibalism" (Blake 190). In my images, skin is pulled, pushed, spread, compressed and bunched up. I do not deny the violence, the flesh violation, intrusion. But, it is my own body that is craving and demanding these relationships; my own body as continual becoming, as inhabiting and reviving the tension between life and death, between Eros and Thanatos. My body as meat. In contrast to the illusory unity of a selfsame being, this dynamic tension is suspended in animation as a chiasmic unity implicating the opposites of life and death in one another. In a similar vein,

> Bellmer depicted the body as an amalgamation of the organic and inorganic, [the living and the dead], transgressing its normative limits to incorporate aspects of its environment. He fantasized the body as a series of shifting, interchangeable erogenous zones, subject to the forces of psychic repression in what he termed 'the physical unconscious' (Taylor 11).

I am partially seduced by Bellmer, who is often pathologized as a sadist, and so I must invoke Sade himself: My pleasure in thought, says



PLATE 40

Sade, lies in having my way with bodies (*BD* 100). Since my body and those of my models are the only living meat in my photographs, I quote some of my models in order to illustrate their perceptions of our continual becoming:

> Astraea, my model in "Viscous Expectations": *It wasn't a hostile degrading experience—it tempted the tension between play and pain-now when I look at the photograph of my nipple pulled through a sharp metal disc, what I remember is play. It was an image Cara and I created in my room when we were first getting to know each other—a very warm space. I was propped up against the wall and using rusty heavy pliers, I pulled my recalcitrant nipple through the metal, a corrugated, convoluted disc, which Cara refers to as her dinosaur diaphragm—and my nipple which at times became just as convoluted. There was a lot of tenderness. We were trying to figure out how to make it stay hard so the photograph would show the visual metaphor between my vulnerable flesh and this supposedly hard object. This metal object looked like it had once moved like fluid—this object that could have been the hardened skin of an animal. The process was one of play—of attention to my body-and while trying to get it to do a very specific thing—the recognition that it had its own responses-the resistance of a nipple.*



PLATE 41, "VISCOUS EXPECTATIONS"

Sean, my model in "disarticulated membranes": *...your attention always there, looking, adjusting; there was, if anything, too much of a safety net... you discuss the enigmas of knowing/wondering/ fearing...the contradictions of desire, invasion, space, yet you protect yourself, (and us) from really hitting those core feelings by making the situation too safe: in a way, I was more excited, the stranger the position you placed me in...I haven't really thought about the most, perhaps only, disturbing aspect of the photos for me, namely the rubber glove, the encased hand (or foot), the separation, that refusal to touch, to sense, and the depersonalization; I know it's you, but do not feel you; indeed the contrast of that strange wrapped member with the strong memory of the real touch of your skin, in random contact...which made the glove the more alienating, but then there was your foot...I do not recognize my own body there... perhaps that uncertainty is the best of all, I feel a thrill not knowing...*



PLATE 42, "DISARTICULATED MEMBRANES"

Don, my model in "Inside the Visible": *I felt I was part of a landscape, a collage, fitting in there with so many other things that are coming together to make a whole-a construction similar to the montage of forms that make up a separate reality, separate from me, like Salvador Dali's*

"Apparition and Fruit Bowl". I felt like I was becoming part of something else...Cicadas on my lips, rotting berries in my mouth, saliva dripping down my chin, my tongue being grabbed by rubber sheathed toes. My saliva and to some degree, my viscera became joined into this collection of forms that make up a different whole. I felt literally frozen in time—holding the pose—I am becoming the photograph.

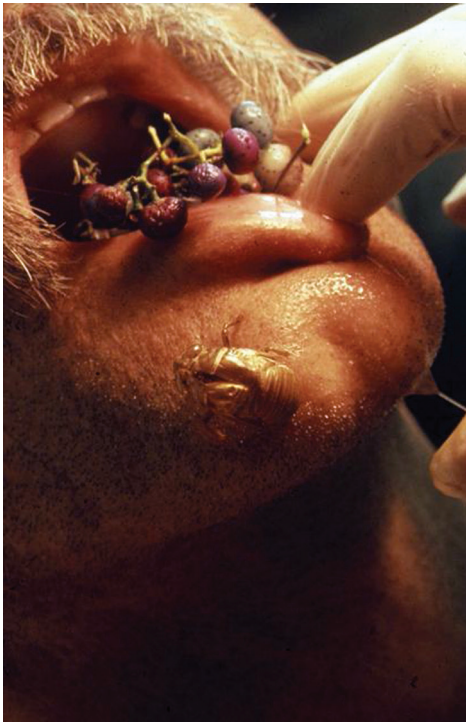


PLATE 43, "THE BEAUTY OF DISORDER"

Julia, my model in "Waking into the transient membrane of such delicious moisture": *One reason I enjoy modeling for Cara is that she puts me into situations and positions that test and question my own physical experience; a reaching out and past the boundaries my culture and I, myself have set up. One time while Cara balanced a very smelly dried octopus on my face, I had to control my breathing to limit my nasal*

intake of air so that I could reduce the nausea swelling inside me. It was an illuminating experience of finding my limitations and reaching around them to feel what's on the impregnable other side. Every session we do together, a little more about my body is revealed to my mind. Another time, Cara inserted very large dead insects in and around my ears. Beautiful and horrifying creatures, which allowed such intimate contact only because they were dead... helped to reduce my irrational fear of "bugs". It was exhilarating and so sensual: feeling the delicate prickly legs and raspy crisp wings and the fuzziness of the abdomens on my own skin sent chills through my body...It is ironic that the tension I feel while we are taking photographs does not always come through in the final print. Perhaps we do not want to see the scars, the adipose flesh, the blood, the pressure of organs, the blemishes...Those who are afraid of their bodies, I believe, are afraid of life itself and so limit or try to disregard this living tension.



PLATE 44, "WAKING INTO THE TRANSIENT MEMBRANE OF SUCH DELICIOUS MOISTURE"

Allegra, my model in "My precarious everything is almost...": *Bone density test: strange positioning, contortions, sideways, arm-raised; Mammogram: hold onto railing—"don't move!", can't breathe; Dentist: mouth x-rays that make me gag; Eye*

> *doctor: chin on immobilizing-thing, shining light in my eyes...*



PLATE 45, "MY PRECARIOUS EVERYTHING IS ALMOST..."

Together, my models and I contest the typical hierarchical power dynamics between artist and model. Our relationships grow out of collaboration, a call and response, a co-implication of exploring and pushing our own expected limits and unexpected possibilities. My models' reflections on our process represent an erotic politics of inhabiting the unknown, the unfamiliar, the stranger within. For Teresa de Avila, like Bataille and his characters in *L'Histoire de l'Oeil*,

> 'torture' is 'bliss', and this amalgam of pleasure and auto-erotic pain unites in a spiritual *jouissance* or 'fruition' as she says, a kind of massive masturbation well aware of the 'corporal form' with lips hemmed in the ideals of the Bible and the Gospels (Kristeva *The Passion According to Teresa de Avila*).

Similarly, Thomas Mann's "voluptuousness of doom" (Sarah Rich) invokes the physical and

psychological uncertainty of the universe—a co-mingling of Eros and Thanatos. My resistance to "a constellation of concepts that are overdetermined in their mutual relation: by linking sexual pleasure to the concept of death and dying" (*STP* 194)[352] honors the sacred violence of the body which implies transformation and life. For me, this relationship lies in the entangled density of meat—of what it means to be meat, to cannibalize meat, to lust after, penetrate and be penetrated by meat.

Nevertheless, I resist the slippage between eroticism and death, so common in French philosophy and psychoanalysis (with the exception of Deleuze and Guattari): "Pleasure is so close to ruinous waste that we refer to the moment of climax as a 'little death,'" (Bataille 1986: 170). But then, because of the complexities inherent in meat, I am thrown once again into another contradictory position. This incongruity resonates with Kathy Acker's investigation of her own body: the ways in which her meat/muscle developed within her bodybuilding practice. We tear our muscles and they fill in the imposed gaps with new muscle fiber, new life. Destruction of muscles leads to rebirth of muscle tissue: "In a gym, verbal language or language whose purpose is meaning occurs, if at all, only at the edge of its becoming lost" (Acker 1993: 21). The body language of Body Building, like meditation, is bound by failure—failure leading to "growth":[353]

[352] "...woman is thereby cast into the category of the non-human, the non-living, or a living threat of death" (ibid.).

[353] See Bataille's relationship to dialectics and negativity (*Visions of Excess* introduction).

> When I reduce verbal language to minimal meaning, to repetition, I close the body's outer windows. Meaning approaches breath as I body-build, as I begin to move through the body's labyrinths, to meet, if only for a second, that which my consciousness ordinarily cannot see. Heidegger: 'the being-there of historical man means: to be posited as the breach into which the preponderant power of being bursts in its appearing, in order that this breach itself should shatter against being' (Heidegger *An Introduction to Metaphysics* cited in Acker 150).

Metaphysics and its corresponding conceptual language cling to the false stability of identity. The 'knot' of chiasmic unity cannot be cut because of its element of necessity (Ulfers). The human perspective is only a portion within this unity and cannot get outside of it in order to see/judge/cut it. Meditation demonstrates the impossibility of this knot. Meditation offers the living consciousness of the intermedial. Acker parallels the ungraspable intersection of voice and body: "Where the body begins and ends is where speech begins and ends". One of my meditation students[354] recently asked me: *How do you contemplate an issue/concept without focusing your mind on it?* In response, I reflect on Pema Chodron's *Comfortable with Uncertainty*: "come back to non-conceptual simplicity of sitting meditation" (71). In our meditation, this coming back is not a return to the same. Each waking moment involves an exchange between surrender and conscious action, conscious choice that pulses with all of its gaps and intervals. I am not positioning choice as a doing or being, but as a process of becoming. What I find exciting is the process

[354] I have taught meditation classes for fifteen years.

of negotiating the spaces around the slippery edges of surrender-to-the-moment and choosing within the moment—simultaneously focused and non-focused. Conscious choice is a foundation for depth of practice. When we examine our habitual behaviorial and perceptual patterns while seeking refuge in the moment, we can inhabit an utter presence. This becoming-fully present in the moment isn't about being immobilized in a binary reaction—ratcheting between cognitive awareness, analytic processes, cerebral activity on one hand and body awareness on the other, but about playing with a choice of chiasmic integration.

My schizoanalytic project attempts to utilize contradiction as a technique to bear witness to the quotidian mechanics of the tyranny of normalcy in order to alter those hegemonies—what Freire refers to as "circles of certainty". "Revelatory wanderings" (Glissant 16) shift the stakes—enlivening the fertility of *détournement*'s politics of eversion:

> The implications of applying rigorously executed logic as a surgical probe for the delving of an illogical world has yet to be fully explored, but for the moment, a portion of the incisive potential of the procedure can be seen in one of Nietzsche's occasional methodologies—the following through of a line of argument until it reaches a logical contradiction and thereby uncovers a flaw in our normative vision of the world. It is a method of argumentation that Nietzsche describes in section 634 of The Will to Power, in which he defines his conception of the atom: 'I call it a quantum of 'will to power': it expresses the characteristic that cannot be thought

> out of the mechanistic order without thinking away this order itself' (ZMERS 13).

Like Butler's examination of censorship as formative and constitutive, a "producing speech", the appropriation of will to power and apprehending consciousness all operate through a *détournement*, evaporating without reaching their target which changes as soon as it is conceived: "an idea...cannot be precisely named... [Ideas] cannot be grasped without being deformed. Since the one is correlated with the other, any definitive identification is purely illusory" (*BD* 47, 52).

> Thus, the mechanism of censorship is not only actively engaged in the production of subjects, but also in circumscribing the social parameters of speakable discourse, of what will and will not be admissible in public discourse. ...[It offers] 'productive modalities' of power...power as formative and constitutive, that is, not conceived exclusively as an external exertion of control or as the deprivation of liberties. ... [C]ensorship is not primarily about speech...it is exercised in the service of other kinds of social aims, and that the restriction of speech is instrumental to the achievements of other, often unstated, social and state goals. ...Censorship is a productive form of power: it is not merely privative, but formative as well (*ES* 132).

Just as Bellmer performs condensations that are "activated precisely by their repression", sex, meditation, and thought de-solve that with which they are in relationship. Thinking, inhabiting the *kairos* of non-thinking intermedial time, echoes sex: "Sex is another name for *kairos*, for that event of pure present,

of pure presence...The other name for the kairos is that precise moment when desire ceases to be desire and comes undone as it becomes embodied" (*BD* 42). *Kairos*, the ineffable, incompleteness of *wabi-sabi*[355] echoes Nietzsche's eternal return: "to fully explain the concept might, in fact, diminish it" (ibid. 17-18). The first ten years of shooting my photographs, viewer's constantly asked me "what is that object?" The viewers crave to have their anxiety resolved. My predicament was that the moment they "knew" what the object was, they would feel/think they had arrived, and potentially would no longer need to engage with my image—the ego operates as interpretation; interpretation evolves from ego—a self-splitting that intrudes on chronological time. Shiva[356], the Hindu God of Destruction and Creation, personifies how the disintegration of individual and social bodies may unfold into vital integration. The "instant of decision, the right moment... the *kairos* is the here and now deployed absolutely" (ibid. 113).

While Luis Buñuel describes "the non-explainable impossibility of the fulfillment of a simple desire," Cixous goes on, "...nor does anything prove to be more fleeting than this search whose movement constitutes the labyrinth which instigates it..."(cited in Royle 16). The fullness of continual non-arrival overwhelms the loss of arrival. Jouissance, "[j]oy is not desire realized, which dies suffocated in and along with its realization"(*BD*

[355] See my narratives of censorship in "Aesthetic Obscuratism: The Ineffable, The Incomplete, *L'Informe*".

[356] "Shiva is the link between lives (death) and between moments (eternity). He is known as the fathomless abyss" (Hemenway 32).

55). The experience of writing and reading produce a double self—not in and not out.[357] In the context of (an expansive) technology, we can learn to inhabit failure.[358] "In a way, de Man has translated and reinscribed the notion advanced by Heidegger that technology's essence is disclosed in its moments of breakdown" (Ronell 2001: 47). Ronell continues, "Language never scores; it engages the experience of failure, opening the test site to the irresolvable conflict between cognition and performance" (2002: 99).

In the context of viewing erotic activity through the lens of scarcity, negation in this sense not as relational but as reactionary, Bataille meshes eroticism into an emptying out of possibility—a draining of resources, energy, integrity. Instead, as I discuss below in the context of love, I am drawn towards Henri Bergson, Deleuze, Kristeva and Baudelaire's versions of eroticism. I cling to experiencing the erotic through the field of living as fully as possible (Bergsonian élan *vital*)[359]—fully inhabiting my libido, life-drives.

In describing the boundlessness of rhizomatic difference, Deleuze writes: "Every object, every thing, must see its own identity swallowed up in difference, each being no more than a difference between differences" (1994: 56). My work thrives in the dissolution of the fantasy of autonomy. Just as Kristeva declares, "'I' become myself by swallowing the Other",[360] Baudelaire "claimed 'to become a reality" *(Paradis artificiels)* [is] not to be *like* the other

[357] "Reading Proust thoroughly and absent-mindlessly in the moment—there is a flash of intensity, pleasure, tears, laughter—and just as suddenly the moment has passed—leaving a stark awareness, a sad realization that I have returned to the present. Proust is gone" (conversation with Micaela Amateau Amato).

[358] Schirmacher challenges us to fail productively—we can never fail enough, never rest in satisfaction, we must keep collaborating, keep producing, keep moving (EGS 2008). We must live continual non-arrival as a life-technique.

[359] "Deleuze endorses Bergson's 'vitalism', [Élan Vital] or the universal presence of dynamic forces in all living, and evolving, entities, including the human. For Bergson, the universe endures, and duration, from his vitalist perspective on evolution, is 'invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new'" (Powell 215).

[360] Consider the relation of the priest scene in *L' Histoire de L'Oeil* to these explorations of collaboration.

but to *be the other"* (Kristeva *The Passion According to Teresa de Avila*). Perhaps the composite of birth, sex, and death can give rise to possibilities of expansion:

> Sex and death in combination become the conditions for the perpetual creativity that we associate with life, and desire as a drive derived from *conatus* has its origins in cannibalism, in the drive to absorb or ingest the other, to make the other part of oneself. The medium through which this occurs is necessarily some form of equivocation between bodies… (Blake 194).

Erotic politics disrupts and reorients our cultural constructs of pleasure and vulnerability, and ultimately who has power and control over our bodies—setting the groundwork for a citizenship that seizes the fertility of the uncanny—the unfamiliar and its accompanying relational tensions. The abject and desire converge and co-exist in a mutual feeding frenzy. Viscous contamination is conceived when straddling the vast lacuna of the unknown.

> It is obviously the combination of abhorrence and desire that gives the sacred world a paradoxical character, holding the one who considers it without cheating in a state of anxious fascination. What is sacred undoubtedly corresponds to the object of horror I have spoken of, a fetid, sticky object without boundaries, which teems with life and yet is the sign of death. … But would he withdraw if he were not tempted? Would the object nauseate him if it offered him nothing desirable….[B]y overcoming a resistance, desire becomes more meaningful; resistance is the test that assures us of desire's authenticity and thus gives it a force that comes of the certainty of its dominion (*AS 2,3* 95).

The sacred borderlessness of the unfamiliar collapses the certainty of dominion defossilizing ethnocentric tendencies. Such an uncanny homelessness spills into the vulnerability of *l'informe:* "According to [Sophocles' *Antigone*'s] Chorus, man is impelled to forsake the borders of everything familiar—home, country, family—and this constraint under which he must make his way exposes him to the overwhelming" (*LF* 25). It is this "overwhelming", this *das Überwaltigende*, this vulnerability of the stateless citizen that opens the process for Arendt's "ecstasy of sovereignty": "The Overwhelming… needs for itself the site of openness" (*LF* 28). Vulnerability emerges from collaboration as a form of contamination. This ekphratic intermedial engenders Arendt's "ecstasy of sovereignty":

> Whereas in the battle of ideas, in the nakedness of confrontation, men soar freely above their conditions and protections in an ecstasy of sovereignty, not defending but confirming with absolutely no defenses *who* they are, the embarrassing situation exposes them and points to them at the moment when they are least ready to show themselves, when things and circumstances have unexpectedly conspired to deprive the soul of its natural defenses (May 28).

Xenophobia seizes metaphysics-as-truth. Conceived in the extreme resistance to the uncanniness of the intermedial, it reproduces formulas of Being such as *limpieza de sangre*. "The uncanny is fearful, but the fear it generates is not the one we have *vis à vis* a 'signifiable object.' (Kristeva 1982: 34). Rather, the fear of the uncanny is not that of an 'already present

object,' but one that calls attention to the 'want of an object' and the simultaneous refusal of an object. (ibid. 35-36). "The name that Freud gives that fear is 'anxiety.' Anxiety is the 'fear' *vis à vis* what Freud calls 'ambivalence,' which he postulates as irreducible, 'grounded in the very nature of life itself'" (Brown 1959: 79). Norman O. Brown calls Freud's 'ambivalence,' a 'dialectical unity' of opposites, deriving this notion from Heraclitus[361] (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). Ambivalence deviates from habit, contracting the defilement of alterity in which ego is forced to shed its allegorical order.

"Articulations of the Unconscious" / *le monstre du carrefour*

Sacrificing normative homogeneity, my images are flush with the terror provoking abject, the terror provoking loss of individual boundaries,[362] an entry into the always-already ineffable: "*Individuum est ineffabile*" (Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, in a letter to Johann Kaspar Lavater cited in Shattuck). They potentially disrupt the demarcation between the public and the private of both psychological and physical experiences—exploring the "psyche-soma"/ psycho-anatomical. My images illuminate a call and response between anxiety and beauty. Anxiety manifests in the moment of recognizing the familiar within the unfamiliar—feeling a connection with the other, yet clinging to a separate identification and resisting empathy.[363] Beauty emerges in the moment of responsiveness to our undeniable connectedness. Beauty becomes not as something outside of ourselves, but as in the condition of the

[361] "What this means is that for Freud dreams, the manifestations of the unconscious that Freud assumes 'to be the general basis of psychical life', (651) have no decidable beginning or end, that is, they are in the most radical sense 'flux. This, plus the fact that dream thoughts are always already at least 'double,' as Heraclitus puts it, makes Freud a profoundly Heraclitean thinker" (Ulfers).

[362] Similarly, female ejaculation exceeds the self: "the object always exceeds its instrumentality...in each object [there exists] an irrational residue" (Caillois 1990: 6). Grosz concurs with Caillois: "structural, anatomical, or behavioral superabundance,...the very super-fluidity of life over and above the survival needs of the organism" (*STP* 190) persists.

[363] See Ronell's exploration of Nietzsche's *disidentification* as a strategy to sidestep the slippage of re-appropriating the other.

imperfect impermanent, incomplete wabi-sabi, "beauty is a dynamic event that occurs between you and something else" (Koren 51). Lispector, probes this psyche-somatic (dis)integrity. Like Lispector, I ask, what must I do "to become sufficiently selfestranged?" (Lispector cited in Cixous 1991:142). I embrace *anxiety* as the offspring of the everfertile uncanny.

By transforming anxiety through an uncanny ecstatic vulnerability, Žižek demands that we intervene in democratic materialism, the vortex of illusory freedom.[364] This uncanny tension between anxiety and beauty is reminiscent of Heidegger's being in the world: "For Heidegger, the fundamental character of our being in the world is uncanny, unhomely, not-at-home. *Being and Time,* for instance, expounds the view that 'In anxiety one feels *"uncanny" [unheimlich]*' (Royle 4). Cixous reaffirms: "To see the most familiar face as unfamiliar is to see it in its truth...one has to be willing to see, without flinching, the stranger in oneself" (1991: xiv).

Caillois delves into a resonant "sacred dialectic" between anxiety and beauty: "Confronted by the divine, Saint Augustine is chilled with horror and transported with love. '*Et inhorresco,*' he writes, '*et inardesco.*' He explains that his horror comes about by his realization of the absolute disparity between his being and that of the sacred, and he explains his ardor by his awareness of their fundamental identity" (37). The uncanny sacred, as a manifestation of erotic politics, can never be wrested apart/cut/de-cided, but instead must become

[364] See notes to Žižek's lecture of anxiety and the uncanny (guest lecturer, Ronell's *Philosophy and Literature* class, NYU October, 2009).

differential—it demands vulnerability: the ineffable, play, inquiry, dialogue.

> Why, groping in these obscure places, must we plant explanations everywhere? Why, when, precisely, it is plain that the art of imitating the outer aspect of animals by means of painting or engraving *could not have been put to use before it came into being* and, in order *to be*, had first *to be found* in the course of accident, chance, or play. …True, nothing proves that, earlier, play did not in some degree unbend larval mankind's stiffness: but the latter had not the power to create this *humanized* world out of the play which wed man's inner meaning to the meaning of art, which frees us, if upon each occasion for a time only, from the oppressive yoke of grim necessity, and in some sort brings us nearer that marvelous heritage, that shower of riches for which everyone of us feels himself born (Bataille 1955: 35-36).

Although my images are consciously choreographed, the relationships are born out of an improvisation (a playful attempt to "unbend larval mankind's stiffness" (ibid.)) in which gravity and balance unfold. The result is a conversation between image, movement, and sound woven together—unraveling the performance of photography and the performance of its viewing. My images inhabit Kristeva's *carrefour*—hybrids of machine and animal that populate dream-like worlds. Dream-logic (dream-thought, dream-being) is uninterpretable, ungraspable: "...by 'knowable,' we mean the 'fulfillment' (the 'satiation') of knowledge achieved when the signifier achieves its 'satisfaction' in the signified" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). Thoroughly unanchored, the characters,

objects, and space within my images pulse into infinite permutations.

> The Teresian style is intrinsically anchored in *images*, themselves meant to transmit these *visions* which are not based on sight (or, at least, not on sight alone), but which inhabit the body-and-mind in its entirety, the psyche-soma. Such 'visions' can only, firstly and essentially, lend themselves to *touch, taste* and *hearing* before transiting through *sight.* Let us say, therefore, that a *sensitive imaginary* [from the Greek *aisthesis:* a single term that signifies touch and sensitivity, like the German word, *Gefühl*] rather than 'image', imagination' or 'images' in the scopic sense of the word—convokes *words* in Teresa's writings so that they become the equivalent of what was *felt* by Teresa. …How does one speak in a contagious way of this otherness that separation in love makes her feel, but which can also fulfill her through love?...a reciprocal and asymmetrical call-and-response between two living bodies in desirous contact? A bond between two contagious desires? (Kristeva *The Passion According to Teresa de Avila*, Keynote Lecture, *La Pensée Fécunde* Conference, Berlin 2009).

Just as Teresa flourished in the inherent strangeness of herself as Christ's lover, and as Nietzsche thrived in our inherent strangeness, I seek to inhabit the strange, embed myself in the strange without feeling estranged. Bataille insists: "Fundamentally, an entire human being is simply a being...from whom there's no separating anything now. An entire human being is partly a clown, partly God, partly crazy" (*ON* xxvi). These uncertainties help me explore my own ambiguous desires and fears about my body and its internal and external designated "disorder"—breaking up pre-determined taxonomies of knowledge. The abject provokes instincts that are at the root



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of being: hunger, love, and violence. "Freud insists…these instincts cannot be expressed directly but must be misrepresented through a certain disfiguring…hallucinatory, violent, monstrous" (Taylor 239). My images explore Kristeva's discussions of the fertile intersections that the abject produces. I create my large-format color photography and video work by finding natural and architectural sites that I relate to human gestures and psychological states. These gestures echo an acoustical body, a Weberian mark whose origin is unrecognizable. This mark hovers in the non-said, under the level of language, a Saussurean embodied energy as a signifying process. Weber writes:

> Building on [Ferdinand de] Saussure's notion of signification as process distinct from and structurally prior to representation, a process constituted by differential relations rather than by the representation of a self-identical referent, Derrida's notion of a general and generative textuality argued that any process of articulation, whether discursive, using words or language, or non-discursive, using images, sounds, or any other 'sense impressions,' operates in the manner of a text insofar as meaning determines itself through the differential relations in which it is engaged (Weber 2008: 228).

I choreograph scenarios within these environments. My models simultaneously splay their bodies into the distance, like a smear or echo of memory, and compress themselves into the confines of the photographic field, the tension of the present moment. My images disarticulate our expectations of the body.[365] They are about the physics of touch and the fluidity of perception in our illusorily solid

[365] In her *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy,* Dufourmantelle elucidates the fertility of multiple perspectives in her exploration of Ricoeur and hermeneutic thought: "it is through the sifting of an infinite number of interpretive viewpoints, as Ricoeur indicates, that meaning is discovered" (36). I would argue that meaning is rarely, if ever, discovered, but rather, the quantum quality of meaning can only be glimpsed at, barely tasted, before it transforms yet again. In the text below, I explore the ethereal nature of meaning in the context of sex and thinking.

world—objects and bodies (including my own) collide in contradictory spaces that blur the lines that separate them. I play with Bataille's sacrifice of the self and Kristeva's pathos, a "monstrous intimacy", as a process of multi-layered storytelling in which ambiguity exposes multiple clarities. What emerges is an ebullient excess that dwells within both the quotidian and the primal.

> The abject would thus be this intermediary position—neither subject nor object—for which the psychiatric term 'borderline' would prove to be extremely useful. …In this, Kristeva's conception of the abject is curiously congruent with Sartre's characterization of the visqueux (slimy), a condition of matter that is neither liquid nor solid, but somewhere midway between the two (Krauss 237, 238).

Kristeva's *le monstre du carrefour* not only overflows with her personal polyphony, her linguistic hybridity, but it also invokes vulnerability. Analogously, Bataille's *festival* stimulates the chiasmic potential of the unknown—the sacrifice of the self. While the body becomes the quintessential *carrefour* of violence and the sacred, sex pulsates at this bio-political intersection. The shameful acts our bodies commit (defecating, bleeding, menstruating,[366] sweating, crying, vomiting, intercourse, orgasm, laughter, childbirth, death) coincide with the acts committed on our bodies (rape, media tyranny, internalized self-hatred and/or self-respect). The *festival*[367] serves as a cathartic function of the sacred as transgression:

[366] Pliny the Elder's hyperbolic diatribe against menstruation demonstrates (in all its monstrosity-both of the diatribe and of menstruation itself): "The more impure it is, the more potent it is considered" (Caillois 46). "It would be difficult to find anything more monstrous in its effects that this periodic flow. It turns new wine sour, renders grain unproductive, kills young shoots and desiccates garden produce. Fruit falls from the trees under which a woman in this state has sat. Her reflection alone tarnishes shining mirrors, dullens the sword's edge, erases the luster of ivory. Multitudes die, even brass and iron rust, and acquire a detestable odor. Dogs that have tasted it become rabid, and venom from their bite is incurable, etc." (ibid.). You get the picture.

[367] The feast of becoming change (as in Annette Messager's sculptural installations) mirrors the *festival* and the carnival. Carnival, with its accompanying objects of phobias and desires, disrupts absolutist models of reproduction and inverts values that legislate systemic violence—such as truth of an established order; "carnival suspends all hierarchical rank, prohibitions, and privileges" (Bakhtin 10).



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> The words *cohesion* and *dissolution* permit us to define adequately the respective unity of the complex wholes to which the pure and impure belong. …At the heart of these burlesqued and sacrilegious parodies, the ancient preoccupation with the annual reversal of the order of things is recognized. ...[The *festival* is] frenetic and orgiastic. …It is understood that the *festival*, being such a paroxysm of life and cutting so violently into the anxious routine of everyday life, seems to the individual like another world in which he feels sustained and transformed by powers that are beyond him. In reality, the festival is often regarded as the dominion of the sacred. …Excess constantly accompanies the festival…the sole manifestation of the sacred may be in the form of taboos, which protect against anything capable of threatening the cosmic regularity, or of expiations and reparations for all that can disturb it. …But the seeds of its destruction reside in its very functioning, which accumulates waste and induces the erosion of its mechanism. …This interlude of general confusion that the festival connotes appears to be a time in which the order of the universe is suspended. That is why excesses are permitted. It is a matter of contradicting the rules. Everything is done in reverse. …The *festival* represents a complex totality. …It implies the elimination of the waste-material produced by the functioning of every economy and the defilement associated with the exercise of all power. In addition, one returns to the creative chaos, the *rudis indigestaque moles*, from which the organized universe was born and reborn…in its pure form, the festival must be defined as the paroxysm of society, purifying and renewing it simultaneously (Caillois 5, 98-99, 101, 114, 124-5).

Through expenditures and paroxysms, creative chaos—the *rudis indigestaque moles*—simultaneously enables a collective fracturing of identity while engendering a

collaborative vulnerability. Indeterminate creatures (like "the Jew", woman and her bodily processes) infinitely become-vulnerable as she traverses the excess of continual non-arrival. The *festival* unfolds the chaos-cosmos cycle of pre-order, pre-laws, pre-separation. It simultaneously encompasses and manifests the process of sex, death, rebirth, and life: "A life is only a link in the chain. I want other people to continue the experience begun by those before me and dedicate themselves like me and the others before to this—to go to the furthest reaches of the possible" (*ON* 7). Bataille's call for a rhizomatic dedication materializes through a "Dionysian sexuality displayed on stage—on all stages—as a device for knowing and overturning identity. Dionysus is excess, disproportion, the indecency of truth laid bare, spewing forth, carnivalesque" (*BD* 45). Caillois'/Bataille's *festival* projects Kristeva's *carrefour* into the public sphere. Like the *festival*/carnival, objects of phobias and desires invert phallo-centric values, such as truth of an established order. As Nietzsche tells us, "truth is unknowable": "Truth is an unhealthy passion of the human soul, and thus of metaphysics. But this passion cannot be removed without risking the decomposition of life itself" (*BD* 44). Vulnerability (decomposition) functions as an oppositional consciousness to truth: "... the categories of reason do not apply to the world and thus are not arbiters of truth" (ZMERS 12). Vulnerability (*l'informe)* becomes "the indecency of truth laid bare".

The deterioration of composure, witnessed in carnival and the *festival,* becomes a manifestation of the uncanny—rendering one vulnerable, contaminated. The uncanny is the "fascinating crest of decomposition-composition" (Kristeva 1982: 153). Carnival suspends all hierarchical rank, prohibitions, and privileges. It circulates Foucault's yearning for an *ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica*.[368] I translate this yearning through uncanny paradoxes and aporias:

> 'The festival,' Bataille avers, 'is the fusion of human life. For the thing and the individual, it is the crucible where distinctions melt in the intense heat of intimate life'. The heat that transforms difference into identity is generated by transgressive acts that violate the boundaries separating good and evil, 'crimes' of violence and eroticism open the realm of divine intimacy. In *Death and Sensuality: A Study of Eroticism and the Taboo*, Bataille claims that 'the final aim of eroticism is fusion, all barriers gone.' This fusion is a *coincidentia oppositorum* in which eros is thanatos and death is life (Taylor 235).

My photographs are images of the impossible—consciously choreographed *festivals* that resonate with Bataille's declaration: "Death is…the wonder-struck cry of life" (Taylor 235). They demand a dialogic self-sacrifice–not losing oneself to an undifferentiated whole, but detaching from pre-determined agendas.[369] My images dismember expectation from the unknown—they require a death[370] of everything we have learned and internalized as normative behavior: "Dying and coming back was what Bataille thought communication is about" (Lotringer's introduction to *ON* viii*).*

[368] Paralleling *wabi-sabi*, the South African artist William Kentridge shares, "I am interested in a political art, that is to say an art of ambiguity, contraction, uncompleted gestures and uncertain endings. An art (and a politics) in which optimism is kept in check and nihilism at bay" (MoMA 2009).

[369] See Sara Beardsworth, *Yoga Neighboring Freud*, presented at *La Pensée Féconde* Kristeva conference in Berlin, 2009.

[370] I am positioning death in a Spinozan "productive" context rooted in the possibilities of interpretation.



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When life is death and death is life, one passes beyond the limits of reality into the surreality of the sacred…Forever incomprehensible in any system—be it philosophical, religious, or economic—the folly of surrealism is the 'non-knowledge' that Bataille associates the ecstasy of 'inner experience'…Through the work of art, surrealists seek a return of the agonizing ecstasy that was once present in religious ritual. Art, in other words, re-presents what religion once presented (Taylor 235).

Teresa's practice of "orison, the mental prayer of amorous fusion with God through which she experienced ecstasy" (Kristeva) embodies the fertility of vulnerability. This consciousness made public precisely demonstrates the erotics of the uncanny. Bataille's *Acéphale* splintered into a private branch, whose main goal was to "redefine the science of the sacred" (*VE* xx), and a public branch that consisted of *Le Collège de Sociologie* (including Caillois, and Michel Leiris). While *Le Collège de Sociologie* operated from a technical perspective—acquiring the materiality of knowledge, *Acéphale* unveiled the monster within:[371] we simultaneously know nothing and know everything. "The possibility of this disruptive inner experience [that] presupposes that the self is never simply itself but is always at the same time self and other" (Taylor 236). For the characters in my photographs, our silent spectacle evokes self-awareness lodged in continual query. Similarly, the audience has an opportunity to read their own stories into the photographic

[371] The *pulsion* embedded in *Acéphale* resonates with the chiasmic post-human condition of psychasthenia (which I discuss in my introduction): "A disturbance in the relation between self and surrounding territory; a phenomenon in which the ability to define one's position in space is confused with, and by, represented space; an urban cultural condition which provides the dual experience of being everywhere at once while not really being anywhere at all" (source unknown).

scenarios—for better or for worse: "Human eyes tolerate neither sun, coitus, cadavers, nor obscurity, but with different reactions" (*VE* 8).

2004. During the opening of my solo exhibition in Hamburg, Germany, a musicologist shared his reading of one of my photographs. He apologized profusely, expressing his shame: he saw a combination of the train scene in "Some Like It Hot" and a concentration camp. His reading hit the mark, opening up my own sense of possibilities of *combinatoire* and interruption.[372]

Recognizing the perversity of those co-existing realities—different variations of absurd hysteria—is integral to how I see myself in relation to the world around me. The characters (including myself)[373] in my photographs pulse between both accreted grotesque hauntings and the quietly familiar. The quotidian in relation to the sensual spectacle sets up a ritualistic narrative—a strewn collision of bodies and space is simultaneously purposeful and haphazard. Through a carnal visual language, these polymorphic bodies are engaged in ambiguous ceremonies. My photographs disentangle the body's porous boundaries; hyperbole and austerity, reactivity and compliance are let loose in a Riemannian field of possibility.[374] Questions remain undecidable, "prior to any distinction-making" (Derrida). I am (my body, my work) in a continual process of non-arrival—

[372] See my exploration in "Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations: Molecular Meat Round Two/Second Course" and "Pedagogical Promiscuities".

[373] Incorporating my body into the frame engages seeing not as a mind projection, but as reception: "Meaning is produced by our whole bodies, not just by conscious thought. We see with our bodies, and any image we make carries the imprint of our bodies; that is to say, of our being as well as the meanings we intend to convey. …[Images are] mirrors of our bodies, replicating the whole of the body's activity, with its physical movements, its shifting attention, and its conflicting impulses toward order and disorder. … Corporeal images are not just the images of other bodies; they are also images of the body behind the camera and its relations with the world" (MacDougall 3).

[374] The instability of this Reimannian field reminds us of the sheer process of relationality. Equally, in the context of my photographs, there is no causal principal—everything interprets, interrupts, is simultaneously active and reactive. There is no illusion of compliance. The chiasm between the solid and the fluid within this field presents a double orbit—a multi-folded substance and non-substance. Although Einstein's 1905 theory of relativity recognized that time and space are intimately interconnected, his theories still refused to metabolize the confluence of quantum fields: "Einstein objected to this [unpredictability]



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discovering my "still unknown"—in which confusion is a state of grace.

Heightened awareness,[375] like the Unconscious as dream logic, serves as a psychogenic prosthetic—Schirmacher's "artificial life"—"the experience of oneself *as* a foreign body" (Royle 2). This other within resists common-sense laws such as cause and effect binary codes. Kristeva's analysis of Teresa de Avila's relationship of her devotion to the divine explicitly moves from metaphors to metamorphosis—a change inherent in embracing the unknown, the unfamiliar—a radically post-human characteristic:

> …fiction 'fertilizes' abstractions by using rich and exact sensorial data transposed into clear images. …Teresa immerses herself above the barrier of word-signs in the psyche-soma. … From that moment on, what remains of the 'words' is no longer a 'signifier-signified' separated from 'referent-things', as is customary with the understanding of 'word-signs' at work in an exterior reality. On the contrary, the prayer which amalgamates the ego and the Other also amalgamates the word and the thing: the speaking subject nearly undergoes…a catastrophic mutism, the self 'loses itself', liquefies', 'becomes delirious'. Halfway between these two extremes, a thin membrane rather than a bar separates the word from the thing: they contaminate each other and alternately dissociate. The self loses itself and finds itself again devastated and jubilant, in an impossible space. …Teresa dives into her mother tongue as if it were a *bath* consubstantial with the experience of engendering a new self, nestled in the Other, a self that loves the Other, that this self reabsorbs and that the Other, in turn, absorbs (Kristeva *The Passion According to Teresa de Avila*).

very strongly, despite the important role he had played in the development of these ideas. …Einstein never accepted that the universe was governed by chance; his feelings are summed up in his famous statement 'God does not play dice'" (Hawking 57). In contrast, the Reimannian logic of interferences reflects Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle (discussed on page 213). See also Hawking's exploration of particle-wave coincidences in *A Brief History of Time*. New York: Bantam Press, 1988, and Deepak Chopra's lectures on synchronicity in *Synchrodestiny: The Power of Meaningful Coincidence*.

[375] As all ascetics know, when we strip our bodies of our basic needs (sleep, oxygen, water, food, sex, etc.), we hit a high point of acute sensitivity which opens possibilities to inhabit the impossible. Excess and asceticism are caught in an elliptical boomerang, a *détournement* of the impossible. Congruently, "[s]ex is not without danger. It is an inverted asceticism, a path of metamorphoses" (*BD* 56).

Inhabiting the psyche-soma as a self-sacrifice enables the possibility of giving up control, an embodiment which creates a violence of shedding ego[376] and social(ized) expectations—another peculiarly political post-human twist. It is this *dexamiento,* Kristeva's exploration of Teresa's state of abandon, that allows us to jump into the unknown, the work of art: "A work of art, a sacrifice…every sacrifice has its cause in the quest for a sacred instant that, for an instant, puts to rout the profane time in which prohibitions guarantee the possibility of life" (Bataille 1955: 39). A collaborative call and response demands the vulnerability inherent in the dis-figurement, the *écriture* of the abject. Vulnerability becomes a spectral and textual jouissance.

The divine cannot be de-cided. This rhizomatic *carrefour,* Kristeva's boundary-crossing, is precisely what constitutes post-human art and corporeal integrity. The fertility of chaos spawns an economy of over-abundance, an erotics of the uncanny, digesting the stranger within—an assimilation of the other which is not about assimilation as annihilation, but a full body-mind submission to Kristeva's *carrefour*. My body and creative work compel me to regurgitate and re-imbibe Teresa de Avila's orality, her haptic disfiguring of her rhizomatic physio-psychology, her erotics of the uncanny. Within the interstices of the post-human:

> 'One does not feel anything, one simply takes pleasure without knowing what one is taking pleasure in' (18:1); 'deprived even of feeling' (18:4); 'a kind of delirium' (18:13). It is a matter

[376] "As Adam Bresnick has put it: 'The uncanny...would not merely be something a given subject experiences, but the experience that momentarily undoes the factious monological unity or the ego. The uncanny is thus perhaps the most and least subjective experience, the most and least autobiographical 'event'" (16). I explore the enfoldments of pregnancy and breast-feeding each as a discontinuous apotheosis of the uncanny.

> of the positive and negative, of *jouisssance* and extreme pain, always the two together or alternating. This concoction crushes and exiles the body in a fainting fit where the psyche is in turn, decimated 'outside the self', before the soul is able to trigger the narration of the state of 'loss' (Teresa de Avila cited in Kristeva).

Kristeva's rendition of Teresa extends into the realm of the post-human—a virtual cyberspace in which our bodies inhabit the complete unknown. In the 15th century, that unknown embodied the divine or the soul; today it is manifested in visualizing technologies: "To be human presupposes signs of an inside, in other words, as a source of what appears on the outside. But which is my real interiority—an MRI of my brain or the thinking organ inside my head?" (Barbara Johnson 90). As we straddle this uncanny post-human double-take proliferating in the public consciousness, we can begin to delineate the stratifications of the real in relation to entertainment (hierarchies of material value). When we citizen-warriors recognize the ways in which we occupy contradictory power structures, we must shift the stakes of this witnessed intermedial zone—mobilizing our individual and collective vulnerabilities. We can begin to deploy vulnerability as an intensive strategy for an embodied democratic republic.

III

Embodied Democracy: Vulnerability and the Potential of Socio-Erotic Ethics

"If I want to realize totality in my consciousness, I have to relate myself to an immense, ludicrous and painful convulsion of all of humanity."

Georges Bataille

"The same stream that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measure."

Rabindranath Tagore

5 Rhizomatic Vulnerabilities for Radical Citizenship

In contrast with the Cartesian form of knowledge from which *scientia sexualis* originates as the "distinction between the imaginative and the veridically perceptual" (Goldstein 187), Spinoza, the philosopher of joy, claimed that *scientia intuitiva,* a third kind of knowledge, knowledge as intuition, is simultaneously an emotional and a cognitive state.

> In intuitive knowledge, the highest level of knowledge, each thing is grasped in the context of the infinite explanatory system, *Deus sive natura*, that is, the world, the details of which cannot—precisely because they are infinite—be exhaustibly grasped in the inexhaustible entirety but can nevertheless be holistically intuited (ibid.).

Intuitive knowledge becomes the chiasmic unity of eroticism as continual non-arrival: "We can never achieve [*scientia intuitiva]* fully" (ibid.). *Scientia intuitiva* is another reflection of Nietzsche's will to power: "Indicating the power and confidence obtained by showing that 'I've unlearned fear'; in place of mistrust and doubt, trust our instincts; each person loving and honoring himself or herself in wisdom and even absurdity; partly as a fool, partly as a god..." (*ON* 11).

Practicing (Anti-)Critique: Emancipatory Pedagogies and Becoming the Impossible

My photographic series from 2004-2011 entitled *The Gestation Project*, is an example of critique—the yet-space-of-alterity, the stranger within—offering vulnerability as agency. The project focused on photographing twenty naked pregnant women in public venues (such as the zoo, bookstores, night-clubs, and theaters) across San Francisco. The woman's pregnant body[377] represents the simultaneity of inside/outside. Life within her is clearly visible from the outside. Her private is undeniably public. Her body is raw and exposed and contained at the same time. Because her corporeality cannot be concealed, the pregnant woman is exempt

[377] I am not claiming that maternity is an essential metaphor for womanhood. I intend for my work to exemplify a productive discursive intercourse that, like sex radical eco-feminism, "must be and is an expanding discourse that responds to and initiates critical self-reflection and ongoing political debate" (*DE, DB* 248).

from societal constraints that inhibit body awareness. The pregnant woman is the ideal subversive human challenging cultural norms because her woman-ness is utterly present. She is sexual without objectification or victimization—the embodiment of sexual and corporeal empowerment. She is the alchemist who embodies and transgresses constructions of difference—opening the door for identification and *disidentification* from others. Her body plays with the illusory distinctions between self and other, the familiar and the unfamiliar, what ostensibly is comfortable and what puts us on edge. The pregnant woman is both mythic and as real as it gets. Her body represents the epitome of my artistic and yogic practices. She not only inhabits a liminal zone, she *is* the in-between, the not-yet, Nietzsche's *over-fullness,* simultaneously existing within and beyond, always in relation to others (or an other).

Like Deleuze and Guattari's becoming-animal, the swarm of naked pregnant women in public spaces within my photographs suggests proliferation, over-abundance, contagion. Sex begets the swarm. "Sexuality is the production of a thousand sexes, which are so many uncontrollable becomings. *Sexuality proceeds by way of the becoming-woman of the man and the becoming-animal of the human:* an emission of particles" (*TP* 279). My *Gestation Project* materializes Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical connective tissue that wanders, improvises, intersects, flows, accretes:



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> what is always crucial to their writing is that all this diversity of image and idea invariably defines a unity at the same time as it explores multiplicity, understood plurally as an infinite set of multiplicities that at the same time characterise the individuated unity of self or world or cosmos. These are materialising multiplicities in which 'each individual is a multiplicity, and the whole of Nature is a multiplicity of perfectly individuated multiplicities' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 254 cited in Blake 181).

Six years after I begin *The Gestation Project*, I *become-pregnant*. Although I had anticipated an *orgasmic birth,*[378] I endured a radically compressed labor (eight hours total)—giving birth in my own home, far from being besieged by any medical institution's doctrine and interventions, far from normative temporal structures. I became-animal—inhabiting each discontinuous Moment. "Timelessness and succession are compatible as soon as the intellect is gone" (Nietzsche *Nachlaß*). My labor was multi-directional—unfolding within Time as a Moebius-strip.[379] I did *not know* I was in early labor because I was counting my contractions within a Reimannian time-frame, counting my breaths—my body-mind's "bent" way of "reading" (not interpreting) the non-linear passage of time.[380] Since I was counting my breaths, instead of measuring time through Aristotelian logic (seconds), I gave my midwife on the telephone "incorrect" information. She did not arrive "in time". In this sense, my labor became music in that, according to John Cage, time is an "essential dimension of all music" (71). He speaks of the "necessity of freeing

[378] I had originally focused my research on the physiology of female orgasm and female ejaculation. During my pregnancy, I investigated *orgasmic birth*. *Orgasmic birth* can be defined as a Nietzschean process of witnessing the rapture of the Moment, a Spinozian revealing in the Now of *all* the physio-emotive/nomadic affective meanderings and collisions that take place during labor and childbirth. An orgasmic encounter with the birthing process, as I discuss in "Irrational Wombs", is actually a logical reality given that sex and birth involve the same hormones and body parts. Now that I have given birth to Zazu and entered our consumerized colonization of motherhood, my research weaves the politics of childbirth into this matrix of hyper-medicalized cultural conditioning which uproots our most basic human functions. Pregnancy, labor, birth, and breast-feeding embody the most remarkable contradiction and fusion of the normal and the miraculous. The culmination of my teaching B.K.S. Iyengar yoga for fifteen years and my body consciousness workshops, along with my Yoga and Sexuality Workshops, is in direct alignment with how I teach *The Neuromuscular Harmony of Labor,* my pre and post-natal focus. Once again, I invoke DeLanda's declaration that there is no "the"—in this case, no "the norm". My project seeks to de-obscene the paradox of the miraculousness of normalcy. Like Hawking's invocation to witness the fertility of what already exists, I intend to construct environments that re-orient our relationships to



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time" (ibid. 131) from any externally imposed measurements "clock time"/ "real time". The world is an amalgamation of events—processes, not objects, "each of which has its own time" (ibid. 47) while "[t]here is no single space, finally…" (ibid. 132). My birthing labor is a poignant example of this process-based auto-time.[381] My "mistake" of using my body's rhythm's to *tell* time illustrates the radical impacts of veering from normative time as agreed upon pre-determined rules—the creative productivity of failure—a variation of Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva* and Nietzsche's eternal recurrence: "Can we remove the idea of a goal from the process and then affirm the process in spite of this?—This would be the case if something were attained at every moment within this process—and always the same" (Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, § 55, p. 36). Like beauty and ec-stasy,[382] a prosthetical relationship to time in which one stands outside universalized functionalities of time demonstrates a dynamic disequilibrium—an imbricated will to power.

> The deepest and most far-reaching revolutions of thought are always those that involve an alteration in the very geometry of thinking, for thinking does have a geometry, a set of rules the space in which it occurs and according to which one thought follows upon another. Aristotelian logic occurs in a space of Euclidean geometry—thoughts that imply each other follow one up one the next without evident inflection. They constitute a straight line of logic–the further one follows out the line, the farther one falls from the starting point of the argument *(*ZMERS 17*)*.

the norm—demystifing pregnancy, sex, and nudity while denaturalizing suburban shame: "All we're talking about is just being able to acknowledge that sex is a good thing in the right circumstances, that it's a normal thing...expansive sex education has to be done in code" (sex scholar, Al Vernacchio). In her "Teaching Good Sex" (*The New York Times Magazine*. November 20, 2011: 38-43), Laurie Abraham asks, "What if [our students] really believed we want them to know their own bodies?"

[379] "…a self-contained, discrete system that, simultaneously, passes out of itself and leads into itself…The Moment is the culmination of eternal recurrence, and as its own entirety of time that passes simultaneously out of itself and back into itself, it is Becoming divorced from normative temporality" (ZMERS 25). I contend that the Nietzschean Moment is a Moebius-strip as Becoming.

[380] "...each Moment provides itself with its only possible time frame—along with the absence of any overall, universal time frame due to the impossibility of its having any experiential perspective—destroys any possible site for a sequence" (ZMERS 24).

[381] Like this *l'informe du temps,* Deleuze's "time–image" of cinematic time is not derived from movement, but appears in itself. The 'direct time-image' turns away from spatial exteriority and enters into 'mental relations or time'.

[382] Butler's elaboration of ec-stasy as standing outside yourself (from the Greek) intersects

I encounter my breast-feeding and post-partum relationships as even more non-Euclidean, even more uncanny than *becoming-pregnant*. Even more amplified than when I was pregnant, as a breast-feeding mother, I am a Heraclitean entity that moves in a 'double orbit'/ a redoubling that simultaneously refuses to distinguish between my boundaries and those of my baby while inhabiting Nietzsche's *disidentification,*[383] we de-solve identification. I find myself inverting Kristeva's declaration (which I discuss above): "'I' become myself by swallowing the Other". I am *becoming*-swallowed in order to animate the other. My infinite excess germinates a Moebius of non-self.

Ulfers tells us that this Heraclitean entity is analogous to Freud's concept of dream-thoughts. Like Gregor Samsa, the breast-feeding woman "embodies dream-thought, that mode of thinking and being that must be repressed in order that we can function smoothly and logically. ...Gregor as 'monstrous vermin,' is an entity irreducibly 'between' categories such as familiar and strange; the 'monstrosity' of his existence consists in his being 'both-and' neither-nor' " (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).[384] Barthes' "wall of antithesis" blocks out indeterminate sensations that form the inchoate undecidability. Baudrillard's concept of the "'simulacrum', which, by being neither model nor copy, defies or subverts the logic of representation and the capability of judgement and its concomitant, classifiability" (ibid.) demonstrates one version of breast-feeding motherhood.

with Jiddu Krishnamurti's "Beauty is, where you are not". The contradictions of *disidentification* are manifold: "For me—how should there be any outside—myself? There is no outside" (Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "The Convalescent"). Multiple insides seep and soar (Nietzsche cited in Scharfstein 116) as Glissant's sacred poetics of relation.

[383] See my discussion of Ronell's theorization of friendship in "Post-Humanism: Digital Visualizing Technologies".

[384] See footnote 277 on the national Nurse-In direct action at Target stores.

Photographing *The Gestation Project*, I witnessed vulnerability as a form of strength.[385] The openness of vulnerability became a strategy to engage with the playful elusiveness of our radically holistic world. At once revered and quarantined, the pregnant woman (and breast-feeding woman) is saturated with an infinitely mutating call-and-response between the private and the public. One of my models from *The Gestation Project* explores her relationship to "open season" the simultaneous spillage of the private into the public while the public subsumes the private:

> MJ, my model in "Hair of the Gods #1-16": *I used to be anonymous. This is precisely why my participation in Cara Judea Alhadeff's photo-shoots was such an important part of my pregnancy. Not just because I was able to spend the afternoon with other people bearing the same load. My prenatal yoga and natural childbirth classes afforded me that. Being a part of Cara's vision meant finally exposing myself as opposed to being exposed, removing the thin veils of clothing that stood between the outer world and my inner world. I was ready to reclaim the parts of myself that had transgressed into public domain. I stood in an African Goddess hair salon naked, chilly, and uncomfortable with a desire to say to the camera, Here. Is this what you've been wanting to see? Take your look then. Stare at me. I am swollen. I've gone brown with ripeness. My nipples have spread and darkened like mud. My legs have veins that show blue through skin. When you see me on the street, you see none of this. To you, I represent so much more than I want to. Shooting pregnant women in a hair salon, and later a zoo, a nightclub, a record store, and an empty auditorium exploded the expected, and what fell into place was a narrative of maternal magical realism. How else can you capture something that is eternally natural, and yet feels like a logistical impossibil-*

[385] One of my model's for *The Gestation Project* wrote about her realization of the multi-dimensionality of vulnerability: "*I found the photo shoots to be extremely cathartic. After many people making comments like "you're huge, are you carrying twins", in which they meant no harm, but nonetheless hurt my feelings, I was able to transcend that. During the shoots I felt beautiful. They were raw and intimate, a perfect transition into motherhood. Labor is raw and intimate. Pregnancy is full of dichotomies, you're scared yet somehow you know everything is fine, you have no direction, and yet somehow find your way. Everything I ever believed in, every preconceived notion I had flew out the door the minute Aidan was born. My ego melted, I surrendered. The photo shoots prepared me for that letting go, that stripping away of masks and letting the world see me as I truly am...So thank you Cara*".

ity? Religiously chaste and yet erotically sensual? Communal and yet isolating? Symmetrically perfect and yet grotesque? How can you display the love a woman feels for her unborn child, the strain she feels from carrying him, and the daunting thrill she has of pushing him out? How can a photographic exhibit tell the story of the emotional duality and the spiraling contradictions that make up this incredibly unique and ephemeral chunk of life? Cara turned the image of expectancy into hyperbole. She took what we think we know, what we've all seen a million times before, and propelled it out of our comfort zone. Compositionally, Cara shows us a world of intimacy and of distance. We manage to exude a peacefulness and sense of belonging despite the incongruity of being naked in public settings. From the perspective of model, it seemed that Cara approached these shoots with very little expectation. She never knew how many of us were going to show up (one model had the very permissive excuse of having gone into labor during one of Cara' shoots); she never knew the level of intimacy she could attempt to establish among total strangers; and there was always the variable of sensitive body issues. One model agreed to pose nude as long as her body and her face were not in the same shot. Without so much as a furrowed brow, Cara accepted this woman's personal limitation and shot accordingly. It is this acceptance, openness, freedom, and whimsy so evident in Cara's work. By the end of the afternoon incidentally, the modest woman seemed to have lost her inhibition and appeared before the camera lens without restraint. Those shoots were a process of shedding inhibition. Letting go when you're holding so much was an incredibly cathartic exercise and one I look back on with fondness and warmth. We entered record stores and hotel lobbies feeling out of place in our own uncovered skin, and midway through the shoot, we were all usually remarking on how unbelievably normal it had become to be naked with each other. Yeah yeah, your belly button has popped out like a meat thermometer, and your abdomen is rippled with stretch marks, and my ass is fat, and your ankles have blown up, and here we all are naked at the

zoo and I've never felt so at ease with a group of people in all nine months of my pregnancy. In fact, at one point in the hair salon shoot, a client had to get rinsed in the room where we were posing. Cara gave us a minute to cover up, but by that point in the day, none of us really felt the need to scramble for clothing for the five or ten minute interlude. Interestingly enough, it was the fully clothed pair, the woman client and her male stylist who seemed out of place. This was an environment turned on its head. And the photos bear witness to the invented reality. Tim O'Brien wrote, in his contemporary collection of short stories entitled, The Things They Carried, that sometimes story truth is truer than happening truth. When I look at Cara's photos of pregnant women horizontal in a hair salon, perched on barstools, roaming the aisles of a record shop, milling around a lion's den, I think, yes, that's what it was like to be pregnant. Even though none of those people would actually be doing any of those things in a conventional reality, Cara's work illuminates a very real truth about the complexities of pregnancy. As the client lay back for her rinse, and the stylist kept to his task, I grabbed a fashion magazine and sank into a swivel chair. I was one of a dozen naked pregnant women in a room filled with painted masks and Aboriginal woodcarvings. I flipped glossy magazine pages and relished the moment of feeling once again unremarkable.

Reminiscent of Nietzsche's joyous affirmation of living, this project has deeply influenced how I structure my photography shoots and body consciousness workshops: "For Nietzsche, fate and the love of it involve us in a knowledge, amounting to wisdom, of an 'excess' beyond Being with Becoming as its negation, beyond the value of truth with non-truth as its negation, in a state of awareness that is beyond normative conception and that leaves him who 'knows' it 'only as a Yes-sayer'" (NAF 4). Just as *The Gestation Project* exclaims Yes! to



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our collective individuated multiplicities, my pedagogical and lived commitment to the body equally demands Yes! I now understand Freire's teaching as a form of love—dialogue as both continual non-arrival and reflective action:

> Dialogue, however, is not any conversation. It is a humanizing encounter that includes both action and reflection. Freire argues that dialogue cannot happen without love and in fact, love is both its foundation and dialogue itself. Dialogue as love is not the sharing of the sentiment but the demonstration of love through actively acknowledging and respecting the world of the [other] (Tanya Brown citing Freire, Cultural Studies Association Conference 2009).

Relational thinking and uncertainty, which I experience as the fluidity of perception, generate Freire's position on the pedagogical potency of dialogue: dialogue implies movement—a productive, *wabi-sabi* encounter with the Other. Freire theorizes dialogue as psychosocially transformative. He claims that dialogue is an existential necessity as it is the only mode by which human life can share meanings. He states, "[d]ialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. …If it is in speaking their word that people, by naming the world, transform it, dialogue imposes itself as the way by which they achieve significance as human beings" (1993: 88). When we witness without appropriating or identifying, we invite vulnerability as a coalitional potentiality. Love "is a process of the production of the common and the production of subjectivity". A mentor of mine, the Deleuzian Communist, Michael



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Hardt, describes love as an ontological event:

> Being...is not some immutable background against which life takes place but is rather a living relation in which we constantly have the power to intervene. ...Spinoza explains...love...is joy...the increase of our power to act and think, together with the recognition of an external cause. ...'Being,' after all, is just another way of saying what is ineluctably common, what refuses to be privatized or enclosed and remains constantly open to all (2009).

By invoking, Walt Whitman, Hardt reminds us to love alterity: "love of the stranger continually reappears as an encounter characterized by wonder, growth, and discovery". Cixous declares, "The other who puts love to the test: How to love the other, the strange, the unknown, the not-me-at-all?" I use this exploration of the self in relation to the other as a possibility for cultural and spiritual healing—"an act of becoming" (Bakhtin cited in Stewart 105). Through this healing process, we are compelled to investigate our own "grotesque" viscosity—our poetics of relation. As a pedagogical intensity, I engage in this vulnerability, the uncanny, the entanglement of difference, the not knowing one's way (Royle 29): "The experience of [radical] uncertainty is...the condition of teaching and learning. To love teaching, to love certain texts, to love certain ways of thinking: this is possible only in a context of moral uncertainty" (ibid. 57).

Exploring contradictory desires, my images transcend socialized possibilities by articulating elliptical rhizomatic convergences. Once again,

we are revisited by the lessons from Jacotot, the Ignorant Schoolmaster. This intuitive perspective echoes Giroux's role as a public intellectual. Giroux presents a pedagogy that "deconstructs and reclaims various aspects of popular culture in a way which challenges canonicity, rejects a view of identity as a privatized consciousness, and refuses to validate the idea that cultural difference is a threat to democracy" (1993: 5). Collective consciousness, not as a unifying discourse, but as an awareness of embodied energy, becomes an a priori paragon of radical democracy.

[386] Another marking of this concept includes the continual non-arrival of promiscuous crossings and rhizomatic vulnerabilities.

The Scandal of Ekphrasis: Transfiguration, Collaboration, and Transdisciplinarity

> *Everything moves and breathes together. The pointing of a finger originates in the opposite foot.*
> Frederick Leboyer

A politics of no resolution[386] invites multiple readings of imbricated stories. Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* plays with this idea: "the ability to change…to become new versions of themselves…to join up with other stories and so become yet other stories" (72). The liberatory potential of this rhizomatic fluidity of story differs from a library in which texts are stacked categorically—their covers distinct, containing their contents. Similarly, my photographs differ from traditional contemporary photography. Rather than relying on an illusory coherent

superstructure, my work amplifies connective tissue, disarticulated membranes.[387] Through interwoven citizenships, our bodies become stories. For example, Sandra Phillips, the Curator of Photography at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (which owns several of my photographs), asked me why I included my foot in one of my images (see plate 49). My synergetic response referred to the chiasmic, hallucinatory nature of my body as photographer. She reduced my response to a Formalist monolingual model. Inversely, the month before, Sarah Hasted, director of a distinguished gallery in New York, Hasted and Hunt, had categorized my work as being too conceptual. I cite this example of contradictory interpretations to illustrate the ambiguous fluidity and the arbitrary nature of these categories, and also to indicate how the imprecision of arbitrary authority can become a form of repression.[388]

My images' subject-object noumene become a metaphoric extension of the intermedial towards a tendency for *artificial life*. This "confounding a cephalopod with a human being" (Rosenblum 340) opens a space for participatory citizenship. Echoing Jorge Luis Borges' hybrid playful monsters, my images hover as a collective interstice. The chimerical of rhizomatic vulnerabilities stimulates "… overlapping intervals between corporeality and art, art and technology, technology and the body" (Oosterling and Ziarek 67) resonate with the surrealist integration of art and praxis. Critical art produces "a sensory form of

[387] "A Brooklyn retrospective recalls a Japanese filmmaker who specialized in messy lives. … Mr. Imamura's films... share a certain willingness to sacrifice coherence for exuberance. Most directors do the opposite... an instinctual aesthetic. ...These films are obviously the work of a supremely assured artist, and one who is at home, even intimate, with his (and our) most basic instincts. And they feel, against all reason, like the movies of a happy man" (Rafferty 2007).

[388] Analogously, see Butler's concept of censorship as producing speech.

strangeness, a clash of heterogeneous elements prompting a chance in perception" (Rancière 2006: 11). Our bodies *become* an operation of art. In his insistence on the how instead of the what, Robert Ryman calls for an engagement with total intuition. Focusing on the how implies no agenda, "[a]nd thereby, Nietzsche can be said to have affirmed life not so well by what he said as simply by his saying" (NAF 25). It is this embodied thinking that informs *l'informe.*[389]

[389] Robert Ryman provokes, "what could be more challenging than to have endless possibilities?" He draws us into *l'informe* as he defies the concept that "painting is dead". Similarly, in *Writer Sollers,* Barthes reminds the reader of the responsibility of form—*how* things are written.

> Closely tied to the mores of contemporary writers, Friedrich Schlegel to this day takes beatings from philosophical overlords who continue to press charges against the philosophical pornography machine, the *pornosophy* that his novel, *Lucinde* indulges. As Paul de Man once drove home, the scandal of Schlegel consists in the crossover of genres, the wanton staging of incompatible codes, and the ensuing contaminations of reciprocally alien formalities rather than in the buildup of any specific or accreditable content (Ronell's introduction to *BD* xvi).

My photographs demonstrate (in the context of monstrosity) pornosophy's formlessness. Visual and visceral enactments of Grosz's exhortation for the incalculable peregrinations of female sexuality (specifically in the case of my argument in "Protean Sexualities" in which I discuss how female ejaculation exceeds the self) as impractical, impermanent, mobile, and rhizomatic intersect with Spinoza's intuitive body-mind, Deleuze's "constant mutations and mutilations of sense" (Blake 194), and Lingis' carnal desire as Moebius band:

> Carnal intimacy is not a practical space; it does

> not open a field for action. The erotic movements are agitation that handles and fondles without keeping anything in its place, without extending its force outward and without going anywhere. Here nothing will be accomplished; one will waste time, unprofitably. Voluptuousness has no tasks and no objectives and leaves no heritage; after all the caresses and embraces, the carnal is left intact, virgin territory. ...It is not the locus from which would emerge the meaning of one's history (Lingis 1985: 67).

Additionally, Nietzsche's rejection of "unities" ruptures their corresponding systemic order and stimulates the possibility for ekphrasis. *L'informe* of the somatic is transfigured through a collaboration with the other within the self. Dialogic interactions as co-animation become a practice of vulnerability in which "[o]ne is opened up, in site of oneself, to the other" (*STP* 200). This libidinal plenum of corporeal cartographies invites the possibility of infinitely transforming contradictory exchanges—a transdisiplinarity of perpetual dynamism.

2010. Amsterdam. I participated in a visual art exhibition entitled *The Smooth and the Striated: Putting Philosophy into Practice.* The exhibit was held in the framework of the Third International Deleuze Conference, "connect, continue, create," hosted by the University of Amsterdam. *The Smooth and the Striated,* took place at two disparate and unfamiliar sites. Departing from Deleuze's philosophy of space and his particular way of connecting art, science and philosophy, we reflected on the ways in which spaces can be defined, quantified and measured, or alternatively, the way in

which they resist our tendency to make them comprehensible.

Deleuze characterizes our environment as a world in which two different kinds of spaces are present in continuous flux and mixture: a 'smooth space' and a 'striated space'. Striated space is a measurable space, a space that is quantifiable and understandable—a space of over-coding, centralization, hierarchization, binarization and segmentation. Smooth space,[390] on the other hand, is one of continuous development and variation, a space hardly measurable, difficult to grasp: "Smooth space is filled by events or haecceities, far more than by formed and perceived things. "The fullness of the subcutaneous" (Hubertus von Amelunxen) is a space of affects, more than one of properties. It is *haptic* rather than optical perception" (*TP* 479).[391] Viewing our surroundings as "smooth" and "striated", the other Deleuzian artists and I deployed Deleuze's philosophy to examine our simultaneous attraction to both organization and disorder. We played with the processes of (de-)quantifying, (de-)stabilizing and (de-)composing the world—*affect*ing the illusion of universal order which our culture of convenience consumption breeds. Affect is not an extensive sensory motor act, but an intensive vibration. Within this context, I realized one reason why my images have been censored in multiple cultural contexts is because striated space tends to dominate our cultural norms; people confuse optics with politics.

[390] Plateaus construct a smooth space of non-conceptual thought (music and mathematics); a "holding together of disparate elements". In contrast with homogenizing interpretations of the liminal, these interpenetrating multiplicities offer "a refrain throughout the plateaus that rise from the smooth space of its composition" (Brian Massumi's Translator's Forward to *TP* xiv).

[391] In contrast to Nietzsche and Freud's discourse of the haptic, Deleuze's anti-critique of the optical intersects with Foucault's *scientia sexualis.*



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I intend for my images to reorient the implications of "seeing the private" in relation to the viewer's (and the model's) viscous space. As a co-navigated poetics of relation, viscosity insists upon relational tension. In my images, both still analog and moving digital, viscous adherences hopefully can "demonstrate" themselves both as an uncomfortable reminder to the viewer of her/his own presence, and my presence as the photographer. The shifting absence-presence dichotomy defies expectation: the viewer anticipates a series of segments, so a non-cut actually implies its absence (Weber).[392] It is this co-implication that brings about an erotic encounter and engenders continual transmutations among mindful body expectations and sensations. By rendering self-conscious interpretations of officially designated private spaces, I expect my images to participate in the transformation of the ways in which power is exercised on and through human bodies.

> Viscosity repels in its own right, as a primary experience. An infant, plunging its hands into a jar of honey, is instantly involved in contemplating the formal properties of solids or liquids and the essential relation between the subjective experiencing self and the experienced world. The viscous is a state half-way between solid and liquid. It is like a cross-section in a process of change. It is unstable, but it does not flow. It is soft, yielding, and compressible. There is no gliding on its surface. Its stickiness is a trap, it clings like a leech; it attacks the boundary between myself and it. Long columns falling off my fingers suggest my own substance flowing into the pool of stickiness...to touch stickiness is to risk diluting myself into viscosity. Stickiness is clinging, like a too possessive dog or [master] (Douglas 38).

[392] Weber associates these visual non-cuts to the linguistic spatio-temporal localization of the simultaneity of present participle—a split presence departing from the present indicative: "a *participation* that never comes full circle, never forms a whole" (*LF* 7).



PLATE 57

Rhizomatic smooth space is the height of visceral empathy (which I distinguish from Ronell's theorization of empathy—see below) and collaborative trans-disciplinarity. This affective engagement offers us a model for co-mingling art with life, politics, and unapologetic complex thought.

> Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the body as a discontinuous, non-totalized series of processes, organs, flows, energies, corporeal substances and incorporeal events, intensifies, and durations may be of great relevance to those feminists attempting to reconceive bodies, especially women's bodies, outside of the binary polarizations imposed on the body by the mind/body, nature/culture, subject/object, and interior/exterior oppositions (Grosz 135 cited in Bristow).

Equilibrium and repetition negates binaries. Generating subjectivity through interpellation, my photographs play with non-teleological becomings. These erotic conjunctions move beyond culturally embedded habitual regimes of clean-cut (hygienic decision-making) opposition: "Things look like things, they are embodied in the transience of each other's meaning; a thing looks like a thing, which looks like another, or another" (Vik Muniz cited in Zummer 2001). My photographs are (de) constructs of hyperbolic hybridity that are intended to mine corporeal intensities. Speculation emerges into a fluid translatability of a potential soma-empathetic democracy.

> The body, then, is no longer a question of form. It is a question of velocities. Invoking Spinoza, Deleuze will not define a body 'by its form, nor by its organs and its functions, nor as a substance or subject...we will define it by its lon-

> gitude and latitude' (Deleuze 1988: 127). Deleuze advocates a corporeal cartography, a map of the body's inextricably *extensive* and *intensive* dimensions...bodies…enter into relations of velocity with one another, extending a corporeal surface, a territory or what Spinoza calls a composite body (Riordan 81).

My photographs trigger this surrealist practice in which corporeal cognition presents an opportunity for viewers to re-inhabit their bodies. Like Maurice Blanchot's scenes that provoke their own limitations, the *mise-en-scene* of my photographs hovers between the psyche and the soma. The nature of this collaborative emancipatory project transgresses invisible assumptions that we unwittingly internalize within capitalist Oedipal structures.[393]

For a differential social movement to take root (rhizomatically, that is!), it is crucial to recognize that the fluid relations between art, bodies, daily life, and politics are absolutely essential to participatory democracy at a time when reactionary, divisive hegemonies dominate our worlds.[394] Instilled within me as a Spanish, Turkish Jew (discussed below), my collaborations are generated from the liminal zone of the sub-altern—opening up the potential for rhizomatic engagements an expansion of consciously intuited entanglements. They explore the precarious balance between appearance and reality: how we choose to interpret and viscerally translate what we see. This visceral empathy transforms sight from seeking truth within reductive

[393] See Kafka's *The Trial.* trans, George Steiner, Willa Muir, Edwin Muir, New York: Random House, 1995.

[394] In the 1930s, Bataille founded *Contre-Attaque,* a surrealist organization that debated the interrelationships among artists, intellectuals, and revolutionaries. Claude Cahun, the androgynous self-portrait photographer with whom my images are frequently compared, was a member of *Contre-Attaque.*



PLATE 58

dichotomous interpretations to expanding ambiguity and contradictions.

> In "The Critique of Violence," Walter Benjamin said something very curious: Only where lying and deception would be promoted as a sign of the flourishing of art and intersubjectivity, would there be a possibility for peace-this is very enigmatic. The minute lying became a problem of the law, and became affiliated with fraud, conflict was inevitable (Ronell 1991: 129).

Because the relationships among the "objects" within my photographs play out a process of continual de-centering and excess, I hope this language of critical imagination becomes an erogenous life-affirming power, breaking up predetermined taxonomies of knowledge, suspending what we think we know. This chiasmic language of the uncanny cannot be taxonomied, classified, binarized:

> [T]he uncanny is destined to elude mastery, it is what cannot be pinned down or controlled. The uncanny is never simply a question of a statement, description or definition, but always engages a performative dimension, a maddening supplement, something unpredictable and *additionally strange* happening in and to what is being stated, described or defined (Royle 16).

How can we challenge, personally and collectively, our socialized fear and distrust of our bodies and its biological functions that heighten self-doubt? For the past twenty years, this question has compelled me to collaborate with artists/scholars from other disciplines: architects, choreographers, sculptors, poets, composers, philosophers, anthropologists, and geographers. Collaboration interrupts self-

destructive dichotomous thinking because it demands that we both give up ownership and explore unfamiliar territory—expanding within[395] the space of the other. Within the social-political possibilities of coalition/collaboration, multiple ways of seeing and thinking differently emerge. Difference and ambiguity are inextricably linked. Freud's process involved:

> Working through digressions, fictional insertions, autobiothanatoheterographical supplements and the subterranean passageways of so-called footnotes, we must try to reckon with the ways in which *a text does not belong.* There are mixings, deformations and transformations of genre...the uncanny calls for a different thinking of genre and text, and of the distinctions between the literary and non-literary, academic and non-academic writing. ...It inhabits, haunts, parasites the allegedly non-literary. It makes genre blink (Royle 18, 19).[396]

Unfixed: Anomalies and Aporias

1980. Dripping Springs. "Does she dance like that because she's Jewish?" Growing up as an unequivocal monster, my classmates felt through my curly hair for horns. Jews as Jesus-killers were suspected of hiding horns in their thick hair—an indication of being of Satan. I encountered my Jewish otherness as a reflection of the abject. My impetus to focus on the criticality of transdisciplinarity was initiated as a Sephardic Jew growing up in rural communities in Colorado and Texas.[397] Seemingly grotesque in our hyperbole, we Sephardim reside within the interstices of being Jewish—simultaneously inside and outside what is considered acceptable, therefore normal—a familiar zone for Jews,

[395] This expansion is not a colonization of the other, but a de-colonization of the self—a mutual occupation.

[396] For Derrida's analysis of the blink, see Royle's *The Uncanny* 35 nt. 63.

[397] Ashkenazic Jews, particularly from New York, assume that their "white" privilege demonstrates/represents the unchallenged privilege of all Jews living in the US. What these Jews fail to grasp is that Jews who do not live in New York or other large cities are considered as marginalized as any sub-altern—and frequently even more so because of our spectacle of the invisible condition. Sarah Lawrence College, the politically correct hotbed left me constantly in a position where I felt cornered, desperate to defend my otherness, defend my experiential fact that I was an other—an enfoldment of simultaneously accessing and rejecting privilege. For example, my closest friend at SLC was Jewish from Great Neck, Long Island. She could not conceive of contemporary Jewishness in the context of oppression. She freely used the term Jewish American Princess to describe a privilege that not only did not resonate with my experiences, but an illusion of power that I found extraordinarily dangerous in our still fervently anti-Semitic world. My experience of *both-and* status became amplified as violently differently othered because of the universalizing nature of faith-based agendas and their concomitant pre-conceptions that are ingrained in our society's mechanics.

especially Spanish Jews living in the US. Here, the multiple folds of being Jewish are collapsed into the homogenized stereotype of the Ashkenazic/Eastern European and then distilled into the category of "white". To many Ashkenazi Jews here in the US, we Sephardim are often labeled as "exotic", and sometimes not seen as really being Jewish,[398] given that our physical characteristics, our language, and even our Hebrew, as well as our customs and foods are a hybrid of Spanish, Arabic, Greek, Italian, and Turkish. The assumption that all Jews are and can pass as white (and therefore have privilege) denies the complexities of whiteness, anti-Semitism, and the multiplicity of Jewish identities from India to Iran to China to Ghana. I have seen myself as a kind of hidden or invisible Jew in Christian North America. Appearing Spanish or Italian or Arabic, Sephardic Jews are often mistaken as Moslem or Catholic and "pass" into situations where anti-Semitism would have stopped a Yiddish speaking person. For example, when I was living in Tunisia, for reasons of daily survival, I had to conceal that I am a Jew.[399] In spite of the guilt I felt, I was grateful to be able to pass, mistaken as an Arab from the city. As a Jew, I unequivocally traverse the topography of the uncanny: The uncanny is "the boundary of what is assimilable, thinkable..." (Kristeva 1982: 18). Because monolithic definitions of all peoples perpetuate racism and divisiveness, it is essential for me as an activist, artist, scholar to recognize the vast cultural differences among Jews living in the United States.

[398] As I discussed in Chapter One in the context of self-censorship and toxic mimicry, several years ago I was a gallery docent at the Jewish Museum in San Francisco. During a panel discussion with the curators of he museum (including the curator from The Jewish Museum in NYC and several outspoken Jewish public figures, such as Michael Krasny, who referred to Yiddish as Jews' "mother tongue") I called attention to the fact that the current exhibition entitled "Too Jewish?" did not include a single Jewish artist of non-Eastern European descent. Although, I had pointed this omission out several times during the course of the exhibition, few of the organizers or even viewers chose to address the ethnocentric omission. Finally during the panel, in response to my comment, an angry woman stood up in tears and explained how as an Italian she never was truly identified as a citizen of that country—always seen as a Jew, not an Italian; and, by Jews in the states, she was seen as an Italian, not a Jew.

[399] See my discussion on Ronell's distinction between understanding and empathy in **"**The Scandal of Ekphrasis: Transfiguration, Collaboration, and Transdisciplinarity**"**.

> Various terror alerts that go out over the media authorize and heighten racial hysteria in which fear is directed anywhere and nowhere, in which individuals are asked to be on guard but not told what to be on guard against; so everyone is free to imagine and identify the source of terror… The result is that an amorphous racism abounds, rationalized by the claim of 'self-defense' *(PL* 39).

One could easily replace the word racism with bodyphobia. The fact that Sephardim, like some Israelis and other "Arab-looking" people, are continually racially profiled reflects my understanding of how and why my photographs have been continually censored—people are more afraid of their own imaginations than of "reality". The sanctity of normalcy sustains the insidious, indeterminate power of projecting dominant imagery. As I stated above, concomitant to any discussion of collaborative, political action is my acute awareness of my own Turkish, Hispanic identity. The inclusion of this discussion is a vital element in my understanding how and why I am absolutely compelled to collaborate, to continually participate in unfamiliar and/or liminal zones. Sandoval identifies as "a cruising, migrant, improvisational mode of subjectivity" (179) in the context of transdisciplinarity. This inhabiting *and sharing witness* of a liminal zone becomes an essential impetus as a "citizen-warrior".

I define and express my Jewishness through the "interfacing" of the methodology of the oppressed. According to Rushkoff, "The Jewish tradition stresses transparency, open-ended inquiry, assimilation of the foreign,

and commitment to conscious living" (2). Readings of the unfamiliar and unspeakable have always been central to my critical and creative work as a visual artist, political sex activist,[400] and Iyengar yoga teacher. My body is marked as the other within.[401] I comprehend the cultural complexities of racism and ethnocentrism as they emerge from my experiences of the dangers of Jews being seen as a monolithic category, in particular, by "normative" Jews, i.e. white, (discussed in detail in Chapter Five)—becoming an "artificial life". Schirmacher tells us that artificial life offers a playful embodiment of "how we should act, what we hope for, and, finally, what it means to be a human being" (Schirmacher, *Advanced Media Philosophy* seminar, EGS 2009). My prosthetics of reappropriation, as a specifically Jewish experience, invites a collaborative emancipatory project which incubates creativity as an exploration of self in the context of multiple communities; creativity as a political imperative in which taking intellectual and aesthetic risks give voice to social justice. I unfold the experiential definition of living as a minority within a minority (a Sephardic among Ashkenazim) as inherently interdisciplinary and explore how this hybridity can lead to a more humane and just society. These theoretical investigations converge in an embodied practice while thriving on diverse perspectives and experiences.

[400] I am defining my sex radical activism through a sex-positive lens that disrupts unchallenged assumptions of stratified, medicalized, and demonized sexual practices and expressions.

[401] See Sander Gilman's *The Jew's Body*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Spinoza's "ecstatic consciousness", what he identified as "fluctuations of the mind", catches us in states of suspense and anxiety. In his *Chief Works,* Spinoza tells us *both* of the magnetic tendencies of sameness and intrasubjective specificities:

> If a triangle could speak, it would say, in like manner, that God is eminently triangular, while a circle would say that the divine nature is eminently circular. Thus each would ascribe to God its own attributes, would assume itself to be like God, and look on everything else as ill-shaped" (386).

Spinoza was considered a heretic because he believed each religion experiences God/g-d from its own perspective. Schirmacher declares: "Everyone of us is the cosmos!" (EGS 2009). Like Spinoza and Galileo (referred to below), Nietzsche rebelled against Christianity's tyranny of the individuated self:

For Nietzsche, after 2,000 years of Christianity and its moral interpretation of the world, its belief that the world is organized by principles of good and evil, that principles of good and evil are *true*—a self-aggrandizing faith that envisions the world on the model of ourselves, that sees the world as centered on us and our fate, "the hyperbolic naiveté of man: positing himself as the meaning and the measure of the value of all things (NAF 18).

In contrast to the conversion-compulsion of Christians, a main Jewish tenet is that "our lives are profoundly implicated in the lives of others" (*PL* 7). Through *tikkun olam*, repair of



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the world, this sense of mutual responsibility can potentially evolve into a true democracy. Environmental stewardship is also embodied in the Jewish tenet of *bal tasch chit:* do not destroy or waste. Nietzsche, like Galileo, the Jews, the Buddhists, and contemporary physicists saw "[t]hat the center [which] may be "everywhere" renders all centers the same center" (ZMERS 25). We revisit quantum physics.

This eroticized social ecology[402] recalls Rancière's *being together apart*. Rancière's definition of an "aesthetic community" is not a community of aesthetics, but a community of sense—a sensorium, a combination of sense data (including power, sound, and absence): "human beings are tied together by a certain sensory fabric... a certain distribution of the sensible" (Rancière 2006: 4). Rancière states that aesthetic experience has a political effect to the extent that the loss of destination that it presupposes disturbs the way in which bodies fit their functions and destinations. Rather than framing a collective body or producing a rhetoric of persuasion about what has to be done, an aesthetic experience affects a community by de-solving morality as obedience. Rancière's *being together apart* coextends Butler's mode of being dispossessed. Whether we are in our desiring body or our grieving body, we cannot stay intact as the "I" separate from the Other:

> One may want, or manage to for a while, but despite one's best efforts, one is undone, in the face of the other, by the touch, by the scent, by the feel, by the prospect of the touch, by the memory

[402] In 1991, I attended Murray Bookchin's Institute for Social Ecology sponsored by Goddard College. In the context of this dissertation, I am exploring the connective tissue among embedded and embodied affect and practices. See my Table of Contents: Philosophical Congruencies.

> of the feel. …As a mode of relation, neither gender nor sexuality is precisely a possession, but, rather, is a mode of being dispossessed, a way of being for another or by virtue of another (*PL* 24).

Community-building is not about imposing the fiction of utopic unities,[403] but about actively seeking connections which may be riddled with irreducible differences. For example, in 1992 at Sarah Lawrence College, I attempted to build a coalition with the Native American and Latino/a student activists around the politics of the quincentenary. I wanted to highlight the historical realities that bound our common histories in 1492—the Spanish Inquisition[404] paralleling the early genocidal colonization of the Americas. My coalition efforts were not welcome. To the other students, my Jewish identity signified my attempt to co-opt their struggles for recognition. Oppression-competition ran rampant. The uncanny disjunction in which Jews are suspended—their simultaneous ability and inability to pass becomes tangled within distrust and paranoia. Translated as an attempt to usurp the other, passing leaves a trace of empathy. Jews historically and cross-culturally have been marked as the privileged interloper—insinuating ourselves into positions of power. The infiltrating Jewish body marks the scandal of ekphrasis:

> …distance and difference are at the heart of Merleau-Ponty's theorization of flesh as nonco-incidence. The subject and object of touch here never completely coincide or merge, and their ontological affective difference is preserved in tactile encounters. Such alterity is necessary for

[403] "'Man' and 'woman' together do not form a whole, since each of them is already itself a failed whole" (Žižek 1994: 159-160).

[404] I discuss the Left's tendency towards internalized anti-Semitism in my unpublished article, "Crypto-Jews in the New World: The Dog Returns to Its Vomit".

> an ethical encounter, for the reduction of alterity into the selfsame forecloses any possibility of transformation in favor of explaining the other in terms of oneself (Ahmed 9).

In *Lust for Life,* the anthology written for Kathy Acker after her death, Ronell draws a critical distinction between the concepts of understanding and empathy—she writes,

> When you identify with your friend, you don't see her, you are blinded by him; empathy has replaced understanding. Understanding, on the other hand, presupposes differences and distance, pivoting on the Nietzschean tact of *Distanz.* When distance is bridged you cannot see each other; instead, you are thrown off by this narcissistic extension that the other, as appropriated by your identification, has become (*LL* 28).

In contrast with Grosz's warning against the homogenizing forces of complementarity, Ronell's empathy, and Nietzsche's identification, Merleau-Ponty states: "my body and other person's are one whole, two sides of one and the same phenomenon, and the anonymous existence of which my body is the ever-renewed trace henceforth inhabit both bodies simultaneously" (Baldwin ed.152). Congruently, Weber observes,

> The structure of the psyche is thus irrecoverably *dispersed* among a multiplicity of instances that are both interdependent and irreducibly discrete. ...The site of the subject is no longer unified and self-contained; it is a scene from with 'other' can never be fully excluded (*LF* 6).

Although Merleau-Ponty and Weber's positions differ from Grosz and Ronell, the combination

of their three perspectives invites an enfolded orientation towards the potential of community. Collaboration and colonization may inflict one another at their disarticulated boundaries.

2009. Berlin. I had the opportunity to engage with Julia Kristeva at the Kristeva conference titled, "*La Pensée Féconde*," "Fertile Thinking". My photographs were projected behind Kristeva as she responded to participating panelists who lectured on a particular aspect of her work. I was gratified to witness my photographs and her words envelop one another: choice and chance co-existing in an elliptical continuum, voice and image animating and digesting one another. Through "promiscuous crossings"[405] Kristeva as the speaker, myself as the image-maker, and the audience, filling in the in-between spaces, formed the quintessential dialectic. This visual improvisation required that each of us give up ownership and entitlement and enter a rhizomatic field of vulnerability, a surrender to dialogic self-sacrifice.[406] This surrender becomes a dialogic relationship in which collaboration thwarts binary, reductive thinking. Congruently, Spinoza's "feeling" of surrender occupies the real. This self-sacrifice, inherent in uncanny rhizomatic vulnerabilities, becomes a *practice* of the real,[407] of being open to the raw exposure of participating in unknown territory.

Earlier that week, at a conference on the "Ir-rational" for which Michael Taussig was the keynote speaker, I also exhibited my

[405] From the College Art Association conference, 2011, Jenn Joy's provocative phrase "promiscuous crossings" demonstrates the dynamic play of collaborative commitments.

[406] "Sex is forgetting itself. It is a magnificent, essential power to forget" (*BD* 99).

[407] In the section on "The Spectacle of the Invisible", I explore the concept of the Real in relation to obscenity and translatability.



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photographs. As with Kristeva, multiple voices and haptic visions contradicted themselves while maintaining their integrity as autonomous objects of speculation. Speculation emerges from specularity, our double shadow side, the unknown, the stranger within. Both the content and the structure of my project are intricately rooted in the potential of the uncanny—the simultaneous exchange of the familiar within and throughout the unfamiliar. Thus, the nature of interpretation itself becomes an uncanny act. Interpretation manifests as reading and communication—multiple and relational—demanding from us an acute awareness of Foucault's insistence to free oneself from oneself through conscious curiosity:

> There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all...But then, what is philosophy today—philosophical activity...if not [the] endeavor to know how and to what extent it might be possible to think differently? (Foucault 1985: 8-9).

Although I shoot my still images with an analog medium-format SLR Hasselblad camera, I don't experience my photographic work as strictly "photography"—but rather, as a two-dimensional manifestation of dance, sculpture, poetry, sociological investigation, and philosophical engagement.[408] During each of my collaborations, my intention is to employ multiple variations of a post-humanist perspective as a *felt*ed bridge, an

[408] My video collaborator, Rich Heeman, identifies his digitally constructed videos not as New or Digital Media, but as painting. "Painting" is his process, not a predetermined category of production.

active "connective tissue," binding viewers' interpretations of my images to an unexpected language of imaginative archeologies—depending on my collaborator's medium. This process of playing with connections among the intermedial is critical in order to amplify the uncanny "otherness within" quality inherent in my visual and theoretical work. When I am collaborating with a choreographer, we are magnifying the movement tendency of my work, with an architect, the structural potential, with a composer, the musical tendency, with a philosopher, the life-examination quality. In each case, I am driven to emphasize the haptic, the visceral in contrast to the dominating faculty of sight which photography privileges. I insist on deploying a medium that I must simultaneously resist—becoming beyond its boundaries. Heidegger tells us: "Technology is therefore no mere means. Technology is a way of revealing" (1954: 318).

Schirmacher warns us against the concept of "tools", which, he states, imply lack of respect and taking for granted oneself as the master (all authority is within ourselves), while he encourages us to *be* our own technologies—to *collaboratively* live life as a work of art. I read Schirmacher's call-to-arms as a Bataillean play towards *jouissance* through becoming-vulnerable. Intuitively, by trusting my vulnerability as a technology of living, I have landed (although not arrived) at home—home in the ineffable, the elsewhere, the beyond. The ob-scene becomes the spectacle. In the homelessness of the beyond,[409] the

[409] It is the trope of our time to locate the question of culture in the realm of the *beyond*...in the *fin de siecle*, we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion. For, above all else, there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement caught so well in the French rendition of the word au déla, here and there, on all sides, fort/da, hither and thither, and back and forth (15). Being in the 'beyond', then is to inhabit an intervening space, as any dictionary will tell you. But to dwell 'in the beyond' is also...to be part of revisionary time, a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity; to reinscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side. In that sense, then the intervening space 'beyond', becomes a space of intervention in the here and now (Homi K. Bhabha, "Beyond the Pale: Art in the Age of Multicultural Translation", *Kunst and Museum Journal* 5:4, 1994: 15-23).

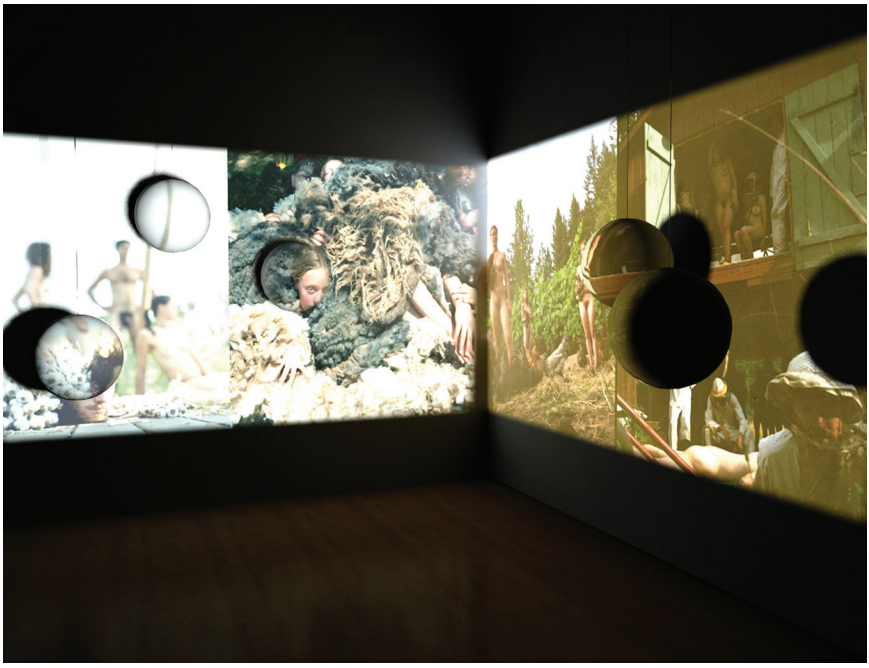


PLATE 60, VIDEO INSTALLATION, *LOST VALLEY*

photograph is not confined to being a photograph—its making and its viewing must be interchangeably experiential, otherwise the photograph's ocular hierarchy subsumes the viewer and myself as the image-maker.

2010. Chicago. Kenneth Saltman, Educational Theory and Policy Development professor at DePaul in Chicago, invited me to speak on critical pedagogy, vulnerability, and body awareness in a lecture/workshop I titled *Embodied Theory: Body Consciousness for Social Change - Proposal and Curriculum.* Prior to my workshop, during my lecture, I showed Saltman's students videos of my photography sessions in process and the resulting images. During the workshop, I asked them to consider several questions including: "What is learning? How can vulnerability become an explicit educational device for social change? How can educators incorporate difference and the unknown/unfamiliar into a coherent pedagogical framework?" During our discussion, the majority of students made it clear that my photographs and photo-session-videos helped them grasp the theoretical underpinnings of critical pedagogical strategies in a participatory democracy. By being exposed to complex imagery that, on the surface, had nothing to do with pedagogical inquiry and/or its institutional implementation, they were able to draw unexpected connections and expand their personal/political perspectives. My visual and theoretical collaborations, like Grosz and Lingis' concepts of the orgasmic body's intensifications "cannot be understood in terms

of complementarity, the one completing the other (a pervasive model of the heterosexual relation since Aristophanes), for there can be no constitution of a totality, union, or merger of the two. Each remains in its site, functioning in its own ways" (*STP* 197).[410] These relations mirror the fertility of auto-contaminating erotogenic zones—a collaboration with the multiplicities of the self.

[410] Another *détournement* surfaces as we consider Grosz's citation in relation to Merleau-Ponty's previous comment.

2004. San Francisco. To illustrate how "promiscuous crossings" penetrate my working process, I describe below, *In-sight,* my two-year collaboration with San Francisco-based, Kunst-stoff Dance Company. I co-directed *In-sight* from its inception to our final performance at Yerba Buena Center for the Performing Arts in San Francisco. After each performance, the choreographer and I watched that night's documentation and re-worked the relationships between the dancers' bodies and my projected images. We were engaged in a continual conversation about how to establish a call and response between the two-dimensional characters in my photographs and the three-dimensional characters on stage—how the images could transform the physiology of the dancers and how the dancers could arouse *l'informe* of my visual narratives, amplifying revelatory readings of my images. We investigated the ways in which the images could attack the dancers or emerge from their movements in co-implicated unfoldings.

The production of *In-sight* was rooted in a co-implication between the choreographer and

[411] See Benedict Anderson's *Imaginary Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso: London and New York, 1983.





PLATE 61, *IN-SIGHT* VIDEO STILLS, COLLABORATION WITH KUNST-STOFF DANCE COMPANY

myself: "There must be a coming together of disparate surfaces; the point of conjunction of two or more surfaces produces an intensification of both" (Grosz on the orgasmic body *STP* 198). We intended this dialogue, this performative ekphrasis to influence how the audience perceives self-other relationships and the very basis of how reality is societally defined: How does the real intersect/interact with the imagined? How do we metabolize the story we are told? In what ways do imaginary communities[411] influence our consciousness? The content of our work and the process in



PLATE 62

which we produced it illustrated Sandoval's meta-ideologizing which

> provides a social, cultural, political, and psychic means for engaging with reality...differential oppositional consciousness is contingent upon the ways in which reality—as constructed through historical agencies—presents itself as 'natural' while being laden with the values, hopes and desires of the dominant social order (179).

We sought to shake loose and shed the sanctity of normalcy that neutralizes differences.

During this project, I also collaborated with a digital animator to make chosen sections of my still photographs move across the stage and interact with dancers' bodies. What I realized during this super-imposed animation process was that there was greater implied dynamic energy in my still images than when they were digitally animated post-production. For example, in plate 62, the animator created the illusion of river water flowing; however, in my original still photograph, there was ironically an even greater sense of moving water. This realization confirmed the uncanny process that evolves within my images—amplifying the cross-disciplinary nature within each individual visual moment of my photographic content. The rhizome embodies the ideal representation/artificial life of the contradictory potential of digital media in which "any meaning is to some extent an illusion" (Barthes 1979: 4). "Meanings" co-exist (mutually vivify) through multiple locations at once—the height of engaging simultaneity and transdisciplinarity.

Ulfers examines Nietzsche's eternal process of living the primal unity of the chiasma as one of eternal offering, a coupling that remains separate, contradictory yet unified.[412] This *l'informe*, in which "meaning escapes any final anchor point...the undefinable meaning that constantly escapes every analysis" (*MO* 179), sets the groundwork for an erotic politic rooted in the vitality of the private. A dialogic self-sacrifice, inherent in uncanny rhizomatic vulnerabilities, becomes a *practice* of being open to vulnerability—the raw exposure of participating in unknown territory—a vividly post-human characteristic.

[412] This concept of contradictory unity can be derived from Bateson's investigation of Balinese culture in which the gamelan orchestra is made of young men whose erections spawned their mother's laughter as they encourage their sons to approach, but not achieve orgasm—both mothers and sons are engaged in "a libidinal economy quite different from the West's orgasmic orientation" (*TP* xiv) as a grand finale.

Pedagogical Promiscuities

How we perceive and encounter sex in self and other underlies one of the most virulent dysfunctions of US culture. By operating strictly through the fantasy of the knowable, contemporary Western sexuality inhabits Kafkaesque *nicht zu beurteilen verstand* (*did not understand to judge*). This phrase combines "the function of comprehension with that of judging or 'making decidable', thus alluding to the metamorphosing... inability to judge, to render judgment, which is at the very heart of binary opposition (logical) thinking" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). The visible evidence of male orgasm translates as mainstream media's investment in the female orgasm as invisible (maintaining its superimposed ob-scenity): "Censoring the images of female ejaculation, one might argue, maintains a male standard

by a deliberate unknowing that consciously re-produces female 'lack'" (*DE, DB* 244). This absence of the other rendering the presence of the unquestioned dominant being recalls Butler's analysis of censorship producing speech (which I revisit throughout this text): "I propose that censorship seeks to produce subjects according to explicit and implicit norms, and that the production of the subject has everything to do with the regulation of speech...and through the regulation of the social domain of speakable discourse" (*ES* 132). As a third interval of public sex orientation—neither absence as invisibility, nor absence as an unanticipated manifestation of visibility, Christopher Straayer argues that Annie Sprinkle "demystifies sexiness, affirms fluid identity, and makes visible the female orgasm. … Ultimately, Annie Sprinkle's sex/life/art challenges the hegemonic categories of 'heterosexual' and 'male' " (*DE, DB* 233).

2009. Salzburg. I arrived from exhibiting my photographic work in Berlin during a conference with Kristeva, followed by a symposium with Taussig (see "The Scandal of Ekphrasis" section). My preparation for the *5th Annual Conference of the Erotic* felt particularly personal. I felt ripe. When we were asked to introduce ourselves to our community of "erotic scholars", I beseeched my fellow lecturers to commit to sharing vulnerable, conscious intimacy for the weekend duration of the conference. Since "[s]exuality is said to be (perhaps?) the most precise indicator of our

internal makeup, quite simply of our being" (*BD* 44), then I would hope a conference specifically focused on the erotic would engender deeply personal discussions, explorations, revelations. Although this was an international group of scholars, ranging from Israel to Australia to Mexico to Saudi Arabi, inhibition—a habitual attachment to a privatized psyche-soma—directed the course of the conference: theories/conceptual systems remained divorced from corporeal lived realities.

We are living in a phobic global culture of collusion rooted in an opaque authoritarianism in which anxiety morphs into fear (Weber). Internalized norms (ranging from fear of germs, our own bodies, nature, "terrorists", or anyone/anything outside of our zone of familiarity and habit) operate as the scaffolding of an ironically open-ended and violently repressive period in contemporary history. Foucault declared that simultaneously, we are living in the most sex-saturated and body-phobic period in history (1994: 78). For example, in 1994 at the United Nations on World AIDS Day, Surgeon General Jocelyn Elders addressed the fact that at that time, half of all HIV infections occurred in people under the age of 25. One response she offered was to encourage masturbation[413] as part of a safe-sex curriculum.[414] One week later, President Clinton fired Elders for promoting "values contrary to the administration". The "sex-drenched, sex-obsessed West" (Tisdale cited in Hall 11) proliferates both the ob-scene and the confession: "Today, sex is avoided as it has

[413] Although Elders did not explicitly say so, autoeroticism is a productive sexual agency that resists medical (STDs) and social diseases (body-phobia).

[414] Pornography videos became a substitute for public sex to avoid AIDS. Of course, conservatives and liberals were not pleased with this tactic. Equally, they could not rely on the myth of scarcity—the myth that porn undermines relationships (like sex toys detracting from masculinity in a heterosexual relationship).

probably never been avoided before, in any culture. Why? Because this avoidance occurs under the cover of a diffuse sexualization of all the consumer objects (human beings included) of our society" (*BD* 82).

We are inundated with a post-humanist *both/and* ensnarement. The history of Times Square illustrates this contradiction. Its storefronts which literally oozed with sexual excess have now descended into Disneytopia—commercial excess: from "You drop it, we mop it" (jism cleaners) to "Corporations…were dead-set on annihilating the blue flame of promiscuity. It was a conservative conspiracy—making Times Square wholesome" (Gonzales 2008). Through the rhizomatic reaches of consumerism, public space is rendered anti-septic—simultaneously stripped of the visceral while being hyper-sexualized. The sex industry, like mainstream media, has explicitly and implicitly made its way onto the public stage of consumer desire.

Kenneth Starr's $50 million report[415] indicting Clinton is a demonstration of the raving absurdity of the obscenity rubric: the "modern compulsion to speak obsessively about sex" (Williams 2). We are driven by media frenzy to speak the "truth" about sexual indiscretions: "under the spell of an immense curiosity about sex, bent on questioning it, with an insatiable desire to hear it speak and be spoken about, quick to invent all sorts of magical rings [in reference to Diderot's fable, *Les bijoux indiscrets*] that might force it to abandon its discretion" (Foucault 1978: 77).[416]

[415] For Michael Moore's "The Awful Truth", Moore hired actors to perform in congress during the Starr Report hearings. Dressed as pilgrims, they violently writhed, calling out "Sinner, sinner!" to targeted congressmen. The list of media-hyped salacious witch-hunts is long, ranging from Tiger Woods to former governor of New York State, Elliot Spitzer.

[416] See congressional transcripts of Meese commission hearings on censorship from the 1980s. Also, see Pat Califia's investigation of these hearings in *Public Sex: The Culture of Radical Sex*. San Francisco: Cleis Press, 1994.

ABC's prime-time reality television. dating-for-marriage, "The Bachelorette", annually sustains eight million viewers. It demonstrates the apotheosis of US double-standards about sex, pornography, prostitution, and the body. In her *Hard Core: The Frenzy of the Visible,* Linda Williams defines pornography through its etymology: *graphos* (Gr.) translates as writing or description, *pornei* (Gr.) translates as a "description of the life, manners, etc. of prostitutes or their patrons" (Williams 9). The "elusive genre of pornography" (ibid.) is exactly the device within which "The Bachelorette"/ "The Bachelor" operates. Courtship and seduction have transgressed the bounds of "Christian decency" into the field of *au déla,* the beyond. The bachelorette shares the fantasy suite with the top three bachelors, or vice versa, off camera. Recently, I was a guest in the home of an avid viewer of "The Bachelorette". When the offending couple had to make a choice about whether or not to share the "fantasy suite", the bachelorette declined each of her three bachelors. The avid viewer gasped in disbelief, exclaiming "that has never happened before"—the bachelorette always accepts the "fantasy suite" offer and presumably has sexual intercourse with each of the bachelors on consecutive evenings; thereby screwing the audience's habitual expectations and their insatiable need[417] to wrench the private into the public. Such officially sanctioned prostitution and pornography is not only publicly palatable, but rendered addictive through the construction of desire. The very same reactionary moralists who would

[417] Throughout this essay, I define social "needs" as constructed desires.

condemn and censor a consenting sex worker would also likely be enthusiastic *Bachelorette* consumers.[418] Radical sex workers[419] evert the social construction of woman as ob-scene.

> Freeing oneself, doing what isn't done, delivering up one's intimacy, exposing oneself to widespread judgment, accepting one's exclusion from the group. And, more particularly as a woman, becoming public. Being read by anyone, discussing what is supposed to remain secret, being exposed in the newspapers. ...All obviously in contrast to the roles we are conventionally assigned: woman is private, property, half, shadow of man (*KKT* 78-79).

Contra, specifically in the context of women as property, I identify the whore as nomadic: "marginalized and free to move around" (ibid.). She, the trans-gender, or he are each loyal to no land, as no land is loyal to them; they are stateless, and like the Jew, the whore must be adaptable, non-judgmental, accepting and willing to absorb the conditions of her environment. Whoring becomes an affective, creative act of vulnerability—will to power made public.[420] Will to power, pornography and sex-work, art and birth all potentially function as artificial life—a collision implied in the *extimate*. What they have in common is not only their potential political potency of vulnerability, but their tendency towards censorship as a formative social construct:

> The question is not what it is I will be able to say, but what will constitute the domain of the sayable within which I begin to speak at all. To become a subject means to be subjected to a set of implicit and explicit norms that govern the kind of speech that will be legible as the speech

[418] I see that this officially sanctioned hypocrisy is consistent with variations of institutionalized anti-Semitism—for example, when prayers to "Our Lord, Jesus Christ" are delivered before a televised athletic event.

[419] I am making the clear distinction between sex workers who consciously choose to make money deploying their bodies in sexual contexts and those men and women who are coerced into prostitution due to social or personal circumstances. I discuss this distinction in detail below.

[420] Marcel Duchamps' *Large Glass-Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors, Even* situates the Bride and her seven Bachelors in a conundrum of never consummating their sexual intercourses. They are literally (images on glass) and metaphorically suspended in a state of continual non-arrival. The Sysiphisian futility of their repetitive attempts heightens the inevitability of their collective failure.

> of a subject. ...*To move outside of the domain of speakability is to risk one's status as a subject. To embody the norms that govern speakability in one's speech is to consummate one's status as a subject of speech.* 'Impossible speech' would be precisely the ramblings of the asocial, the ranting of the 'psychotic' that the rules that govern the domain of speakability produce, and by which they are continually haunted (*ES* 133).

'Impossible speech' is the very motivation for pedagogical promiscuities—the fertile *détournement* of inhabiting the unknown as we thrive on contradictions. The interlocutions, interruptions, pauses, spaces in-between provide a scaffolding in which we the unrepresentable, Kristeva's *écriture,* the intermedial, Bataille's part clown, the sex radical worker, the analog artist, the mother, the Jew[421] become unified under the rubric of obscenity and its corresponding censorship. Censorship, like the vulnerability it both produces and fears, sustains and obliterates, becomes a Moebius-strip of dialectical intensities. "Leibniz's continuous labyrinth of readings, a fold [that] is always folded within a fold" (Deleuze and Conley 6), reflects the intra-subjectivity of contradictory mechanisms of power—producing multiple forms of social becomings—a citizenship of *l'informe*.

> Never fully separable from that which it seeks to censor, censorship is implicated in its own repudiated material in ways that produce paradoxical consequences. If censoring a text is always in some sense incomplete, that may be partly because the text in question takes on new life as part of the very discourse produced by the mechanism of censorship (*ES* 130).

As I described earlier, my photographs

[421] This theorization of censorship as "a productive form of power" (*ES* 133) parallels what defines me as Jewish. Although I am not religious, one significant reason why I *feel* Jewish (as in Spinoza's affect) is because of the oppression that has distinguished me/my people as other. I feel a sense of *conatus* and a community with other Jews because of the knowledge that if/when right wing supremacists *take over*, as has occurred many times throughout history, they will come for us. As additionally stated in the context of Virilio's sanitary ideology and also of the Occupy Movement, we are a "dissensual community" (Rancière on Deleuze and Guattari) defined by inevitably encroaching oppressors.

have frequently been censored because of their ambiguous nature and characterized as pornographic in some contexts, and abstract in others. A surrealist doubling—the erotic play of the uncanny illuminates censorship's redoubling. I propose that mainstream and sub-altern pornographies (and fertile pornographies in-between)[422] not be deciphered, de-cided, or analyzed through the lens of sex as "sex is supposed to be"[423] (discussed below in the context of prostitution). Counter to the sex-positive practices of Deleuze and Reich, our scopic-obsessed society's overdetermined and legislated sexuality reifies the debilitating schism between sex and politics. Instead, it behooves public intellectuals to probe Butler's query: "If pornography performs a deformation of speech, what is presumed to be the proper form of speech?" (*ES* 86).[424] In the US, pornography has always been demonized—positioned in opposition to puritanical, "decent citizens" by both puritanical, "decent citizens" and mainstream everyday folk. Congruently,

> prostitution must be kept in shame and darkness in an effort to protect the traditional family unit...Family, warlike virility, modesty—all traditional moral values are intended to keep the genders in their assigned role...In the end, we are all enslaved, our sexualities confiscated, policed, and normalized (*KKT* 78, 101).

Oedipal phallocentric values are wedged between who we are supposed to be and the radical potentiality of our vulnerability.

[422] Below, I discuss in detail pornographies' productive multiplicities.

[423] The pathologization of sex surfaces through manifold manifestations. For example, the same year Dr. Elders was fired for publicly supporting masturbation as an alternative to having multiple sex partners, a high school student in Ohio had not been allowed to graduate because he passed condoms out at a high school prom.

[424] J. Krishnamurti's warning: "It is no measure of health to be well adjusted to a profoundly sick society" reflects Butler's interrogation of the invisible norm.

Commercial and economic aspects of public sex complicate our political relationships (Dagmar Herzog). We do not question the slippage between porn and public sex in our academic and mainstream discourse.[425] How we interact with public sexual material determines the status of pornography. Jeff Escoffier claims that pornography is the most important discourse on sexuality. He sees pornography as a document of the history of sex and of civil rights. Its value as a historical document and its recto-verso reality-effect (real erection, real sex) is critical to how we understand contemporary civil rights' challenges (CUNY Symposium 2009). Like Slater's *Toilet Assumption* (discussed in "Prostheses and Parasites"), the institutional pathologizing of the body in public is manifested through the tragedy of the commons. For example, NYC's "Disappearance Ordinance" prohibits porn shops to be built or opened near churches and schools. In contrast, throughout European cities, (public) sex is shared as a form of social therapy; it is unapologetically advertised and enacted.

"Pornography almost always works through inversions of various sorts" *(ES* 83). Pornography operates as an ellipsis[426] to be absorbed—consumed through the body, not through the analytical part of our brain, the neo-cortex—consumed Bataille-style that is wholly different from capital-induced consumption.[427] It inhabits a liminal zone. The paradox of incredible popularity of pornography and simultaneous repression is

[425] Obscenity laws frame public sex as an epidemic that must be curtailed (generally by the Christian right). A Christian counseling agency drives the largest porn addiction rehabilitation center: "Pornography is performed sexuality, sex made ceremonial...a grave danger for the masses, from which they must be protected" (*KKT* 93).

[426] "[Henry] Miller, asked to distinguish between pornography and obscenity, aligns his own work with the latter, elaborating that 'the obscene would be the forthright, and pornography would be the roundabout. I believe in saying the truth, coming out with it cold, shocking if necessary, not disguising it. In other words, obscenity is a cleansing process, whereas pornography only adds to the murk' (Miller 1962: 49)" (cited in Powell 2011: 63).

[427] Although of course, prior to amateur production (digital), distribution, and consumption (internet), the porn industry was worth millions of dollars.

sustained because the world of porn is so far outside the world of normative behavior. In her lecture, "Towards a Topology of Pornography and the Moving Image", Melissa Ragona argues how porn merges into abstraction—mapping inversion and compression—tensions of accretions and deletions, a performativity of polyvalent languages.

I do not identify porn as a failed attempt to represent the real—there is no attempted mimesis. Rather mimesis and poiesis unite into a Moebian band[428] *aisthesis*: "The stage, the audience and the world are taken in one and the same continuum" (Rancière 6). The active affect of this dialectic can actually offer space in which we can occupy pornographies' allegorical potential. Rancière's call to eliminate the theater and the active-passive binary it establishes with the spectator[429] mirrors pornography's disarticulated membranes—a fluidity of the real, a shattering of the Euclidean geometric addictions. Pornography,[430] like whiteness,[431] or masculinity[432] is not monolithic, not univocal. Congruently, when we speak of "the military" or "the state", we loose sight when we give "them" too much power. For example, the state is not a neutral machine, it, too is a lived relation encountering dissent, fracturing, negotiation, corruption, and variation (Delanda, *Gilles Deleuze and Science* seminar, EGS 2008). While legal moralism is incapable of addressing the vitality of becoming-animal, pornography, as a rhizomatic manifestation of co-existing complementary contradictions

[428] Lyotard's "theatricalization" decelerates the intensity of the libido in order to witness the simultaneous exchange of *this and not this* (Lyotard 1993: 15).

[429] Jacques Rancière's discussion of Brecht's alienation effect illustrates this disintegration of Euclidean hegemonies (EGS 2009).

[430] "…the numerous heterosexually married men who actually patronize male whores; but again, this common situation is scarcely ever recognized and commented on by sex-work abolitionists, especially feminist ones.) It is as though sex, especially male sex, is a bubbling cauldron of trouble, and if we don't keep a lid on it, awful things will result" (Carol Queen 131).

[431] In "Entitlement and Equality as Submission", (in the context of exploring "whiteness" at the Black Cinema Conference at NYU), see my argument assessing the need to theorize the nuances of any dominant conceptual system—whether whiteness, pornography, capitalism, masculinity, or digital technology. Once again, DeLanda's reminder that there is no monolithic "the" must be included in any analysis of power.

[432] Male sexuality is frequently categorized as a boiling cauldron that must be dampened.

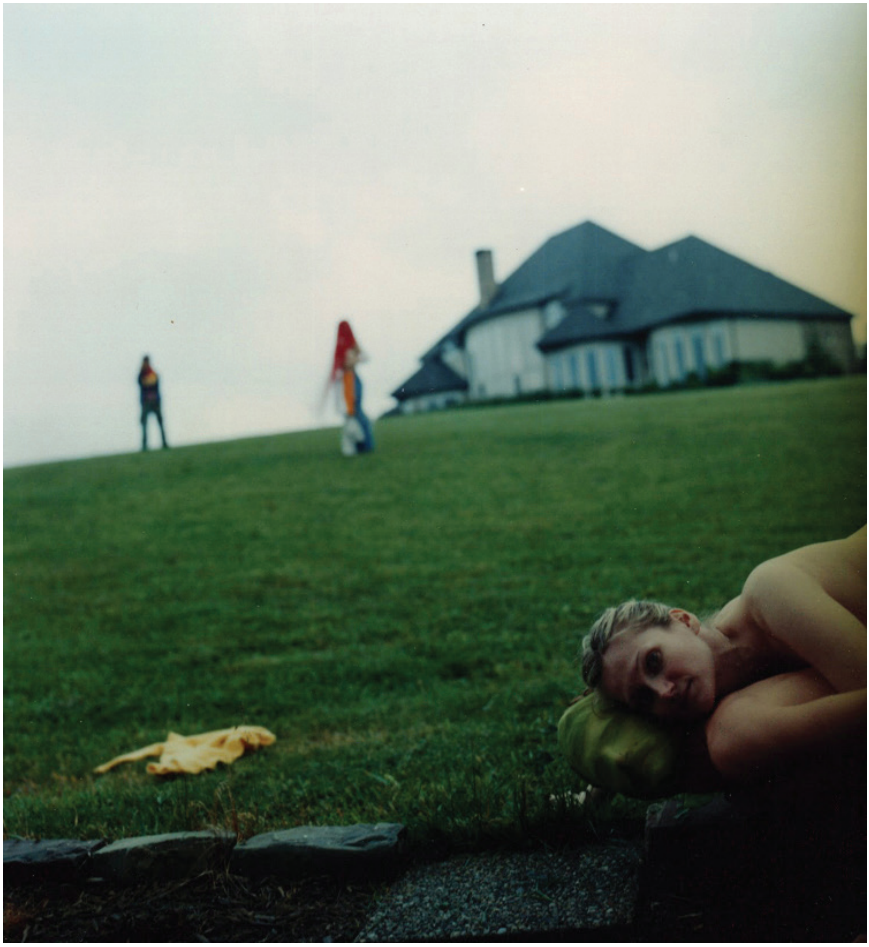


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has the potential to fully embrace the state of becoming-animal.

Coercion of the Real: *Détournement* and Unrepresentability

> My call, as it were, is for a feminist reading of pornography that resists the literalization of this imaginary scene, one which reads it instead for the incommensurabilities between gender norms and practices that it seems compelled to repeat without resolution. ...[W]hat pornography delivers is what it recites and exaggerates from the resources of compensatory gender norms, a text of insistent and faulty imaginary relations that will not disappear with the abolition of the offending text, the text that remains for feminist criticism relentlessly to read (*ES* 69).

It is a question of *how* and *where* (in our bodies) we read it.[433] If we ignore pornographies' multifarious relations, we constrain our own sexual potential, our libidinal plenum. We render ourselves impervious to our own capacities.[434] When examining what constitutes the real, this "feminist reading of pornography" too easily slips into the double-bind entrained assumption that women who enjoy sex too much are sluts. Additionally, "[p]orn is too often expected to mirror the Real. As if it weren't cinema. For example, actresses are criticized for faking orgasms. That's what they are here for, and paid for, and have learned how to do" (*KKT* 86). Similarly, one justification for my work being censored is the recrimination that my images constitute a reality (examples below). In my interrogation of my own foisted culpability, I invoke Schirmacher's insistence on the audience's responsibility to determine

[433] For a Deleuze-Reichian integration of politics and pornography see The Feminist Porn Awards and Madison Young Feminists for Facials Manifesto.

[434] Deleuzian capacities are relational and open-ended.

the "truth" of material. Although some of my images have been categorized as pornographic, the censors understanding of how my images actually *are* pornographic miss the mark. They are not pornographic because they depict naked bodies or fragments of bodies engaged in illicit activities, but because, like pornography, my images fail to constitute a *familiar* reality:[435]

> ...if what is depicted is a set of compensatory ideals, hyperbolic gender norms, then pornography charts a domain of unrealizable positions that hold sway over the social reality of gender positions, but do not, strictly speaking, constitute that reality; indeed, it is their failure to constitute it that gives the pornographic image the phantasmatic power that it has (*ES* 68).

It is precisely the hyperbole of the beyond[436] that invites the erotics of the uncanny to operate as pedagogical liberatory possibilities of pornographies. The "unrealizable positions" that Butler locates actually allow for the fertility of subjective intensities and Nietzsche's *disidentification*.[437] Additionally, as scholars of freedom of speech, we must ask: Who is making the porn? and for which audience?

Some examples of intermedial pornographies include: porn-chic (such as Andrew Blake), ethnic-porn, fetish-porn (ranging from filthy-gorgeous to furry-girl), veg porn, menstruation porn, pregnancy porn, lactation porn, every-configuration-of-gender-polymorphic porn (ranging from trannies to dykes engaging with fags), gay-porn (male gay-porn from the 70s is a radically different genre from that of the 80s), autoerotic porn, art-porn. The cross-fertilization

[435] In *Hans Bellmer: The Anatomy of Anxiety* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2000), Bellmer's "physical unconscious" utilizes the enneagram, circuitous Surrealist maps which continually rearrange the familiar. Of course I realize the precarious position I put myself in by drawing connections between Bellmer's work and pornographic intensities because Bellmer's work has historicized as pedophilia. But, once again I must distinguish among various readings/productions of pornographies.

[436] See Homi Bhabha's elaboration of the beyond in "(De)Construction of Sight: (Dis)Assembling (Un) Becoming-Animal".

[437] Ken Probst's black and white still analog photographs of often humorous, often surrealist behind the scenes gay porn reiterate pornography's failure to constitute reality.



PLATE 64

between art and pornography expands the creative and pedagogical boundaries of each. "The Operation", an infrared film that focuses on the temperature changes in the skin during a het-sex doctor scenario, won the 1995 Award for Best Underground Film at the Chicago Film Festival. In his *Melancholia and Moralism,* Douglas Crimp theorizes this *carrefour* between art and sex. He discusses the significance of the site, which is often more important than the act committed there. Escoffier observes that the setting is as significant as the sex itself.[438] Similarly, my photographs are "literary" texts in the sense of Weber's definition of the literary in contrast to the theoretical: "A text can be considered literary to the extent that its propositional, semantic, thematic *content* is *exceeded* or undermined by its syntactic movement. *What* it says is never separable from the *way* it says it" (*LF* 1).

The context, the act of viewing that is always in flux and infinitely repetitive as the how rather than the content,[439] parallels my photographs' censorship history—a history of the *extimate*. As I describe below, my bloody menstrual pads were one of my many photo-props that I used in the early 90s. Years later, I discovered a well-known artist's installation piece of used menstrual pads, simply hanging side by side—a clear example of how the art world, like mainstream entertainment, is consistently drawn to the lowest-common-denominator of shock-value. In contrast, my pads were always (see my discussion on meat) dialogic—*in-forming* and *in-formed* by other objects of both transition and transmogrification.

[438] Examples of the import of a public staging of porn material range from 70s male gay porn set at the NYC piers to Jean Genet's prison scene.

[439] See Nietzsche's theorization of the a-substantive (Ulfers, *Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought* seminar, EGS 2008). Additionally, the non-local co-relations theory in quantum physics reflects this a-substantive field.

Another example of the interpenetration of content and context (the slippage of *l'informe*) arises from Tim Kincaid, aka Joe Gage, who directed and wrote a trilogy of male gay-porn in the 1970s that are now part of the film collection at the Museum of Modern Art. "The Kansas City Trilogy" or "The Working Man Trilogy" depicts rugged working-class, rural men none of whom fit the stereotype of feminine man—i.e. fag. These men suck and fuck in a *détournement* of power and pleasure. When one of Gage's men gets gang-banged and then cum on by six others, no matter who is topping and who is bottoming, Gage's men defy binary codes of heteronormative gender identification. The trilogy received critical praise for its consistent portrayal of homosexual sex between rugged blue collar studs who were equal sexual partners. Because Gage's films displaced the typical stereotype of the effeminate gay male, his characterizations heightened the complexity of homosexual categorizations, thus shattering the heterosexual monolith. Gage states: "I never went out of my way to emphasize the butch or straight attributes of my guys. I always sought to portray them as representatives of the average, ordinary for the most part, working class citizen" (Morris 2003).

Porn-pathologizers—some feminists, some psychoanalysts—condemn pornography because they say male viewers are superimposing their bodies onto the male in the porn. I love watching gay porn not because I'm necessarily fantasizing about getting my ass fucked really hard or deep-

throating some anonymous guy's enormous dick. What turns me on is watching/witnessing that much pleasure (or is it desire?!—a fullness of excess which exceeds illusory boundaries. My intention is not to project or superimpose myself (my body/my psychoanalyzed orifices); rather, I'm participating in the overflow—neurological, chemical changes that I identify with films like those of Joe Gage. By re-examining pornography in the light of a differential analytic framework, we can begin to recognize the fertility of contradictory political tendencies. When we closely examine the slippages—paying attention to how the body is deployed in public commodified contexts, we disrupt dualistic assumptions of power, choice, and individual freedoms—we become citizen-warriors.

> But while these comminglings and copulations and partings and repetitions and singularities may well indicate a process of infinite multiplicity as constituent of movement, they do so under the aegis of a univocity which, while not mentioned directly by Deleuze after a certain point in his career, is the condition and determination of the kinds of genesis that we humans associate with the pleasure, pain, desire, control abandonment and the power of sex (Blake 182).

During the years I reviewed pornographic films and erotic literature for the Good Vibrations sales team, I focused on how my affective psyche could slip into interstitial corporeal narratives. I was interested in getting lost, not knowing my way as I migrated through each labyrinth of sexual alterity. My only compass was my body. Its affective antennae located my desire as I traversed the visual, textual material.

Never a question of good porn/bad porn, but rather Annie Sprinkle's declaration:

> Pornography is like a mirror through which we can take a look at ourselves. And sometimes what we see doesn't look pretty, and it can make us feel *very* uncomfortable. But how beautiful to take that look, to see (truth), and to learn. The answer to bad porn is not no porn, but to make better porn!" (cited in *KKT* 81).

My photography, video work, and yoga teaching embody vulnerability—the uncomfortable, the uncertain—as a political intensity, a collective *pulsion.* Those who I have met over the years who have expressed sincere appreciation for my creative process that takes them outside their comfort zone, *and* those who have broken relations with me for that very reason, are numerous. I offer my viewers and students contradictory corporeal cartographies not as a catalogue of answers, but as an opportunity for them to recognize the value of infinite possibilities. A commitment to *tâtonner* (groping, in English—there is no adequate translation). I witness this *tâtonner* as another variation of practicing the abject, of delving into Kristeva's *unrepresentability.*

1979. Austin. I'm eight years old. My mom and I are buying underwear at a discount outlet store. She is explaining to me her relationship to feminism. Somehow pornography comes up. I distinctly remember her saying: "I don't believe in porn, like I don't believe in Jesus Christ. I know they both are a part of our lives, but I don't need to recognize either of them". This was one of my many childhood introductions

to understanding sexuality—both private and public—as non-hierarchical and knowing that contradiction and difference are inevitable and replete with potential. I learned early on that the way we choose to experience our bodies can provide a framework of inter-subjectivity which moves beyond the narrow limits of what we think we know.

> [V]oluptuous desire fragments and dissolves the unity and utility of the organic body and the stabilized body-image. The limbs, erogenous zones, orifices of the other, provoke and entice, lure and beckon, breaking up the teleological, future-directed actions and plans of a task to perform. ...The voluptuous sense of disquiet engendered by and as lust disarrays and segments the resolve of a certain purposiveness, unhinging any determination of means and ends or goals. Carnal experience is uncertain non-teleological, undirected (Grosz citing Lingis' explorations, *STP* 195).

Like prosthetics as artificial life, our corporeality is deterritorialized. Erotic politics exert "libidinal zones [which] are continually in the process of being produced, renewed, transformed, through experimentation, practices, invocations, the accidents or contingencies of life itself, the coming together of surfaces, incisive practices, inscriptions" (ibid. 198). Although my photographs are consciously constructed, the relationships are born out of an improvised collaboration, practicing this repetition of contiguities. My images offer a cathartic opening into the becoming-vulnerable of *extimité*. Intensive differences drive this ever-expanding process.

Carnal activities proliferate the possibility of political agitation and social (ex)change. These libidinal intensities reorganize our social body's scopic drive. They provoke subversion and transgression in the workplace—conditions of production that when examined, can no longer slip through the cracks of normalcy. For example, expanding the concept of "safe-sex"—not just the legal right to carry and distribute condoms,[440] but emotional safety in which body-phobia and shame are de-solved, health and pleasure become civil rights and are integrated into active citizenship. When the sex workers' union (Sex Workers Project Urban Justice/ Network of Sex Workers Projects/ Sex Worker Empowerment Project (SWEP)) participated in the Construction Workers' Rally (whose focus is middle class "made in America" unions), their presence illuminated how the 9 to 5 laborer is engaged daily in officially sanctioned prostitution—the socially accepted and expected coercion of the worker's body.[441] Moral authorities decide what constitutes honest work. The sex workers' union draws explicit attention to the multiple ways in which we inadvertently sell our bodies, while we maintain a scrupulous perspective on others' bodily income-generating practices.

> I had no wish to humiliate my body at a low price, especially after I had become accustomed to being paid very highly for whatever services I rendered. …I felt sorry for the other girls who were guileless enough to offer their bodies and their physical efforts every night in return for a meal, or a good yearly report, or just to ensure that they would not be treated unfairly, or discriminated against, or transferred. … I came to realize that a female employee is more afraid of

[440] The Sex Worker Empowerment Project fought against a particularly vile legalized discrimination against transgender men and women's Constitutional rights in New York's Lower East Side. The project established a bill to stop punishing those who possess condoms, many of whom were transgender and inaccurately targeted as sex-workers: "Sound public health policy would encourage condom use by eliminating the fear that carrying a condom will be used against you by police or in a court of law". If they are found guilty of *carrying* condoms, they "are shut out of public housing, targeted for eviction, denied the opportunity to pursue certain jobs and professional licenses, and subject to deportation if they are without immigration status" (Urban Justice Center).

[441] See the civic rights lawyer and previous labor lawyer, Andrea Ritchie's activist writings on workers' compensation claims. She focuses on the connection between conventional labor abuses and sex workers' rights.



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> losing her job than a prostitute is of losing her life. An employee is scared of losing her job and becoming a prostitute because she does not understand that the prostitute's life is in fact better than hers. And so she pays the price her illusory fears with her life, her health, her body, and her mind. She pays the highest price for things of the lowest value. …[M]en force women to sell their bodies at a price, and that the lowest paid body is that of a wife. …As a sex worker radical, Nawal El Saadawi explicitly chooses to be a free prostitute, rather than an enslaved wife (Saadawi 75, 76, 91).

In contrast to unchallenged/institutionalized coercive labor, sex-positive activism (including sex work) shifts the focus from Bataille's warning of production as inherent repetitive destruction, echoing Baudrillard's challenge to consumer society to both Goethe and Nietzsche's consciousness of instinct—a poetics of relation (Glissant):

> As with Goethe, 'all is redeemed and affirmed in the whole.' Here is the affirmation of life, the essence of *Amor Fati*: we must learn the joy of perishing for the life of the species, of being sacrificed, as we have no choice but to be, for the continuance of life that both is ours and is not ours: not our individual lives but the life of the whole of which we are a part. We must learn to face with joy, with the Yes of affirmation, our part in a world that 'lives on itself: its excrements are its food, and we are among what is consumed.' (NAF 21)(Nietzsche *The Will to Power*, § 1066, 548).

I examine the potentially expansive/elastic dialectical nature of sex work in the context of *Amor Fati*. To cannibalize, to swallow the other, becomes a simultaneous self and other sacrifice and expansion (i.e. affirmation), a discursive negotiation among differences: "…women—

and whores—do not exist to be sexually used by men…any sexual interaction, including a paid one, benefits from *negotiation*" (Carol Queen 129).

When we take into consideration the unintended consequences of negotiation, we can begin to play with the generative capacities/tendencies of co-implications. Negotiation as a multilogue (an expansion of dialogue) of cross-fertilizations, promiscuous-crossings re-positions Grosz's concern. Grosz is wary of sex workers who describe themselves as "health workers": "they justify their roles in terms of maintaining the 'health' of their clients. ...It is a model of sexuality based upon the equation of sexual desire with orgasmic release, with instrumental or functional relief of the body..." (*STP* 204)— literally buying into hetero-normative sexuality. Why must Grosz dichotomize the "purposes" of orgasmic release? Particularly, in a simultaneously sex-drenched, body-phobic culture such as ours, orgasm breeds and serves multiple "functions". Although Grosz exhorts the "formlessness of sexual pleasure, the indeterminacy of the objectives of desire" (ibid. 248 nt. 18), it appears as though she is denying the importance of fucking—for any given reason. Whether "using" the oxytocin hormone that is released during orgasm to help calm an agitated nervous system or to help re-align someone's psyche who has internalized too many sex-negative messages, sex with orgasm can be healthful without replicating the repressive patriarchal status-quo that Grosz condemns.

Given our culture's stigmatization of sexual pleasure for its own sake,[442] Grosz's assertion is eerily reminiscent of right wing censors. Again, we are caught in the enfoldments of the *détournement.* I am reminded of Charles H. Keating Jr. During Reagan's administration, Keating served on the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography: "Any form of sexual activity which is impersonal, which uses the body alone for pleasure, violates the integrity of the person and thereby reduces him [sic] to the level of an irrational and irresponsible animal" (The Report of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, September 1970, Washington D.C.: US Government Printing Office 516). Unquestionably, Grosz is a pro-pleasure feminist. Her argument would be better served if she would distinguish amongst the sexual variations of sexual activities—examining why this kind of "health-care" may be needed in our somatically impoverished culture that reproduces the sanctity of normalcy.

Double standards of sex-negative clichés run rampant in both feminist and (covert and overt) misogynist circles: "The parallel stereotypes about drug use among physicians, lawyers, and executives do not diminish the respectability of these nonsexual, male-dominated professions, whereas strippers have gained notoriety for drug abuse" (Reed 182). One alternative to pathologizing sex work, to support women to choose what they want to do with their bodies, would be to de-stigmatize the profession.[443] Feminists who fight for the right to have an

[442] "I was carried by the conviction that I rejoiced in extraordinary freedom. To fuck above and beyond any sense of disgust was not just a way of lowering oneself, it was to raise yourself above all prejudice" (Millet 142).

[443] Showtime's "Diary of a Secret Call Girl" is also participating in the current wave depicting liberated sex-workers. This time, the ho is a woman—the apotheosis of high-fem representation—the money, make-up, hair, clothes. She loves money and loves sex, it is her choice to be a sex worker, but she is represented as "obviously" not being able to be in a "normal" relationship. Her choice is de-cided. She cannot become-whole-in-flux. She lives divided lives—her normal, everyday self and her slut, paid-for-sex self. Once again, the insidious forces of illusory liberation are at work—reifying puritanical values and moralizing categories.

abortion, but simultaneously condemn sex work as shameful are caught in what should be recognized as a hypocritical boomerang. "Rather than take it upon themselves to tell other women which professions to choose, feminists should defend every woman's work-place rights" (Reed 186). If anti-sex-work demagogues would destigmatize sex-work as a profession, it would no longer be an outlet for men and women who have internalized their victim-status and seek dehumanizing forms of interaction: "Again the answer lies not in abolition or extreme regulation but in confronting the various fabrications about [sex work]" (ibid. 182).[444] Bataille reminds us that historically prostitution was not initially perceived as degrading for women (or men). It began as a sacred exchange—a religious prostitution. Only with the onset of servile poverty did prostitutes become monsters.[445] Economics and new social divisions between the public and private re-configured the public role of women "using" their bodies. Within our current entrenched neoliberal compulsion to fear negotiation, we must

> …rethink the relation between conditions and acts. Our acts are not self-generated, but conditioned. We are at once acted upon and acting, and our 'responsibility' lies in the juncture between the two…Being acted upon is not fully continuous with acting, and in this way, the forces that act upon us are not finally responsible for what we do. In a certain way, and paradoxically, our responsibility is heightened once we have been subjected to the violence of others… Only once we have suffered that violence are we compelled, ethically, to ask how we will respond to violent injury (*PL* 16).[446]

[444] "This particular image of the prostitute that we so love to display—stripped of all her rights, deprived of her independence and her capacity to decide—has several functions. ...Another double bind: in our cities all images arouse desire, but its consummation must remain problematic, guilt-inducing... [a] "political strategy of victimizing prostitutes" (*KKT* 75).

[445] See *Tears of Eros.*

[446] Although Butler's argument is not targeting rape, her comments are illuminating in this context. In her elaboration of her own rape, Despuentes proclaims: "...you must be a total slut to have escaped alive. Any woman who values her dignity would rather die. My very survival incriminates me" (37). This kind of inversion/eversion demonstrates post-humanist dynamics of paradoxical power plays.

Hierarchical ethnocentric attitudes, differing very little from humanitarian imperialist tendencies, perceive sex-workers as devoid of agency—let alone the intelligence to draw upon that agency. Rescue-missionary tactics of sex industry abolitionists reify homogenous concepts of equality emblazoned in the fantasy of neutrality. Both mainstream and "alternative" media position the dirty sex worker through a lens of shame and lack. The myth that most sex-workers have been sexually assaulted feeds both the invisibility of sexism and misinformed feminists: one out of four women in our culture have been sexually assaulted in some capacity. It is assumed that the sex-worker is forced into her role of prostitution:

> The worry isn't that the women won't survive; quite the contrary. The worry is that they might come and say that it isn't such a dreadful job after all. And not only because all work is degrading, difficult, and demanding—but because plenty of men are never as affectionate as when they are with a whore (*KKT* 63).

Additionally, laws and the media conflate sex trafficking with sex work—criminalizing any and all sex work.[447] The gendered stigma of a "whore'[448] (*DE, DB* citing Gail Pheterson's "The Social Consequences of Unchastity" 237) extends to all sexuality becoming implicitly degrading to women; sex is essentially constructed as inherently abusive (implicit in the unchallenged assumptions of what sex is "supposed to be").

[447] "The more wretched it is, the stronger the man feels in comparison. The more sordid the images, the more emancipated the public feels itself to be. And then, moving on from these unacceptable images of prostitution worked in slavery conditions, they draw conclusions on paid sex in general. This is about as relevant as exploring work condition in the textile industry purely through images of children working in black-market sweatshops...the important thing is to put across the idea that no woman may profit from her sexual services outside marriage. In no case is she adult enough to decide to make a business of her charms. She necessarily prefers an honest profession. Which is judged honest by the moral authorities. And not degrading. Because for women, sex without love is always degrading" (*KKT* 74).

[448] Despuentes also cites Gail Pheterson's *The Prostitution Prism* (Amsterdam University Press, 1996): "What is transgressive for women is neither providing services to men nor is it receiving money or goods for sexual service: women's transgression is in asking for and taking money for sexual services" (cited in *KKT* 73).

Protean Sexualities: Spinoza's *what a body can do?*

The superfluous, A very necessary thing.
Voltaire

Spinoza's shift from epistemology to physics became the foundation of his ethics (*APGD* 92) (which I detail below). Specifically, I enframe (Heidegger) female ejaculation as a socio-erotic ethic. Given the potential of social emancipation, female ejaculation becomes a lived model of Spinoza's shift—his query into "what a body can do". In the context of Spinoza's analysis of the "nature of power", Hardt tells us that "[t]he question of power (what a body can do) is immediately related to the internal structure of the body" (ibid.). In Book III, Spinoza asserts, "No one has yet determined what the Body can do. ...For no one has yet come to know the structure of the Body so accurately that he could explain all its functions" (IIIP2S). I am not advocating the search for the elusive pudendal nerve,[449] but an inhabitation of the structurelessness of female ejaculation. Female ejaculation offers an opportunity for this relational investigation: "...we must decompose the unity of the body..." (ibid.). It demonstrates an exquisite arrangement of deterritorialization-by-proximity (see my diaristic account below). Deleuze identifies this political potency of *affectivity:* "A body's structure is the composition of its relation. What a body can do is the nature and the limits of its power to be affected" (ibid. 56).

[449] The pudendal nerve, enervated by clitoral stimulation, serves a primary role in one manifestation of female ejaculation. The pudendal nerve travels directly from the clitoris to the limbic brain. It is the only nerve in the entire body that is associated with the exclusive productionlessness of pleasure. For more physiological details of female ejaculation see footnote 479 which details my neurological research.

Spinoza's ethical project involves "an increase of our power to think… [an] increase of our power to exist and act" (ibid. 91). But before delving into this abundance, we must examine the "encounter of bodies" (ibid.). Two different variations of the concept of will to power: one springing forth from power-as-potentiality (Nietzsche), another from power-over (including will to truth, equality, and knowledge) orient the affects of this encounter. *Conatus* reflects the former: will to power-as-potentiality—as the "power to be affected" (Deleuze on Spinoza, ibid. 92). Spinoza's *conatus* (strive, tendency), an active reception of affects (ibid.) can be considered as a reception to the unknown, a relationality across difference.[450] This openness allows for a witnessing as active affect. Because it does not resist the unknown by looking for answers, solutions, clean-*cut* explanations, universal justifications, it does not judge. The "power to be affected", to receive the unknown, refuses adherence to an agenda, it is indefinitely indeterminate[451] (but not necessarily undecidable) (Weber, *Media and The Uncanny* seminar, EGS 2008). The "power to be affected" invites us to strive to become fully alive—fulfilling the continuity of our capacity that is continually emptying out in order to fill up again. Spinoza's affective is *felt*ed in conjunction with Nietzsche's eternal return. Correspondingly, Kristeva's *carrefour* is *felt*ed in conjunction with Benjamin's concept of aura. The uncanny con-spires (breathing with) in a differential movement—a breathing together which animates *convivencia*-conviviality:

[450] "Thus mind and body, rather than being distinct as in Descartes, are two attributes or aspects of the same, and whatever happens to one will be paralleled in the other, whether as particles or matter in the body or ideas in the mind. Changes of will or intellect or *conatus* are thus paralleled on a physical level and the body's activities and experiences on the mental level, these activities or drives being identical aside from our perspective in relation to them" (Blake 184).

[451] For further discussion of emanating libidinal economies, see footnotes 174, 323, 477.

> Aura is a medium that envelops and physically connects—and thus blurs the boundaries between—subject and object, suggesting a sensorial, embodied mode of perception. One need only cursorily recall the biblical and mystical connotations of *breath* and *breathing* to understand that this mode of perception involves surrender to the object as other" (Hansen 114).

Conatus traces the junction between a reception of self-awareness; self-preservation[452] as questioning, as reveling in the incomplete, the non-arrival, the eternal not yet and the spontaneous production of the power to act: "Spinoza's theory of *conatus* (or striving) marks precisely the intersection of production and affection that is so important to Deleuze: 'The variations of *conatus* as it is determined by this or that affection are the dynamic variations of our power to act' (231)" (ibid. 93). Vulnerability equivocally becomes self-preservation.[453] Charles and Ray Eames' *The Powers of Ten,* which tracks the interpenetrating relations between the microcosmos and the macrocosmos, reflects this concept of *conatus*.[454] At the floating "disjunctive crevice" (*LL* 27) between the micro and the macro, the private and the public—extimité—the space for agency expands. My vulnerability couched in self-confidence is one manifestation of this expansive *conatus.* I write and film my "sexual body" (Cixous cited in Wolff 420) not to be an exhibitionist, but to become-vulnerable—a peripatetic moebius-strip of Leibnizean awareness:

> But to philosophize at all, one must embrace the contradiction and remain content that one

[452] "The criterion measure is the *conatus* through which every thing strives to persevere in its being. [Spinoza] also sometimes speaks of 'natural love' instead of *conatus,* alluding to Augustine, who uses the term *love* to describe the universal principle of conservation of self. Thus Spinoza views the terms *conatus, will,* and *desire* in the same way" (*BD* 74). Also, see my discussion of love in the context of teaching and the uncanny in "Practicing (Anti-) Critique: Emancipatory Pedagogies and Becoming the Impossible".

[453] In "Pedagogical Promiscuities", I discuss the vulnerability of self-preservation in the context of whores and other feminists.



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> will, of necessity, undermine the credibility of anything one can say by the act of saying it—one must affirm that contradiction. This would make philosophy itself the very image of life, and of the affirmation of life, and of *Amor Fati*: the enthusiastic embrace of necessity, which is itself, in its simplest sense, an utter contradiction, a nonsensical counsel, as if necessity could care whether we embraced it. Thereby, freedom and necessity become a contradiction that does not entail a violation of binary logic but rather an intricate relation that simultaneously unites them and holds them apart. Thereby, we become what we already are. And thereby, Nietzsche can be said to have affirmed life not so well by what he said as simply by his saying (NAF 25).

Converging with freedom and necessity, an uncanny *conatus* suggests chiasmic cross-fertilizations, a Heraclitean perpetual strife:[455] Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas writes: "The First Amendment was designed 'to invite dispute,' to induce 'a condition of unrest,' to 'create dissatisfaction with conditions as they are,' and even to stir 'people to anger'" (cited in Eastland 223). Tzvetan Todorov describes the ambiguity and hesitation, the fantastic and the marvelous in/of the uncanny. Similiarly, Hawking's declaration, everything we need is already within us just waiting to be realized, like Nietzsche's "Become who you are!" — "*Werde, der du bist*!",[456] underscores that we are infinitely capable. My Yoga and Sexuality workshops demonstrate how to access that capacity: "Whence the importance of the ethical question. *We do not even know what a body can do,* Spinoza says. That is: *We do not even know of what affections we are capable of, nor the extent of our power.* How

[454] *Conatus* and *The Powers of Ten* are also reminiscent of Nietzsche's *Verhängnis* and Bataille's Labyrinth. "The Labyrinth" (1936) scrutinizes how communities are "composed": "For Bataille all entities are collections of other entities; there is no simply isolable *ipse* that would represent unitary being. What cells are to a human being, a human being is to that large organism, the community. Being is not simple identity, but rather rupture or dis-equilibrium, the sudden change of levels: being is violent *difference,* precariousness and heterogeneity in relation to a given stable group ('the virulent madness of its autonomy in the total night of the world' ["The Labyrinth']])" (*VE* xi).

[455] To paraphrase Buddha: May we live like the lotus, at home in the muddy waters.

[456] See Nietzsche, *Also Sprach Zarathustra: Fourth and Last Part*, "The Honey Sacrifice," in *The Portable Nietzsche* 351 (NAF nt. 42).

could we know this in advance?" (226 cited in *APGD* 91). Hardt reiterates the first step in this ethical project: "Investigate what affects we are capable of, discover what our body can do" (ibid. 92). My photographs and workshops offer opportunities for viewers/students to re-"discover" their innate capacities (described below). In *The Functions of the Orgasms,* Michel Odent describes the following psycho-physiological reflexes—which is not to say that they are automatic/predetermined, but rather how their relational potential is innate—a reflexive *pharmakon*: a 'orgasmogenic cocktail' of the 'fetus ejection reflex', "milk ejection reflex', 'sperm ejection reflex'. When we *learn how* to step out of our own way we embody the "power to exist=power to be affected" (*APGD* 94) and power to affect.

Hardt tells us that we must refine "the ethical question so that it can provide the basis for an ethical practice. ...Consider the typical Nietzschean mandate: Become active. ...Spinoza too recognizes ethics as an issue of becoming active. ...*How can we come to experience a maximum of joyful passions?* (246 ibid. 95). Vulnerability, like desire, is not rooted in lack.

> The renunciation of external pleasure, or its delay, its infinite regress, testifies on the contrary to an achieved state in which desire no longer lacks anything but fills itself and constructs its own field of immanence. Pleasure is an affection of a person or a subject; it is the only way for persons to 'find themselves' in the process of desire that exceeds them; pleasures, even the most artificial, are reterritorializations…interior and exterior are equally a part of the immanence in which

> they have fused. …Everything is allowed: all that counts is for pleasure to be the flow of desire itself, Immanence, instead of a measure that interrupts it or delivers it to the three phantoms, namely, internal lack, higher transcendence, and apparent exteriority (*TP* 156).

Desire [like vulnerability] does not lack anything (ibid. 26). Both Spinoza and his predecessor Moses Maimonides "conceptualized desire from the starting point of joy rather than lack and has construed consciousness as a relation to servitude" (*BD* 75). Spinoza, Maimonides, Deleuze, and Reich explored the co-mingling between desire and sex that is not about sex,[457] but about ethics, values, presence, awareness, personal and social responsibility. Reich and Deleuze's politics are synonymous with desire—*ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica*[458] "…how and why desire attaches to all relations of social production. … [T]hey seek to bind the material world and the libido into one and the same form" (Bristow citing *Anti-Oedipus* 128). The libido is as fundamentally socio-political as it is equally personal. A sexually potent society implies a society that is just. Libidinal plenum opens the possibility of vulnerability as psychosocial practice. Libidinal-somatic intensities provoke the "explicitly productive power of desire" (ibid. 118).

Desire has no subject and does not lack[459] its object, it is already-always here. Pat Califia claims that "[s]exuality is not a desire to complete the subject with an object but a desire for the transformation of self, which does not

[457] "Deleuze consistently criticizes models of sexual desire that are in any way goal oriented, in the sense of a pursuit of pleasure or a discharge of libidinal energy or *a fortiori* a release and exchange of bodily fluids as ends in themselves. His claim is far greater than this, however, for he criticizes these models as being not metaphysically incorrect, but also as politically repressive—as having evidently material consequences for populations...for the Earth" (Blake 179). Deleuze's disgust for ejaculation can be read as an abhorrence of consumer culture's construction of desire: "...desire is lived as such a disagreeable tension that—a horrible, hideous word is required here, that's how bad this thing is—a discharge is necessary. And this discharge, this is what pleasure is! People will have peace, and then, alas! desire is reborn, anew discharge will necessary" (Deleuze 2001: 96).

[458] "For [the contemporary filmmaker,] Mr. Oshima, the complacently consumerist Japanese society of the 1970s offered clear parallels; as in the 1930s an irrational, erotic revolt was necessary to stir things up" (Kehr).

[459] "Irigaray's argument that the feminine is coded within masculine parameters in two contradictory but related ways—as lack and leak" (Riordan 79).



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invoke an object at all, or at least doesn't need to invoke one" (Riordan 79). In contrast to the myth of scarcity, prompted by institutionalized internalized lack, distribution and abundance (Deleuze's excess, multiples) and female ejaculation (Nietzsche's overfullness) demonstrate a model of vulnerability as an unbound socio-political practice. Rather than focusing on the "power to act (spontaneity)" (Deleuze on Spinoza cited in *APGD* 92), integrating this model invites us to engage with the "power to be affected" (ibid.)—embracing our individual and collective vulnerability. My proposal that surrendering to the unknown[460] is an example of the power to act and of active affect may appear to be contradictory. It is precisely this contradiction that invites the citizen-warrior to explore Spinoza's "*what a body can do*":

> Most of all, the reader is invited to lift a dynamism out of the book entirely, and incarnate it in a foreign medium, whether it be painting or politics…The question is not, is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make possible to think? What new emotions does it make possible to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body? (Massumi's introduction to *TP* xv).

These questions animate my corporeal, creative, and theoretical processes—ever-shifting embodied nomadic thought. Spinoza's concept of *fabrica* (reminiscent of the entwinement of *felt*), invoking the body's aptness to be "made, unmade, and remade in and through sociality" (Thompson 10) frames his ethical project that plays into a Moebius

[460] Vulnerability manifests as the *Daesin*: "Such self-emptying, according to Benjamin, is the essence of courage: being capable of complete surrender. 'Capable' perhaps continues to hold onto an element of cognition. The poet yields entirely giving in to sheer relatedness...Poetic courage consists in taking the step towards this exposition, that of pure exposure ('only step/ Naked into life' (Benjamin)" (Ronell 2002: 8-9).

band-like practice of power to act and power to be affected—individual-collective; private-public potential. Similarly, Freud's *Spaltung*, Lacan's the Real, Leibniz's cohesive elastic body, Levinas' interhuman intrigue, and Grosz's co-implications revisit Ulfers'[461] "radical metaphoricity" of the Moebius-band as fluctuating mind/body relations. Nietzsche too draws on the Moebius-band in his view of the universe as a "monster of energy" (Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, section 1067) that sustains itself as a *Perpetuum Mobile*.[462] Ulfers and Grosz expound on the politics of eversion as a chiasmic interplay:

> the conservation of force as a constant quantity, the cyclical flow of energy, the continuing presence of energy established in paired and opposing polarities that remain perpetually in a condition of dynamical disequilibrium, the rejection of the principle of entropy in application to the universe as a single closed system, and the arrangement of cosmic space in accordance with a non-Euclidean geometry (ZMERS 7).

> Relying on a model established by Lyotard in *Libidinal Economy* (1993), where the subject is viewed in terms of the twisting, contortions, and self-rotations of the Moebius strip, Lingis refigures carnal desire in terms of the lateral ("horizontal") contamination of one erotogenic zone or bodily surface by another, rather than in terms of a "vertical relation" between (bodily) surface and (psychical) depth. The intensification of one bodily region or zone induces an increase in the excitation of those contiguous with it (*STP* 197).

These "promiscuous crossings" become an embodiment of the abject. The practice of the

[461] Undecidability can be experienced as a "*(m) etaphoricity*" that is "the logic of contamination and the contamination of logic" (Derrida 1981: 149).

[462] In the context of the world as a "circular course of things . . . which ever endures and uninterruptedly renews itself . . .", "*perpetuum mobile physicum*" (cited in ZMERS 6)—perpetual motion—in an open system (let's call it collaboration) involves the dynamic continual non-arrival of eternal recurrence.

abject propagates protean sexualities. Non-productive, non-reproductive, uncategorizable, "[r]esisting redeployment in pragmatic projects, [they] function in [their] own way, seeking to endlessly extend [themselves], to fill [themselves] with intensity" (*STP* 200) they exceed the self. In his discussion of Elizabeth Llyod's, *The Case for the Female Orgasm,* Žižek views this excess as spiritual because it has no biological function (like male nipples) (Žižek lectures, NYU 2009).[463]

Protean sexualities yield "an identity and desire that cannot be articulated in the discourses and frameworks currently available" (Grosz 1994: 338). These new and exploratory forms of homo and heterosexuality are "no longer dominated by the phallus and male desire. ...[They perform the]...relations between beings who recognize and respect the otherness of the other" (ibid.). Protean sexualities perform an erotics of the uncanny. As a writer and photographer, I participate in this self-conscious political intensity through my performative practices and discursive self-portrait video pieces. This conceptual shift is not a prescriptive project; rather, it deconstructs patriarchal inscriptions on our bodies. We cannot afford to reassert another hegemony to replace or mimic existing normative paternal tyrannies. Such toxic mimicry would reinforce dichotomous habitual behavior, while obliterating the potential for fertile vulnerability. In his *The Temptation*, Cioran enlists Samuel Beckett: "What is the good of passing from one untenable position to another,

[463] In Ronell's class on *Antigone and Hegel*, guest lecturer Žižek declared that, like Deleuze, within dialectical repetition the zero level of civilization is established—the boomerang effect of that which emerges in the in-between. By tracing melancholia through an exploration of exile and sexuality, in particular, Elizabeth Lloyd's *The Case of Female Orgasm*, Žižek expounded on what I am identifying as the erotics of the uncanny—a transubstantiated becoming-animal.

[464] "Any attempt to understand female sexual desire on the models provided by male sexuality and pleasure risks producing a new model that is both fundamentally reliant on (heterosexual) norms of sexual complementarity or opposition, and reducing female sexuality and pleasure to models, goals, and orientations appropriate for men and not women. Such maneuvers short-circuit any acknowledgement of the range, scope, and implications of erotic pleasure for understanding sexual difference" (*STP* 188).

[465] "The Agony and Ecstasy of Steve Jobs" is Mike Daisy's (actor/monologist) new Off-Broadway performance addressing the slave-labor conditions of Apple product factory workers in Shenzhen, China. Because of the daily attempts to commit suicide—jumping off the roof—Apple has recently installed a net across the tenements where millions of workers live. The iPhone Suicides have not impacted sales. See my conclusion for details on this post-human phenomenon.

of seeking justification always on the same plane?" (7).[464] Instead of transposing difference onto the terrain of illusory sameness, through my visual (described above), theoretical (written), and corporeal (Iyengar yoga as pedagogy) work, I hope to undermine the insidious nature of a US-version of the fantasy of democracy and freedom of choice—what Arendt identified even before the barbarism of NAFTA, WTO, globalization[465]: "Americans tend to confuse freedom with free enterprise" (Kerr 18).[466]

Embodied democracy requires that we reframe freedom in the context of psycho-anatomical vulnerability. Ronell playfully informs us that "Bataille pornographized the *cogito*" (*BD* xvi). In his *Tears of Eros,* Bataille describes the indecency of what is non-productive: death, tears, laughter. The recurrent expression of Bataille's characters' tears (and urine) throughout *L'Histoire de L'Oeil*[467] is reminiscent of female ejaculate.[468] A woman's ejaculate is "useless"; it produces nothing. It is waste, mess. Its formlessness is indecent.[469] Its full-strength excess overflows the containable, directable—disabling phallo-centric consumer momentum. As a woman, both the act of ejaculating and having that act and substance *received*[470] both publicly and privately produces an embodiment of vulnerability as *l'informe*. Female ejaculation's radical metaphoricity generates a politicized corporeal cognition. This socio-political somatic rhizome demonstrates a non-reactive resistance to the status quo—an experiential of intermedialities' potentiality

[466] For example, the nomenclature for one of our contemporary systems of slavery—student loans—reflects down-home, everyday folk being appropriated for corporate insatiability: For example, Fannie Mae government bonds represent the stability of an old woman who counts every penny of her Bingo winnings at the bank-teller; Freddy Mac is the male version, and Sallie Mae, the school girl version. Sallie Mae charges an *unemployment penalty* to people who are out of work and have to delay repayment on their loans.

[467] Even more than Simone, Marcelle "urinates" continuously during self and other arousal.

[468] In the end, Marcelle could not accept the vulnerability that her female ejaculate demonstrated. Instead, she was overcome with shame and eventually succumbed to death.

[469] See my discussion of "Truth as indecency laid bare" in the context of corporeal politics and my photographs in "Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations: Molecular Meat Round Two/Second Course".

[470] Lewis Hyde's *The Gift: Imagination and the Erotic Life of Property* (New York: Random House, 1979) redefines the word *erotic* in the context of community. A gift is 'anarchist property', "because both anarchism and gift exchange share the assumption that it is not when a part of the self is inhibited and restrained, but when a part of the self is given away, that community appears" (1979: 92).

i.e., embodied theory: "…this circumstance of resistance requires that the unspeakable be spoken and that the impossible be done" (Critical Art Ensemble 1998: 8).

Kristeva's *unrepresentability* speaks and represents the ineffable target. "The sexual encounter cannot be regarded as an expedition, an adventure, a goal, or an investment, for it is a directionless mobilization of excitations with no guaranteed outcomes or 'results'. Not even orgasm" (*STP* 200). In contrast with orgasm, ejaculation is rhizomatic. Contra a rigidifying difference in sexual difference of feminine *écriture* in which the mother-body *only* flows, my breast-milk, like my sexual ejaculate, shoots, does not flow.

> To accept female ejaculate and female ejaculation one has to accept the sameness of male and female bodies. ...It is not just that its existence corrects the mistaken assumption that only men have prostates, but that it solicits further inspection of the more generally porous system of binary sex. ...[a] system of difference can erase women's eroticism as much as sameness can (*DE, DB* 246, 248).

Physiological correlations do not imply the toxic mimicry of a projection of sameness—absorbing one's experience into the phallic norm. Contrary to arborescent, linear logic, an awareness of affinity can generate non-hierarchical discourse and produce the conditions for exploring how we relate to one another and how else we may relate to another. As a Deleuzian investigator of sex and sexual relationships, I animate the interstitiality of

[471] My Yoga and Sexuality workshops focus on consciously directing energy—the contraction and expansion of energy through our body (or in specific areas). We learn how to charge energy without contracting (clamping down on energy) physically, emotionally, mentally—exploring how to stretch our capacity to contain that charge. Spinoza's desire is rooted in social agency: "To experience what seems to be an increase in one's endeavor to persist, to feel oneself flourishing, expanding outward into the world, is pleasure; and to experience a decrease in one's power to persist, to feel one's self diminishing, contracting out of the world, is pain. Desire, the third of the 'primary emotions,' is the consciousness of our endeavor to persist and thrive" (Goldstein 179). Desires are hooked into judgments as a form of choice. A contraction is an unspoken objection. Continual contraction leads to a deadening of our relationship to life, while examining our habitual reactive addiction to the familiar, we practice not contracting—expanding into our infinitely spacious imagination. My intention is for these workshops to open opportunities to embody the *both/and*. The practice of pulsation develops and contains charge and leads to both desire for and capacity for union. Reconceptualizing distribution becomes a key collaborative ethic in both a libidinal economy as well as financial economy. Erotic empowerment is often a question of distribution. For many of us, sexual energy is like physical strength. When we learn to be able

difference to forge connections, articulating questions rather than formulating and relying on generic truths. An uncontainable socio-erotic somatized ethic is an ethic that is embodied in order to create and sustain communication as the inception of community. Deleuze's emphasis on the potential of sexuality when liberated from genitality is central to my workshops on yoga, sexuality, and pregnancy.[471] My projects engage the potential of an erotics of the uncanny as a pedagogical tendency towards social change: "At the outset, philosophy and sex have to do with the Other, *l'Autre* with a capital A, as Lacan would say..." (*BD* 15). The *Logic*[472] of the uncanny illustrates my positioning of female ejaculation as a model for active citizenship. This is an ethics of the erotics of the uncanny—a psychosexual commitment to *messing up.* Nietzsche declares: "You must have chaos within you to birth a dancing star" (cited in Kaufman 1954: 5).

Nietzsche may have believed in such a pronouncement of the fertility of disorder; certainly his philosophy of chiasmic unity would lead us to imagine his full-capacity sexuality. But, in Dufourmantelle's *Blind Date: Sex and Philosophy,* Ronell expresses her concern:

> No one, not even those who put their bodies on the line or wriggled around like Nietzsche, admitted sex—or perhaps citable or excitable relation to sex—into the backrooms of philosophical speculation. Philosophy, however, prides itself on taking hold of life and exploring its various articulations. Why this unabating

to expand and contract energy fields, we develop, energetic muscles. This is not a question of acquiring something outside of ourselves. Redistribution is a question of learning how to use what you have more effectively. It is a practice of voluntary movement of your energy, choosing how your energy is distributed so you have more freedom of action. According to Julie Henderson in *The Lover Within: Opening to Energy in Sexual Practice.* (New York: Station Hill, 1999), "Movement in any part of the body focuses energy in that part, [it] allows energy to arise from the tissues in the area. We can also use movement in one part of the body to offer energy to another part" (49). Whether exhilaration or fear, the energy is the same. "Pain, as Nietzsche well recognized, is a capable, perhaps more so, of inscribing bodily surfaces, as pleasure" (*STP* 198). It is how we choose to perceive and work with that energy that is important: "a world and a body are opened up for redistribution, dis-organization, transformation; each is metamorphosed in the encounter, both become something other, something incapable of being determined in advance, and perhaps even in retrospect, but which nonetheless have perceptibly shifted and realigned" (*STP* 200). Both during my abortion (see section "Psyche-Somatic (Dis)Integrity") and during my baby Zazu's birth, I consciously chose energy expansion. The pause, the ebb and flow of the baby's head back and forth at the cusp of the mother's body and the world beyond plays in a multi-temporal liminal zone. Just as we learn to let

> level of discretion or self-censorship? (Ronell's introduction to *BD* xvii).[473]

Is this somatophobic tendency of Western philosophy, this refusal to "admit" sex once again a demonstration (as in the monstrous) of our collective disembodiment—our communal mind/body disconnect? In the 2002 film, *Derrida: Screenplay*, the interviewer asks Derrida what he would most like to hear from philosophers who are important to him. He replies, "their sexual lives, because it's the thing they don't talk about".[474] Why aren't even those philosophers who valorize uncertainty and the unknown willing to publicly revel in their own sensuality?: "All of them forged a morality; none of them spoke about their own sexual lives. ...And one suddenly wonders why philosophy never speaks of sex and yet speaks of nothing else" (*BD* 5). Is this inverted omission (recalling Foucault's *scientia sexualis*) an example of how vulnerability appears to be an enormous threat—or at least how we perceive of vulnerability? In *The Republic,* Socrates *confesses*: "sexual passion is capable of superseding all others and affecting the subject's capacity to think, to discern, and to behave as citizen" (ibid. 24). Society's collective drive towards order and the rational being suffocates vulnerability as "the attraction of the pleasure of bodies remains the principal threat to philosophers, the distraction most likely to deflect them from the quest for truth" (ibid. 45). Kundera speaks of sexuality[475] as a magnifying glass through which we can view our connective tissue, our dynamic chiasmic unity:

go and allow our vaginas to expand, we can learn to expand to contain and distribute charged energy—breathing in between and during the surges.

[472] See Foucault's *logic of sex* in comparison with his *logic of science*.

[473] Apparently, philosophers don't talk about sex, like they don't talk about their Jewishness—Ronell, Grosz, Butler, Rancière, Benjamin, Cixous, Derrida, Teresa de Avila, Anzaldua, Illich, Spinoza, Maimonides (almost every philosopher I discuss in this paper)—happen to be Jewish, the latter seven mentioned here have Sephardic ancestry! Although each of these thinkers is quintessentially Jewish (see my discussion of Arendt and Jewish thought), I have found scarce reference by any of these philosophers which directly addresses their experiences or the impact of being Jewish (and/or specifically Sephardic) on their work. Is being Jewish as unspeakable and unrepresentable as sex? Of those thinkers I address in these pages, Arendt and Kafka are the exceptions who speak about themselves as Jews, and Cixous as the exception speaking about Derrida's Jewishness.

[474] "AZK: If you were to watch a documentary about a philosopher—Heidegger, Kant or Hegel, what would you like to see in it?

Long pause, Then:

DERRIDA: Their sex lives. If you want a quick answer. I would like to hear them speak about their sexual lives. What is the sexual life of Hegel or Heidegger?"

AZK: Why?

DERRIDA: You want a

quick answer; you don't want justification not... the answer. Because it's something they don't talk about. Why do philosophers present themselves asexually in their work? Why have they erased their private lives from their work? Or never talked about anything personal? There is nothing more important in one's private life than love. I'm not talking about making a porno film about Hegel or Heidegger. I want them to speak about the part that love plays in their lives" (104,105).

"KM: How can you separate a philosopher's writing from his life?

JD: I don't know if you can, but most classical philosophers did try to separate them, and some of them succeeded. If you read philosophical texts of the tradition, you'll notice they almost never said 'I,' and didn't speak in the first person. Philosophy is something empirical and outside, something else.

KM: You don't think the philosophy is shaped by the life?

JD: It is, but the private empirical life is considered an accident that isn't necessarily or essentially linked to the philosophical activity or system. From Aristotle to Heidegger, they try to consider their own lives a something marginal or accidental. What was essential was their teaching and their thinking...My own life, my desires and loves are inscribed in all of my writing—in a certain way, of course. They're not confessions, but I do take the risk of making my life part of what I write" (Dick and Ziering 124, 125).

> …with me everything ends in great erotic scenes. I have the feeling that a scene of physical love generates an extremely sharp light which suddenly reveals the essence of characters and sums up their life situation. …The erotic scene is the focus where all the themes of the story converge and where its deepest secrets are located (236).

Female Ejaculation as Social Emancipation

1994. Happy Valley. The first time I ejaculated, I didn't know it wasn't "normal"[476] so I just reveled in sharing the sensation. No judgment; no fear—until the man I was with clearly expressed his surprise.[477] Only then did my mind intervene. It is a cultural assumption that it is men, and not women, who are capable of ejaculation. My research is not about the fact that millions of women do indeed ejaculate—the physiological reality is that both men and women have active prostates: in women, the prostate is identified as the para- or peri- urethral glands.[478] Nor is my project an attempt to replicate or usurp male tendencies or to degrade women's bodies as a systematic functionality, thereby reifying hierarchical power relationships in which sexuality is reduced to a generic hydraulic model.[479] Rather, my intention is to examine the political potency of male and female ejaculation as deterritorialized sexuality.

Grosz critiques the current reclamation of female ejaculation by some feminists[480] (such as Shannon Bell) as an example of women being absorbed into toxic mimicry—the homogenizing, "transcendental" patriarchy. She invokes Irigaray "for whom female sexuality

is itself non-self-identical, non-enumerable, not made of distinct and separate parts, not one (but indeterminately more than one)" (*STP* 222). If we do "conceive of sexuality in generic or human terms", we maintain its invisibility—reifying male sexuality as the model of normalcy. Grosz underscores that "[i]nstead of assuming an inherent mystery, an indecipherable enigma, female sexuality must be assumed to be knowable, even if it must wait for other forms of knowledge, different modes of discloser, to provide a framework and the broad parameters of its understanding" (*STP* 223).

Rather than refusing to call public attention to the reality of female ejaculation, I want to point out the dangers of seeking the "knowable". I recognize that Grosz's call does not reflect Foucault's critique of *scientia sexualis.* She specifically seeks "other forms of knowledge". However, by only focusing on woman's corporeality, she may be inadvertently feeding into the historical elision of female sexual



PLATE 68, VIDEO STILL, *BATH*

[475] Sex, like the abject and my photographs, magnifies.

[476] Since I didn't know women aren't "supposed" to come, I was free to inhabit my capacities. Once again we revisit the politics of eversion as they manifest through imbricated emanating libidinal economies: birth has become an illness requiring medical intervention, poverty is internalized through development politics, and sexual normalcy, "sex as it's supposed to be", dictates our biological functions.

[477] "You're not a leper but you do cum a lot!" Fortunately, this was not the response from the man I was with, but it was the response of the male lead character in the HBO series *Hung* (a politically radical story of a male prostitute and his female pimp—*not* a gendered role reversal, but a creative collaboration).

[478] In 1998, I conducted the neurological research for Deborah Sundahl's (also known as Fanny Fatale) instructional and diaristic video, *Tantric Journey to Female Orgasm: Unveiling the G-Spot & Female Ejaculation*—a sequel to her collaboration with Carol Queen and Shannon Bell's original female ejaculation video *How to Female Ejaculate*.

[479] "The fantasy that binds sex to death so intimately is the fantasy of a hydraulic sexuality, a biologically regulated need or instinct, a compulsion, urge, or mode of physical release (the sneeze provides an analogue). ...When eroticism is considered a program, a means to an end ("foreplay"), a mode of conquest, a proof

of virility or femininity, an inner drive that periodically erupts, or an impelling attraction to an object that exerts a "magnetic" force (i.e. as actively compelling, as as passively seduced), it is reduced to versions of this hydraulic model" (*STP* 204).

[480] See *STP* 204.

[481] I recognize the limitations of assuming a two gender social structure. Trans-gender identity is not specifically part of my discussion.

desires and pleasures—supporting the very psychological infrastructures she is determined to disentangle. I am proposing a shift from Grosz's entreaty for a "knowable" female sexuality: by combining Bristow's challenge to form a political project rooted in Deleuze's rhizomatic and schizo-analytic lines with Grosz's search for a reconceptualization of female sexuality, again, I am suggesting that we deterritorialize *both* sexes.[481]

Congruent with my examination of pornography's multiplicities and my critique in "Entitlement and Equality as Submission" of the Black Cinema Conference in which leading African-American Studies scholars only focused on the nuances of blackness without a corresponding analysis of whiteness, I, like Grosz, propose we re-examine the dominant form of sexuality: "the relation *between* terms is what establishes a possibility of identity for each" (Grosz 1994: 343, my italics). By reconceiving male sexuality as unknowable—we call into question the underpinnings of what it means to "understand" any sexuality at all—whether biologically male or female. Grosz makes this case in *space, time, perversion* with her analysis of the sexual behavior of the black widow and the praying mantis:

> These two species have come to represent an intimate and persistent link between sex and death, between pleasure and punishment, desire and revenge, which may prove significant in understanding certain key details of male sexuality and desire and, consequently, in specifying elements or features of female sexuality and subjectivity (ibid. 188).

Analogously, Duden's distinction among incompatible meanings of knowledge that produce "useful" citizenry,[482] Spinoza's emphasis on questions not answers,[483] Arendt's embrace of herself as a "conscious pariah",[484] and Theodor Adorno's critique of "instrumental reason"[485] point to the urgency of vulnerability via uncertainty as a position of power. We can exercise vulnerability when we begin to engage with a Spinozian ethological version of sexuality. Grosz proposes an erotic politics: "I am not suggesting a necessary reciprocity here, but rather a co-implication. ...There is always equivocation and ambiguity in passion... eroticism and sensuality tend to spread out over many things, infecting all sorts of other relations" (*STP* 204). Lingis' discussion of the erotic temples of Khajuraho in northern India (which I visited in 2009) illustrates the kind of political project rooted in protean sexualities that I am investigating:

> ...it is as though the libidinous impulse is an exorbitant energy that tends not to satisfy itself with its own function; everything gets infected with its trouble, even practical association to work with tools, political relationships within institutions, pedagogical relationships over ideas, military alliances before the imminence of disaster and in the thirst for conquest. Not only can the pursuit of riches or the investiture with political authority function as a means to obtain partners of flesh and blood, but cupidity and calculation themselves becomes lascivious (1983: 50 cited in *STP* 248-9).

As I discussed "Toxic Mimicry", I am not looking for a substitute for male sexuality or to "depict male sensibility in a female

[482] For discussion, see section "Post-Humanism: Digital Visualizing Technologies".

[483] I identify seeking questions and not answers as a typical Jewish characteristic. See my discussion of Spinoza and Arendt's Jewishness in "Practicing the Abject".

[484] As a "conscious pariah", Arendt chose to inhabit the liminality of vulnerability: "an absolute determination to be herself, with the toughness to carry it through in the face of great vulnerability" (Hans Jonas cited in May 26).

[485] "Adorno urged educators to teach students how to be critical so they could learn to resist those ideologies, needs, social relations and discourses that lead back to a politics where authority is simply obeyed and the totally administered society reproduces itself through a mixture of state force and orchestrated consensus. …. Adorno's essay ["Education after Auschwitz"] raises fundamental questions about how acts of inhumanity are inextricably connected to the pedagogical practices that produce formative cultures that legitimate a culture of cruelty, a punishing state, the militarization of everyday life and an assault on the welfare state, while transforming government into an adjunct of corporate power" (Giroux, truth-out.org).

body" (*KKT* 124)—such as representations of hospitalized birth and rape in film and the stereotypical ways in which women are represented in mainstream porn. Rather, I am driven towards Ronell's "feminine intensity" (see "Toxic Mimicry")—a sexual ethic that reconfigures how we experience sex and the erotic in the context of radical citizenship—*how* we inhabit our bodies in our everyday lives. By exaggerating, reorienting, and cultivating vulnerability, conventionally designated "private" expressions seep into the public and expose the potential for collaborative-intuitive hysteria. In this context, I am re-appropriating this historically misogynist concept. Hysteria, like female ejaculation, ruptures clean-cut categories and expectations.

As a woman who ejaculates *without the need for specific physical stimulation*,[486] the socio-political implications of what my body represents are vast: a rhizomatic, molecular sexuality, without an end-point, no arrival, no derivation. My body inhabits and produces haecceities and affects in a chiasmic dissolution of binary codes and social expectations: "infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction; [they have] no top nor bottom nor center; [they do] not assign fixed and mobile elements but rather distribute a continuous variation" (*TP* 476). Whether I am examining female ejaculation through the uncanny Deleuzian masochist or a Taoist field of immanence,[487] I am positioning myself within an intuitive re-configuring of socialized sexuality. This Deleuze-Guattarian "model of

[486] The closest physiological term "representing" this experience is *psychogenic*—an emotionally induced physical disorder. It is not surprising that this ineffable experience is associated with a disorder. A third type of orgasm, a psychologically stimulated orgasm (here I am not distinguishing between my orgasms and their corresponding ejaculations), (according to Ann Koedt's clitorial hierarchy) "is through mental (cortical) stimulation, where the imagination stimulates the brain, which in turn stimulates the genital corpuscles of the glans [of the clitoris] to set off an orgasm" (Ellman 330).

[487] "It is not a question of experiencing desire as an internal lack, not of delaying pleasure in order to produce a kind of externalizable surplus value, but instead of constituting an intensive body without organs, Tao, a field of immanence in which desire lacks nothing and therefore cannot be linked to any external or transcendent criterion. … The field of immanence or plane of consistency must be constructed. This can take place in very different social formations through very different assemblages (perverse, artist, scientific, mystical, political) with different types of bodies without organs. It is constructed piece by piece, and the places, conditions, and techniques are irreducible to one another" (*TP* 157). For further discussion on the rhizomatic nature of Taoist sexuality, see Mantak Chia and Douglas Abrams Arava's *The Multi-Orgasmic Man*. San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1996.

the production of subjectivity...animates the biopolitical economy" of "becoming different". The chiasma of female ejaculation[488] unfolds, thus "in a becoming, one is deterritorialized" (291).

> In Deleuze and Guattari, a plateau is reached when circumstances combine to bring an activity to a pitch of intensity that is not automatically dissipated in a climax. The heightening of energies is sustained long enough to leave a kind of afterimage of its dynamism that can be reactivated or injected into other activities, creating a fabric of intensive states between which any number of connecting routes could exist (Massumi's translator's forward to *TP* xiv).

This Taoist rhizome offers an irreducible difference among becomings. Both mindfulness and unpredictability play in perpetual disequilibrium. We are undergoing radical transformation that sheds the object while embracing the process. I am proposing a peripatetic sexual agency that engages sexual relations as both mobile and strategic positions. Whether I am exploring my own sexuality, a pedagogical imperative, or my photographic possibilities, my process incarnates a libidinal-somatic intensity. Grosz similarly describes how Lingis revels in the continual non-arrival of orgasm as a manifestation of deterritorialization:

> [Lingis] demonstrates that sexual passion is not reducible to the goal of sexual satiation, but lives and thrives on its own restless impetus. Orgasm need not be understood as the end of the sexual encounter, its final culmination and moment of conversion towards death and dissipation; instead it can be displaced to any and every region

[488] Grosz distinguishes between an Oedipal conceptual system of the citizen-via-family economy and a libidinal economy of an erotics of the unknown: "Desire need not culminate in sexual intercourse, but may end in production. Not the production of a child or a relationship, but the production of sensations never felt, alignment never thought, energies never tapped, regions never known" (*STP* 250).

> of the body, and in addition, seen as a mode of transubstantiation, a conversion from solid to liquid (*STP* 203).

Reinvention of the private ruptures the borders of the public. Using its own publicly designated excesses, my intention is for my work to eroticize and celebrate the private as excess: the monstrous, hysteria, mutation. Similarly, surrealist women artists/writers such as Joyce Mansour, Leonora Carrington, Eileen Agar, Toyen, Frida Kahlo, and Gisele Prassinos reorient the hybrid-monster-body: "all are depictions of a grotesque body which call into question canonic representations, particularly those of the female body...occupy either too much space or not enough, never just the right space. Their very disorganization defies the laws of anatomy and physics..." (Caws 92).

I am compelled to explore the terrain where logic and fragment converge and transform one another's meanings. Throughout this terrain, excessive unexpected juxtapositions cultivate the grotesque. These "disorganized" relationships are nourished by an intuitive cohesive logic—the dream-world of the discontinuous:

> The grotesque body...can be effected by the exaggeration of its internal elements, the turning of the 'inside out,' the display of orifices and gaps upon the exterior of the body. But in addition to this interpenetration of the exterior and interior of the body, an exchange of sexuality and an exchange between animal and human [organic and inorganic] also can be used to effect the grotesque and its corresponding sense of interchange and disorder (Stewart 105).



PLATE 69

Both the disorder of the human body and health "disorders" slip into the realm of the "grotesque". The grotesque ruptures the order of official norms of representation. Congruently, I intend for my images to remind the viewer of shifting positions that require continual negotiations among expectations, desires, and fears. It is the possibility of the viewer's visceral relationship to her/his interpretation of the images that titillates both the imagination and lived relations:

> I think this sense of what it means to be a social persona and the fact that every social person has a private person inside is vital to the sense of community and to any meaningful sense of 'public'-of public service. The way to get to those issues sometimes is organizational and structural, but often it has to do with compassion, with play, with touching the inner self in every individual who recognizes that the next individual has a similar self. And it is that community, whether literal or metaphorical, that is in fact the real public that we as artists might address (Alan Kaprow cited in Lacy 36).

It is my intention that this public intensity of engagement evokes a sense of disorder and difference as potential erotic agency. I am focusing on female ejaculation not as an improvement or progression over non-ejaculatory orgasms (which would imply an inherent lack), not as a mechanical goal-oriented *how to,* but rather, I am critically interested in what the corpo-social implications are of an ejaculating woman. When physical proliferation gives way to theoretical excess and we delve into the embodied zone of *ars erotica, ars theoretica,*

ars politica, we can learn "how to imagine a broader understanding of politics as a form of public pedagogy" (Giroux, truth-out.org).

A Pedagogy of Trauma: Visualizing the Uncanny

Ménage à Trois: ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica

I have made a lived philosophical commitment to integrate the intellectual realm with sexuality in order to invoke a collective cogito-corporeal emancipation. By committing to a reconnection with *ars erotica,* I attempt to bridge the mind-body, personal-political, individual-communal. I characterize this reticulation through my discussion of pedagogical promiscuities—an uncanny *ménage à trois: ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica*. What would you like pleasure to look like when not filtered through the lens of the market? How can we establish and recognize sustainable relationships under which access is produced, not just having or getting access? My photographs, self-portrait videos, and theoretical practice explore *ars erotica*—the fluidity of sex as a key to encouraging social agency. Spinoza's quest for *what a body can do* and Jan Patočka's commitment to living lives in amplitude "so luminously" materialize the creative potential of erotic politics:

> Man enters into amplitude upon submitting to the fascination of the limits that press upon our lives. He is compelled to confront these limits to the extent that he aspires to truth. He who seeks truth cannot allow himself to look for it solely in the flatlands of existence, cannot allow himself to

> be lulled by the quietude of everyday harmony; he must allow to grow within himself the disturbing, the un-reconciled, the enigmatic, that from which ordinary life turns away in order to deal with the order of the day (*BD* 97*)*.

This erotic politics reconstitutes our hegemonies of desire and vulnerability—reclaiming who has imaginative power and control over our bodies. Improvisational communication within the self and negotiation with the other underlies my exploration of eroticism. Eroticism is any intensely satisfying sensation of connectedness to oneself, to others, and to one's environment in which creativity and play (Bataille)[489] enhance our own and others' sense of vitality. This exploration of eroticism resists homogenized social relations and self-censorship: I, like Bataille's characters in *L'Histoire de L'Oeil*, "delighted at going beyond all limits" (40).

Similarly, in Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams,* instrumental thinking and doing reach their limit and give way to "articulations of the unconscious" (*LF* 83)—the space/time of dream logic in which the concept of "either/or does not exist. ...[T]he act of judgment that gives rise to either/or does not take place, leaving us with a situation 'prior to any distinction-making' [Derrida]" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009). The phantasmagoria of the body offers the eternal *recurrence* of the unknown. Octavio Paz writes "what poetry is to language, eroticism is to sex" (cited in Hamil xx). The performance of desire in writing, like female ejaculation, is messy and immediate. The "tenebrous realm of

[489] "It is not work, but *play* that marked the advent of art" (Bataille 1986: 46). Bataille goes on to say how play leads to success and encourages us to thrive in "play whose essence is above all to obey seduction, to respond to passion" (48).

the unconscious" (Harris 20) invites the Reader to stretch the poem she perceives.[490] The critical use of messiness as an engagement with power is reflected in Deleuze's realization of *puissance* that expresses an erotic politic. He describes power as *puissance et pouvoir: puissance* is a "capacity for existence"; "capacity to affect or be affected"; "capacity to multiply connections that may be realized by a given 'body' to varying degrees in different situations" (*TP* xvii). Contra to interpreting as *pouvoir, puissance* enables reading. This relational will to power is neither reduction, interpretation, nor signification.

> What this means is that dream thoughts are never interpretable as conceptual units or in terms of unitary meaning where one word or phrase would refer to or represent one meaning only, but are to be treated like a 'poetical phrase' (Freud 1913: 312), that is, like a metaphor that alludes to at least two contradictory meanings. Freud expresses this when he writes that dream thoughts 'are not infrequently trains of thought starting out from more than one centre' and that each 'train of thought is almost invariably accompanied by its contradictory counterpart, linked to it by antithetical association' (ibid. 346) (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU 2009).

Eroticism can be a key to examine the unconscious mind by *felt*ing the very interactions that are often prohibited or suppressed under social norms. This conscious practice embodies various responsibilities to ourselves and to others. My images reflect this fecund dynamic translation process between erotic politics and Deleuze's philosophical discourses. The lived idea that all is in flux, every "thing" (not as things in themselves, but the a-substantive) moves in a double orbit by

[490] Natural birth is a form of poetry. The natural expansion of the vagina is like the penis—requiring an absence of stress and a flush of oxytocin. The capacity to stretch physically originates both in not knowing that one cannot and knowing that one can.



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helping us understand the relational tension embedded in each moment, each interaction.

> And as a simultaneous passing away and recommencement that never really passes away and never really recommences, the Moment is the perfected image of Nietzsche's simultaneity of destruction and creation, of his internal contradiction in all things—of his criticism of substance, which makes the Moment, and eternal recurrence, the culmination of Nietzsche's ontology (ZMERS 26).

This rhizome of contingent encounters embodies erotic politics—the lived relation between philosophy and sex: "Sex is not bodies, as philosophy is not concepts; each is an act, a relation, and a language" (*BD* 16).

> The beauty and horror of undeniable connectedness is central to my photographic work. My photographs *become* queer.[491] Just as Deleuze and Guattari borrow and proliferate BwOs,[492] I arrange the space, objects, and bodies (including my own) in such a way that blurs the lines that separate them. This luminescent excess inhabits both the domestic and the animalistic. Converging with Deleuze's masochist, my photographs explore the body as a membrane between sensuality and restraint, surrender and resistance. My intention is to de-solve the distinction between the interior and exterior of both psychological and physical encounters.
>
> D&G refer to this molecular/molar double articulation as *disjunctive synthesis*, which is repeated differently as *minoritarian* and *majoritarian* language. …Referred to as *schizo-analysis*, this disjunctive process deterritorializes and reterritorializes pre-existing, reductionist assumptions, representations, and systems of analysis by way of the BwO and rhizomatic assemblage, and from which heretofore anomalous, unknown, and unforeseen multiplicities of knowing and understanding difference can emerge (*TP* 18 cited in Garoian 12).

[491] Queer theory looks "non-normatively at what parts of bodies do, and delegitimates the terms of psychosexual foreclosure according to which bodies have conventionally been represented. …[N]on-identitarian identity, for [Sedgwick], was a condition for queer love and allocentric desire, yielding a diversity of object-choices and a flux of affective attachments. …Gayle Rubin's severance of sex from gender (in the 1970s) was precisely what made apparently contradictory psychosexual subjectivities vitally dialectical and interestingly contingent. ….Drives and objects—though understood to be housed in situated bodies subject to surveillance, to policing, to familial and fiscal restraints-were nonetheless open to new conjugations, readily assimilated by every medium. …Halley and Parker posed the questions: 'Can work be regarded as queer if it's not explicitly "about' sexuality?'…Could work be regarded as feminist if it was no longer about women?'" (Apter 64).

[492] "(BwO) where sedimented organizational assumptions are destratified, and where they manifest as unprecedented and unfamiliar, contiguous and disjunctive entities… destratifies ontological and organizational impediments and reconstitutes them as difference, subjects-in-process, as nonstratified bodies. This boundless process of becoming-other, becoming-intense, which is constituted as the incorporeal embodiment of the BwO, enables getting "outside dualisms...to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo...never ceasing to become" (*AOed* 277).

Henry Giroux speaks of my photographs as exploring a "pedagogy of trauma". By deprivatizing the everyday violence perpetrated on and internalized by the body, I hope to cultivate the liberatory potentials of the "traumatic". My photography's uncanny trauma is unleashed as a non-symbolizable condition. Trauma, like the grotesque and hysteria, exaggerates our vulnerabilities as it disrupts the solidity of things. Trauma, like tension, evokes a shift in expectations: "This interstitial passage *in-between* fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without hierarchy" (Bhabha 16). The Masochist[493] demonstrates and eventually becomes the ultimate non-arrival, a prosthetic as a cybernetic device. This variation of embodied energy opens into a process of incessant becoming. Multiple simultaneous contradictory narratives suggest "...this very insolvability [which] may be the most radical moment in Bataille's text, a moment of automutilation or 'nonlogical difference' in which two necessary and incompatible positions impossibly meet. Bataille's radicality, then, may stem not so much from the content of his 'positions' themselves as from their violent interaction" (*VE* xxiii). This is precisely my intention (both conscious and inadvertent) in the production, presentation, and potentially, the reception of my photographic work. Our Moebius strip re-emerges as a "radical negativity that is in itself unknowable and ungraspable" (*VE* xxii).

[493] "…the masochist's suffering is the price he must pay, not to achieve pleasure, but to untie the pseudobond between desire and pleasure as an extrinsic measure. Pleasure is in no way something that can be obtained only by a detour through suffering; it is something that must be delayed as long as possible because it interrupts the continuous process of positive desire. There is, in fact, a joy that is immanent desire as though desire were filled by itself and its contemplations, a joy that implies no lack or impossibility and is not measured by pleasure since it is what distributes intensities of pleasure and prevents them from being suffused by anxiety, shame, and guilt. In short, the masochist uses suffering as a way of constituting a body without organs and bringing forth a plane of consistency of desire' (*TP* 155). In contrast to a psychoanalytic interpretation/ pathologization, the masochist's absence of *fear, shame, guilt* can serve as a template for active conscious citizenship. It is this "…a becoming-animal essential to masochism" (ibid.) that I advocate.

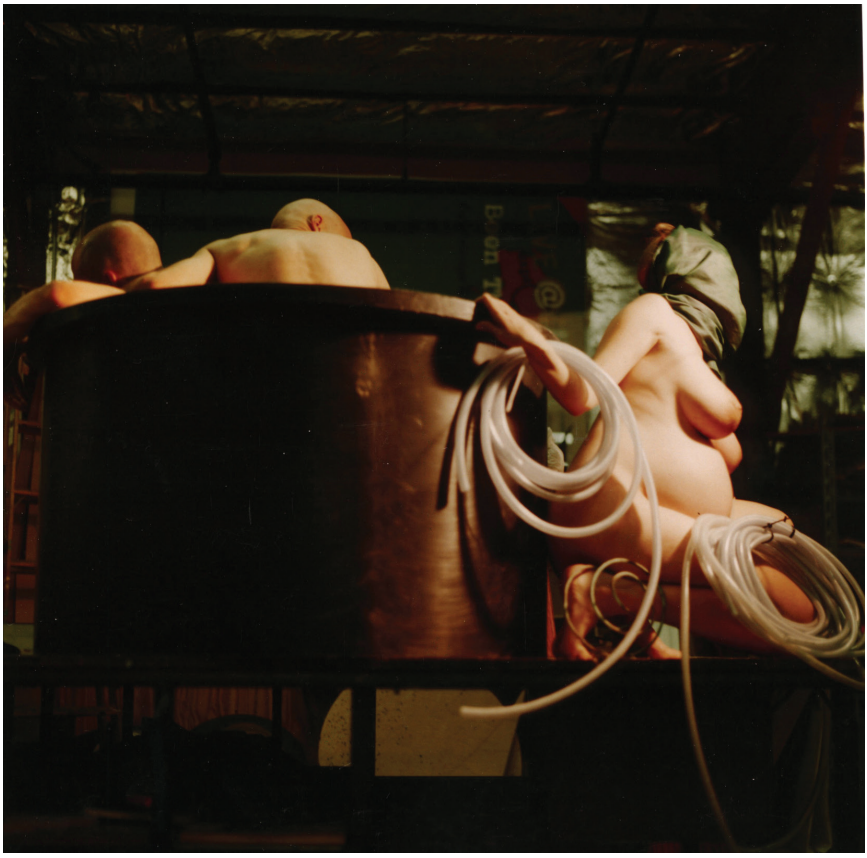


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[494] *Ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica.*

The vitality of the unknown and the fertility of vulnerability undermine the fiction of an intact static body: "When you will have made him a body without organs, then you will have delivered him from all his automatic reactions and restored him to his true freedom" (Antoin Artaud cited in O'Bryan 96). No longer trapped by pre-determined binaries, the BwO incorporates and shares the fluid exchange of autonomy and contingent encounters. This networking of intensive states becomes an erotic politic—the intertwining of ethics and creativity. Such a deterritorialisation disrupts social anxieties by aligning our sexual potential with an uncanny *ménage à trois*:[494] the self within the other, the other within the self, and the disidentified self and other with a zone of indiscernibility proper to 'becoming'" (*TP* 488). In an embodied democracy, citizen-warriors are insistently/insurgently becoming-vulnerable. This aligned becoming addresses Foucault's question-answer: "How does one introduce desire into thought, into discourse, into action? How and must desire deploy its forces within the political domain and grow more intense in the process of our overturning the established order? *Ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica*" (Foucault's introduction to *AOed* xii). Within the context of conscious fractal sexuality as social action, I explore Deleuzian topologies of sexuality as a continual non-arrival.

"There is nothing more marvelous or madder than real life."

E.T.A. Hoffman, *The Sandman*

6 Dis-figurement: Somatizing Our Liberation

When I first read *Angry Women*, Andrea Juno's collection of interviews with radical pro-pleasure feminists, I immediately identified with Ronell—scholar, performance artist, and my private yoga student. Ronell explores the possibilities of "a feminism that is joyous, relentless, outrageous, [and] libidinally charged" (127). She asks, "How are you going to make the world safe for true deviance, true play, a genuine expression of aggression as desire, and sexual expression that displaces aggression?" (151). My work generates an erotic agency which is, in Ronell's framework,

"flexible in life-having humor, irony, desire and pleasure...the irony is that letting go and experiencing the source of pain paradoxically revitalizes the body and self to experience joy and life. ...[W]e need a language change, which means, among other things, we have to actively affirm mutation" (147, 141). By flooding both metaphorical and experiential boundaries between pleasure and pain, desire and denial, sensuality and restraint, my intention is for my images to relibidinalize the vulnerability of asymmetrical relational encounters. "Transformation comes from shifting balances rather than demolition and reconstruction" (Mulgan 387). Practicing the ineffable, my images demonstrate such aleatory-becomings.

Transformation is a form of prosthetic commitment to the unfamiliar—adapting to the asymmetry of the unfamiliar. Rooted in our history of adaptation, being a Jew has historically meant being a prosthetic (as previously discussed in the context of Schirmacher's life-techniques—an embodied *conatus*). Spinoza's physics demonstrate this uncanny, prostheticized transformation implicit in an emancipatory ethic—a remaking of immanence:

> ...it is the body that will reveal a model of practice. ...Spinozian physics is an empirical investigation to try to determine the laws of the interaction of bodies: the encounters of bodies, their composition and decomposition, their compatibility (or composability), and their conflict. A body is not a fixed unit with a stable or static internal structure. On the contrary, a body is a dynamic relationship whose internal

> structure and external limits are subject to Change. What we identify as a body is merely a temporarily stable relationship (IIP13Def). ...This physical universe of bodies at motion and rest, in union and conflict, will provide the context in which we can delve deeper into the functioning and structure of power: 'In order to really think in terms of power, on must first pose the question in relation to the body' (257). Spinoza's physics are the cornerstone of his ethics (*APGD* 91, 92).

Aesthetic Obscuratism: The Ineffable, The Incomplete, *L'Informe*

By disentangling society's phallic illusion of order and its concomitant binaries, we inhabit the interplay of empathy–not a unified merging, but the fluid exchange of autonomy and sexual difference as conscious strategies/intensities. Conscious choice imbues the psycho-anatomical within a framework that helps us thrive on contradictions and ambiguities in our chaotic daily lives. I am suggesting a collective uncanny in which, for example, prostitution, pornography, and public sex could become an integral part of an explicitly collaborative sex-positive/pro-pleasure feminist social emancipatory project. This project accentuates both the ecstasy and the rage involved in the collective transformation from our restrictive homogenizing society to one in which celebration of mutation operates as the political strategies of the everyday: "a poetic sensibility teaches celebration at these moments of radical incomprehensibility" (*LL* 18). Caillois extends Ronell's exaltation:

"Just as order, which preserves but is used up, if founded on proportion and distinction, so disorder, which regenerates, implies excess and confusion" (Caillois 119).

I am like Cixous' woman man who "abandons herself with joyous relief to her vital uncertainty" (1991: 82). And like her muse Lispector, we crave "the profound organic disorder that nevertheless triggers the intuiting of an underlying order. The great power of potentiality" (ibid. 37). Bataille's lust-ridden characters, obsessed and warped by their own lewd desires, are driven to the very demands Cixous exhorts:

> rejoice in the terror [of the] plunge... Let yourself go! Let go of everything! Lose everything! Take to the air. Take to the open sea. Take to letters... vomit up everything, give up everything...seek out the shattered, the multiple I...shake off the Law...there's nothing behind you, everything is yet to come (ibid. 40).

1980. Paris. I found home the first time I visited *Le Musée Picasso*. As a nine year old overwhelmingly seduced by Picasso's contorted bodies, the world suddenly made sense. I recognized myself within a vulnerable swarm. Integrity. Clarity. Exposure. Picasso's grotesquely beautiful heads integrated into monstrous forms, helped me feel at ease in my own body—dissonant and rich with life-affirming energy and sensual and political potential. My body-mind straddled the dialectical possibilities: "Understanding, definition, and concept are opposed to ravishment or rapture, to the seizing of

consciousness by an ecstatic sensuality that overflows reason in all directions" (*BD* 69). Mirroring Cixous, Bataille's characters' "plurality of impulses" (*Will to Power Sections 484-485)* reminded me of Picasso's figures. Their "brutal frenzy" and surrender to the "lewd" confirmed who I am, who I have always been.

Congruently, Bellmer's displaced body parts "as materialization of hysterical conversion symptoms" (*BD* 18) formed his commitment to mind-body relations. The lush, precise excesses and the fertility of chaos in both Picasso and Bataille spawn an economy of over-abundance, an erotics of the uncanny, digesting the stranger within. I saw this stranger in myself and this is who I see when I read and re-read Bataille. Similarly, Lispector and Cixous ask, "Who are you who are so strangely me?" (1991: xiv). "Breaking down walls...leads to the recognition of the stranger even in those one loves, or is" (ibid. xii). "Love your fellow being as if he were your stranger..." (ibid. xvii). Cixous and Lispector lead us right back into the pregnant chiasma of no resolution. My intention is to move beyond the question of who is disfigured by whose power, and challenge how that disfigurement can be re-conceptualized as a vibrant and affirmative collaborative social movement.

Soon after I first visited *Le Musée Picasso*, I saw my first Japanese Butoh dance performance. I understood the outrageousness of Butoh, like the erotic, as a key to examine the unconscious



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mind by plunging into our carnal nature that is often prohibited and suppressed under both Western and Eastern social norms. Butoh asks, "What does it mean to be incarnate on earth?" Butoh is not only performance, but also the embodiment of one of the most precise critical political actions in the history of consciousness of the body.[495]

> The dance evokes images of decay, of fear and desperation, images of eroticism, ecstasy and stillness...the essence of butoh lies in the mechanism through which the dancer stops being himself and becomes someone or something else...Perhaps this enables us to bring our bodies back to their original state and reconcile us with ourselves and with the world around us. The more you adhere to the details of the body, the more they expand to a cosmological scale. When you continue that process, the purity of the body is incredibly refined (Ashikawa Yôko cited in Kurihara 1997: 159).

The primal messiness[496] of Butoh incites a socio-erotic ethic rooted in the private *as* public. Cixous revels in the excess as she explores the cunt[497] as self: "Wild thing or woman? With one hand she holds her *animale* pressed between her thighs, she caresses it briskly (as a 'wild thing'). While with the other hand she does her utmost to kill it (as a man's 'woman'). Happily, as ill luck would have it, beating it only adds to its joy"—its "overfullness of femininity" (1991: 35). Converging with Cixous, Nietzsche's excess of life suffering and pleasure has been tremendously reassuring to me–his sublime ecstasy and over-fullness (overflowing, abundance, awe, wander, wonder as creative

[495] "Butoh has accomplished a reversal in the aesthetic consciousness...a catalyst for the deconstruction of all values, and includes the deconstruction of the self. …Butoh burst upon the world in 1959 in Tokyo in a performance by Tatsumi Hijikata and Yoshito Ono that was immediately labeled scandalous by Japanese society. Violent and sexual, irrational and frightening, Hijikata danced in search of his own body. What does it mean to be incarnate on earth - "a corpse standing upright?" Butoh's founders, Kazuo Ono and Hijikata, trained in Western dance and in the German Neue Tanze tradition. ... Convinced that the exploration of forbidden sexual passions could free the body from artifice, rejecting dance as self-expression and drawing inspiration from nature and from the imagination, from the crippled and the blind. ...One is the concept of the empty body. ...Good butoh is like a Rorschach test. The audience reads their own story in the actions. …It must be absurd. It is a mirror which thaws fear...it is the unveiling of the inner life. ...For children, there is only the present. They are not afraid. Fear envelops us in a fine mesh. We must remove this mesh. ...We should be afraid! The reason that we suffer from anxiety is that we are unable to live with our fear. Anxiety is something created by adults. The dancer, through the butoh spirit, confronts the origins of his fears: a dance which crawls towards the bowel of the earth...Butoh plays with time, it also plays with perspective, if we, humans, learn to see things from the perspective of an animal, an insect, or even inanimate

principles) as a love of the world (as a body both separate and within). If we are truly conscious of ourselves in relation to ourselves and to others, we inhabit the excess of the uncanny: "[It] is a figure and experience of what is at once inside and added on, always already at home yet an outsider, constitutive yet supplementary. ...The uncanny overflows" (Royle 19).

For example, during my unanticipated abortion[498] in 2008, I consciously inhabited the uncanny. I practiced being present within the violation I had chosen to impose on my body *while* not constricting or contracting my physical or energetic corpo*reality*. Ronell incites:

> It is perhaps no mere coincidence that non-Western medical practices come from a climate that frequently supports the multiplicity of bodies that exercise their abundant rights based on the claims of energetic or subtle beings, including those promoted by and inclusive of the *Kama Sutra* (Ronell's introduction to *BD* xvii).

Ronell's emphasis on the inherent multiplicity of bodies demonstrates the potential of re-orienting vulnerability as strength. Not only can we experiment/play with countless energetic and textual corporeal fields, we can set "aside the expressions of the 'living body' in order to free the capacities of other bodies by exploring the disjunctions between the functional body, the expressive body, and the indeterminate body" (Rancière discussing modern dance, 2006: 8). Analogous to Rancière's corporeal

objects. The road trodden everyday is alive ... we should value everything... happenings and spectacle... they expressed their souls to reveal the banality of human life in its ugliness, depravity and beauty. Heretically ritualistic subjects...It becomes a catalyst for the deconstruction of all values, including the deconstruction of the self. ...A polymorphic body in a mysterious ceremony" (gathered from multiple conversations with contemporary Butoh dancers).

[496] In a discussion with Hubertus von Amuluxen about my photographic work, he drew on the sexual practice of Japanese Bukaki in the context of derailing the private-public dichotomy.

[497] Cixous' unrepresentable cunt intersects with the "wildness" of Barthes' *punctum*.

[498] Abortions can represent an uncanny act—the womb simultaneous functioning as a home and a space of perpetual exile.

cartography of modern dance,[499] Irigaray pluralizes woman's sexuality:[500]

> So woman does not have a sex organ? She has at least two of them, but they are not identifable as ones. Indeed she has many more. Her sexuality, always at least double, goes even further: it is *plural. ...Woman has sex organs more or less everywhere.* She finds pleasure almost anywhere. Even if we refrain from invoking the hystericization of her entire body, the geography of her pleasure is far more diversified, more multiple in its differences, more complex, more subtle, than is commonly imagined—in an imaginary rather too narrowly focused on sameness...(1977: 28).

What happens when socialized norms are so deeply ingrained in us that our imaginations contort our perceptions of reality—become more threatening than reality?[501] "Certain philosophers revalorize deception as a playful honoring of life's multiplicity, rather than as a subjugation of the lie to truth" (Ronell 1991: 128). The emancipatory possibilities of ambiguity, which our culture teaches us to see as duplicitous, must be specified within an exploration of the complexities of corporeal representation. By reconceptualizing disorder and mutation, I intend for my photographs to continually evoke, reorient, and interpenetrate specific corporeal relationships and experiences. Bataille's "The Solar Anus" thrives in frenetic ambiguities of relation: "It is clear that the world is purely parodic, in other words, that each thing seen is the parody of another, or is the same thing in a deceptive form" (*VE* 5). Through appropriation, exaggeration, and unexpected juxtapositions, the collaborative intervention involved in constructing and

[499] Rancière's discussion confirms one reason why I see my photographs as a form of dance and why I have collaborated with dancers and choreographers since I began to shoot and exhibit my photographs. (See my first exhibition at Sarah Lawrence College—a collaboration with dancer environmental-activist, Katherine Kendall).

[500] I do not want to *limit* this discussion to woman's sexuality. As I explore in detail in the section "Protean Sexualities", I am calling for a re-imagination also of male sexuality.

[501] For example, the consistent rationale for my photographs being censored has been rooted in a *misrecognition* (Eve Sedgwick's term) of objects and relationships that did not physically exist in the frame of the image.

viewing my photographs becomes an approach to instigate insurgent intersubjectivities. "Integrity is based not on artists' allegiances to their own visions but on an integration of their ideas with those of the community" (Lacy 39). My intention is for my images to provoke this move from a privatized aesthetic to a political "communal" intimacy—an erotic agency of *convivencia*.[502]

[502] In the context of my work, I liken *convivencia* with Deleuzoguattarian concept of the swarm.

As my own body and those of the model and the viewer shift between states of containment and states of excess, an aesthetic of tension is created. My viewers tell me I am accountable for their social and personal psychological projections onto my work—how they reframe my images. During my first year at the European Graduate School, one of my fellow students broke down in angry tears while I was projecting my photographs in Sam Weber's class on *The Uncanny*. She later confronted me with accusations of irresponsibly imposing what she characterized as my violent visual representations. Where I see mutation as celebration, others may see mutilation, which they label as obscene, pornographic, and irreducibly offensive. Where I see a lust for life, they see imposed abuse or even death. In the eyes of the threatened viewer, sensuous, squeezed plums gliding over my model's collar bones, become blood; ripe guava between my mirrored blistered feet becomes raw flesh; mirrored refractions in my grandfather's shaving mirror become fragmented, dissected misogynous representations. In the viewers' pre-determined imaginations, I portray violated, cut-up (de-cided) women's bodies.

2007. Seoul. The senior editor of Korea's most prominent art magazine, *Wolgan Misool,* Korea's *ArtForum*, interpreted the Peeping Tom/voyeuristic nature of my images as representing male sensibility. He was one of many to express this position. According to this view, the male gaze is elicited not just from the indirect, secretive angles from which I shoot, but also the way in which the characters in my photographs respond to the camera. According to the editor, their expressions look like they are reacting to a phallic, authoritative presence, not a woman's receptive gaze; and, since I happen to be a woman, I must be gay "or bisexual,[503] or at least a self-confident, assertive female..." I emphatically suggest. I thought this was a curious, but fascinating analysis of gender and power. After having enthusiastically proclaimed my bisexuality during these conversations, I realized that perhaps this was just another example of how deeply we are entrenched in the invisibility of sexism. If only the male gaze is seen as fragmenting and voyeuristic, possibilities of perception are confiscated to this gender reduction. As mentioned earlier, in the mid-90s, my work was accused of "being anti-feminist"—objectifying the female body. Then I was labeled sexist, now I am perceived to be a man or a lesbian. These claims made by university employees, Western feminists, and Korean art critics shrink the vision of the human body—reducing it to mere flesh to be controlled or desired.

The tightly bound alliance between mainstream feminism and unchallenged/institutionalized sexism remains unchallenged within a hetero-

[503] As a bisexual, we are expected to be both whore and virgin—a manifestation of marionismo. Bisexuality also moves beyond the dual into the multiple: "Bisexuality –that is to say the location within oneself of the presence of both sexes, evident and insistent in different ways according to the individual, the non-exclusion of difference or of a sex, and starting with the 'permission' one gives oneself, the multiplication of the effects of desire's inscription on every part of the body and the other body" (Schor 41 nt. 39).



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normative hermeneutic framework. In Jill Nagle's anthology, *Whores and Other Feminists,* stripper Stacy Reed refutes mainstream feminist imposed myths about her chosen profession:

> Objectification literally means to hold oneself as subject and everything and everyone else as object, the object of one's actions and thoughts. According to this definition, traditional feminists objectify strippers. This paradox grows increasingly obvious considering the us/them construct such discussions inevitably employ. 'Those strippers undermine our ends.' Are not strippers and their patrons the objects of these women's disapproval? (182).

2005. Lyon. During the opening of my exhibition in France, "The Gestation Project", a male viewer asked me if the naked pregnant women in The Red Room photographs were in a brothel. He was the eighth or ninth person of either biological gender to ask me this question. I told him that these pregnant women were not in a brothel, but in a nightclub in San Francisco and asked him if the models in the photographs had been men, naked and posed similarly, what would his associations have been? His immediate response was that clearly the naked men would have been seen as patrons waiting for their prostitutes. The jarring sexism of his comment echoes Žižek's argument about how men fear becoming-woman—in this case, a swarm of women.[504] Man's aggression towards woman may be rooted in fear of themselves—their own primal nature, their own stranger within/the female within—the internal abject of becoming-animal.

[504] This swarm such contagions as Federico Fellini's 1980 *City of Women*. Also, see my problematicization of rendering sex-work obscene.

Anxious Interventions and Uncanny Improvisations: Molecular Meat Round Two /Second Course

As a sex radical[505] Deleuzian nomadic feminist writer and visual artist, my photographs have been frequently censored because of ambiguous gender representation and people's taken-for-granted fear of the unfamiliar—or what the viewer identified as uncertain or unknown. A few years ago, I was invited to participate in an exhibition sponsored by San Francisco's apparently not so radical fetish scene—Women-of-Color BDSM (Bondage Domination Sado-Masochism). Among the four participating photographers, I was the only woman. After months of preparation, my photographs were abruptly censored by the curator because of our conflicting interpretations of the concept of fetish. She expressed disgust at what she interpreted in my photos as placenta emerging from a "man's" crotch, and at a woman with hair-growth on her toes—an unexpected and ironic gender reversal. Her bottom-line was that the images of the body needed to be unambiguously beautiful, i.e. hairless, well-groomed, and gender-specific:

> I believe I stated that there can be nudity, however, it should be tasteful, fetish-style sexy, artistic and in keeping with the 2257 [code][506] i.e.: No sexual stimulation, no intercourse, no erect penises, no fingers in vaginas, no spread eagled legs for the women, no spread butt anus shots, fisting, pornographic inspired. The images we would like to present will give a flavor of the various fetishes. However, many aspects of fetish are about the sexy clothes, shoes, props, play toys, hair and make-up…

Apparently, I should have photo-shopped out all physical "imperfections". Like Cixous, I am

[505] Sex radical thought embodies a chiasmic unity of feminist convictions and challenges.

[506] I scrutinize the complexities of the 2257 code in the context of Butler's investigation of censorship as speech-producing, Foucault's internalized fascism, and Lyotard's "enemy within" (Schirmacher, EGS 2009)": "…the Net functions as a disciplinary apparatus through the use of transparency. If people feel that they are under surveillance, they are less likely to act in a manner that is beyond normalized activity; that is, they are less likely to express themselves freely, and to otherwise act in a manner that could produce political and social changes within their environments. In this sense, the Net serves the purpose of negating activity rather than encouraging it. It channels people towards orderly homogenous activity, rather than reinforcing the acceptance of difference that democratic societies need" (Net Criticisms 152-3). All of my images after July 1995 are subject to the 2257 code. I need a copy of each model's I.D. And a model release form and include a statement (on website and/or any publication) which proves the age and consent of each model—the statement must include the address where the records are kept—not a home address, where I could be harassed). The Free Speech Coalition may subpoena 2257 code paperwork that would help me comply with Federal Law.

compelled by "…the need not to submit the subject of writing, of painting [in my case, of photography and teaching yoga], to the laws of cultural cowardice and habit…not to make things pretty, not to make things clean" (1991: 118).

Bataille expresses his contempt for society's (both marginal[507] and mainstream) "disgust

[507] Bataille's break from André Breton involved numerous contradictory enfoldments. "[I]n Breton we see a certain configuration of values that he opposes to Bataille: the refusal of the interpenetration of reason and bestial reason; the desire to psychoanalyze (hence to categorize and cure Bataille)..." (*VE* xii).



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for everything that emanates from warm and living flesh" (*AS 2,3* 63). Paradoxically, or perhaps congruent with a Moebius-strip / torodial perspective: "Bataille suffers from a strong physical revulsion in the domain of sexuality. 'The body is a thing; it is vile.' He links erotic activity not to reproduction or to pleasure but to pain and death" (Shattuck 241). While his view of the detestable sexualized body appears to contradict his critique of mainstream childrearing,[508] it remains consistent with his commitment to a sadomasochist[509] "impersonal egoism" (ibid.).

> We must *artificially* deform [our children] in our image and, as our most precious possessions, instill in them the horror of that which is only natural. We tear them away from nature by washing them, then by dressing them. But we will not rest until they share the impulse that made us clean them and clothe them, until they share our horror of the life of the flesh, of life naked, undisguised, a horror without which we would resemble the animals (*AS 2,3* 63).

Bataille's contentious relationship with André Breton and the Surrealist Movement parallels my perverse experience with the SF BDSM community.[510] Bataille saw Breton as bourgeois; the only pathology he condemned was "the pathological refusal to embrace stinking decomposition—an embrace that, from the point of view of any dialectic of the cure, must itself be pathological" (VE xv).

We have become addicted to virtual reality's illusory perfection—as witnessed in the 1975 science-fiction thriller, *Stepford Wives*. If an underground queer sub-culture in the most

[508] Bataille explicitly condemns a childrearing that is hygiene-directed, one that denies children's relationship to play, disorder, and bodily curiosities/awareness/discoveries. He no doubt would be horrified by contemporary society's condemnation of parents who bath with their children and who sleep with their children (euphemistically reappropriated by the Attachment Parenting movement as "co-bathing" and "co-sleeping"—as if the act of labeling renders these parenting choices less indecent): ABC television recently ran a story of an ad depicting two posters of a baby lying in a bed next to a large cleaver. In one, the baby is white; in the other, the baby is black. The caption declares: "YOUR BABY SLEEPING NEXT TO YOU CAN BE JUST AS DANGEROUS". http://news.yahoo.com/milwaukee-runs-provocative-ads-wake-parents-dangers-co-213117311.html

Once again completely inaccurate and decontextualized statistics are misused to reify the climate of fear and insecurity prevalent in raising children in this country.

[509] "Bataille's shocking treatment of his wife and daughter can be documented in Marcel More, *G. Bataille et la mort de Laure*" (Shattuck 241).

[510] In contrast to Bataille who saw shit smear in Dali's *The Lugubrious Game* as a "vehicle for liberation: through this stain 'a new and real virility is rediscovered by this person [the man in his underwear] in ignominy and horror themselves'" (*VE* xii), Breton had an evident aversion to filth

and excrement. As one of the primary Surrealist artists, I find Breton's disgust extremely peculiar, but then again, consistent with contradictions embedded within contemporary "outsider" sub-cultures.

[511] "All the real atmosphere of shared living is barred from the industrial town in the name of 'health'...sanitary ideology disguises the most secret deficiencies" (Virilio 100).

[512] See my discussion on Virilio's *Sanitary Ideology* on pages 89 and 142, and in footnotes 42, 76, 422, and 516.

"experimental" city in the US is so deeply rooted in hetero-normative patriarchal conventional concepts of the real: i.e., assimilationist consumerism, sanitized beauty, and psychological comfort, then, as social exiles, where can we go?[511]

Clearly, not across the Bay Bridge to Oakland. In San Francisco's City Hall, my image of a mirrored shaved head was interpreted either as testicles or as hairy breasts, and was also censored. In the Oakland Federal Building, the same image was censored for racialized interpretations: it was Black History Month—the head *was* seen as a head, as opposed to testicles and breasts, but this time as a head of enslaved bodies. Also, the justification for removing this particular image included references to the monks who had been recently burned in Tibet and to the Oklahoma Federal Building Bombing. I was accused of depicting and even celebrating the mutilated, fragmented bodies of subjugated ethnic others.

A post-humanist reading of both censorship accounts, this masquerade of morality, reiterates the imperative to look beyond the censor—taken-for-granted zones of consumption, neutrality, and ultimately hyper-conformism. Hygienic compulsions,[512] convenience, and prohibition propagate our cultural ideological addictions:

> **...**always a question of countering animal disorderliness with the principle of perfect humanity, for which the flesh and animality do not exist. Full social humanity radically excludes the disor-



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der of the senses; it negates its natural principle; it rejects this given. ...[A]sexual humanity... shelters its values from the violence and dirtiness of passion" (*AS 2,3* 56).

Both institutionalized censorship and internalized fears of socio-pathological behavior,[513] conveniently manifest as self-censorship. "Bataille uses Hegel's dialectical term—*aufheben*—to make his case: 'Transgression should not be confused with a reversion to 'the state of nature'; it suspends [*leve*] the prohibition without suppressing it….a complicity between the law and breaking the law' (1986: 39)" (Shattuck citing Bataille 241).[514] Bataille's understanding of transgression mirrors Foucault's *scientia sexualis*—both the manipulation of prohibition and the spectaclized confession play out a collusive reproduction of habitual comfort zones.

Since the 1990s, my photographs have been publicly defended by freedom of speech organizations such as the Electronic Freedom Foundation (EFF), artsave/People for the American Way, and the ACLU. By witnessing people's reactionary tendencies[515] and unconscious addiction to the cult of standardization, these experiences with censorship help me clarify my role as a teacher, activist, writer, and visual artist. My images and collaborative performances, position the body to defy assumptions of familiar categorization by blurring constructed boundaries of difference/sameness, pleasure/

[513] See Lotringer's *Overexposed: Treating Sexual Perversion in America*. Net*Care,* the name itself demands scrutiny!, is a sex-offender "rehabilitation" program. It is governed by the state's Sex Offender Management Board (SOMB). I was unable to uncover who comprises this board). Net*Care*'s homogenous rules are another example of the ways in which lack of specificity creates a scaffolding of mindless fear. Someone who has been convicted of streaking or flashing endures the exact same disciplinary measures as someone who has committed *rape*. Those who have committed acts of indecent exposure and pedophiles can end up in the same rehabilitation programs because judges don't seem to have many options when sentencing convicted individuals and differentiating between misdemeanor and 'felony counts.' In "Pedagogical Promiscuities", I explore some of the institutional perverse paradoxes that reflect Foucault's assertion about modern civilizations contradictory compulsions towards sex and sexuality. Also, see my discussion of pornography and Arendt's warning of "lawless law". Another example of society's perverse value misalignment is the often criminalized practice of "Sexting": if a teenage girl texts a naked picture of *herself* to her boyfriend and he puts it on his Facebook or myspace page, they both could be arrested and both be charged for child pornography.

[514] In my concluding chapter I explore the fertility of disentangling collaborative emancipatory

pain, expectation/unpredictable. As a child of a holocaust survivor, multiple, contradictory perspectives feel inherent to the way I function both personally and politically. Instead of automatically defining difference as threatening, within the context of the uncanny, my intention is to construct environments in which creativity, corporeality, and subjectivity become pedagogical tendencies towards social change: Nietzsche demands, "What else is love but understanding and rejoicing in the fact that another person lives, acts, and experiences otherwise than we do…?" (Ulfers, Nietzsche in Contemporary Thought seminar, EGS 2008). Inherently, we discover how we are connected to what we think is unfamiliar.

Through mapping and storytelling, a circuitous interstitial discourse that meanders and ducks into interconnections and collaborations with the Moment, the Now,[516] my visual work vivifies the potential of creative deformation. Zummer has described my photographs as "artifactual environments in which edge conditions are made salient". Once again, we revisit the magnification of the abject. By defamiliarizing that which we take for granted, my images imbricate the unknown. The erotics of not knowing, an extension of Kant's unknowable noumenon, sustains the possibilities of reconceptualizing the grotesque, the vulnerable: "'Non-deceptive' language would have to give up figurality-in other words, deny its dimension of play and experimentation" (Ronell 1999: 138). The claim that the representation of

grassroots movements in relation to Arendt's inquiry into Eichmann and the paradoxical implications of "lawless law".

[515] In 2004, one month before my stepmother (my father's third wife) was to give birth, his ex-wife brought charges against me. Three years earlier, my brother, who was eleven years old at the time, had modeled for me with our father and our stepmother (third wife) in the living room of our home, which happens to be painted with red and orange walls. All models wore clothing. Three years after I shot these photographs, my father's ex-wife, my brother's mother, had me interrogated by Child Protection Services. Because I had photographed him, I was questioned at the police department for alleged "abuse". Astonishingly, her unfounded and horrifying claim was solely based on the fact that her son (my brother) was photographed in front of a red wall—which she claimed symbolized violence and sex. My brother, father, and his wife were not naked in the photographs and no one is touching one another. Again, one's predisposition to signs and cultural triggers can twist reality into violent reactionary and dangerously accusatory behavior. Ironically, Boulder, Colorado, where this violation of my rights took place, has been deemed by the Dalai Lama as one of the most spiritual communities in the world.



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visually fragmented, i.e. objectified, (de-cided) women's bodies is inherently violating sabotages the intimacy, play, and collaborative tension within my physically constructed images (in contrast to digital photography's tendency towards Photoshop). My images articulate a language beyond the rational—what is represented within the confines of the real, the expected, the familiar. My photographic series of nipples compressed beneath wire-gridded glass, nipples and ears pinched by rusting pliers or delicately threaded through sharp metal slits, toes pulling a tongue, oscillate throughout the porousness of the ineffable. I do not intend for these images to dehumanize, but rather to shift the stakes of the official aesthetic. The body-as-object is not a given, but rather a question—the body-as-process: "As with Nietzsche, the world is "not an object. It is a process" (NAF 19). I engage with the body as inherently a surrealist project of processes: a "temporarily stable assemblage of coordinated elements" (*Ethics* IIP13Def). Surrealist and Dadaist women artists such as Hannah Hoch, Claude Cahun, Frida Kahlo, Meret Oppenheim, Ann Hamilton, Hannah Wilke, Marina Abramovic and I are

> ...developing a new language for women by tearing down the barriers that separate not only the genders but the decent from the indecent, the private from the public, the poetic from the gruesome, the perverse from the normal. [Or are they creating] a vision of a private hell in which the female body cannot transgress its own division between pleasure (*jouissance)* and pain, desiring and hating itself for it (Caws 93).

[516] The law of impermanence emphasizes the Moment, the now, *atta. Atta* in Sanskrit translates as *now. Atta* is the first word of B.K.S. Iyengar's *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*—a manifesto for social behavior and individual ethics.



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My images parallel Kristeva's psychoanalytic investigations of the fertile intersections the abject produces[517]—meat as montage. The abject quality of our contradictory relationships to our bodies-as-meat links the sacred with the "horrific powers of impurity" (Krauss 237).

1994. New York. I see Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 *Battleship Potemkin* for the first time. The rotten meat scene continues to seduce and haunt me. Eisenstein conveys to his audience that the meat is contaminated with maggots by superimposing magnifying-like lenses onto the film image. The audience is privileged to see writhing larva—ravenous grubs whose infestation will, ironically, contribute to the sailors' starvation—whereas these protein-rich maggots could have saved their lives![518] Both Georges Didi-Huberman and Barthes have explored the "Eisenstein-Bataille connection... between the often 'fetishistic' use of close-ups in Eisenstein's films and Bataille's text on the big toe" (Krauss 73). During this time period, I photographed Bataille's *big toe* performing various activities: grabbing a human tongue, poised in relation to a bird skeleton and my leg hair wax strips, melting enormous icicles.[519] This performance is a *déformance,*[520] rendering the objects *l'informe* through their conflictual relations. "Corporal politics-making manifest the body in all its vulnerable, disarticulated, morbid aspects, in its apertures, curves, protuberances where the boundaries between self and world are porous-is somehow indecent" (Lacquer 14).

[517] "Kristeva's theorization of the abject had a very different starting point from Bataille's, one that was not primarily social—for all its chapters based on the anthropology of Mary Douglas' *Purity and Danger*—but part philosophical and part psychoanalytic" (Krauss 237).

[518] This missed opportunity to survive is another example of civilization's failure.

[519] The toes of my foot clutching my tripod; the toes of my right foot wrapped around a tremendous icicle; a magnifying mirror reflecting my bloody tampax which is wedged inside a crevice of my step-father's patinaed-turquoise sheet metal; his head precariously balanced as icicles slowly drip into his ear; my grandmother's forty-eight year-old dentures straddling the space between his ear and the mirror. It is hot in the room-before I can catch myself, my foot is slipping down the icicle-my other toes lose their grip of the tripod. I feel as though my pelvis will split as I barely catch my camera before it crashes into the pile of melting icicles and Don's head—somehow I take the shot—gather enough strength and press my thumb down on the shutter release...is this somehow "indecent"*?* (Personal journal entry 1994).

[520] See Weber's performance as *déformance* in *LF* 30.

Disarticulated membranes are rendered indecent precisely because of their inherent ambiguity. Rancière distinguishes between Eisenstein's principles of montage[521] and visual propaganda material: "Eisenstein systematically denies us this sense of certainty" (Rancière 29). A quintessential Jewish characteristic is one of uncertainty, always questioning, looking beyond what is apparent. In my conclusion, I discuss this "Jewish" drive to question in the context of Arendt's commitment to thinking as living. I associate this animated thinking as a non-linear series of collisions[522]—collusions and contentions. "Eisenstein chose the word 'collision' to express the effect of juxtaposing two shots, and it is this concept of dynamic energy that permeates much of his writing on the various forms of montage—rhythmic, metric, graphic, planar, spatial, tonal, overtonal, contrapuntal…" (MacDougall 224).

The Jewish body, like the woman's body, is enfolded within contradictory collisions—psychosocial expectations inhabiting both private and public. These *collusions* intensify the potential of our bodies to inhabit our otherness—while resisting predictable, prescribed fragmentations. The resulting psycho-physiological effects (though non-linear) fold us into the uncanny interval. It is within and beyond this third (sur)reality that we become-vulnerable. Cixous' *Laugh of the Medusa* charges: "If a woman is a whole, it's a whole compressed of parts that are wholes, not simple partial objects but a moving, limitlessly changing ensemble…an immense astral space

[521] See my discussion of Benjamin's montage of cuts and non-cuts in "Prostheses and Parasites".

[522] Avant-garde composer Morton Feldman, referred to the abstract experience in music and art as a "collision with the instant" (Houston Museum of Art exhibition catalogue, 1964).



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not organized around any one sun that's any more of a star than the others" (358). Projecting their own interpretations onto my photograph's through mis-take, misrecognition, *feminist*-censors reduce fragmentation to misogyny. Instead, I suggest an everted reading of Cixous' wholes which are fed by both Spinoza's multiplicities and Freud's dream-logic. Deleuze and Guattari buttress Spinoza's emphasis of "individuated multiplicities": "What we are talking about is not the unity of substance but the infinity of the modifications that are part of one another on this unique plane of life" (*AOed* 254). Converging with Freud's uncanny dream logic, my photographs' surrealist tendencies indicate a tendency for a unification of contradictory juxtapositions.

With an acute awareness of Eisenstein's hybrid Jewish/Russian Orthodox identity in post-revolutionary Russia, I can't help but associate his magnified maggots with the host-parasite historical identity of Jews in Russia and within other adopted countries. As discussed in my introduction, since biblical times, Jews have inhabited a host-parasite space of alterity within their adopted countries —an uncanny zone of the stranger within. Fear of unpredictable (thus seemingly dangerous) interpretations has been institutionalized across both time and space. We are taught to resist the gap between negation and affirmation, the spectral, the uncanny, the stranger within—feeding the machine of self-censorship and its accompanying acceptable social behavior. We cannibalize our imaginations.

I make self-portraits that incorporate Bataille's reading of the history of the abattoir [523] in the context of *l'informe*[524] and a Heideggerian query into "what is it to dwell?" Being at home in exile while being exiled at home,[525] I once again resonate with the abject. My early series of self-portrait/road-kill photographs explore the public-private conflation of the parasitic nature of death—both exilic and nomadic. My *unheimlich* and everted self-destabilized spatiality is reminiscent of Louise Bourgeois' inverted domesticity—woman as house,[526] Virginia Woolf's homelessness—home as an intermedial, a becoming, not a place,[527]—and Buckminster Fuller's

> radical reformulation of land dwelling's primary totem: the house. ...Instead of allowing himself to be crushed by the irrational customs of the land dwellers, he would, in effect, devote himself to remaking life on land in the image of life at sea...[Fuller's] 'Dymaxion House' (the word itself was a portmanteau of "dynamic," "maximum," and 'ion"…[this *combinatoire* formed] an inversion of a traditional house (Keller 283).

Precarious interiority in relation to manifold self-portraiture invites the "participant" (as self and other) to inhabit spatial congestion. The inside outedness of space re-orients perceived (vulnerability) scarcity into an infinite abundance.

(De)Construction of Sight: (Dis)Assembling (Un)Becoming-Animal

1993. Seattle. At the Seattle Science Museum, a docent is dissecting a cow eyeball to

[523] Additionally, "[s]acred yet impure because intimately connected to violence… the spaces of slaughter mediated between the cultural poles of sacred and profane…the sites of animal slaughter were symbolically located between the institutions of the sacred cathedral and the profane marketplace Saturated with lawfully spilled blood, and partaking equally of spirituality and materialism, the spaces of slaughter helped define the limits of the spirit and the properties of the flesh through the repetitive act of transformation" (Lee 8).

[524] See *Formless* 43-50.

[525] Sephardic Jews yearning for Jerusalem while maintaining their deep attachment to Sefarad (Spain/Iberia-domicile) exhibit a spiral beyond the dialectic of identity and culture: *ovadiya*. They had to negotiate a characteristic paradox of appreciation and awe while consumed by a profound longing for home haunted the Sephardim—exile within exile, the Sephardi suspended between Spain and Israel (Dr. Brann, Center for Jewish History).

[526] See Louise Bourgeois' *Femme Maison*.

[527] "The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo—that is what Virginia Woolf lived with all her energies, in all of her work, never ceasing to become" (*TP* 305).

demonstrate to children how similar the cow is to the human. The prospect of becoming-animal spurs me to ask if I can keep the post-dissected eyeball for my photographs. For the next three months, I store the cow eyeball in a thermos—alternately freezing and thawing it between my photo shoots. Eventually, the cow's eye disintegrates into unrecognizable meat. Strands of membrane are now barely capable of holding the eyeball together—dissolving under the heat of the lamp focused on the dyed turquoise bristle of my model's head; her ear reddens[528] under my pressure as the eyeball continues to dissolve into her scalp. How would Bataille have (de) constructed this version of *The Story of the Eye*?

> [Barthes] rejects a thematic or 'extraplastic' reading of Bataille's 1926 pornographic novel *L'Histoire de l'Oeil (The Story of the Eye)*, no matter how filled the book might be with the precipates of perverse fantasy and unleashed sexual imagination, to insist instead on a specifically structuralist account of the book. The story, Barthes declares, is not that of a set of characters and their exploits, but of an object—the eye—whose characteristics yield the *combinatoire* from which the textual fabric is woven, both at the level of its language and in the dimension of its events (Krauss and Bois 154).

L'Histoire de l'Oeil offers infinite permutations. The *combinatoire* of what I am exploring as an *erotic politic* opens up a space for Glissant's "poetics of relation". Eisenstein explored our senses as everted and inverted—*recto-verso*. He played with the synaesthetic correspondence of "hearing light, seeing sound".[529] This *combinatoire* is reminescent not only of Eisenstein's use of the montage/collage, but also

[528] "The ear is uncanny… because it is double: it can be at once open and closed; receptive and unresponsive; source and destination. The ear is the ear of the other. The ear of the other is an 'eerily' dismembered ear" (Royle 64). As resistance to universal truth and authenticity, Derrida identified teaching as "a matter of voice and the ear". Additionally, the invisible is situated in the uncanny in several aspects. For example, Ulfers describing Gregor Samsa's relationship to transitional identities, states: "Rather than interpreting 'invisible' as a secret that doesn't allow itself to be revealed, I would suggest that we read it as belonging to the order of the auditory, which by its very nature involves us in transitoriness—each sound a coming-to-be and passing-away, like waves unceasingly rising and ebbing off, never reaching a finality" (Ulfers). Also, see Nietzsche's "remarks on 'listening with another ear'" (Burgarde 233).

[529] See Eisenstein's *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory.* Orlando: Harcourt, 1949.

[530] The construction of sight and the History of the Gaze are critical to my understanding of my work. My future research includes Spinoza's background as a lens grinder. Leibniz writes on Spinoza's knowledge of mathematics and optics. This occupation of lens-grinder has come up numerous times in ironic and uncanny contexts, such as E.T.A. Hoffman's *The Sand-Man*'s ambiguous itinerant Italian optician, Giuseppe Coppola (coppo=eye-socket), (Freud 1919 137, 159). Both Freud and Sam Weber explore *The Sand-Man* as a

of Bellmer's "physical unconscious"—a living, *conspiring* prosthetic. The eye is meat—by nature, in constant transformation.

> In terms of sources, one wonders...whether Bellmer's 'physical unconscious' was in any way a response to Walter Benjamin's notion of an 'optical unconscious,' introduced in the latter's "Small History of Photography" in 1931. 'It is through photography,' wrote Benjamin, 'that we first discover the existence of this optical unconscious, just as we discover the instinctual unconscious through psychoanalysis' (Krauss 1993: 178).

The eye is a wound that suggests incalculable peregrinations.[530] The eye and its applications (seeing)[531] become an entanglement of multiple opposites. As I discussed in the context of Teresa de Avila's *orison*, the wound is bound by love in the form of hysteria. Peter Schaffer's 1973 play, *Equus,* demonstrates (monstrously) convulsive ecstasy as a conflation between the heightened eroticism as sacred union with God, and the violent materiality of the collision between our carnality and their corresponding senses.[532] Like Bellmer's disjointed dolls and the Surrealist arrangement of a peculiar incident, these erotic conjunctions manifest as intuitive prosthetics and open into a matrix for perceiving the world through possibility rather than prescription:

> Freud's model of the mobility of the libido provided the basis for Bellmer's theorizing about erotic feeling...Freud observed that 'sexual impulse-excitations are exceptionally plastic,' and continued: 'One of them can step in place of another; if satisfaction of one is denied in reality, satisfaction of another can offer full recompense. They are related to one another like a network of intercommunicating channels filled with fluid,

quintessential example of the uncanny. The violence and beauty, the grotesque exaggerations, in Bataille's *L'Histoire de L'Oeil* offer obvious connections to the eye as wound. Additionally, see my discussion of the horses being blinded in *Equus* in "(De)Construction of Sight: (Dis)Assembling (Un)Becoming-Animal". To plunge further into the invisible and the significance of eyes (not necessarily for seeing), see Cixous' invisible sorcery and secret eyes. Also, Freud discusses fear of eyes in relation to castration and death of the father—anxiety and violence—being robbed of one's eyes (ibid. 138, 140). Both Hoffman and Bataille had unusually painful relationships with their fathers: Hoffman was estranged from his father, while Bataille's father who eventually went insane, was paralyzed, syphilitic, and particularly significant in this context, blind. Lastly, I intend to research the connection between the ocular sexualized violence in Luis Buñuel's *Le Chien Andalou* with that in *L'Histoire de l'Oeil.*

[531] Seeing as knowledge, seeing determining absolute truths, as in Foucault's discussion of *scientia sexualis,* is integral to my investigation of the construction of desire.

[532] Regardless of the horror of Strang's crime, the psychiatrist wondered if it could be justified as the only means of breaking the shackles of conformity.

> and this is inspite of their subordination to the primacy of the genitals—a state of affairs that is not at all easily combined in a single picture' (S. Taylor 12).

Mobility of the libido, like gender dysforia and hybrid identities, produces a prosthesis of possibilities: the fertility of the uncanny. Cixous demands, "Don't you tremble with uncertainty?" (1991: 6). My resounding response is Yes! And I also tremble with sensing the unknowable. "The uncanny as the continuing experience of an uncertainty" (Royle 35) recalls Grosz's pervasively applicable analysis of lesbian orgasm as "continual non-arrival". Grosz counters hetero-normative patriarchal assumptions about sexual exchange. Consistent with Ronell's call for relational language, Grosz (converging with Deleuze and Reich) refuses a linear model of sexual intercourse leading to the presumed climactic orgasm. The urgency of their declarations incites a re-cognition of the uncanny and ineffable regions of our bodies and the incalculable horizons of our sexuality. Continual non-arrival, "radically foreign to the order deployed by the world according to the *logos*" (*BD* 45), has become a refrain for which I can more clearly decipher the socio-political implications of interpretations that have led to many of my censorship incidents.

2008. New York. A week after my abortion, I begin to read Cixous' *Coming to Writing* and re-read Bataille's *L'Histoire de l'Oeil*. My body tells me that their positions converge. I am delighted. Cixous' act of writing mirrors

Bataille's characters' abandon(ment) and relation to sexuality. I equally devour both texts simultaneously—knowing that the work/art/love I have always lived-shared is embedded in Cixous and Bataille's provocations. The last time I read Bataille's work, I was 18 and actually living one version of Bataille's lurid tales.

1989. Ghent, Beja, Grass. Just months before the fall of the Berlin wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, at the age of eighteen, I joined *La Commune du Monde*, *Wilderdorp*, the commune of the world, servicing a tiny, lavishly wealthy village near Ghent, Belgium. This macrobiotic commune was a sanctuary for itinerant poets/story-tellers, philosophers, recovering drug-addicts, sexual freedom fighters. No animal flesh or by-products of any kind was permitted on the commune—except during the Tunisian festival for *les mechouis* in which a sheep is slaughtered. As its throat was ceremoniously slit, the sheep's expression remained placid—the knife glided through layers of wool, layers of muscle. There was a profusion of blood. I cannot forget the quiet.

I left the commune to travel to Tunisia and photographed the only literal image of meat that I will ever shoot. Every image hereafter is allusion—allusion to that moment in the early morning sunlight when a Tunisian butcher held in his hands the serenity of death—that moment when Thanatos is born from Night and Darkness. Witnessing such strength in vulnerability, my camera and I began to play.

We explored the possibilities of the grotesque in the everyday—the fertility of ambiguous relationships. Dialogue between decay and resurrection lead me to the subject of my photography.



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Before I found reprieve in image-making, I wrote incessantly about the manipulative extreme psycho-sexualized power relationships I witnessed and encountered on the communes and farms—not just in Belgium, but also in Tunisia and then in the South of France where I developed an intimate relationship with Philippe Comette, an artist who had just been released from a psychiatric hospital. During this unraveling of the familiar into the multiplicity of self and language, the aesthetics of the rhizome became somaticized. We inadvertently developed into one another prosthetic interruptions. Philippe taught me, embodied within me, to dwell in the *beyond*. I hear Homi Bhabha's voice once again:

> We find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and

> exclusion. For, above all else, there is a sense of disorientation, a disturbance of direction in the 'beyond': an exploratory, restless movement… Being in the 'beyond', then is to inhabit an intervening space, as any dictionary will tell you. But to dwell 'in the beyond' is also...to be part of revisionary time, a return to the present to re-describe our cultural contemporaneity; to re-inscribe our human, historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither side. In that sense, then, the intervening space 'beyond', becomes a space of intervention in the here and now (48).

In the French Alps, where we lived and farmed, Philippe's drawings began to infiltrate my dreams. Border-crossing the unconscious and our everyday reality, I was no longer able to distinguish between his two-dimensional images and our actual lives. Our relationship reached the point where *Philippe* would eat rotten food and *I* would get unbearable stomach pains: "the approach of the other is dismemberment of the natural body, fragmentation of the phenomenal field, derangement of the physical order, breakdown in the universal industry" (Lingis 1985: 72). We each had lost all distinction between self and other—a complete collapse and erasure of boundaries. Not an ideal situation for the mental health of an eighteen year-old. However, I was presented with a rare opportunity for self-inquiry and for discovering the stranger within. I metabolized our cathexis—the magnetic lure of *pulsion*. Twenty-three years later, I am reminded of Butler's pronouncement: "Let's face it. We're undone by each other. And if we're not, we're

missing something" (*PL* 23). The uncanny always serves as a venue for collaboration, a potential for deepening awareness and vitality. This blurring of reality, this "promiscuous crossing," allowed me to engage with my subconscious without inhibition, without self-censorship. With Philippe I witnessed Nietzsche's "equally fictitious entities like the self" (A. Star 11). Writing became critical to my survival as I first experienced an acute loss of the illusory wholeness of self. I had written in English, not French, so that he could not read my attempts to escape.

Philippe had taken my journal and on its cover drew an image of the two of us face to face, eyes peeled open, vomiting into each other's throats. No periphery could withstand our merging. We had become the height of Bataille's eroticism: "The final aim of eroticism is fusion, all barriers gone". Bataille's eroticism unfurls from Nietzsche's "death of God":

> In particular, it can be said that Nietzsche's appeal to love of fate is the consequence of his thesis of the 'death of God,' love of a supreme center of the value of Being that guaranteed meaning to a meaningless world of Becoming—the authority beyond the limits of the world. The fate of *Amor Fati* 'frees' us, then, to a world of radical immanence, a world beyond the dualism of immanence and transcendence. Nietzsche characterizes this world as whole in the sense of an interconnectedness or web-like structure Nietzsche describes as *Verhängnis* (literally a 'hanging together'), a word that also means 'fate.' Given that the world of interconnectedness (*Verhängnis*) is its own fate (*Verhängnis*), it is beyond any outside determinism because there is no outside to the whole. Given

[533] Schirmacher's discussion of Bataille's emphasis on laughter recalls my response to one of my earliest images:*"Saturated with tension, the two-dimensional residue of my performative photo shoot emerges from the analog printer into my hands. As I unravel the weight of this 20"x24" embalmed image, I begin to laugh. ...What have I demonstrated (referring to the monsters) within those shifting white borders? I am startled—excess of reflected orange-gold and metallic-blue- under-skin reinforces the restrained sensual movement within both the actual image and my (visceral) memory of the shoot. The heat of the spotlight burns into Sean's shoulders and shaved head as his neck is wrenched backward around the pole of the lamp; the icy deep blue comes from nowhere as a shock and a relief—it counters the welts caused by the intensity of the light. A rush in the back of my throat—my eyes almost unable to contain the heat. Why is laughter my immediate response? As I encounter the image, only the clarity of excess becomes apparent—the play of exaggeration as the only tangible reality. How am I to interpret my insistence on such precarious positions, so precise and demanding?"* (Personal journal entry 1991).

[534] Bellmer met Zûrn—thirty-three years after he shot his photographic series of *Die Puppe* (The Doll) 1934. The apotheosis of the uncanny riddled their many-year relationship. Zûrn's facial features were almost exact replicas of Bellmer's former doll.

> a radically holistic world, there is no outside to its *Verhängnis*, and thus we must be what we are: *Verhängnis*. As Nietzsche puts it succinctly: "One is necessary, one is a piece of fatefulness [*Verhängnis*], one belongs to the whole, one is the whole' (NAF 8-9).

Mirroring Bataille's eroticism, sadomasochist relationships[533] also enter into this "beyond the outside". Bellmer's *Double Cephalopod,* 1955, in which he depicts his self-portrait embedded in the womb of his lover and muse, Unica Zûrn,[534] is eerily familiar. Just as Bellmer had stripped away Zûrn's boundaries, fusing within her the ultimate prosthetic of the monstrous: self *identified* into other. This Nietzschean *identification* echoes my critique of equality as an internalized fascism that dissolves difference while reifying the hierarchy of the real. Harassed perimeters of the other are caught in a post-human *unheimlich*—a *détournement* of embodied energy. Philippe's obsession with this cybernetics[535] manifested in his entropic self-portraits.[536] Unlike Deleuze's schizo-analytic masochist, Zûrn—became trapped: "I am haunted as if I am the only home for something unknown"(Zûrn). I too was haunted. My body-mind could not endure my co-implicated totalizing mental liquefication.

Gestating the Unknown

> Because it is before her, against her, right up against her, our most dangerous and generous mother, the one who gives us (although we aren't thinking, there isn't a glimmer of thought in us, only the tumult, the roaring of blood, precosmic, embryonic confusion) the staggering wish to come out, the desire for

[535] "The term 'feedback' originates from the interdisciplinary science of cybernetics. Cybernetics is concerned with regulation within closed systems. It looks for and exploits circular causal relationships, 'feedback', within these systems. Negative feedback is a process in which action and its effects are fed back to the actor in order to better coordinate aim and result. The loop proceeds from action (e.g. firing a machine gun at an enemy plane in order to shoot it down), to sensing (how is the target affected?), to comparison with the desired goal (has the plane been shot down?), to action (shoot again, a degree to the right), and so on. The circle of action, monitoring, correction and further action, integrates error in order to regulate and improve performance. Incorporating indeterminacy and recursive logic enables an automation and expansion of control. On the other hand, as we will see, this virtuous circle of negative feedback can also invert into its opposite. 'Positive feedback', from the perspective of control, is not positive at all, but represents a spiralling disorder or perturbation of the system. A vicious circle" (Benedict Seymour, *Short Circuit: Finance, Feedback and Culture,* Art&Education). I parallel this discussion of cybernetics with the chiasmic concept of embodied energy.

[536] Now that I have become familiar with Zûrn's self-portrait drawings, I cannot help but be acutely aware of how similar they are to Philippe's drawings.

> both extremes to meet, enter into and reverse each other, and day doesn't come after night, but struggles with it, embraces, wounds it, is wounded by it and the black blood and the white blood mingle; and in the same way, life emerges crawling from the entrails of death that it has lacerated, that it hates, that it adores, and it never forgets that death doesn't forget it… (Cixous 1991: 37).

Schirmacher elaborates on Bataille's death-trigger dialectic rooted in discontinuity[537] that requires violence to release us from the misery of fake continuity—the everyday life that is not real: "…something that strikes me as the goal of my sexual licentiousness: a geometric incandescence (among other things, the coinciding point of life and death, being and nothingness), perfectly fulgurating" (Bataille 1967: 33). And Cixous: "Without it—my death—I wouldn't have written. Wouldn't have uttered the ear-splitting cry, the cry that cleaves walls" (1991: 36). And Bataille: "What a spectacle, what joy! ...Our friends themselves began howling sobbing in a delirium of tearful screams; they sounded as if they had been set afire as live torches. Simone exulted with me!" (Bataille 1967: 16). The violent urgency of both art and sex, a relational destabilization of signification becomes a fluid intensity of activated vulnerability. How we respond to this vulnerability determines our relationships with the mobile swarm. Zûrn flung herself from a window to her death, I fled to a liberal arts college.

1991. Westchester County. My rhizomatic familiarity with radical differences being inherent in the everyday took root during my oscillation between word and image-making.

[537] The interruptive power through orgasm (under difficult circumstances and auto-eroticism) reflects both Cixous' cunt as self (see page 399) and Kristeva's "auto-erotic circle of pregnancy." De Lauretis cites Kaja Silverman's theorization of Kristeva's *choric* fantasy—"the *libidinal* basis of *feminism*" (172).

Returning to the States and to my first year at Sarah Lawrence College, a school renowned for its creative writing program, I found I could no longer write—stifled by the tyranny of reductive language that I found in both academia and popular culture. As a strategy of self-defense, I began to shoot color photographs—images that directly mirrored my written language, my commitment to erotic politics. Similarly, "[o]n a formal level, [Siegfried] Kracauer and Benjamin both structure their writing 'in the manner of different camera positions or separate takes,' [(Hansen 28)] thereby suggesting the fundamental impact of film on their work" (Isenberg 32).

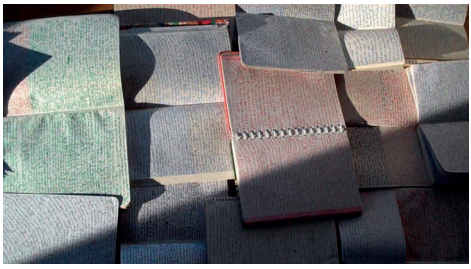


PLATE 81, VIDEO STILL OF MY JOURNALS

I began photographing in the forests of Westchester County where I found tree trunks filled with cicada exoskeletons. As if crawling into and emerging from my models' orifices, I combined these symbols of metamorphosis with bats' heads, glass laboratory vials, latex gloves, preserved pigs' ears, molded gourds, my fingernail clippings, bird claws and skulls, rusted metal, multiple mirrors—flesh neither victim, nor perpetrator; yet both. Now, because of the onslaught of the censors, I must return to writing. The relationships between image

and word helped me survive both excess and depravation. Because of our societal perceptions/impositions of the boundaries of the body in public and private, ironically, writing is the only "safe" public activity in which I can engage—while taking an image, making an art object, can only be "legitimately" produced under private conditions. Because of its perverse deferral, writing is the only thing I can do that doesn't put me in immediate danger—doesn't subject me to immediate censorship, expulsion.

As a macrobiotic, I lose my menstrual cycle for three years. Immersed in my photography, human, animal, vegetable, insect, mineral become interchangeable in my photographic imagery as they surge with the fluidity of the uncanny throughout each other's zones of recognition**.** Relationally, each element destabilizes definitive categories. Meat becomes the reference through which I enmesh these fragments together into literal and allusive connective tissue. I celebrate the return of my menstrual cycle by photographing my bloody pads juxtaposed to other allusions to skinned detritus—metal, rubber, mirrored. Ironically, synthetic objects so often appear more organic, sumptuous and alive than flesh itself. I am again reminded that there is no solid ground—no clear-cut or absolute answer[538]—only tension, suspension, anticipation, enfolded readings. Tension animates connective tissue, the web that binds us together, while distinguishing us as autonomous.

My photographs are rooted in an acute awareness of these contingent encounters—

[538] "The absolute is a resistant figure that carries desire and hatred in its wake" (*BD* 36).

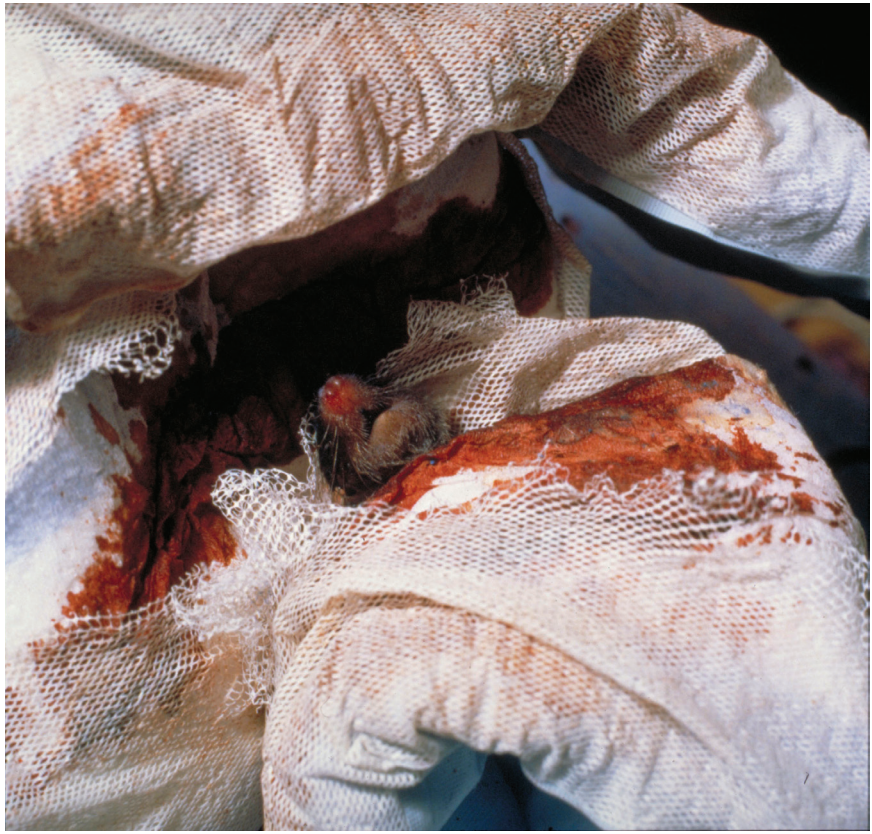


PLATE 82

psychic, imagined, palpable, and projected. Like Bataille, Bellmer, and Kristeva, Nietzsche sought to dissolve homogeneous normative hierarchies that inhibit the flesh, the meatiness of our bodies: "Nietzsche wanted philosophy to be consumed raw and with the entire body" (*BD* 66). When I photograph my menstrual pads stuffed into rusting copper cylinders, woven with earthworms, compressed under plate glass on verdant carpet, or when I balance a found decapitated mouse's head between the weave of the encrusted pad and wire plate glass, I am celebrating this tension—the confrontation and connectivity between life (as the lived erotic) and death: "the nature of both death and eroticism...[is that] they conceal themselves at the very moment they reveal themselves" (Bataille 1986: 52). As with Scarry's theorization of pain, the Tantricas[539] believe that everything exists in pulsations—what they call spandas—infinitely conspiring (breathing together) through expansion and contraction. The other is contained within each.[540] Every day we navigate through concealment and revelation. According to the Tantricas, "we can't know or remember everything so in order to remember or know something well we forget other knowledge or turn away from it" (anonymous). Congruently, the split-self of the ob-scene is reminiscent of Weber's observation that reality is constructed through relationships that are not seen.[541] Always partially invisible, identity manifests itself as it conceals itself; in appearing, it disappears. (EGS 2008).

[539] Tantricas are female philosophers of Tantra. See Sara Beardsworth, *Yoga Neighboring Freud*, presented at *La Pensée Féconde* Kristeva conference in Berlin, 2009.

[540] "People like to say: Revolution is beautiful, it is only the terror arising from it which is evil. But this is not true. The evil is already present in the beautiful, hell is already contained in the dream of paradise and if we wish to understand the essence of hell we must examine the essence of the paradise from which it originated" (Kundera 234).

[541] This question of distribution within a continuous space-time flux echoes Žižek's investigation of Elisabeth Anne Llyod's text: *The Case of the Female Orgasm: Bias in the Science of Evolution.* Cambridge: MA.: Harvard University Press, 2005. (NYU 2010).

Paralleling ideologues of technology, Tantricas believe that there is no "revealing without concealing, as the poets have long demonstrated. Revealing deconstructs, opens up, tears the fabric of the known. Revealing through media brings back the body in amazement, than acknowledging how the fundamental changes in our lifeworld through media are taking form" (Bender 45). Heidegger argued that truth invites a chiasma of potential and does not adhere to predetermined categories of right or wrong. Alētheia parallels "equivocality [which] can coexist with univocality without there being a contradiction in being" (Blake 194). Heideggerian truth embraces "*alētheia*"—the continuous dialogue between revealing and concealing that forms humanity's destiny (1967).

> By a Heideggerian meditation which all paths cross by a hidden truth to its judicative form; the truth as *adaequatio* is essentially bound to the judgment, to the proposition, that-is-to-say *founded on* an unveiling neither judicative, nor prejudicative, an other truth—the *alētheia* that is not bound to judgment" (Derrida 1985).

As Weber tells us, judgment cannot withstand the uncanny. He goes on to distinguish Heidegger's version of the uncanny as opposed to Freud: "For Freud, 'uncanny' (*unheimlich)* is a subset of 'canny,' *heimlich,* which in itself contains the notion of 'familiar' but also that of 'concealed'" (*LF* 25).

1991. Happy Valley. I begin photographing road-kill, not as a direct representation of horror or shock, but rather with the intention of heightening the relational tension between road-kill, my camera, my own bodily processes,

and other intuitively chosen objects:[542] "One moment has meaning only in its relation to other moments. We are at each instant only fragments deprived of meaning if we do not relate these fragments to other fragments" (*TE* 165). Choreographing these relationships is a conscious process of re-animation—Nietzsche's eternal return that vitalizes embodied energies as an erotic politic. The crushed skull of a road kill possum mid-screech, like the terrified ashen-atrophied figures from the eruption of Vesuvius in Pompeii, is juxtaposed to my tightly wrapped green latex gloved fist gripping a Japanese embroidered puppet with long nostril hair. Materiality awakens the uncanny tension between anxiety and beauty. Meat triggers the pliability of perception. Because of its optically allusive quality, meat inhabits this fertility of ambiguity—once again, a bridge between life and death. Both animal and human friends bring me gifts of carcasses of dead animals as props for my photos. One such gift is a dead oriole, bright yellow and still intact. Post-mortem, the oriole's body endures being saturated in milk, dissolving her brilliantly colored feathers into human cheeks, necks, knees, gradually deteriorating over time and numerous photo shoots. Through the Spinozian construction of my images, I engage in a productive discursive intercourse between objects, space, and time: "Using *ratio,* [configurations of] bodies are derived from other [configurations of] bodies via the mathematically expressed laws of nature" (Goldstein 187). As with the cow eyeball, I stretch and compress and adhere the dead oriole until her accommodating body can no

[542] See my discussion of gay porn from the 70s and the vital significance of site.

longer yield my manipulations/negotiations—from death, back to life, to perhaps a more complete death.



PLATE 83

2009. New York. One year after my abortion, one year before I am finally pregnant again—I experience both abortion and pregnancy as acts of the uncanny. I lived temporarily in Avital Ronell's beautiful Washington Square Park apartment. Her sunflower yellow walls and overflowing bookshelves tell me I have found a home or *heimlich*—my psyche and body can stop searching for peace of mind and rest for the time being. While devouring Royle's *The Uncanny,* I come across an image of an in utero baby—an ultrasound photograph under which the caption reads: "Antenatal photography". Below the image is written: "That rather terrible thing which is there in every photograph: the return of the dead. Roland Barthes". I was stunned by the poignancy of how Barthes' *return of the dead* and Nietzsche's *eternal return* "fit" into the story of my abortion. My memory of my yet-to-be-living being in utero haunted me, undoing me as I flashed back—

consciously unraveling the memories as vivid scenes from my abortion—that moment when I saw the image of the fetus on the technician's screen; after I had convinced myself my baby had left, had "chosen" to die on its own accord, of its own *conatus*[543]—will to power. Yet, there he/she was—returned from the dead, according to Barthes, my physio-psychology felt aligned with that particular image (antenatal photography) in that particular book (*The Uncanny*); and, if that is the case with "all" photographs, as Barthes tells us, then how does all of this relate to my own images—to me as a photographer?

I remembered a comment made by one viewer at my last opening in Hamburg, Germany: he had recognized in my images a soulless/death residue so intricately (and unwittingly) interwoven into the excess of life, of "animation" through the extreme sensuality of color. Before I knew it, I was re-entering the place I resist most: eros in the context of thanatos. Confronted by the tension between total excesses—between life (Bataille) and death (Bataille). I find solace in Spinoza. His concept of interruption as living, orienting death within a productive new context: You do not have to fear death, you have to fear you have not lived.[544] Perhaps the height of vulnerability is living life.

[543] Metaphorically (and perhaps literally) I witness this death as "the intersection between production and affection that is so important to Deleuze" (*APGD* 93). It is an open-ended death rooted in continual non-arrival.



PLATE 84

"Thinking is never finished."

Hannah Arendt

"But by no means can we try to replace their directives with our own. We don't expect anything from a direction."

Georges Bataille

Conclusion: Occupying the Future—The Revolution Will Be Televised

2011. October. Oakland. I am carrying my six-month old baby boy, Zazu, through the Occupy Oakland encampment in the plaza in front of Oakland's City Hall. A banner reads: "This Is What Democracy Looks Like". The Frank Ogawa Plaza, now renamed[545] The Oscar Grant Plaza[546]

[544] Schirmacher, *Advanced Media Philosophy* seminar, EGS 2008.

[545] Similarly, on New York's Wall Street, the protesters not only occupied the physical space, but by renaming Zuccotti Park, Liberty Park, they occupied the capacity to identify themselves as a rhizomatic collective force. This renaming strokes the fluidity of form, "the ability to change", "to become new versions of themselves" (Rushdie 72).

[546] On New Year's Eve 2011, Oscar Grant was shot in the back and killed by an Oakland transportation officer (BART cop). Following an absurdly grotesque hearing during which the primary evidence was suppressed, the multiple digital videos and cell phone

swells with tightly clustered tents and swarms of people raging dreams, ideas, and information: the Free-School, Radical Reference, and Mobile Library as the *information commons*; Media-Reception Area, Children's Village, Security, Alternative Banking, Tactics, the People's Kitchen, Medics, Comfort Station, Sanitation Group, and one of the most influential of the working groups—Facilitation, which is responsible for the daily agenda of the General Assembly. Working groups are horizontal and self-regulating. In the vein of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus,* the protesters exile themselves from an insulated domesticity—a polysemic, non-unity schizoanalytic tactic. In spite of the media and police attempts to contain it, the private overflows into the public—a Nietzschean vigor of overfullness. This communal everted domesticity has begun to animate the uncanny, the ob-scene, and *l'informe*—engendering a democratic formative culture of unity in diversity. In contrast to positing our social encounters as a general abstraction of systems theory, when we re-cognize our individual and social structures as ecologies of organizations linked together, historical entities interacting with one another,[547] we open into a Deleuzian assemblage of heterogenous relationships. The universe is messy (Delanda, *Gilles Deleuze and Science* seminar, EGS 2008).

Not only is the revolution being televised,[548] it is being FaceBooked,[549] Twittered,[550] live-streamed, culture-jammed, and "online

recordings of the shooting were banned from the court, and the case was actually moved out of Oakland to Los Angeles—the officer was convicted of *involuntary* manslaughter and sentenced to two years, minus the time he served in a private prison cell separate from other prisoners. Throughout Oakland, marches and murals remind us of the *on-the-scene* spectaclized injustice—the institutionalized racism that continues to run our militarized police departments.

[547] In the early 90s I was asked to take the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI), considered the "gold standard" in personality testing in mental health field. Rather than categorizing the table, stool, and chair as the generalized abstract identifier, *furniture,* I had seen these objects as things one puts something on; rather than categorizing the orange, banana, and pineapple as the generalized abstract identifier *fruit,* I had seen these objects as things one peels in order to eat. The results from the dot-matrix printer categorized my personality as "invalid".

[548] Televised not through conventional means such as CNN, Fox News, and NBC, but through social media and indy TV, like "The Awful Truth" (Michael Moore's stand-up performance on Bravo television, "The People's Republic of Democratic Television").

[549] "…[A] core group of protesters...were live-streaming the activities in the park on a Web network called Global Revolution. ...Two men held up a sheet projecting the movement's Facebook page where the number of messages of

flash mobbed"—a technique "of shooting out messages about street-meeting places" (Greenberg 12). The Occupy Movement[551] demonstrates a post-human dialogue between the global and the local. Internationally and locally, social media generates citizen-warrior responses to structural, psychic and social violence—communicating our commonalities through mobile direct actions (see my reference to the National Nurse-Ins organized by breast-feeding mothers).

Sixty or so years ago, Edward R. Murrow lambasted the potentially mind-numbing effects of the "tube" and then followed up his critique with a call to consciousness:

> We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason if we dig deep in our history and doctrine and remember that we are not descended from fearful men, not from men who feared to write, to speak, to associate and to defend causes which were, for the moment, unpopular. We can deny our heritage and our history, but we cannot escape responsibility for the result. There is no way for a citizen of the Republic to abdicate his responsibility (Edward R. Murrow March 9, 1954).

Similarly, Baudrillard evoked the agency of communication: "The only irresistible pulse is to occupy the nonspace, the empty space of representation that is, par excellence, the screen" (1992: 1). Viewing the Occupy Movement in this light, we witness the evolution of the television into the computer followed by the hand-held device[552] distributing the immediacy of social media.[553] We veer between a "loss

support ticked higher by the second: 24, 842 and rising. Cameras were everywhere—recording, broadcasting, feeding—and the people at the computer hub were hard at work, streaming it all live. The movement was a digitized global brain, a strange melding of the virtual and actual, one a mirror of the other, both unspooling simultaneously in real time" (Greenberg 13, 14).

[550] The hackivists of Anonymous "are known for, among other things, their 'denial of service' attacks that involve saturating target websites such as those of banks and credit card payment centers with so many requests that they overload and crash." They "developed a Twitter application called URGE, launching online campaign designed to quell potential violence. Anonymous 'culture-jammed' Twitter with messages to keep protests peaceful, using top Twitter trends from around the world" (Greenberg 12).

[551] The word "occupy" to designate the unifying intent of the movement has been vehemently contested. As an attempt to confront the "colonial rhetoric of 'occupying' indigenous land, (and to address this history)" (M. Bernstein), a vocal group of Ohlone (the Native Americans who first lived where Oakland is now located) activists organized to change the movement's name from "occupy" to "decolonize".

[552] Cell-phone cameras have become devices for the defense of civil liberties—from voting booths to police brutality, such documentation is often the only way we can record the violation of our rights.

of individual sovereignty in technologically saturated societies" (Critical Art Ensemble 2008: 145) in which corporate goals (i.e. pancaptitalist ideology) support the ever-engulfing "new market for electronic hardware" and "democratic cultural production". This formless, post-human landscape interconnects both a digital empire as a new age of imperialism—"information control (as opposed to the early capital model of military domination)" (*Net Criticisms* 155)—and a Deleuzian *smooth* fabric of interruption and reading. In her elucidation of Barbara Johnson's text, "The Critical Difference: Essays in the Contemporary Rhetoric of Reading", Ronell states, "[Sign and meaning] demarcate the element of mutability that conditions any reading: 'Arbitrariness and motivation, irony and literality, are parameters between which language constantly fluctuates" (Johnson 101, Ronell 2001: 50).

Serres' vortices and turbulences oscillate within an engendered smooth space that resonate (*TP* 489) with *ars erotica*, *ars theoretica*, *ars politica*. This *ménage à trois* disrupts the interpretation of the sanctity of normalcy—politics as usual. The legacy of Dada Theater, The Living Theater, Carolee Schneeman's orgiastic Happening *Meat Joy,* Fluxus, Rachel Rosenthal, Lygia Clark's participatory moebius-strip non-existant art objects, and Ana Mendieta's *Siluetas* all perform radical political carnalities. Congruently, these demonstrations of direct democracy recall the 1973 Chilean art practice, the Avanzada. Reflecting on the power of

[553] Microblogging for mega-effect: hash-tags are metadata information distribution and recovering techniques: #occupywallstreet.

[554] The origins of inter-net emerged from a nomadic military strategy—the technological application of the rhizome for totalitarian purposes, a subterfuge to evade accountability. In this fail-safe both/and, the users could not be implicated: The US military created a decentralized "electronic network capable of immediately rerouting itself if one or more links were destroyed, thus allowing surviving authorities to remain in communication with each

metaphor, Chilean critic Nelly Richard wrote, "I think it is necessary to defend the secret of these opacities against the linguistic tyranny of the simple, direct, and transparent characterizing today's social communications, which have left language without narrative twists, without poetic turns of double and ambiguous meanings" (1998).

In part spurred by the symbolic and unrepresentable (Kristeva) uprising of the Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement has mobilized the reticulation of the body and technology as an ekphratic strategy. The paradoxical origins of the inter-net[554] echo the post-human role of social media as it intersects with dominant media in this embodied movement of a collaborative becoming-vulnerable. This collision of the hyper-physical[555] with the hyper-virtual is producing a reterritorialized *carrefour.* The media is the street. Unequivocally a grassroots movement, rhizomatic multiplicities interpenetrate the supply chains of social media congregation.

Soon after the Occupy Movement emerged as a *movement*, Giroux published his article, "Occupy Wall Street's Battle Against American-Style Authoritarianism"—an analysis of "the pedagogical and political challenges being addressed by the protesters" in light of Adorno's essay titled "Education After Auschwitz". Giroux elaborates on what I am identifying in this essay as a post-human *détournement*—a politics of eversion:

and to act accordingly. With such an apparatus in place, military authority could be maintained, even through the worst of catastrophes" (*Net Criticisms* 142). Conversely, in the context of the Occupy Movement, the internet is being deployed for anarchist intentions**.** The history of the radio has evolved from a similar *détournement:* "While Brecht recognized radio's potential for distributing information for humanitarian and cultural purposes, he was not surprised to see radio being used for the very opposite"; an "orderly broadcast system" (*Net Criticisms,* "Utopian Promises-Net Realities" 140, 141) fuels our unchallenged censors' agenda, invisibly bound into our quotidian—in which the apparatus remains invisible and homogenizing norms masquerade as "community standards".

[555] The physicality ranges from Muhamed Bouazizi's self-immolation to the tear-gassed protesters to the Iraq war veteran's brain damage from the Oakland police to protestors sleeping, eating, and organizing together to the woman on her bicycle offering home-made blueberry pastries to protesters as we marched to the Port of Oakland in support of the Longshoremen.

> What is partly evident in the Occupy Wall Street movement is not just a cry of collective indignation over economic and social injustice that pose threats to human kind, but a critical expression of how young people and others can use new technologies, social formations and forms of civil disobedience to reactivate both the collective imagination and develop a new language for addressing the interrelated modes of domination that have been poisoning democratic politics since the 1970s. At the same time, the movement is using the dominant media to focus on injustices through a theoretical and political lens that counters the legitimation of casino capitalism in the major cultural apparatuses. The rationality, values and power relations that inform hypercapitalism are now recognized as a new and dangerous mode of authoritarianism (truth-out.org).

"We have had enough" underlies the spirit of resistance[556] that is as educational as it is political. By co-operatively developing a schizoanalytic rhizomatic approach to a lived democracy as a functioning democracy, the Occupy Movement is attempting to deracinate unity in homogeneity that dictates the fascistic fusion of equality, de-solving the tyranny of neutrality. Working groups have become one of the foundational tactics in the occupation.

Attempting to address our deeply structural social and economic problems,[557] approximately 300 Occupy initiatives have spread across the US; almost 2,000 occupations around the world. Inhabiting a contemporary *convivencia*, occupy sites are set up as communities in which anyone can discuss grievances, hopes, and dreams, and where everyone can experiment with living in a space built around

[556] Micah White, senior editor at *AdBusters,* called the Occupy Movement a "spiritual insurrection".

[557] "How have Occupy spaces addressed (and failed to address) homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, racism, ableism, imperialism/patriotism, police brutality, anti-homeless territorialism, sexual assault, and other issues of structural, personal, and intimate violence?" (M. Bernstein).

mutual support. A radical shift in the way we think about our politics has emerged. It directly demonstrates Arendt's drive towards democracy: the absolute necessity of critical debate arising from differing and often opposing viewpoints (May xx). The Occupy initiatives refute anti-intellectualism and hierarchical rationalism—positioning thinking as a courageous Arendtian moral imperative (ibid. 128, 124).

At the Occupy sites, when there are conflicting perspectives that appear to be slipping away from communication and productive debate,[558] the agreed upon protocol includes a "swarm" of occupiers who gather round and cordon off individuals displaying aggressive behavior. When the swarm performs this "intervention", they contain, but never touch the "aggressor". Embodying the citizen-warrior, we are committed to co-implicated co-mingling materialization of theory into practice. \Taussig's exploration of shamanism, "[t]he cure is to become a curer" (447), echoes Eldridge Cleaver's declaration that "You're either part of the solution or you're part of the problem" (Speech 1968). Recognizing that we are all part of the problem and the solution, we can embrace an ethical rupture of certainty by interrupting the dominant dialectic.

The International Occupy Movement is unfurling with a Deleuzian thrust. Spanish political theorist, Raimundo Viejo, recently stated: "The anti-globalization was the first step on the road. Back then our model was to

[558] See my discussion of Arendt, thinking, and Jewishness in "The Scandal of Ekphrasis: Transfiguration, Collaboration, and Transdisciplinarity".

attack the system like a pack of wolves. There was an alpha male, a wolf who led the pack, and those who followed behind. Now the model has evolved. Today we are one big swarm of people". This Deleuzian *swarm* is a "horizontal crowd" that loathes hierarchy while joining together as a counter-community—a community of disjunction.[559] Congruently, in the context of Freud and anxiety, Weber states, "...a major part of all self-definition entails the way in which the self demarcates itself from what it is not" (2008: 45). I find myself caught in an additional entanglement: if resistance itself cites, thus incites, the object of its resistance, then how can we clarify the necessary distinction between reaction and constantly shifting (dis) equilibrium? The Occupy Movement evokes an uncanny, non-linear evolution of community. It's intermedial character involves not just consanguine thinking, but as Butler argues, a relationality as "a way of thinking about how we are not only constituted by our relations but also dispossessed by them as well" (*PL* 24). This reconceptualization of the non-symbolic invites us to become-vulnerable, surrendering ego while encountering the unknown.

The Deleuzoguattarian horizontal structuring of the Occupy Movement shifts the partisan landscape from sectarianism to a re-animation of the American public sphere. The specificity of this movement decodes *divide and conquer* tactics while thwarting universalizing homogeneity. Weber asks "how do we operate within restrictive models?" (*Media and The Uncanny* seminar, EGS 2008). He suggests

[559] I include Rancière discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's "dissensual community, an aesthetic community...structured by disconnection" (Rancière 2006: 5) in "Post-Humanism: Digital Visualizing Technologies".

using anxiety as a necessary force in order to be present and political. This re-appropriation of vulnerability invites what Weber refers to as a "productive opening into alterity" (ibid.). The body as a collective of singularities emerges from a Deleuzian intensive thinking rooted in new conditions of the uncanny.

> Occupy Wall Street was always about something much bigger than a movement against big banks and modern finance. It's about providing a forum for people to show how tired they are not just of Wall Street, but *everything.* This is a visceral, impassioned, deep-seated rejection of the entire direction of our society, a refusal to take even one more step forward into the shallow commercial abyss of phoniness, short-term calculation, withered idealism and intellectual bankruptcy that American mass society has become. If there is such a thing as going on strike from one's own culture, this is it. And by being so broad in scope and so elemental in its motivation, it's flown over the heads of many on both the right and the left (Sharlet 65).

In these occupation sites, Nietzsche's "transvaluation of all values" provokes individuals, as reader, witness, listener,[560] to think and act across party lines. As a non-partisan movement, subterfuge of institutionalized binary habits has become an underlying connective tissue. The Declaration of No Party moves beyond good and evil: "We are not Left, we are not Right. We are the 99%. We are leader-less. Just stay away. We are here to end corporate influence in government. We don't want to be like the Tea Party which was started by Ron Paul and co-opted by the Republican theocratic Right" (cited in Greenberg 14). The

[560] In her *Hold It Against Me: Difficulty and Emotion in Contemporary Art* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012) Jennifer Doyle insists on the critical role that citizens must take on as a reader, a witness, a listener in the face of the AIDS crisis.

movement proposes a democratic process that debunks the "necessary evil" of dichotomous infrastructure.[561] "When you give up right and wrong, you don't get anything, you get rid of everything" (Agnes Martin on her visual art work). This "cascade of negations" (Jonathon Katz) echoes a Nietzschean forgetting of history in order to not simply resist, but to become. The movement insists upon Nietzsche's active Nihilism and Spinoza's active affectivity moving beyond good and evil into the realm of erotic politics:

> [W]e need to forego the fractured, single-issue politics of the past by refusing to argue for isolated agendas. It suggests developing a social movement that rejects small enclaves in favor of a broader social movement that can address how the current configuration of neoliberal capitalism and other antidemocratic modes of authoritarianism work as part of a larger totality. Such a globalized movement must offer to all people the tools of a politics that embraces both a radical imagination and a radical democracy (Giroux, truth-out.org).

Both Spinoza and Nietzsche's commitment to the mystery of our continual becoming reinforces our own recognition of one another as ethical, aesthetic, political, and sexual affinities. In this miraculous recognition of each other's humanity, we can potentially thrive through the urgency, intensity, and intimacy of *convivencia* and hospitality.

> Kant provides a tentative legal beginning, when he proposes as one of the articles for the peaceful nation that 'the rights of men, as citizens of the world' shall be defined by a qualified 'universal hospitality.' Levinas goes further when he

[561] "One of the basic premises of the Occupy movement is the idea that democracy exists for most Americans as little more than an unhappy choice between two sides of the same corporate coin" (Taibbi 64).

[562] See my discussion on collectively embodying a schizo-analytic paradigm and Bristow's concern (136).

> writes…that 'one belongs to the messianic order when one has been able to admit others among one's own'; it is 'the criterion of humanness.' In citing these passages, Derrida remains aware that the issue is complicated. Hospitality can never be complete… (Eisenstadt 57).

Hospitality/conviviality as continual non-arrival are agencies of affectivity in the public realm.

The Occupy Movement engages the theoretical demands found in both *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*[562] and is translating these tracts though pragmatic action and the material world.[563] Foucault writes in the introduction of *Anti-Œdipus*, "Where capitalist society trains us to believe that desire equals lack and that the only way to meet our desires is to consume". *Anti-Œdipus* shifts our ingrained encounter with desire away from one of lack—Freudian imaginary fantasies which play out in the unconscious as a representational "theater"[564]. The relocation into a technology of desire as a productive, relational force cultivates a Nietzschean ever-expansive joy. Uncanny rhizomatic vulnerabilities exhibit a seemingly illogical Dionysian vision of ob-scene logic (the logic "hidden within"). This "tragic insight" materializes in the movement's reticulated agenda that can never reduce any symptom to a single cause. Intimacy and communication sustain thick collaboration.[565]

The movement *pursues*[566] a Deleuzian multiplicity, a Spinozan nomadic affirmative action as "the strongest sense of

[563] One of hundreds of examples of translatability (many in which I have been participating) is the December twelfth successful shut down of the entire west coast network of ports in support of the Longshoremen workers. Perhaps a more poetic illustration is one of the "Nurse-Ins". As a way to prevent protesters to set up camp, the mayor of Oakland has been flooding the grounds outside of City Hall where the original encampment took place. Regardless of the fact that Alameda county experiences an ongoing water shortage crisis, the sprinklers have inundated the earth to the point where the famous old oak tree that represents the city of Oakland, is being threatened with "root rot". The Deleuzian metaphors of this are too absurdly and obscenely obvious; ironically, the city government was attempting to quite literally drown the rhizomatic potential of collective citizen action. Several breast-feeding mothers conducted a "Nurse-In" on City Hall's steps, in front of the drowning oak tree, as a form of allegiance/alliance with the tree.

[564] In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari position desire elsewhere: "It is not a theater, but a factory".

[565] Thick collaboration plays off Clifford Geertz's thick description. Although Geertz is an anthropologist of interpretation, his work on how we ascribe meaning is critical to my argument.

[566] I am interested in the act of pursuing in all of its potentially non-linear enfoldments.

meaninglessness to things, of the absence of any purpose or end goal, of pointless interminable continuance—and carrying as well a moral lesson, open to endless interpretation" (ZMERS 11). Meaninglessness and vulnerability do not manifest as despair. Rather, like hysteria, they fuel a "poetics of relation"—a co-animation that enlivens Spinoza's "what a body can do". The occupiers' actions manifest as hysteria in the sense that we are aggressively and unrelentingly bringing autobiography into the public realm. The specificity of our relations with arbitrary authority libidinalizes the productivity of the movement.

> Hélène Cixous insists [hysteria] is an inherently revolutionary power. ... Hysteria [functions] as a response to what is unacceptable and intolerable in life...as a response to emergency. ...What's important now is to mobilize hysteria as it intervenes, breaks up continuities, produces gaps and creates horror-refusing conformity with what is (Ronell 1999: 131).

When a political project embodies hysteria, vulnerability, uncertainty, and hybridity as affirmative mobilizations, individual's bodies, emotions, psyches, visceral memories, and intellects interpenetrate into collective erotic agency: "the body begins to speak, to ulcerate, to protest in all sorts of ways from that 'other place of latency' that speaks without fully knowing what it's saying. That voice may be considered 'hysterical' because it makes no claims for 'mastery,' for knowledge..."

(ibid. 152). This erotics of "not knowing" suspends those involved in the space between familiarity and absolute unknown. This third space elicits the possibility of communicating among differences. For example, within my photographs, how do ambiguous surfaces, histories, and connotations, that elicit such contradictory responses, make sense of one another? And how do they simultaneously connect and remain separate—co-habitat in their *disidentification*?

Critical questions for the Occupy Movement include "what is the purpose of the economy? ...[H]ow do we create an economy that is democratic and supports the 99%?" (Korten). Rather than an economy of need or a libidinal economy of Nietzschean abundance and Deleuzian desire, we are currently being consumed by an economy of desire rooted in lack—reinforcing the myth of scarcity and Bataille's "nonproductive consumption" which infiltrates our social anatomy. "Injustices of various stripes are much more powerful when they are normalized or hide behind the shadow of official power" (Giroux, truth-out.org). Instead of being victims to a fetishized politics of clarity (i.e. "official power"), it behooves us to assert our allied will to power, our *conatus* in which local intensities and global solidarity direct our sovereign right and responsibility. When we deploy embodied energy/socio-erotic ethics as a dynamic rhizome from which we investigate how systemic violences are interconnected, an embodied democracy can begin to emerge. For example, Wall Street

became the monolithic entanglement of zombie politics and casino capitalism that it now is as a result of the deregulation and consolidation of control of the banking system in the 1970s and 80s. Wall Street in its current incantation expropriating wealth (rather than creating real wealth), speculation, usury, accounting fraud, financial bubbles—holds us hostage to its control of capital.[567] Antithetically, when Main Street is comprised of local economies and co-ops, power is decentralized. When we commit to this deterritorialization—alternative economies such as a barter-economy[568] or an economy of reuse (*not* recycling),[569] we enter into an infinitely fluctuating indeterminate zone in which negotiation becomes the basis for redistribution as we examine the myth of scarcity.[570] This shift in perception that exposes the how of interconnectedness binds contextualized ethics with social justice. Redistribution is rooted in creating our own alternative economies that do not depend on corporate banking and mass consumerism. Some examples of fluid, enfolding, rhizomatic economies are the Grameen Bank,[571] women's money circles,[572] local bartering,[573] gifting,[574] gleaning,[575] and swaps.[576]

The process of how to live in *life technique* (Schirmacher) suggests the how of becoming Nietzsche's "overman"/ "*Übermensch*". Horizontal, dissonant negotiation and redistribution simultaneously disrupts the ingrained habitual infrastructure of our individual bodies as it decodes the entrained subjectivities of our social bodies. This

[567] See my discussion of the independent documentary film *Inside Job* in "Institutionalized Anti-Intellectualism" and "Post-Humanism: Digital Visualizing Technologies".

[568] Ironically, when a barter-economy evolves *within* the context of a corporate industrial complex, such as a hospital, the barter system becomes another form of feudalistic oppression. A mocking and painful example of this is represented in Michael Moore's TV series on the People's Democratic Republic of Television, "The Awful Truth". Moore set up a mock "Work Care" program across the street from the Jamaica Queens Hospital in NYC. Modeled on Clinton's Welfare-to-Work program, the hospital was in the process of establishing its own "exchange" system—health-care in exchange for work around the hospital. For example, in exchange for medical attention, an impoverished elderly man who has AIDS and already holds down two jobs, needs a hip-replacement surgery. He is "forced" to fix toilets. Another example is a seven-month pregnant woman who has contracted pneumonia is "forced" to sweep floors. The criminal aspects of this neoliberal appropriation of a barter-economy demonstrate another twist, another enfoldment in the rhizome of post-human tyrannies.

[569] Recycling has given people the permission to "ethically" waste. The impression that we are not wasting, or wasting less, actually invites more production of consumer items that could easily be re-used, meaning no new products would need to

intermedial movement takes from Derrida an economy as the law of the house, a "regulation of an economy of one's own" (Royle 25, 26). In contrast with the absolutist homogeneity of economic globalization, it is a *movement* of micro-macro[577]—a communal identity, whether "economy" (*oikos*, the household organization) or *polis*,[578] the both-and. Rather than reacting to institutionalized everyday oppressions, it is attempting to creatively, collaboratively shift *how* we conceive of the roots of these systemic violences.[579]

> What we see happening in this surge of collective resistance is an attempt to make visible the ideologies, values, social relations and relations of power that fuel a toxic form of casino capitalism, one that assumes it owes no accountability to the American public and legitimates itself through an appeal to the self-evident and the discourse of common sense... In this first and important stage of the movement, young people and others are making visible how organized violence works through a criminal culture and set of dominating power relations; they are expressing a sense of not just individual but collective outrage that is as moral as it is concretely utopian. "Imagine the unimaginable" is more than an empty slogan; it is a call for reactivating the potential of a radical imagination, one that rejects the tawdry dreamworlds of a privatized, deregulated and commodified society (Giroux, truth-out.org).

Wielding our imaginations, we are anchored to the unknown. Inhabiting the psyche-soma of a Nietzschean Moment, naturalized moments are interrupted rather than resisted. "This isn't just what democracy looks like, say the occupiers, it's what it *feels* like" (Sharlet 60). Rancière's concept of *together apart*

be produced. Re-cycling requires additional energy and resources that are rarely accounted for in casino capitalist societies' assuage-the-consumer green-washing.

[570] The myth of scarcity is one of the most vile, avoidable plagues of contemporary society."Salvaging is a matter of ethics" gleaning activist interviewed in Agnès Vardas' film *Les Gleneaux et Moi.* Globally and locally, redistribution is a vital, communal response to our consumption/waste-obsessed societies.

[571] In 1976, Bangladeshi Muhammad Yunus initiated the microcredit organization the Grameen Bank. He won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. The Grameen Bank provides loans to small businesses owners and to those, particularly rural women, who need to make large purchases. Throughout the non-industrial world, microcredit lending organizations such as this have supported women with the financial resources necessary to kick-start their entrepreneurial ideas. The loans are offered without any guarantee of repayment, the rate of which is higher than in most commercial banks.

[572] In 1998 in San Francisco, I participated in a similar micro-lending women's collective. Because of the ingrained monetary assumptions within which the US mainstream media and the public operate, one of our sister lending collectives was attacked by local media and disbanded—members were arrested and the collectives terminated. The women's money circles were officially (and inaccurately) labeled Ponzi schemes. The arrests

manifested in the sensorium[580] demonstrates an anti-disciplinarian tensile structure which exchanges multiple enunciations of sovereignty. Through individual and collective voice, the protesters[581] embody sensuous perception as political action. The sensuous realm sustains ambiguity—a scrambling of opposites that breaks down the binary logic of conceptual thought and language. Resolution is supplanted with an equilibrium in flux. Converging with Merleau-Ponty's spell of the sensuous and Rancière's play with Deleuze and Guattari's "double relation...[a] community of sense woven by artistic practice" (2006: 5), mutual vibrations of human community offer an affective combination of political potential.

Hawking's proclamation that everything we need is already within us just waiting to be realized could be a tag line for the movement.[582] "Movements usually spend a lot of time on education, telling people why they need to come to the demonstration. This is exactly the opposite. The people came. Now we're all deciding together what happens" (Occupy Wall Street activist). The *how* of communication invites us to become-vulnerable enough to pay attention.[583] Speaking and listening in this movement represents a new kind of conscious interdependency—our lived "poetics of relation" (Glissant). Exposing the intermedial disentangles the interconnectedness of proto-fascism. An exquisite example of this collective process of co-navigation as negotiation is the human microphone.[584] Dubbed "the people's mic",[585] this manifestation

clearly discouraged other women from participating in local and lived economies in which interdependency leads to fertile communities, not hierarchical trash-based economies.

[573] Ronell describes Valerie Solanas' relationships to economic exchange: "Her goal was to abolish money, the symbolic exchange of value" (Ronell's introduction to *Scum Manifesto* 26). I, too, seek to disrupt the convenience of assumed value—I rely heavily on a barter economy—trading all services I may need or desire (ranging from website development to dentistry to pediatric care for my baby) for yoga classes or photography. I use money as little as possible. I choose to step away from the abstraction of currency and move into the rhizomatic barter economy that is continuing to evolve in the US. People can exchange services and goods through an extended network. For example, if someone doesn't want what I have to offer, but someone else does and they have something to give the person who has/does what I want, the latter and I can barter our goods and services.

[574] In her essay on women and surrealism, Mary Ann Caws explores Hyde's concept of the erotic economics of the gift: "'A gift that cannot be given away is not a gift...*The gift must always move.*' (Hyde 1979: xiv, 4). ..."The more a gift is shared, the more it is sacred; what is give leaves a free place, so that energy accrues in the procedure of free circulation" (Caws 285).

[575] See my references to Vardas' film *Les Gleneaux et Moi,* footnotes 172 and 571.

of eternal recurrence—a rippling echo of infinite potential—suggests an alternative to militarized, imposed silence. The people's mic recalls the stutter, the interruption, a chiasmic, Surrealist Riemannian field: "Deleuze writes in terms of echoes and resonance...[a] Riemannian mathematical space. Deleuze's description results in 'a sort of disconnected space' that is a translation of Riemann's mathematically defined functions without being an imitation or a metaphor (Deleuze 1995: 124). Rather, it is an echo" (Levan 52). In reference to the (brutal physical) police action prohibiting the use of electronic amplification,[586] one activist exclaimed: "Cops made a huge mistake...The people's mic, it's such a unifying force. Almost like a choir. Like a modern religious revival. But it's a civil revival. Down here we're becoming citizens". Becoming-citizens, like becoming-vulnerable, is a variation on becoming-animal. Paralleling Bataille's denunciation of logical hierarchical relations,[587] becoming-citizen demonstrates a viscous horizontal interpenetration of voice and body.

"I see people talking. Everybody's talking, man, and I can talk, too" (activist at Occupy Wall Street). In his speech at Occupy Oakland, Michael Moore declared: "this movement has no spokesperson, it has tens of millions of spokespeople. The media has a hard time figuring this out". This is not a sound-bite revolution, but a rhizomatic reterritorialization that resists the concrescence of convenience-culture.

[576] I have not purchased any new clothing, shoes, or accessories for almost twenty years. Instead of supporting a system that I find abhorrent, I host and attend swaps—everything, except for (the abstraction of) currency is exchanged. This commitment parallels the content of my Yoga and Sexuality workshops that focus on self-awareness and communication, *not* "how to" ejaculation techniques. See Grosz's critique of "how to" sex education as reproducing unexamined gender norms (*STP* 223).

[577] In the context of this argument that explores the embodied possibilities of theory, I witness my photographic practice as the micro technic mirroring of the Occupy Movement's macro technic.

[578] As I explore the meanderings of the Occupy Movement, I am heeding "…Heidegger's warning that the 'polis' in question is neither simply a political notion nor simply the city-state. Rather, he insists, it is the site where history happens" (*LF* 25).

[579] Learning how to distinguish between various forms of power is integral to this reconceptualization—for example, my earlier reference to Giroux's critique of ConEdison's billboards putting the onus on "the individual"/the consumer as a scape-goat for being responsible for pollution in contrast to a corporate tyrant like Ira Rennert, founder and president of Renco Group, Inc. Rennert, a multi-billionaire who owns Steel, Lead, and Magnesium Producing Plants that in one year released 73 million pounds of toxins into the atmosphere. Renco Group, Inc. has been rated the

> Reporters keep sniffing around for leaders... [but] its resistance to organized leadership has... [endured]. ...The evasion of organized leadership that for many began as a tactic—leaders are targets and weak-links, subject to prosecution and co-option—has now grown into a principle...They aren't trying to provide a voice for the voiceless. They are doing it for themselves, and they speak for no one but themselves (Sharlet 63, 64).

As with the Arab Spring, the media has covered the protests in real time, and inevitably witnesses first hand on camera the abuses of power that police would have preferred to remain invisible, but now becomes part of the public debate. This movement demonstrates the bohemian-techno psycho-anatomy of dissent. "To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves. Each will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied" (*AOed* 3). The movement invites the body politic to move beyond single-issue politics by initiating an ongoing dialogue with the body politic about the "dangers of casino capitalism as a new form of authoritarianism. The Occupy Wall Street protests offer a new language of critique and hope, while inventing a mode of politics in which the claims to justice, morality, and social responsibility prevail" (Giroux, truth-out.org). To think is to dissolve—expanding our consciousness beyond our society's perverse addiction to making reactive judgments based on what we think we know. Potentially, provocation and incitement generate agency, rather than pathologizing,

number one corporate polluter in Forbes magazine. This radical difference in scale of responsibility distracts the consumer from the intricacies of embodied energy.

[580] I discuss these concepts in detail in "The Scandal of Ekphrasis: Transfiguration, Collaboration, and Transdisciplinarity".

[581] In the press, the protesters are consistently identified as "dirty hippies" and "violent criminals" with no clear agenda. The mainstream media—ranging from *The Wall Street Journal* who claimed the first Occupy Oakland march (November 2nd) had "fizzled out" the day before it was scheduled (November 1st) to *The New York Times* who sent out an entertainment reporter to mock the protesters—has consistently attempted to misrepresent the unrepresentable.

[582] Declaring the critical significance of life-techniques, Schirmacher tells us "trust is something you do, like ethics". There is no judgment in life-techniques, no need to ask what is wrong or right. Rather than imposing ourselves on the phenomenon, let the phenomenon guide us. Trusting ourselves would allow us to expand within an immanence of singularities (*Advanced Media Philosophy* seminar, EGS 2009).

[583] One definition of yoga is the act of paying attention.

[584] Following Argentina's economic collapse, workers in the factory takeovers began to use the "people's mic"—concentric circles of repetition: one person speaks, the people who can hear that person repeat what

they hear, the people who can hear them repeat what they hear, and so on. The lived reality of the people's mic is simultaneously absurd, humorous, and demands concise language.

[585] One disgruntled man at the Occupy Oakland site kept interrupting whoever was speaking. He was insisting that we, those who were participating in the human mic, reeked of fascism. Interruption and echo navigate order within chaos.

[586] Similarly, bicycle-powered batteries were used to replace generators that had been confiscated by the police.

[587] See Bois and Krauss, "The Use Value of Formless", 26.

[588] In "Practicing the Abject", see my description of my photographs that deploy Weber's mark, the acoustical body, the gesture.

criminalizing punishment. Restorative justice emerges from a "spiritual fecundity of subjective difference" (Cimitile 279).

Performative public pedagogy is a provocation for a critical formative culture that enmeshes a *combinatoire*[588] of Spinoza's affectivity, Brecht's epic theater, and Benjamin's gesturing into consciousness. Weber invokes Benjamin's monumental question:

> 'What is Epic Theater?' is marked by the very traits that constitute his response to It: *gesture, interruption,* and *citability.* The philological situation of 'What is Epic Theater?' is organized around an interruption and a suspension... the distinguishing trait of Brecht's epic theater is its ability not just to produce gestures, but to produce them in a way that makes them *citable*…Already the etymology of both words suggests a certain affinity. Both stem from words designating a kind of movement: *citare*, *cire,* deriving from the Greek *kinein,* designate not just movement, but in their composites—in-cite, ex-cite—a *bringing into* movement. And *gesture,* stemming from *gerere, gestum,* designates the action of *bearing, carrying* (Weber 2008: 96, 98).

De-solving into a Spinozian post-human *polis*, this hyper-civilization, this Epic Theater, offers a creative, intuitive deformation of habitual dichotomous classifications. Becoming-citizen envelops both collective physical presence (the encampments, cluster meetings, working groups) and the techno-body actively engaged from cyberspace. "Democracy is dependent on the individual's ability to act on the information received" (Critical Art Ensemble 2002: 151). Because of the "monstrous" intermingling of the body with technology, disabled people

have been able to participate in the Occupy movement as with no other movement before in history. The disabled body now has become a techno-body (not through artificial prostheses such as hybrid medical interventions such as mechanical knees or a plate in one's skull), but through digital devices that generate active affectivity. Schrimacher's homo-generator demonstrates a lived, politicized manifestation of *détournement* of people and technology. "The inevitable production of the monstrous, or the heterogeneous, by the very same process that is constructed to exclude the nongeneralizable, this is the force that creates nonlogical difference out of the categories that are constructed to manage difference logically" (Krauss 252).

Žižek's *Parallax View* offers another counterpoint to ostensible monadic autonomy. His contradictory readings of Being and Time resonate with the chiasmic technics of the Occupy Movement. He suggests:

> a Being and Time which would elaborate a different, more "progressive" notion of authentic collective existence, somewhat along the lines of, say, Walter Benjamin, who also spoke of revolution as the authentic repetition of the past? In 1937-1938, Heidegger wrote: 'What is conservative remains bogged down in the historiographical; only what is revolutionary attains the depth of history. Revolution does not mean here mere subversion and destruction but an upheaval and re-creating of the customary so that the beginning might be restructured. And because the original belongs to the beginning, the restructuring of the beginning is never the poor imitation of what was earlier; it is entirely other

[589] The fact the I am citing Krauthammer illustrates yet again the problematic that both hungers for potential social change and terrorizes it—another *détournement* of radical democracy.

[590] "According to the *New York Times*, workers at a factory in Shenzhen, China, owned by Foxconn (a company that manufactures iPhones, iPads and other devices for Apple) regularly work a sixteen-hour, seven-day work week. They stand until their legs swell and they can't walk, and they perform repetitive motions on the production line for so long that some permanently lose the use of their hands. To cut costs, managers make workers use cheap chemicals that cause neurological damage. There has been a rash of suicides at the Foxconn plant, and 300 workers recently threatened to jump off the roof over a safety and pay dispute. ...In 2005, the company released a supplier code of conduct, and it performs hundreds of audits each year in China and around the world to confirm its suppliers are meeting the code's expectations. But that's

> and nevertheless the same.' In itself, is this not a wholly pertinent description of the revolution along Benjamin's lines? Should we then propose, as a mode of authentic community, that of the revolutionary collective.... Is not such a collective precisely something which escapes the dyad of the closed *oikos* and the mechanical anonymous *das Man*, of community and society (277-278).

"News that Steve Jobs had died circulated. He was the rare one-percenter whose demise provoked a moment of sadness in the park, no matter that Apple had recently surpassed Exxon as the American company with the highest market value" (Greenberg 14). Charles Krauthammer[589] observed that OWS consists of "Starbucks-sipping, Levi's-clad, iPhone-clutching protesters [denouncing] corporate America even as they weep for Steve Jobs, corporate titan, billionaire eight times over". A former Apple executive told the *New York Times*, 'Most people would be really disturbed if they saw where their iPhone comes from.' But, I ask, would they be willing to recognize their own complicity in the embodied energy of iPhone suicides[590]—to give up their addiction—their fetish for the cult of Mac. Given the pervasive warnings of the dangers of eco-commerce or the critique of neoliberal tactical appropriations and ideological co-optations as bellwethers of impending global paralysis, it is crucial to determine whether or not these co-realities are operations of hypocrisy or are "benign" multiple contradictory simultaneous narratives? Clearly, democracy is a messy enterprise—a scandal of ekphrasis. Just as we need to define the nuances—the *how*—of whiteness, pornography, feminism,[591]

where Apple's commitment falters: the number of supplier violations has held steady year to year and Apple hasn't consistently publicly stated which suppliers have problems or dropped offending suppliers. The bottom line, Apple executives admit, is that they're not being forced to change. One current executive told the *New York Times* that there's a trade-off: "You can either manufacture in comfortable, worker-friendly factories," he said, or you can "make it better and faster and cheaper, which requires factories that seem harsh by American standards. And right now, customers care more about a new iPhone than working conditions in China" (www.change.org).

[591] See my discussion on Elizabeth Badinter in "Self-Censorship: Toxic Mimicry, Internalized Fascism, and Phallic Norms" and on sex-negative feminists in "Pedagogical Promiscuities".

[592] See **"**The Scandal of Ekphrasis: Transfiguration, Collaboration, and Transdisciplinarity" in which I address some of the paradoxes of privilege embodied by a Spanish Jew growing up in small conservative US towns.

and privilege,[592] we must define the *how* of corporation. As DeLanda affirms: there is no reified generality—no "the corporation". It behooves us to denaturalize the single master narrative and scrutinize its disjunctive rhizomatic contexts—rethinking the implicit structure of the corporation.

2011. November. Oakland. The encampment is raided again.[593] The books from the Occupy Library are confiscated along with the occupiers' personal property including tents, water, food, clothes, medicine, plates, and audio equipment. Oddly, the officials do not disband the Information Tent. We live two blocks away from Oscar Grant Plaza and the tear-gassing incidents. SWAT Teams line the sidewalks while modern tanks[594] cruise through our neighborhood. At least four helicopters (a combination of media and surveillance) hover overhead continuously for weeks on end. The amount of wasted fuel and taxpayers money is stupefying. Another twist in the movement's *détournement* opened into a reterritorialization: once the encampment was disbanded, de-centralization intensities became even more critical. Vulnerability invites skepticism to become insight. William James conceived of

> divergent reasoning. [He] stated: 'Instead of thoughts of concrete things patiently following one another in a beaten track of habitual suggestion, we have the most abrupt cross-cuts and transitions from one idea to another….unheard of combinations of elements, the subtlest of ideas …where partnerships can be joined or loosened….treadmill routine is unknown and the unexpected is the only law' (Heilman and Donda *Tikkun*).

[593] The government/militarized police have a long history of "tolerating" the protests. For example, during The Bonus Army of 1932, unemployed veterans were brutally driven out of their protest encampments in Washington.

[594] Our tax dollars have generously funded these tanks that send out sound waves that scramble the target's brain-waves. They render the victim disoriented, unable to physically and psychically act with clarity.

This is a quantum physics *move*ment. There are no fixed laws: "With Sade, reason confesses its powerlessness to conceptualize the revolution..." (*BD* 101). Like Deleuze's tendencies and Hume's habits of nature,[595] this performative movement is rooted in impermanence. It is a model of embodied democracy through anti-identitarian vulnerabilities—a *carrefour* of continual non-arrival. "[A] dense thicket of the intricacies of process" inform the elasticity of thinking and interacting exemplified by the daily General Assembly meetings of the Occupy Movement.

The movement is grassroots—literally rhizomatic. Ulfer's dialogues about Nietzche's concept of will to power-as-potentiality are congruent with the current Occupy Movement. It is allusive (as Ulfers emphasizes, the allusive is always illusive)—never settling at one meaning: "the strongest sense of meaninglessness to things, of the absence of any purpose or end goal, of pointless interminable continuance—and carrying as well a moral lesson, open to endless interpretation" (ZMERS 11). Meaninglessness and vulnerability do not function as despair, but interpenetrate as affective formation—a co-animation that enlivens Spinoza's "what a body can do". Intensities are conveyed through post-humanist, Dadaist articulations. The media and our policy-makers cannot grasp this *combinatoire*—an escape from conceptual understanding, i.e. reducing thought to habitual categories of familiarity. Its lack of containment calls into question the very nature of the idea in action. Time and space belong to the taking place of intricate relationships as negotiation

[595] In both his first book *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), and later in his *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life* (New York: Zone Books, 2001), Deleuze focuses on Hume. Deleuze is interested in the ways in which Hume privileges direct experience in everyday behavior. Rather than establishing a monolithic, absolute philosophical position, Hume centers on the relations between things that develop our realities. His ideas are not pre-scripted or predetermined, but can be infinitely reassembled into new relations and associations. This assemblage in flux constitutes the 'self' or 'I'. Like the Surrealists, knowledge and experience is generated and filtered through continuous combinations of impermanent, contingent possibilities. The problematic of reality is constructed only through habits, not (the illusion) of universal laws.

As I discuss in "Vulnerability and the Politics of the Imagination", in the Stress Reduction Workshops that I teach, my focus is on unraveling our relationship to our everyday habits and on learning to develop the skill of choice in relation to recognizing those habits.

and process.[596] No political party or individual is in charge of the Occupy Movement. Anyone who is struck by countercurrent convictions can organize an action, facilitate a work group, offer proposals, or participate in and support the movement. Because leadership and participation are decentralized and never static, the movement cannot be silenced or aborted—it is infinitely indeterminate:

> *Indeterminability* thus emerges as the condition of possibility of all determination, but also its condition of impossibility...The perhaps marks the difference between the irreducible spatial-temporal singularity of 'there is' and the space-time transcending generality of 'it is or exists' (Weber 2008: 125).

A differential oppositional movement (Sandoval) inhabits this ateleological indetermin-ability that decodifies axiomatic values. Echoing Lyotard's hesitating thought stammering in a strange tongue (Nietzsche 1872: 86), this capacity of the undecidable has opened the frame of socio-political possibilities. Yet our language confines us to pacify struggle through illusory unities. The language of the Movement still adheres to an us/them (except, perhaps, for the contradictory looming presence of Steve Jobs and his legacy, see footnote 466).

> We are the 99%," the central slogan of the Occupy movement, has been crucial in rallying mass support. And yet, this slogan invokes a vision of sameness that stands in stark contrast to a queer analysis that foregrounds, cultivates, and nurtures difference. From Mortville, the queer camp at Occupy Baltimore, to the Feminists and

[596] Like Nietzsche and his play with the Moment, the perceived "Now", Einstein overcame substance ontology, wielding his lived science of energy *as* a process philosophy (Ulfers, EGS 2008).

A post-human negotiation of time and space relationships demands a reformulation of "convenience" in convenience-culture. By democratizing a new approach to mass transit, the current hacker activism of Krys Freeman emphasizes social networking technologies in the context of "excess capacity and collaborative consumption" (Khafra Company website). Through modern technology ("a commuter driven public transit intelligence platform, powered by text messages, SMS"), Freeman's commitment to shared vehicle access vivifies the Moment: "I'm planning [a project] that also offers a bus prediction, plus a prediction for ridematch, if there's a driver available - so that straphangers are never (or seldom) stranded" (Conversation with Freeman 2013).

> Queers Against Capitalism bloc at the Oakland general strike, queers are playing central roles in Occupy spaces. But, what would it mean to bring a queer analysis to the forefront, going beyond the politics of inclusion to question the very terms of the debate? (M. Bernstein).

Queerness is a crossing of the existent. The queer, non-hierarchal movement defies US democratic tendencies to reduce equality to sameness. "Standpoint epistemology" indicates that "we all have different eyes/minds and bodies"/ "We don't all live in the same Now" (Jonathon Katz). It is this Nietzschean Now/ Moment (discussed in detail in "Equality and Entitlement") of will to power that is beyond substance—rooted in the paralogic of excess, the disobeyed logic of Žižek's "tickly subject".

"It is a movement, not a list of demands" (Huffington Post, 11/11/11)—not a list of policy reform initiatives, not a list of changes that end up resurfacing as toxic mimicry, but a *movement*[597]—needs, desires, conflicting and converging readings, a schizoanalytic fluid potency. Initially, the liberal Left[598] shuddered at the occupation's open-endedness—fearing *the lack* of specificity would give their opponents ammunition. This continual non-arrival cultivates vulnerability, lending the movement its *unrepresentable* (Kristeva) character.

> The call for deep change—not temporary fixes and single-issue reforms—is the movement's sustaining power. The movement is sometimes criticized for failing to issue a list of demands, but doing so could keep it tied to status quo power relationships and policy options. The occupiers and their supporters will not be boxed in.

[597] See my theorization of balance and the asymmetry of non-arrival in "Fictional Bodies: Probing The Private and The Public".

[598] I am conscious that I am using homogeneous categories. DeLanda asserts we cannot legitimately talk about "the people", "the masses", even "the proletariat". That has changed with the fluidity of this movement. The "the" no longer implies a monolithic, homogeneous absolute, but now indicates multiple, contradictory narratives, moments, and mobile positions. Just as "de-ciding" no longer implies rigid, complicit, linear judgments, but now offers a *sense* of fluid exchange, unrest and debate.

Occupy mutineers call for a massive reconceptualizing and restructuring of the democratic process and the rule of law—a break with the "chimera of free-markets" (ibid.). They demand a sustainable environment and a system that is held responsible for the safety and civil rights of citizens. We cannot be judged, de-cided, categorized. By agitating the entangled internalized concresences that render current US citizenship inert, occupiers are embodying a critical citizenship that challenges our current corporatocracy. The Occupy Movement radiates a collective BwO. As I argue in "Violence and the Sacred", the coerced ethnically, sexually, and economically *neutral* individual body of the Christian, "white", heterosexual, 9 to 5 "productive" worker represents the counterpoint to the BwO in action:

> The organism is…the judgment of God, from which the medical doctors benefit and on which they base their power. The organism is not at all the body, the BwO; mutilation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labor from the BwO, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences (*TP* 159).

Weber's move beyond the dialectic seizes the psycho-dynamic forces of the principles of montage: "The Kantian notion of a 'disjunctive synthesis' thus becomes a point of departure for Benjamin, who here emphasizes the possibility and necessity of conceiving a different, non-synthetic relationship between concepts which alone will be capable of relation the 'temporal singularity' of experience to the 'timeless certitude' of the concept" (2008: 165).

Improvisational alliances erupt among the occupiers, sabotaging our inherited tendency to cling to pre-determined agendas. Governing must be messy to activate e/affective change and jar the inertia of partisan stalemate.

It was not yet clear how the occupation's agendaless agenda would address Wall Street's unaccountable oligarchy[599] and trans-national corporate crime.[600] The movement's rhizomatic instability, asymmetry implies transformation—the fertility of destratification. *L'informe* in action: "They were 'leaderless,' 'directionless,'…Occupy Wall Street's vague, open-ended character has been crucial to its success" (Greenberg 12). It is not evidence of "the tyranny of structureless", (Koedt 285) rather a reflection of our contemporary intertwined power-relationships. The inadequacy of our seeing[601] both the figure and the ground simultaneously leaves us subject to transcendent psychosocial restraints. Conversely, the ability to see beyond what appears to be true, to recognize that doubt shifts the stakes of both comfortability and anxiety, induces a *cogito* insurgency. Seeing both the figure and ground simultaneously is a critical characteristic of a cultural worker. Skepticism becomes *l'inform* of sight, a boundarylessness, a liberation from right and wrong, a recognition that all authority is within ourselves—opening to unexpected immanences. The amorphous nature of the movement reflects both Irigaray's call to becoming[602] and Nietzsche's "overman"/"*Übermensch*"—reflecting the chiasmic fecundity of the citizen-warrior at home in the perpetual exile of vulnerability.

[599] November 5, 2011, Bank Transfer Day: US and international citizen-warriors took collective action through a consumer activist initiative. We designed and implemented a mass shift of our money out of big/corporate banks into local banks and non-profit credit unions.

[600] See my discussion of the independent documentary film *Inside Job* in "Institutionalized Anti-Intellectualism" and "Post-Humanism: Digital Visualizing Technologies".

[601] Note my exposition of Derrida's seeing in relation to art and the abject on page 204 and footnote 159.

[602] In my introduction, I discuss Irigaray's call to becoming in the context of radical citizenship. She demands that we inhabit the impossible: "To become means fulfilling the wholeness of what we are capable of being".

Not recognizing the value of its communal will to power, mainstream media sources continue to condemn the Occupy Movement as lacking a clear structure and focus. The press has "ridiculed the protesters for lacking a specific agenda or concrete demands" (Greenberg 12). The fact that the media remains critical of the Occupy Movement's absence of a clear agenda indicates their myopic capacity to witness and be a part of social change. Once again, the lowest-common-denominator of our mediaocracy's market-driven culture[603] dictates how we perceive the possibility for "organizing openness" (Hardt, *Political Activism: Multiplicity and Empir*e seminar, EGS 2009).

> [M]uch that has been suppressed in the historical creation of post-colonial nation-states, much that has been erased or glossed over when nationalist discourse has set down its own life history, bear the marks of the people-nation struggling in an inchoate, undirected and wholly unequal battle against forces that have sought to dominate it (Chatterjee 170).

The vast entanglements of the movement's interconnected agendas mirror that of contemporary robber-barons[604] neoliberal corporate monopolies and their opaque alliances. The Occupy Movement demonstrates a clear representation of our democracy's (read: mediaocracy/mediocracy) fear of thought and accountability—not so different from US history's labor conflicts. Samuel Gompers, the American cigar maker who in 1886 founded the American Federation of Labor (AFL) fought against the multiplicity—the mass diversity of the Wobblies (the Industrial

[603] "[A] market-driven culture: the notion that markets should take priority over governments, that market values are the best means for ordering society and satisfying human needs, that material interests are more important than social needs and that self-interest is the driving force of freedom and the organizing principle of society" (Giroux, truth-out.org).

[604] The robber-barons were the "the great American capitalists" between 1861-1901.

[605] "[T]here's nothing supernatural to haunt or bedevil [the Japanese filmmaker, Nagisa Oshima's] people, just the ordinary monsters of real life in a nervous country" (Rafferty 2009).

[606] Derrida tells us that the law has no sense—idiomatic or categorical—it is without dreams, without fantasies.

[607] In a society which so voraciously thrives on contradictory messages about sexuality (Foucault's examination of *ars erotica* in contrast with *scienticia sexualis*), a prime example of lawless law, the criminality of institutions, demonstrates how the US federal government has historically anthropomorphosized and pathologized pornography. In 1968, a scientific commission was established that designated pornography as a public menace (Linda Williams)—hovering in a mid-world between crime and art. Additionally, sodomy laws were established to "protect" citizens from themselves; protect them from becoming-animal; protect them from *becoming*-anything at all. In 2003, George W. Bush declared

Workers of the World): "The Wobblie Movement has never been more than a radical fungus on the Labor Movement—those who could not fit into a normal, rational movement" (*The Wobblies*). The AFL, like contemporary mainstream media and both the Left and Right, imposed an Apollonian "judging/dichotomizing [of] the excess that constitutes the chiasmic unity of the unconscious" (Ulfers, *Kafka* seminar, NYU). Consistent with the Wobblies, the Occupy Movement consisted of skilled and unskilled workers, regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation and was motivated by multiple, often contradictory, logics. Their meetings in the early 1900s sponsored 24 different nationalities as representatives. With such diversity of perspectives, those involved would be compelled to "operate" from a commitment to *both-and.* Following an incident of extreme police brutality, one coal-miner decried, "Let them sift coals with their bayonets". White-collar crime embodies the everyday violence that directly and indirectly affects each and every one of us.[605] Lawless law[606] has become an inherent component of contemporary democracy.[607] The entanglement of toxic mimicry determines in part how we designate who is a freedom fighter (asserting her civil rights), who is a terrorist (a criminal), and who is corrupt and what laws are unjust and lawless.

> After the trial of Eichmann, Hannah Arendt embarked on a series of reflections about how to make judgments and exercise responsibility without recourse to existing law, especially

October 26th as "Protection from Pornography Week": "I call upon public officials, law enforcement officers, parents, and all the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate programs and activities". The assumption of what is considered "appropriate" is in itself crucial to maintain the fascism within. (Additionally, Bush's proclamation ends with "in the year of our Lord two thousand three"—another raging example of lawless law—the absolute collusion between church and state, including corresponding forms of Christianity's domination). As a reaction to child pornography, the Department of Homeland Security launched Operation Predator. (Archives, White House website which is officially labeled as "historical material, 'frozen in time'").

Porn Nation was then founded by self-proclaimed "porn addict", Michael Leahy who lectures at universities about the dangers of porn—how his addiction to pornography ruined his family, made him lose his job, forced him to become homeless, etc. Pornography is allegedly the number one addiction in the US. It is clearly the primary addiction of the Christian Right (along with abortion and homosexuality). Butler invokes Henry Louis Gates, Jr.'s complication of the lawlessness of the obscenity law: "Paradoxically and poignantly, when the courts become the ones who are invested with the power to regulate such expressions, new occasions for discrimination are produced in which the courts discount African-American cultural production as well as lesbian

> when existing law is itself criminal. Although sometimes she understands judgment as a social act - an act performed in common - other times she seeks recourse to an idea of sovereign mind. What kind of "act" is judgment? And how do we understand those acts that make us criminals in light of one law, but dissenters from a criminal law in another? How do we account for lawless law? (Butler on *Eichmann in Jerusalem*).

Foucault attempts to sabotage lawless law when he declares that *Anti-Oedipus* is *An Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life.*[608] He draws out a list of "essential principles…a guide to everyday life"(xv), that could become the manifesto for the current international Occupy Movement.[609] In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History," Benjamin discusses the need to consciously mobilize against the everyday violence of Fascism as a historical norm: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule...it is our task to bring about a real state of emergency" (257). Through our "disordered," "mutated" bodies, which can be seen as undergoing a constant state of emergency, the mass-based public legitimacy[610] of the movement continues to aerate an effluvium of mediocrity. Occupying the future implies an embodiment of the present as the beyond. Bhabha's concept of the beyond lucidly reflects Nietzsche's incessant and irreducible becoming, a "continual non-arrival" of gestating the unknown.[611] Cixous also dwells in the beyond:

> And so when you have lost everything, no more roads, no direction, no fixed signs, no ground, no thoughts able to resist other thoughts, when

and gay self-representation as such through the arbitrary and tactical use of obscenity law" (*ES* 75).

[608] Foucault is playing off the history of Christianity—referring to the seventeenth-century priest and Bishop of Geneva, Saint Francis de Sales' text *Introduction to the Devout Life* and reminding us that "[t]he Christian moralists sought out the traces of the flesh lodged deep within the soul" (*Anti-Oedipus* xv).

[609] See Foucault's bullet point proclamation for what I am identifying as an embodied democracy.

[610] Richard Wolff, America's most prominent Marxist economist speaks of the "fractured American confidence in capitalism". Although economic recovery is on the horizon: "...the growth won't necessarily feel like growth—it will be slow, and millions will stay unemployed for many years. The big difference is that is in 2006, most were blind to the impending disaster. Now it's all we can see" (A. Davidson 12-13).

[611] See Chapter Five on *The Gestation Project*. As I witness the Occupy Movement reveal itself, I experience the same kind of compulsive enthusiasm as when I realized that the pregnant woman's body epitomized the enfoldments of my theoretical/creative *pulsion*. *Pulsion* becomes an aesthetic and political practice.

[612] Jeffrey Smith's book *Seeds of Deception: Exposing Industry and Government Lies About The Safety of the Genetically-Engineered Foods You Are Eating* investigates how Monsanto paid the consulting company Arthur Anderson to devise a plan to corner the market on

> you are lost, beside yourself, and you continue getting lost, when you become the panicky movement of getting lost, then that's when, where you are unwoven weft, flesh that lets strangeness come through, defenseless being, without resistance, without batten, without skin, inundated with otherness, it's in these breathless times that writings traverse you...from the throats of your unknown inhabitant, these are the cries that death and life hurl in their combat (1991: 39).

The perverse beauty of our biotechnology addicted digital age lies in its utter ambiguity. That our semi-totalitarian state, breeding Frankenfood tech-tronics[612] / promiscuous micro-organisms,[613] can simultaneously give birth to a techno-civil disobedient movement demonstrates (as the ultimate monstrosity) a poignant potential for *real* democracy. Perhaps we have reached the point where industrialized societies can learn from techno-scientific visualizations without the visual becoming our totalizing, dehumanized reality. The distinction between becoming "the truth" (ordained technology) and using our imaginations to learn from that technology may be a critical action if we are to decolonize our cells and psyches. Scaling the neoliberal abyss that threatens the emancipatory necessity of an erotic politics, I offer strategies for thriving on contradictions and ambiguities as active interventions in the renewal of our individual and social body-minds. In our post-human cyber-era, like Heraclitus, known as the Greek Taoist, I urge that we find the courage to celebrate the infinite potential of autonomous and contingent modes of relation.

the world's food supply. Monsanto's goal is to convert every single seed in the world to become genetically engineered and patented (Reagan 22-23). On Smith's website, ResponsibleTechnology.com, he lists extraordinary science-fictionesque hybrids and technological fantasies that are now in the laboratories in one form or another: spider genes were inserted into goat DNA, in hopes that the goat milk would contain spider web protein for use in bulletproof vests; cow genes turned pigskins into cowhides; jellyfish genes lit up pigs' noses in the dark; arctic fish genes gave tomatoes and strawberries tolerance to frost; potatoes that glowed in the dark when they needed watering; human genes were inserted into corn to produce spermicide; cows that produce human breast-milk; removing the gene from livestock so they won't feel sad when they remove their children from them. "Today people conceive of the flesh in terms of cloning, genetic manipulation; they play at frightening themselves. ...The danger lies in the constant reopened relation to the possible—and not to utopia, for the realization of which in fact no space whatsoever is allotted" (*BD* 83).

[613] A Deleuzian understanding of this explosion of morphogenesis witnesses promiscuous micro-organisms as the least territorialized of all living creatures. Humans are the most territorialized, except for the hybrid manifestations of bio-technological experiments. (DeLanda, *Gilles Deleuze and Science* seminar, EGS 2008).

Epilogue

2011. November 2. Oakland. We are marching in the Children's Brigade down to the port to support the Longshoremen, alongside the Bicycle Brigade, Zazu clutching our "Occupying the Future" sign for four hours.



I had originally intended to conclude my dissertation with the birth of our now ten-month old baby boy, Zazu. Not actually a name or even a word, but a sentence in Hebrew, Zazu translates as "they are going/movement". We named our baby Zazu to ally ourselves with the consciousness of social justice movements. A few months after his birth, the Occupy Movement became a network of citizen-activist coalitions. Throughout my dissertation, I have intertwined my photographic work through corporeal awareness as a living demonstration of the theoretical. My psyche-soma has re-routed carnal-cognitive interruptions—becoming-*ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica.* The confluence of raising Zazu along with the rigors and play of my work, like the Occupy Movement, re-*cognizes* and re-*configures* individual and collective vulnerabilities—embodying structure and cohesion within apparent chaos. Unforeseen modalities spawn productive encounters with the intermedial—becoming tactical participants in our ever-regenerative democracy.

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