Performing Subjectivities: Feminism, Postmodernism and the Practice of Identity

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Declaration

I, Julie Marney, declare that, except for all citations referenced in the text, the work contained herein is my own

Abstract of Thesis

This thesis analyses contemporary understandings of identity formation as investigated by discursive and artistic practices. In order to develop an awareness of how performance and language construct identity, the thesis explores theories of performativity. Identity is shaped in accordance with ideas about the body, as the body is the means by which we achieve material existence. In masculinist discourse the body is constructed as a bound entity, and this contains identity in a singular and fixed space. This limits identity to unified and centred understandings. The contemporary feminist works explored in this thesis critique this masculinist approach to the body, and seek to assert a feminist identity based on fragmentation and multiplicity.

The creative works researched in this thesis operate performatively, revealing that performative enactment is not only linked to drama but also engages different genres. As such, this thesis focuses on performativity in both performance art and works of literature, in an attempt to study the performative act in both language and performance. The work of the performance artist Orlan literally enacts ideological interpellation, exploring the ritualistic exchange of the body for a cathartic experience of identity, as do works by Karen Finley, Annie Sprinkle and Franko B. Similarly, *Fools*, by Pat Cadigan and *Borderlands/La Frontera*, by Gloria Anzaldúa question ideology and control by presenting fragmentation performatively. Through considering catharsis and technology such authors and performers attempt to construct and redefine ritual in a way which investigates the social relationship with the body and attempts to establish feminist agency in identity fragmentation.

For this reason feminist practitioners often locate subversion in the examination of the boundaries between subjectivity and objectivity. As the body of the artist as object becomes increasingly central, inquiry into objectification and voyeurism may, indeed, empower female subjectivities. The use of catharsis to ground a materiality of ritualistic exchange thus becomes the means through which the processes of identity are transformed. In challenging ideological inscription many contemporary artists align themselves with a tradition of artistic 'madness', thus contemplating issues around rationality and control. In fragmenting the body, the last refuge of a whole space outside of fragmentation, these textual enactments release this fragmentary 'madness'. Positioned as the wild, untameable and threatening body, the 'hysterical' body, women have challenged the construction of the 'natural', using the ideology of technology to 'reterritorialise' the female body. As the gendered female body takes control of the 'hysterical', so contemporary artists enact female empowerment in response to a perceived crisis in identity formation. The assertive language and performance styles used by the discursive and artistic practices focused on in this thesis reveal a commonality which refuses gender stereotyping and negotiates new ways forward for feminist agency.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to explore theories of performativity in order to understand feminist subjectivity. Performativity enacts the power of convention through both language and acts, which carry the conventional force of ritual. This repetition of happenings over time inscribes gender through conventional force. The premise of this thesis is that subjectivity is enacted through performance. Given that subjectivity is always a performance, in a philosophical sense, theatrical performance is in a powerful position to provide a space in which changes to subjectivity may be made. In order to resist the conventional force of dominant ideology, subjective agency must be enacted through the performance of identity. In the theatrical sense of performance, drawing attention to the performance of subjectivity through performing subjectivity in extremity, feminist subjects can critique understandings of subjectivity, and can perform the subject with agency.

In examining subjectivity this thesis will explore the ways in which contemporary understandings of the body are connected to constructions of identity. Embodied subjectivity enables identity transition through catharsis. The processes through which catharsis operates are being revised in the contemporary investigations into ritual. This investigation is reconfiguring empowerment for feminist subjects, and is locating agency in identity fragmentation. This leads to performing the 'mark' of gender, and challenges the conventional force of dominant masculinist ideology in identity transcription. It is only through understanding the modes of inscribing identity that feminists may move to challenge constructions of women within the terms of masculinist hegemonic ideology, and so begin to locate new ways forward for feminist agency.

In order to explore performativity, this thesis focuses on both performance art and literature. The performance artists and writers explored all perform identity transition. Orlan, a French performance artist, is undergoing cosmetic surgery to transform her face according to a computer-generated image of her features morphed with those of female iconographical figures taken from art history. Annie Sprinkle, a

porn star turned performance artist, uses sexually explicit images of herself in order to perform the identity transitions she has experienced through her work. Similarly, Karen Finley, who is based in New York, performs identity transition. Finley enacts various characters on stage with no logical progression from one character to the next, performing the leaps for the spectator. Together with this enactment of identity transition, the performers mentioned are assertively full of agency in both their presentation style and in the language they use to represent their performance. Bob Flanagan and Franko B negotiate different ways of presenting subjectivity, as they perform a masculine subjectivity that also seeks to move outside of the terms of masculinist ideology. Similarly, they perform identity transition through threatening the idea of the body as a bound territory. Also challenging masculinist ideology, Pat Cadigan presents a feminist body through exploring science fiction as a means of negotiating an embodied gendered identity. Her novel, *Fools*, performs fragmentation for the reader by leaping between characters without placing the reader in a privileged position of knowledge. In this way the fragmentation that happens for the character also happens for the reader. In *Borderlands/La Frontera*, Gloria Anzaldúa also finds empowerment in fluid subjectivities. Moving from an analysis of the border cultures of Mexico and the United States of America to an exploration of the benefits for feminists in identity fragmentation. Anzaldúa presents an embodied subjectivity where the territories inscribed in the land are inscribed on her body as marks of categorisation and compartmentalisation.

Chapter One; "Performing Subjectivities"

This chapter explores contemporary theories of performativity. Beginning by looking at Louis Althusser, Chapter One explores how ideological apparatus is interpellated into identity. Moving from this to an investigation into the performative act as a means of carrying conventional force, this chapter develops an approach where ritual is seen as instructive in the enactment of the performative moment. "Performing Subjectivities" ties together the language and the act contained in ritualistic enactment, and explores this in relation to female agency as a challenge to patriarchy.

In examining both postmodern and feminist theories of fragmented subjectivity this thesis aims to establish agency in feminist fragmentation.

Chapter Two; "The Cathartic Subject"

Section Two investigates the embodied subject of feminism, and Chapter Two begins this by connecting the embodied subject to the fluid subject of postmodern feminism. Catharsis can be seen to function as a means of both identity transition and a means of connecting the body of the performer with the embodied subjectivity of the spectator. In order to explore catharsis, the chapter looks at Antonin Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty, and its development of theories of catharsis. "The Cathartic Subject" goes on to explore this use of catharsis in the performance work of Joseph Beuys. In Chapter Two I argue that catharsis is the means through which identity transition takes place. This thesis asserts that the work of many contemporary performance artists focuses on identity transition through the performance of catharsis. As such, this chapter explores catharsis in order to examine the relationship between the performer and the spectator. The relationship between the performer-as-object and the spectator-as-subject is currently being revised through the use of catharsis in performance. Thus, the artist now refuses to embody 'the suffering artist', who sacrifices their subjectivity for the agency of the spectator, and, in so doing, refuses to allow the spectator a cathartic release.

Chapter Three; "Body Boundaries and the Territory of Identity"

Chapter Three discusses the body as a territorialised, bound and gendered space. Continuing with the idea of identity transition, this chapter explores the bound space of the body as a site that aligns the body with masculinist constructions of women. As the female body is seen as a fluid body without rigid boundaries, woman is configured as a threat to this masculine unity of identity. This chapter begins by looking at Carolee Schneemann's performance of this embodied threat to masculinity, and continues this by looking at the presentation of identity as absence in the work of Bob Flanagan. Flanagan's performance art documents his struggle against cystic fibrosis, and enacts the fluid body in an attempt to find presence and

agency for the non-patriarchal, non-bound subject. Continuing this critique of the bound site of masculinist, imperialistic, heterosexual dominance this chapter then explores the mapping of territory across the female body in *Borderlands/La Frontera* by Gloria Anzaldúa.

Chapter Four; "Escaping 'The' Body: Ritualistic Sacrifice and Technology"

"Escaping 'The' Body: Ritualistic Sacrifice and Technology" develops the work on catharsis and the bound body of the Other into an exploration of contemporary reinvestigations into ritual. As a means of engaging with the conventional force of society, ritual challenges the inscription of the body into dominant ideology. This chapter goes on to look at the use of technology as a contemporary reinvestigation into ritual. As such, it explores the work of the performance artists Orlan and Stelarc, whose performances investigate technology and the 'post-human' body. As Orlan's work reinvestigates ritualistic figures from the history of religion and art, she challenges the construction of gender through ritual. Her work also seeks to break through the bound space of the body into a body which is fluid and in process. Similarly, Stelarc seeks to break through the bound body. Yet for feminists the transcendence of the body as a bound sphere, and the resulting attempts to break through this, are problematic. The body is a site of power for female embodied subjectivities, and is often used as a means of controlling women. This issue is explored by Pat Cadigan in *Synners* and "Rock On", also examined in this chapter. Cadigan takes issue with the use of technology in order to break through the bound self and reveals that feminist subjects must often reterritorialise the body.

Chapter Five; "Representation and the Sight of Power"

Section Three connects the focus of identity transition through theories of catharsis, ritual and the embodied female subject, to the framing of the female subject within feminist performances and writings. As the opening chapter of Section Three, Chapter Five explores the relationship between representation and the 'real' in order to understand the logic of representation. Representations of women often attempt to seal the female as object. This maintains the dominance of patriarchal structures

through exchanging women in the space of representation. Looking at the relationship between representation and the 'real', this objectification translates into the lived, material experience of women. As part of this critique, this chapter explores contemporary feminist theories on representational visibility and the relationship between representation, women and power.

Chapter Six; "Negotiating the Mark of Gender"

"Negotiating the Mark of Gender" explores the dualistic construction of gender, whereby woman is marked as Other. Feminist performers and writers are negotiating this construction by enacting the fragmentation of identity, and refusing the mark of gender through performance. Gender, for Kate Bornstein, a male-to-female transsexual performer, becomes multiple, and is not restricted to imposed dualities of heterosexual maintenance. Similarly, Orlan negotiates gender divisions through enacting 'woman-to-woman transsexualism'. These performers explore the construction of woman as other in order to critique and reject this position. Continuing this exploration into fragmentation, this chapter explores the novel *Fools* by Pat Cadigan, which seeks to establish a feminist agency through identity fragmentation within a body that remains bound.

Chapter Seven; "Performing Right on the Mark"

This chapter examines feminist performers who explore the construction of woman as other, and conclude that performing this otherness in extreme ways is an effective way to enact feminist agency. Performing the mark of gender may be one way in which masculinist terms of dominance can be critiqued from within, thereby disallowing the structure of this dominance through feminist action. This is the focus of the work of Karen Finley, who exposes her body in extreme ways. As such, her performances challenge the terms of patriarchal dominance through an aggressive awareness of the lived reality of women's experiences. Similarly, the work of Annie Sprinkle attempts to perform female sexuality in a way that challenges the construction of women as passive objects of masculine, heterosexual desire. Continuing with this issue of performing a 'Monstrous Other', *Borderlands* by

Gloria Anzaldúa enacts the sexualised 'monster' of female sexuality, in an assertive manner that refuses the logic of passivity.

This thesis acknowledges a connection between feminist performers and writers, in a way that reveals their concerns with performing feminist agency. The connection between the two genres of performance art and literature within feminism reveal that there is a movement towards presenting agency in an assertively feminist style. It is important to see performativity in terms of both language and performance, as performance itself is always a mode of signification, which carries with it the means either to reproduce and reinforce the conventional weight of society, or to challenge it. The assertive style of the works examined aggressively challenges patriarchy. Through this assertive enactment of women's experiences within patriarchy these performative works enact the mark of gender. However, they resist the terms of the masculinist economy that establishes gender as a mark in order to control it. Rather, through performing an extremity of this position, they critique from within the terms of this masculinist category of Other. The connection across genres refuses the compartmentalisation of knowledge that privileges imperialist, masculinist, and heterosexist modes of thought.

PART ONE

CHAPTER ONE

Performing Subjectivities

In a paper on performativity entitled "Fundamentals"[1], Richard Schechner argued that the term performativity has been much misused. He argued that performativity can only truly exist in actions; a table[2] he argued is only performative when it is being made by the carpenter, and it ceases being performative when it is no longer part of an action. The logic of his argument was that, just sitting there, a table is just a table. He went on to connect this reasoning to writing, which he maintained cannot be *of* the body. Writing can be from the body, Schechner stated, in the sense that the writer who writes must obviously have a body from which to write, but, having left the body, it cannot be *of* the body. There are, of course, problems here for a feminist understanding of both writing and performativity. Feminism is at pains to establish an embodied subjectivity. French feminism has been influential in establishing women's identities as embodied, and emphasising that the existence of identity happens through the body as a means of placing women in a lived environment. Women have established a tradition of writing that uncovers the importance of the body in the creation of female identity.

In this paper, Schechner raises some important and valid points in relation to any analysis of performativity. The debate around performance, performativity and representation, including the representation of language, is loaded. The maintenance of performance as a separate field of knowledge and practice is also an important consideration. As such, the linking of performativity to performance alone is an interesting dilemma; it is important in so far as it acknowledges the status of performativity as an act which exists through performance. As such all performative acts do indeed perform, an aspect of performativity which this thesis takes seriously, with important consequences for a feminist critique of gender identity. However, this insistence on performativity existing only in so far as the subject intentionally performs an act misses an important part of performativity which this thesis takes as

its core: that performativity is a theoretical approach which enables us to examine power negotiations. As such it is a central concern of this thesis to explore the ways in which this works in relation to the formation of identities. Schechner's model of the table denies the workings of performativity in two ways. Firstly, it disallows the historicity contained in the table. In the performative moment it is the historicity contained within this instance of the present which gives the performative act its power. Secondly, it disallows the importance of the witness in the interaction with the table. In so doing, it disallows the role of the witness or the other in the power of the performative moment. Whilst performativity does indeed commit an act, a performance, it exists not only in the intended performance, but also in unintended moments of enactment. This can be when ideology works in performativity as an implicit and covert form of interpellation. It is these aspects which this thesis seeks to address.

This thesis engages in a feminist and postmodern exploration of performativity and identity. Feminism and postmodernism have had a troubled relationship. It is assumed by some feminist scholars that feminism, a socio-political movement with its focus on achieving changes in the lived reality of women, is incompatible with a theoretical position that does not have issues of gender as its central position. As this thesis aims to explore feminist and postmodern responses in performance art it is perhaps necessary to clarify these positions here.

Whilst all feminist approaches seek to improve the lives of women within society, feminism has been categorised into various approaches felt to contain distinct goals. These have been known as radical or lesbian feminism, bourgeois or liberal feminism, and materialist or Marxist feminism. Gayle Austin has provided a useful summary of these three types of feminism:

Liberal

    1.   Minimizes differences between men and women

    2.   Works for success within system; reform, not revolt

    3.   Individual more important than the group

Radical

    1.   Stresses superiority of female attributes and difference between male and female modes

    2.   Favors separate female systems

    3.   Individual more important than the group

Materialist

    1.   Minimizes biological differences between men and women

    2.   Stresses material conditions of production such as history, race, class, gender

    3.   Group more important than the individual[3]

Liberal feminism has as a central concern the belief that changing the laws of a given society will lead to an improvement in women's equality with men, and has been seen as an approach taken by middle-class white women who already hold a position of relative privilege within their society. Materialist feminism, on the other hand, takes as its central concern a belief that class issues form a basis in women's oppression, and that changing the economic structure of society, and viewing women as a class within that society, will improve conditions for women. Radical feminism takes as a central concern the idea of a separatist movement, believing that only by separating from society will the inherent nature of the value of women be seen. These categories of feminism have been defined alongside the definitions of sex and gender: from female as the sex of women, to feminine as the cultural construction of gender, and more recently to the empowerment of the category of 'woman' which has been seen as the political agent on whose behalf changes are sought. Geraldine Harris, in her book *Staging Femininities*, argues that "'the feminine', 'feminist' and 'woman' are contested and unstable categories"[4], and clearly this is true. These definitions do not represent single, unified positions, but discursive categories which intersect.

Postmodernism has been defined as both an aesthetic and political response to contemporary culture, containing diverse characteristics. The non-linear format of postmodern forms is celebrated in the often parodic representation of these forms. These concerns are highlighted by Linda Hutcheon in her book *A Poetics of*

Postmodernism who argues that within postmodernism "self-reflexivity cannot be separated from the notion of difference".[5] Hutcheon goes on to argue that furthermore postmodernism highlights how the "relation of the center to the ex-centric is never an innocent one".[6] From this perspective postmodern politics can be useful to a feminist critique.

The troubled narrative between feminism and postmodernism occurs because many feminist critics of postmodernism believe that any theory that does not consider woman as a central concern is not feminist. Furthermore, from this perspective feminism and postmodernism are incompatible because postmodernism attempts to destabilise categories at the very time when feminists critical of postmodernism feel the need to reassert the category of woman. However, there are feminist scholars who have sympathies with these concerns of postmodernism. Postmodern feminism seeks to combine the two theories as a way that empowers women within a postmodern world.

Geraldine Harris argues that "*some* feminisms continue to maintain and depend upon making a distinction between masculine and feminine, reversing the normative hierarchy, to revalue the concept of the feminine and render it in positive terms".[7] Whilst this is obviously true, these feminisms can not be said to be postmodern feminisms. Postmodern feminism ultimately seeks to question the division of gender into mutually exclusive and dichotomous categories.

Linda Hutcheon, in *The Politics of Postmodernism* has illuminated the case of postmodern feminism. Hutcheon argues that the use of postmodern parody is a politically effective characteristic of postmodern feminism:

> By using postmodern parodic modes of installing and then subverting conventions, such as the maleness of the gaze, representation of woman can be 'de-doxified.' …the subversion will be from within. The critique will be complicitous.[8]

For the purposes of clarity this thesis defines postmodern feminism as feminism which seeks to apply the destabilising categories of postmodernism to gender politics, focusing particularly on the ways in which destabilising empowers the lived experiences of women. Feminist and postmodern theorists apply when feminist approaches are critical of postmodernism and the ways in which postmodernism does

not state gender as a main concern. Postmodern theorists who destabilise categories without focusing on gender politics will be referred to as postmodern theorists.

The Performative Subject

In *Thinking Fragments*, Jane Flax critiques the universalism of language as a system which states "that language has an invariant, universal structure and always functions to split or castrate all 'subjects'".[9] Rosi Braidotti has argued the extent to which this validates masculine subjectivity:

> In this respect some of the traditional grievances against women's alleged intellectual and moral incompetence can be seen merely as a rhetorical technique that aims at constructing and upholding Man as the ideal model. Misogyny is not an irrational act of woman-hating but rather a structural necessity; it is a logical step in the process of constructing male identity in opposition to – that is to say, rejection of – Woman. Consequently Woman is connected to the patriarchy by negation.[10]

This universally masculine structure works to place the masculine subject at the centre of dominant discursive practices. The extent to which this ideology is reproduced is consequently important to feminist understandings of subjectivity and agency. The work of Louis Althusser is useful for understanding the theory of how external ideology becomes interpellated and internalised as subjectivity. Althusser has been influential in theorising the extent to which underlying systems of power and control are instrumental in defining the workings of domination within our society. Although his theories on the control of 'individuals' have some problematic areas for feminist and postmodern theorists alike, his work has been useful for feminist theorists whose own work is particularly concerned with attempting to understand and explode the workings of power and domination within society. Althusser focuses on the workings of ideology as it operates in two systems, which are not without their problems for postmodern feminist purposes. The extent to which he ties these systems to the state and separates them into binary oppositional thinking based on the split between public and private spheres, for example, is

problematic because this analysis itself creates structures of domination. Despite these problems, however, he usefully identifies both Repressive State Apparatuses, which construct and maintain the workings of power through repressive force, and Ideological State Apparatuses, which "interpellate individuals as subjects".[11]

What this thesis is concerned with illustrating here is the function of the Ideological State Apparatuses, which are useful to an analysis of the workings of structure, and how this structure becomes reified in the subject position itself. Althusser identifies the Ideological State Apparatuses as the family and education, amongst others, as these are the means by which ideology is reproduced. The Ideological State Apparatuses operate within the superstructure, which is usually oppositionally constructed to the base of capital in Marxist analysis. Althusser's theory is useful because it places equal importance on the influence of the superstructure in maintaining the structure of the capitalist system. For postmodern feminism it is not only useful to theorise the possible workings of the structure of power, but the work of Althusser is also useful in determining the manner in which subjects become subjects through their subjection to ideologies. For Althusser, the subject is one of 'double constitution', in that the subject is constituted *by* ideology as a subject, and only in this way does the subject become constitutive *of* ideology. For the purposes of this discussion, this is the nature of the humanist agency that contemporary feminist scholarship has been so concerned about losing:

> the individual *is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection,* i.e. <u>in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his subjection 'all by himself'.</u> *There are no subjects except by and for their subjection.* That is why they 'work all by themselves'.[12]

Agency is important for political action in humanist analysis, as it is considered to express a certain degree of autonomy on the part of the 'individual'. An agential subject is one who appears as if s/he makes gestures and actions "all by her/himself". Althusser's analysis is useful in illustrating the manner in which agency is the construction of a constituting subject by ideology, and in order to maintain the workings of that ideology.

This maintenance of ideology by subjects may, of course, be challenged, and theories of performativity enable the understanding of the manner in which subversion and agency may be achieved for feminist subjects. The performative moment, it seems, can both establish conventional force and empower the subject to challenge such force. Through its ritual element the performative act constitutes subjectivity through the historicity of convention, something Austin describes as "the 'historic' present".[13] In *How to do Things with Words*, J. L. Austin illustrates the extent to which the performative utterance simultaneously performs an action. To do this he examines both illocutionary and perlocutionary statements, and establishes that the former commit an action in their very utterance whilst the latter do not immediately commit an action, even though they may effect a change within the world. Perlocutionary utterances, for example, bring about 'consequences', and, as Austin tells us, these consequences are distanced from the act of locution itself: "By doing *x* I was doing *y*".[14] Illocutionary utterances, on the other hand, perform an action in their very nature, because these utterances contain "a certain (conventional) force".[15] The now famous example Austin uses to demonstrate this 'conventional force' is the "I do" uttered in the Christian wedding ceremony.[16]

The conventional force of the illocutionary act implies that the effect of the performative carries with it the power of historicity. Each performative act contains that statement's cultural history within the instant of its performance, and this is what gives the performative its power to act, or, in Austin's words, its 'force'. Judith Butler has developed this point to illustrate and emphasize the repetitive quality of the performative act. In *Excitable Speech* Butler stresses this ritualistic element of Austin's work, analysing agency and 'linguistic vulnerability' in the performative moment:

> As utterances, they work to the extent that they are given in the form
> of a ritual, that is, repeated in time, and, hence, maintain a sphere of
> operation that is not restricted to the moment of the utterance itself.[17]

If, in Althusser's terms, the subject is 'interpellated' by ideology, and ideology, as Butler emphasises, is ritualistic, then the subject can be seen to be constituted by performativity. This enables Butler, in *Excitable Speech*, to locate agency within discourse, and to create a sense of responsibility within the use of that discourse. In

establishing this repetitive and ritualistic nature, Butler emphasises the cultural formation of the performative act, and is thus able to question the notion of the 'sovereign subject', as the subject's agency actually emanates from the performative's discourse, and not from the subject itself. This facilitates her exploration of the constitutive effect of performative speech acts, especially in terms of hate speech.

Why Language? – or Why Conventional Force Matters

At first glance, the language of performativity seems to inscribe meaning through definition and categorisation. However arbitrary that inscription may be, the performative action attempts to name the signified and place it within a system of value. In *How to do Things with Words*, Austin states that performatives regulate behaviour, and that, furthermore, they operate within a system *for the purpose of* regulating behaviour.[18] At some level, performatives work to confirm societal truths. The assigning of value and recognition operates on this system of truths, and many of these 'truths' work to reaffirm the value system of the dominant culture. However, readings of meaning can escape the dictates of dominant culture, and, in fact, these resistant readings can be used to undermine the value system of hegemony. This seems to tie into Foucault's argument in *The History of Sexuality,* that speech, rather than being an act of transgression, is actually a means of control because the subject spoken about is then placed in a system. Language is an attempt to construct presence, placing the humanist subject at the centre through the belief that language refers to an already existing reality. The problem is not simply that the subject spoken about gets put into a system, but that language itself is also 'marked', to use the term of Monique Wittig.[19] Language is marked in order to inscribe value into the system of language.

This attempt to understand the workings of power is one reason why the work of Michel Foucault has been influential within postmodern feminism. Foucault's work reveals an underlying critique of humanism's construction of oppositional

difference. In *The Order of Things*, Foucault discusses the nature of structure as the process whereby value is imposed onto the area of the visible. This value is based on structure, and permeates discourse so that structure itself is already within discourse. From this analysis we can see how value enables the formation of fixed entities, which in turn allows a system of oppositional difference. As Foucault states: "It is therefore possible to establish the system of identities and the order of differences existing between natural entities".[20] This analysis reveals the extent to which structure is all pervasive. The system of power is so persistent within contemporary culture that feminist politics must look at the extent to which these systems of power are reified in the subject position itself.

Ultimately, this self is based on what Derrida has called the metaphysics of presence.[21] In his essay "What is Enlightenment" Foucault sees humanism as "always tied to value judgements" and that this leads to the establishment of a "critical principle of differentiation".[22] Foucault's work was instrumental in illustrating the power structures and control of humanism. The humanist subject comes to recognise itself as such, and in this process not only is it constructed as a subject by discourse but it also constructs itself as a subject. In this scenario we believe that we are the agents of what "we are doing, thinking, saying".[23] The construction of meaning and the possession of knowledge is crucial to humanist understandings of the self; because we 'know' ourselves to be subjects we construct ourselves accordingly, and we are simultaneously constructed in this way. That is, we are constructed to believe that the knowledge we possess is our own. This belief in rationalism and self as mediating all knowledge and experience allows a belief in 'progress', and a focus on 'ends', where authentic experience premises rational value judgements.

This (un)gendered nature of humanism has been the focus of much attention by feminist authors, who seek to critique this aspect of humanism as a power structure that works to reinforce patriarchal assumptions. Chris Weedon, in her book *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, has illustrated the extent to which the humanist subject assumes that 'he', and 'she' when considering feminist liberal humanism, is the originator of his or her knowledge. Thus, s/he assumes that s/he is

the controller of meaning, and that "subjectivity is the coherent, authentic source of the interpretation of the meaning of 'reality'".[24] Given that the humanist self perceives itself as the author of reality, so this self constructs his or her 'authentic' experience of the world as a unified 'reality', constructing its concept of self along similar lines. In *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, Linda Hutcheon has discussed the manner in which the structures of power and control within a humanist approach to the world are established in the concept of unity itself:

> 'to totalize' does not just mean to unify, but rather means to unify
> with an eye to power and control; and as such, this term points to the
> hidden power relations behind our humanist and positivist systems of
> unifying disparate materials, be they aesthetic or scientific.[25]

What changes, points not only to the inevitable limitation of the viewer, but also to the instability in humanist terms of the particular subject in question.

This 'loss' of centre politics is precisely what is at issue in the negative interpretation of postmodernism as denying all political action. For Fredric Jameson this feeling of the loss for centre does seem to be tied into the loss of presence. Following on from Roland Barthes and the death of the author, Jameson has called this loss of the centre 'the death of the subject'. In these terms the humanist self is now no longer the author of meaning, either in the writing that s/he creates or in the founding of the subject position through the knowledge that s/he possesses. He experiences the postmodern decentring of this self as loss as he clearly wishes to politicise postmodernism as a reaction to late-capitalism. In his essay "Postmodernism and Consumer Society" there is a tone of nostalgia for this lost unity of the coherent self, where the postmodern decentred self is seen as fragmentary and schizophrenic:

> Schizophrenic experience is an experience of isolated, discontinuous
> material signifiers which fail to link up into a coherent sequence. The
> schizophrenic thus does not know personal identity in our sense, since
> our feeling of identity depends on our sense of the persistence of the
> 'I' and the 'me' over time.[26]

There is a belief here in the importance of the unified subject position, and a belief also in the neutrality of time, which are both linked to Jameson's political agenda as a Marxist critic. A feminist analysis would want to question whose sense of identity it is that Jameson seems so intent on pursuing.

Indeed, women have been controlled through the masculine identity of rational subjectivity, and this can clearly be seen in the connections made between rationality, language and women. One only has to look at the emphasis placed on language in relation to women in patriarchal societies to see a little of why women have been placed outside of language. It is crucial, for example, to have vocalised a resistance against sexual harassment or rape in order for there to have been any resistance. Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall explore this point in *Contemporary Feminist Politics*:

> Because there is rarely any collaborative evidence, because there are rarely any other witnesses, the trial will turn on the issue of consent. The accused will claim consent, and the defence will use almost any means to undermine the woman's assertions that she did not consent.[27]

Positioned outside of rational subjectivity a woman's body can be seen as 'speaking' against the mind. In this way the vocalised subject position of women is discounted. This issue of being placed outside the rational subject of language has been explored by Mary Poovey in her essay, "Feminism and Postmodernism – Another View". In discussing the 'double bind' of women's imposed subject position she states:

> On the one hand, because women are excluded from the humanist subject position in being associated with nature, they are not credited with full rationality; when a woman says "no" in relation to sex, she may as often mean "yes". On the other hand, because the law also assumes that the humanist subject exists apart from gendered meanings, the woman is held responsible for upholding the standards of rationality: She must tell a coherent story or tell no story at all.[28]

Poovey goes on to make another useful point for developing theories of feminist agency, that identity fragmentation within women is the result of experiencing the clash of the ideological separation of rationality and nature inscribed onto the subject position imposed on women within humanism; "the double bind displaces what is really a social contradiction onto the individual subject as the split between consciousness (rationality) and the unconscious (nature)".[29]

As, in the discourse of humanism, women are not seen as representing the position of 'subject', so when we use the language of performativity that commits an action at the same time as it speaks, this action appears to move us assertively into the subject position. One reason why a feminist critique of agency needs to explore

theories of representation is the way in which women have been discouraged from assertively taking up subject positions. Rosalind Coward has explored the repression of women's speech in *Female Desire*:

> While the mouth can be used to establish a person's presence in the world, it is obvious that this is no easy task for women. Men silence women's speech in public... women's comments are often rendered marginal or irrelevant... It seems that we have internalized effectively the repression of our speech; when we speak it can feel as if we have no right to do so, that we are unworthy of expressing our needs.[30]

Indeed, various feminist studies of the use of language reveal that language seems to be particularly important for women because often women do not get what they want because they fail to vocalise it. In the discourse of femininity this vocalisation of desire is represented as 'masculine', and as being a mode of subjectivity which is too direct for 'feminine' identity. In *Man Made Language*, Dale Spender discusses the extent to which sexism in language use is controlled and perpetuated:

> The belief that men and women talk in sex-specific ways (and on sex-specific topics) is dependent in part on the ability to enforce those divisions, and there is some evidence to suggest that this task is undertaken primarily by men.[31]

As women are actively discouraged from using language vocally and assertively, so studies have revealed that they often do not make the claim that they have any right to fulfil their desires. Consequently, in actively using performatives that constitute identity women experience subjective presence through expressing their desires.

Subjected Subjects and Feminist Agency

As language interpellates us into discursive practices, so it can also express feminist agency. Performativity can be seen to rest on a representation of subjective sovereignty which can never exist in representation. In her exploration of Zizek's work in *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, Butler's work in *Bodies That Matter* examines the "relationship between identification with political signifiers and their capacity both to unify the ideological field and to constitute the constituencies they claim to represent".[32] Butler explores the extent to which "[f]ollowing Lacan, Zizek

argues that the 'subject' is produced in language through an act of foreclosure (Verwerfung)." So that the "subject is, as a result, never coherent and never self-identical precisely because it is founded and, indeed, continually refounded, through a set of defining foreclosures and repressions that constitute the discontinuity and incompletion of the subject".[33] From this we can see that the subject is fragmented in speech and will never come to a full realisation and recognition of itself as a subject in humanist terms, simply because this fragmentation in speech is the way in which the subject is constantly changing. "No signifier can be radically representative, for every signifier is the site of a perpetual *meconnaisance*; it produces the expectation of unity, a full and final recognition which can never be achieved".[34] This, for Butler, is the positive aspect of signification in which the performative remains open, and is never a closed system.

As language constitutes subjectivity, it never fully realises the subject, and so language operates as the medium of our 'recognition of our lack of recognition'. Consequently, it both constitutes and represents fluid subjectivities. This rational naturalisation constructs "agency" as a means of privileging consciousness and the unified self. The idea that the subject is constructed by discourse directly challenges the humanist notion of the self. The subject as constituted by discourse is felt to be problematic for feminism as it is read as determinism. If the subject is constructed by discourse then it is felt that the subject is merely a passive receptor of outside forces, and can have no means for direct action. The concept of a momentary subject in process ruptures the structure on which the rational self as agency is built, and in turn alters the traditional view of political action.

In much thought around agency there is a dichotomy between the constituted and the constituting subject which must be broken down. Much feminist thought on this issue only succeeds in maintaining functioning subjects through borrowing the concept of agency from the humanist discourse of the self. Thus, Sandra Lee Bartky, in her essay "Agency: What's the Problem?", discusses the work of Foucault and acknowledges that there is no subject without subjugation, therefore problematising the process through which one becomes a subject. Yet she also concludes that a

> knowledge of these anonymous historical processes can give us a
> certain distance on our own sensibilities: such knowledge should not
> lead to a denial of rational agency but to a more secure understanding
> of its parameters, its possibilities, and its limits.[35]

It is important for feminist purposes to question the systems of power that constitute the subject. This need not lead to an inability to take action in the world, but ultimately leads to a questioning and rejection of agency as rooted in the rational subject. This concept merely reifies the structures of power themselves. Within the rejection of this rationalist self rather than denying action altogether, the movement between multiple and conflicting discourses, the space in-between the binary, and the point of process become important.

The movement from difference to unity found in humanist discourse is dependent upon the notion of oppositional difference. The recognition that this movement from difference to unity has been one of the problematic organisational principles of feminism may be one reason for the contemporary focus on difference within feminist politics. Annette Kolodny argues that there has been a loss of "the originating revolutionary potential of feminism".[36] This loss of feminist agency, if such a loss exists, is not about buying into an ideology of 'having it all', as Greene argues, although this doctrine certainly exists. Rather, it seems to be about acknowledging a loss of unity. If, as Kolodny and others argue, there is an impasse at the moment within feminist politics, it is because of an awareness that the unified fight for the recognition of 'Woman' as a category of value has negative repercussions. On the contrary, however, rather than an impasse, contemporary feminist artists and writers are actually renegotiating the definitions applied to this term. In fact as we shall see, feminist masquerade is an assertively, and even at times aggressively, feminist response both to the notion of identity as unified and also to the concept of mutually exclusive gender characteristics.

Thus, feminism, rather than seeking to claim for women a space within the central, rational subject position actually questions the absolute wholeness which founds this unified self. The construction of difference does not allow for any connection between the self and the other, except through sealing the notion of irreducible difference. This difference is a negative space, a space of oppositional

politics. Any marginalised position that seeks to create a politics of appropriation and resistance necessarily constructs that standpoint in opposition to the central position. At the level of structure, Jacques Derrida has explored this idea that the position constructed through a knowledge of itself as marginal to the centre is necessarily constructed within the level of transgression allowed by the structure of centre politics. In "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", Derrida illustrates the extent to which structures do indeed allow a space within the structure itself for what he terms the 'play' of the structure. What Derrida has termed 'the structurality of the structure' allows this play, so the structure ultimately, and simultaneously, limits the extent of available play. This dominant, centralised ideology can then continue to define itself in opposition to the marginalised position, and the logic of this power of oppositional domination goes unchallenged.

The discursive subject-in-process explodes the principle that one becomes a subject through possessing knowledge of an object, and so challenges the structure of oppositional difference and power itself. Difference can be a positive thing because it accepts the processes involved in creating a subject, and that each and every subject process is different from person to person. It does not attempt to unify the differences into similarity by seeing connection only on the level of sameness. Christine Di Stefano in her essay "Dilemmas of Difference", acknowledges that "it is not always the case that 'difference' translates into 'unequal'".[37] A positive politics of difference allows a space for difference without interpreting the subject of difference as "Other", and without defining oneself in opposition to this difference.

In this political scenario, giving up the concept of agency does not mean that the self loses all ability to act on the world, becoming the mere object of deterministic discourses. The self as constructed by discourse can still act on the world; not through the concept of agency, but through the point of conflict between any multiple discourses that this self inhabits at any one, historically positioned, time. Thus, the self is within discourse, it does not occupy some imaginary space outside of discourse, and is shaped by discourse, but it is also simultaneously within other multiple and different discourses. This conflict establishes the functioning

action capabilities of the subject in process without relying on any bound subject whose agency comes from an essence of self which is true and constant. This moment of conflict is different from Lyotard's differend which is itself a conflict which can have no resolution, as resolution would necessarily result in one of the parties being oppressed, and so constant moments of conflict illustrate resolutions in process.

Each subject position is constituted by discourse. Despite this, it must be acknowledged that each subject is placed in only one discourse at any one time. The subject finds itself in multiple discourses, and is constituted by multiple discourses. These discourses all converge and so the subject is split, fragmented and decentred, but is not positioned off-centre and is not marginalised to the centre. Through this "interpellation" by multiple discourses the subject position becomes a process. This process is a series of connections, relations, difference and flux. It is non-defined, non-absolute, and so exists as dynamic points of process. It disavows traditional concepts of political action, and is particularly challenging for feminism in this way. It no longer depends on an end point of 'progress'. This constantly changing process places emphasis on the finite time, which ultimately means that political action for feminism focuses on the political position of women in the present. It does not take an evolutionary approach to political action, which is the agenda of humanism and the approach that has previously been adopted by much feminist politics.

It follows that the construction of identity itself, as a mark of 'presence', is constituted not only within performative repetition, but also within the powerful discourse of recognition. The contemporary focus on the subject is about a concern with the extent to which power is all pervasive. Power is inevitably power over something or someone else. By virtue of this power we create the oppressed, the Other, and the marginal. As a feminist, it is important to examine the manner in which the subject is 'subjected'. Understanding the workings of power will enable feminism to change the lived experience of women. As Sandra Lee Bartky has stated on her reading of Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*: "to be a subject at all is already to have been subjugated".[38] Feminism is concerned with empowering women; with instilling in women a belief in their own capacity for action. To understand the

workings of power in terms of subjugating subjects is not to deny women this empowerment or agency. Rather, it is a useful tool in understanding and exploding the workings of power itself. As such, it is important for feminist politics to resist the logic of power whereby the system of power itself is perpetuated. Resisting power does not mean that women will cease to be functioning beings in the world, able to be the driving force of political change, and able to navigate their way through the mediatory codes of rationalisation which reify the structures of power in subjugated subjects.

However, the rational self is problematic for feminism, not least because of its dependence upon issues of centrality and control. Within this framework the concept of agency can be seen as a cathartic means through which the subject engages with the world. Issues of central agency also enable codes of mediation to be put into place which allow for the construction of the subject as separate from the world. The rational capabilities allow the belief that the subject can mediate between a complex world and an intact identity through which this meaning is generated. Agency is therefore the means through which the subject can make sense of the world and can seek to maintain control of the subject position itself. Therefore, agency is the means by which the subject performs its centrality.

Self-Recognition: Performativity, Recognition and Identity

Performing centrality requires a recognition of the subject as central. There must be someone to hear or see the act in order for it to be endowed with meaning. Eve Sedgwick, in her essay on performativity and performance, examines the theory of performatives established by J.L. Austin, illustrating how within this theory, powerful speech needs a witness. It is not enough simply to say it or do it, one must call on a witness, whether or not the witness is aware of it. Performatives need recognition, as Butler has stressed. Indeed this need for recognition calls on the Hegelian notion of self-consciousness, even as it seeks to interrogate, and explore the possibility for the denial of, the constitution of this subject iteratively: "Self-

consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged".[39]

This need for acknowledgement, stressed by Butler, and by Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in their introduction to *Performativity and Performance*, both recognises the act and acts as a subject who is constituted in turn. Just as one interpellates the subject, and the object, who may or may not be the witness themselves, one also interpellates the witness. In a discussion of the performative "I dare you", Sedgwick and Parker discuss the extent to which the performative depends upon a consensual agreement between the subject and the witnesses. However, this agreement which constitutes the subject and witness as empowered through the sacrificial inscription of value may be denied:

> To have my dare greeted with a witnesses' chorus of "Don't do it on our account" would radically alter the social, the political, the interlocutory (I-you-they) space of our encounter.[40]

This suggests that powerful language is dependent on the existence and creation of the Other. This need for a witness is important to feminism because of the connotations of the Other, usually constructed as an empty space onto which identities are projected and then these identities are in turn demanded from the conventional weight of society.

The recognition provided by the Other may be in the form of an absent recognition, and may, in this case, be the continued presence of the conventional force of ideology. Therefore the witness is absent but the weight of society recognises the act according to its conventions. As a result it appears that the existing conventions of ideology have become ritualised as recognition of various modes of subjectivity. Obviously, a feminist critique of performativity needs to pay attention to this conventional force, as ideologies, especially within a continued patriarchal framework, rarely work to women's advantage.[41] The work of contemporary writers and performers investigates the manner in which ideology becomes ritualised into recognition. Gloria Anzaldúa, in her exploration of feminist identities, *Borderlands/ La Frontera*, writes:

> Culture forms our beliefs. We perceive the version of reality that it communicates. Dominant paradigms, predefined concepts that exist

as unquestionable, unchallengeable, are transmitted to us through the
culture. Culture is made by those in power – men. Males make the
rules and laws; women transmit them.[42]

Theories of the Other traditionally place the male in the active role of the performer
and the female in the passive role of witness. Performative acts which challenge the
construction of ritual in turn challenge the ways in which ideology is turned into
culture.

Relational Selves

Within much recent feminist discourse there remains an insistence on interpreting
the individual as whole. Briefly exploring the position of much contemporary
feminist theory will hopefully illustrate a recurring problematic area. This
problematic issue is the connection between subjective presence and centre discourse
in a way that aligns value with permanence, rather than transience. This can be seen
even where feminist scholars critique the centred subject and advocate a recognition
of the processes involved in identity creation. Within this debate the argument that
the subject needs to misrecognise itself as whole remains. Thus, critics of
postmodernism argue that the subject's misrecognition of itself as the producer of
meaning is the essential part in which that subject becomes grounded in the world.
Therefore, this misrecognition is seen as the only way in which that subject can
function in the world. In short, that the presence of the centre is the only way in
which subjects believe themselves to be the agent and controller of meaning. The
problem with this is the dependence upon the centre as the site at which the subject
experiences itself as present. This is problematic because of the tendency to align
presence with permanence, and to associate value with permanence in the
construction of meaning. Thus, the manner in which the subject misrecognises itself
as centred serves to position meaning with permanence. This creates and maintains a
duality between permanence and transience, presence and absence, and centre and
ex-centre. This seems to me to invest in the very logic of oppositional politics that
much recent feminist discourse has aimed to challenge.

In *Practising Postmodernism/Reading Modernism*, Patricia Waugh discusses the decentred nature of much female experience in the world, concluding that:

> It is why women began to seek a subjective sense of agency and collective identity within the terms of the discourses of modernity at precisely the moment when postmodernists were engaged in the repudiation of such discourses, proclaiming the 'death of the author' and the end of humanism.[43]

Feminist scholars are suspicious of the postmodern critique of this self because it exists in a fragmented state; it no longer has a centre, a sense of a unified, whole, essence, which maintains the self intact, but is diversified. Agency is directly grounded in an essence of self, a subject position which is whole and is not felt to be incapacitated by fragmented dispersal. Much contemporary feminist scholarship is suspicious of the decentred self specifically because it is felt that such a concept of subjecthood disallows the ability for action in the world. To use the words of Patricia Waugh again, but this time from her essay "Stalemates?: Feminists, Postmodernists and Unfinished Issues in Modern Aesthetics": "perhaps feminist writers needed to formulate a sense of identity, history and agency within these terms before they could begin to deconstruct them".[44] Waugh clearly perceives the decentred subject as a loss of the centre. She believes that there can be no space for political action within postmodernism, and whilst she advocates a relational self her belief in action in the world is clearly grounded in the notion of humanist agency, and for the female subject to become a central and autonomous subject.

In this framework any sense of fragmentation and dispersal of positions will be seen to contradict the notion of identity, and must therefore incapacitate the individual. So feminist scholarship becomes suspicious not only of the decentred subject position, but also of the contemporary focus on the problematics of subject positions per se. Gayle Greene has written about her experience at a feminist conference, where many of the feminists present expressed outrage at the contemporary focus on subject positions. In this approach to feminism, 'reality' is divorced from the subject who organises for change within this 'reality', a position which Greene herself accepts when she says:

> A theoretical discourse that's preoccupied by increasingly subtle
> deconstructions of subjectivity and experience is unlikely to be
> concerned with changing people or experience; it's no accident that
> this is the going thing.[45]

Such a position is suspicious of the decentred subject because it perceives this

subject as disallowing political action. This standpoint is unable to conceive of

socio-political revolution in any terms other than the grounding of agency, and

hence political action, in the subject of 'progress'. As such, much feminist

scholarship wants to question certain aspects of the humanist self without truly

questioning the structures upon which this self is based, and the logic of oppositional

difference which this self maintains. Whilst such feminist scholars have good

reasons for wanting to hold onto certain aspects of this sense of self, in doing so

such scholarship allows the power structures upon which it is premised to go

unchallenged.

The search for a centred concept of self in which we recognise ourselves as

whole is a misrecognition. Even when, as Waugh and others argue, we recognise this

misrecognition, it seems to me that we are still operating under the logic of reference

to a centre. As such, the fragmentation of a decentred subjectivity is always

discussed with reference to the centre as the ultimate point of presence. In this sense

fragmentation is always fragmentation of the centre. Consequently, there remains a

single point of reference in a unified position which has been fragmented. However,

recognition of our fragmentation in multiple, and simultaneous, discourses avoids

the nostalgia for the lost centre.

As this chapter will go on to explore, much feminist discourse insists on

interpreting the individual as whole, even where feminist scholars critique this

unified subject and advocate the 'subject-in-process'. Sara Mills and Lynne Pearce,

for example, critique the idea that the subject is the author of meaning but believe

that "without such a misrecognition we could not function effectively in the

world".[46] Similarly, Catherine Belsey proposes a subject-in-process where the "'I'

designates only the subject of a specific utterance", but equally believes that "it is

only by adopting the position of the subject within language that the individual is

able to produce meaning".[47] Mills, Pearce and Belsey all recognise that the subject

is constructed by discourse, and Belsey's advocating of a subject-in-process illustrates a changing and relational subjectivity. Yet all three theorists return to the agential subject; to the need for the subject to misrecognise itself as whole and as the producer of meaning. Even if the subject recognises the misrecognition, this sets up a mediatory code between the subject and the world. This code reinforces the rationalising capabilities of the subject and reinscribes a logic of oppositional difference.

Hysterical Madness or Decentred Agency?

The process of discourses in conflict generates action, creating a self which is unbounded, dynamic and decentred, and which has no investment in the humanist self and the power structures on which it is premised. Yet some feminist scholars have been suspicious of this feminist discursive subject. In "Looking at History", Gayle Greene quotes Nicole Ward Jouve to illustrate her point that feminism must retain the agential subject:

> For we (especially women) have been asked to go along with
> Deconstruction whilst we had not even got to the Construction stage.
> You must have a self before you can afford to deconstruct it.[48]

Such a standpoint believes that the decentred subject leads to a fragmented subject which incapacitates the individual through destroying the possibility of agency. In her essay "Subjects and Agents: The Question for Feminism", Susan Hekman identifies a discursive subject which attempts to displace the constituting/constituted dichotomy. She argues that the subject as constituted by discourse is not inimical with agency. Her concern as a feminist is to enable political action in the world whilst recognising the formation of the subject by discourse. She seeks to "posit an 'I' with agency without reference to a presocial entity divorced from discursive forces".[49] The problem with agency derives from the positing of a central agent. A valuable exploration of agency can be found in Susan Hekman's essay "Subjects and Agents: The Question for Feminism", where she argues for "an identity that is fluid, heterogeneous, changing".[50] This seems to me to be an attempt to move away from

the central agent. In Hekman's discursive subjectivity the ability to act in the world is provided by enabling discourses, so that "some ... of these discursive formations provide the possibility of agency". Furthermore, she argues that whilst "many of the discourses that construct the feminine within our culture deny women agency, construct them as passive and dependent, others do not".[51] This does not reflect material existence, which is dependent upon mutual and conflicting discourses existing simultaneously within subjectivity. Therefore, this chapter argues that it would be useful for feminist politics to consider the conflict between discourses as the mode of generating action. This is where postmodern politics becomes truly revolutionary because the conflicts can never be resolved. This does not have to be seen as annihilistic. In fact, it is only ever seen as annihilistic when we invest in a nostalgia for the loss of centre politics. Hekman argues that this is accomplished by aligning oneself with the enabling forces within culture:

> Although many of the discourses that construct the feminine within
> our culture deny women agency, construct them as passive and
> dependent, others do not. Feminists can look to the enabling
> discourses for the agency they require, particularly in the political
> arena.[52]

Such a subject position may not refer to a presocial entity, accepting a subject that is heterogeneous and formed by discursive forces. It allows women to gain access to a subject position which is active and can, therefore, work towards political change. Yet it does not recognise the conflict that must inevitably ensue from the social force of these fundamentally multiple discourses, as it does not recognise that these multiple discourses are necessarily in play at the same time. In my opinion, and with particular reference to the often expressed 'multiple' and 'fragmented' subject positions that women experience, the subject is in process. This necessitates the subject being permanently in a state of constitution by discourses. Given such a scenario, the subject is in a constant state of formation, being constantly interpellated by discourses, and, as the subject is heterogeneous, it carries these multiple discourses around in "subjective time".[53] In working within multiple discourse the subject may be dispersed or fragmented, but not in such a way as to prevent useful action. Rather the subject becomes flexible and fluid. Despite being decentred subjectivity is not fragmented into dispersal.

Fragmentation comes from conflict in discourses. Given this scenario, women have traditionally been closer to the position of fragmentation due to women's relation to the discourses of subject and object, together with the situation of woman, and woman as 'sign', within multiple and simultaneous discourses. This is not to say that all discourses have presence at once, although often they do, but that this subjectivity necessarily entails that people have an 'interpretative community'[54] of discourses, so that any number of discourses are actually in play at any one time.

This focus on the present time of multiple discourse creates a dynamic politics. The socially-situated nature of postmodern feminism eradicates a belief in the subject position as transcendental, and so challenges the concept of 'progress', concepts that some feminist scholarship has invested in. In their essay "Social Criticism Without Philosophy", Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson advocate a genealogised approach to feminist politics where theory "would be explicitly historical, attuned to the cultural specificity of different societies and periods and to that of different groups within societies and periods".[55] Thus, postmodern feminism demands a different interaction between past and present. History is not felt to be a unifying force in which human essences travel forwards in time to an ever disappearing point of progress through a necessarily transcendental and universal point of reason. Instead women in history are felt to be constructed out of that particular time of history, out of the various discourses available in any particular time. Thus, 'woman' is not a fixed essence, but socially-constructed, and therefore subject to change according to that social situatedness.

Feminist politics can no longer adopt an oppositional standpoint of resistance, as this maintains the power structure through opposition. Given this understanding of the "structurality", to use Derrida's term, of systems of power, it is important to challenge both hegemonic ideologies and the systems through which they operate. This places an importance on the space in-between the dichotomy and on the moment of process. Much has been written to stress the importance of the process to postmodern feminism. For much feminist theory there remains a concern around this 'loss' of centre, because it is felt that this, once again, is to be positioned

off-centre. To modernist feminists writing about postmodernism this decentering is seen as a somewhat convenient move to eradicate the position of the centre just as women were coming to be placed in it. It is seen as an attempt to eradicate rationalism just as women were moving from irrationalism. Exploring the theortetical interaction between feminist and postcolonial theories enables us to theorise 'difference' and the decentred subject position in the construction of identity. Such a perception of rational subjectivity is thus only viable if one follows the dominant ideology as 'first'. In the words of Edward Said discussing the attitude of Westerners to the imperialised world: "Was it not true, ran their new evaluation, that 'we' had given 'them' progress and modernization?".[56] Understanding the decentred subject as the 'loss' of the unified centred subject accepts the logic of oppositional difference, seeing the marginalised position as defined in opposition to hegemony. Contrary to this view, the subject as constituted by discourse places emphasis on the process of socio-political revolution and deconstructs the prevalent structure of binary opposition.

The category 'woman' creates another paradoxical situation for women. On the one hand, this category enables feminism to have a political position from which to speak and create change in the world; it allows for the organisation of thought and maintains the focus of this thought. However, it also reifies the image of woman as defined through marginalised politics. Feminism cannot get rid of the category 'woman' which does provide an organisational and political locus. However, our understandings of the category 'woman' are changing as feminism challenges its own investment in hegemony and the institution of power itself. Feminist scholarship recognises that groups of women are alienated by the term 'woman' and are working towards rectifying this investment in hegemony. By clinging to humanist concepts, such as notions of agency premised on the subject as binary oppositional thinking, women seek to claim for themselves a position in the power of the subject. What should be of concern to feminism is the pervasive effect of power itself. Once you accept the value judgement which gives you the authority to speak you invest in power, and so are less likely to challenge the structure upon which this authority exists. A postmodern politics based on the movement of constantly repositioning the

subject and its politics, and thus creating the dynamism of revolution, would enable feminists to challenge strucutures which seek to interpellate them into dominant ideologies, whilst resisting the interpellation by calls to universalism.

Feminist scholarship believes that this subject position of wholeness was gender blind and that it was premised on its exclusion of woman as Other. Rather than eradicate this position, feminist scholarship seeks to expand the centred self. There was a move to create a space for women in which they may become effective in possessing a unified agential sense of self which allows them a space from which to organise, to maintain political action in the world, and so to generate a position of authority. In this scenario women maintain the liberal humanist approach which they have also worked to challenge. Language is considered to reveal the authentic self of the woman who utters the 'I', and who is the author of meaning in the world, however subjective and non-universal this construction of meaning may be. The self is not felt to be constructed from outside in such a manner as to incapacitate the individual, because the individual is felt to have an essence of self which can control outside influences, and in turn construct these outside influences. This standpoint generates the idea that women cannot move to 'play' with a decentred self because they have never been able to construct themselves from the central position. Therefore, it is assumed that women must experience themselves as centred before they can allow themselves what is perceived as the 'luxury' of playing with a decentred subject position.

The concept of the Other as a marginalised position depends on oppositional difference. It is important to eradicate the position of the Other in terms of challenging the political belief in the importance of an outside position to any centre, a political position which is felt to have importance in acting on the centre in a way that can change the politics of that centre in a unique manner. Sandra Harding and other feminist scholars advocate "reinventing ourselves as Other" in order to speak from a more authentic, by which she means more valuable, political position. It is important not to desire an eradication of the other as an eradication of difference, an attempt to reduce all things to the same, and to see connection only in terms of similarity. However, it is important to disallow the construction of objects which

simply work to reify the workings of power as domination by constructing a position which the subject can use to define its status as whole. Identifying with the object through similarities is not the key to eradicating marginalisation. Just as there has to be an outside to the constructed centre, so, within the terms of humanism, there has to be an Other to the self. If the subject is no longer defined against the object (in fact is no longer defined at all), then the object position disappears. The point of process becomes important, rather than the traditional focus on the end. Nothing stays the same, there is a constant state of flux, and the focus on the process necessitates a focus on the circumstances of women in a finite time.

In her essay on feminist practice and postmodernist theory, Sara Ahmed has argued that feminism is humanist in practice and postmodern in theory. Ahmed argues that feminism cannot sit comfortably with postmodern theory as it cannot inhabit a discourse that does not take gender as one of its fundamental concerns. Thus, Ahmed argues that the discursive clash between postmodern theory and feminist practice generates a new discourse. However, Ahmed's analysis insists on maintaining a humanist autonomous subject for the practice of feminism. As such, it maintains a division between theory and practice which insists on marking the spheres of feminist activity. It is because of this that it operates within a humanist value system, which works by stabilising difference through categorisation.

Female Bodies and the Immateriality of Discourse

The maintenance of rationality and reason as a masculine sphere enables the construction of the body as a site of female embodiment. Hence, the notion of 'the' body as an abstract term cannot exist, but instead becomes a specifically gendered body. Consequently, as rational subjectivity sought to define this space of rational knowledge which is now extended into intelligence and information as masculine, so the space of the body came to be constructed as feminine. This served several purposes. Firstly, it constructed the feminine oppositionally as irrational and thus it placed women outside of a created space of rationality and rights. This enabled a

division between public and private space. Creating a space of opposition between not only rationality and irrationality, but also mental and bodily processes. Secondly, it enabled the construction of femininity as the irrational space of the body, and masculinity as the space of the mind. As Rosi Braidotti states:

> One of the positive effects of this marginalized position has been to make philosophical discourse aware of everything which had previously been constructed as 'other' than the global and totalitarian knowing rational subject.[57]

Leaving the body to the realms of the feminine enabled the masculine to pursue an abstract and transcendental sense of self.

Thus, the boundaries of the bodily space needed to be controlled and enforced. Gillian Rose has written about the female body as a site of territory and containment in her essay "As if the Mirrors had Bled". Referencing the work of Irigaray on the containment of woman, we can see from Rose's argument the necessity of creating the body as bound in order to contain woman within an ideological field which can be controlled:

> And she is contained, enclosed, by these efforts. She is imagined as contained, imagined as having a spatiality of impermeable borders, imagined as having "the solidity of land", as being the hard surface of the mirror.[58]

Indeed, Irigaray tells us in "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine", the feminine exists as a bound, solid space in order that it might reflect back to masculine reason the power of this discourse:

> Strictly speaking, *Speculum* has no beginning or end. The architectonics of the text, or texts, confounds the linearity of an outline, the teleology of discourse, within which there is no possible place for the 'feminine', except the traditional place of the repressed, the censured.[59]

The Gendered Dualism

The creation of the bound space of the body as a territory of femininity enables the division of gender into two. This is not a 'natural' extension of biological sex, for as Judith Butler tells us, sex, that is the biological body, is as constructed by discourse

as gender. Perceived as the natural extension of sex, in this way gender maintains the boundaries of the biological body through an essentialist understanding of the nature of gender divisions. However, when we not only explore the socially constructed formation of gender categories, but also examine the extent to which sex, the biological 'nature' of the body, is also constructed, we can begin to question the connection between sex and gender. The work of Butler has been influential in exploring the manner in which sex and gender are constructed. For as Butler states, this enables a division of gender into two opposing constructions which clearly enables heterosexuality to perform its centrality as a dominant discourse:

> The presumption of a binary gender system implicitly retains the belief in a mimetic relation of gender to sex whereby gender mirrors sex or is otherwise restricted by it.[60]

The problems with the critique of the division of gender into two are in creating and maintaining for feminists an ideological discursive position from which to speak. However, once the problems contained in understandings of agency in identity formation are addressed, then strategic deconstruction of gender duality can enable feminism to interpret identity in ways that are challenging for hegemonic discursive practices. These hegemonic discourses confine female identity in the space of the bound body as territory:

> The identification of women with 'sex', for Beauvoir as for Wittig, is a conflation of the category of women with the ostensibly sexualised features of their bodies and, hence, a refusal to grant freedom and autonomy to women as it is purportedly enjoyed by men.[61]

Not only, as Butler's work informs us, is it not necessarily true that a female body should have a feminine identity and a male body a masculine one, but that identity becomes a performed enactment of many possible gendered identities and need not be restricted to two. Given that the body is a signification of identity, which may or may not possess an inherent ephemerality, the bound female body attempts to construct a singular and restrictive feminine identity which many contemporary feminist artistic and discursive practices attempt to explode. Thus, Butler asks the question:

> What separates off the body as indifferent to signification, and signification itself as the act of a radically disembodied consciousness

or, rather, the act that radically disembodies that consciousness?[62]

Thus, feminist performances which seek to displace the boundaries of this gendered dualism create an imbalance in the boundaries of identity formation, and assertively and aggressively force the recognition of other gendered states. In deconstructing the bound body of gendered duality, an important consideration seems to be the extent to which such discourses around the body write, through language, the body out of its signification as physicality in an attempt, somewhat paradoxically, to construct a presence of identity. As Judith Butler writes in *Bodies That Matter*:

> This is not to say that the materiality of bodies is simply and only a linguistic effect which is reducible to a set of signifiers. Such a distinction overlooks the materiality of the signifier itself.[63]

However, she goes on to ask:

> In what precisely does the crafting power of prohibition consist? Does it determine a psychic experience of the body which is radically separable from something that one might want to call the body itself? Or is it the case that the productive power of prohibition in morphogenesis renders the very distinction between *morphe* and *psyche* unsustainable?[64]

Process is seen as a way to negotiate identity between the supposed polarities of presence and absence.

A grounded politics is grounded in the subject position, in this case the category 'woman'. The subject is seen as the centre of the politics, as the space in which the subject as agent can organise for change through the experience of a unified self. It is important to decentre the self in order to challenge the prevalent binary power structures which interpellate this self. Binary structures, as Hélene Cixous and Catherine Clement tell us in *The Newly Born Woman*, are hierarchical in nature. In Cixous's words:

> Thought has always worked through opposition,
> Speaking/Writing
> Parole/Ecriture
> High/Low
> Through dual, hierarchical oppositions.... Everywhere
(where) ordering intervenes.[65]

Binary oppositions are premised on the privileging of one term over the other. If we even out the terms of the hierarchy, if we revalue the concept of the feminine and all

the value systems which have been previously defined under the negative term of the feminine, then the terms lose their hierarchical power. But it leaves alone the structure of the binary itself. Oppositional power remains unchallenged. All positions keep the outside to that position, and so each term continues to define itself in oppositional relation to the other.

Discourse: or *Writing* the Body out of Existence

Part of the problem with any analysis of the body in discursive terms is the extent to which 'the' body remains an abstract term. Even whilst it is gendered as female, 'the' body remains abstract and 'universal' in the extent to which it is deprived of all positionality. This body is indeed an extension of the masculine, 'universal' self. Whilst the space of the body is constructed in female terms, 'the' body is clearly defined in masculine perameters. Julia Balen's investigation into language and the female body through an examination of the work of Monique Wittig, argues that the 'markers' of gender work to reinstate the status quo. Influenced by the work of Judith Butler, she argues that biological definitions of gender are just as constructed as cultural definitions. Thus, she questions the benefits of renegotiating gender meanings and identities through focusing on the female body as an active and physical claiming of presence by women in a dominant culture where women are actively represented out of existence. Whilst the feminist discourse of reterritorialising the female body has been critiqued for the extent to which it can be seen to essentialise woman, returning her to the sphere of the body of humanist discourse, from which much contemporary feminist discourse has been working to dispel, the contemporary concern with the body within much feminist theory, practice and art seeks to assertively position women as a presence within dominant discursive practices. Balen argues that language, and consequently subjectivity, is disembodied. This concept has much that is useful for a feminist analysis of language, but it creates a problematic concept of the subject as constructed by discourse for a postmodern feminist analysis of subjectivity.

The critique of essentialism argues that women have been doubly embodied in order that they can be aligned with the natural and separated from the rational which could then be bound as a masculine sphere. Women have been doubly embodied because they have been cast with the negative half of the binary, which aligns women with the natural, primitive, emotional and irrational sphere. This embodied state has been represented as a wild, abandoned space of the Other which, given this 'value', can be defined and categorised. This control of the Other enables the masculine to claim the space of the rational. This rational space is the space of language, a space where language can be seen to enable the self to establish a stabilised space of difference where language can rationally construct the world and is therefore to some extent disembodied. Language disembodies the self by envisaging a subject that is constructed through language, and through the utterance of the "I" in language; not only is this "I" a subject, but this "I" knows that it is a subject through its placements in the discourse of language as a subject. If the subject is defined through language, and through their knowledge of themselves in language, then the discourse of language enables the subject to transcend the body. Thus language becomes a sublime construct, in which the subject contemplates the infinitude of language and its power in constructing the self. Even the escapes of meaning, which are ultimately re-encapsulated and avowed with double meaning, are important for the sublime nature of language. The concept that the self exists in the utterance and not in the body has prompted Balen to call for the assertive positioning of the female body firmly within the discourse of language. However, she fails to completely avoid the essentialist argument and does not envisage how feminist politics may overcome this very real problem.

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in her essay on perfomativity and performance, examines the theory of performatives established by J.L. Austin, illustrating how within this theory, powerful speech needs a witness. To me, this suggests that powerful language is dependent on the existence and creation of the Other. In order to assert the presence of women within discourse, women must engage with an embodied subjectivity. This is not to say that women must become associated with the body in a move to align women with the natural and emotional, but that an

embodied subjectivity assertively places women within discourse and challenges the establishment of disembodied language. Furthermore, it questions what can be seen as a contemporary move within theoretical postmodern discourse to divorce women from the production of theory. The need for the Other to witness the theory, and not create the theory, is at work in postmodern rejections of the embodied, autobiographical "I", and the valorisation of the rational, disembodied voice of academic theory.

The concept that the self exists in the utterance and not in the body has prompted Julia Balen, in *Embodied Subjectivities: Power, Gender, Language*, to call for the assertive positioning of the female body firmly within the discourse of language. However, Balen does not completely avoid the essentialist argument, and does not envisage how feminist politics may overcome this very real problem. This is why when women perform subjectivities through embodied, performative language they enact an assertive, embodied presence. The action of assertively presenting the body in a performative way challenges the oppositional discourses around rationality and the body. As Butler's work informs us, though, a performative action does not have to take place purely in language, but may also take place through the lack of language, through silence or through the language of cultural inscription. One of the ways in which gender is performed is through the ways in which performativity acts on the body:

> As in other ritual social dramas, the action of gender requires a performance that is repeated. This repetition is at once a reenactment and reexperiencing of a set of meanings already socially established; and it is the mundane and ritualized form of their legitimation.[66]

One argument about the politics of representation is the extent to which the representational discourse of language is disembodied. The critique of essentialism argues that women have been 'doubly' embodied in order that they can be aligned with the natural and separated from the rational, which is in turn bound as a masculine sphere. Women have been doubly embodied because they have been cast with the negative half of the binary which aligns women with the natural and the primitive, and thus they are embodied in a way which has been represented as the wild, abandoned space of the Other. Furthermore, they have been represented purely

as 'body', and as totally embodying the body of the self, so the masculine has been doubly free to claim the space of the rational. Given this 'value', women have been defined and categorised as the Other, and the representations of this embodied object have been placed and controlled. The masculine rational space, however, has been represented as the 'disembodied' space of language. This attempt to explore the body and its relation to the construction of gendered identity in enactment and representation, has meant a movement away from words, for some performers. Indeed, as we discussed earlier in this chapter, and as Allan Kaprow has written, words act performatively:

> Words are our biggest problem; obviously, they are not only a form of communication. They carry intellectual customs and cultural memory. Instead of leading us to the present in order to come to terms with it, they are attaching us to the misunderstood past.[67]

Language as a mode of representation has enabled the self to establish a stabilised space of difference, in which language rationally constructs the world. Language has 'disembodied' the self by envisaging a subject that is constructed through language. One problem with such a theory of subjectivity is the extent to which the 'I' recognises its subject position through the placement in the discourse of language. If the subject is defined through language, and through their knowledge of themselves in language, then the discourse of language enables the subject to transcend the body. Thus, one problem appears to be that language becomes a sublime construct, in which the subject contemplates the infinitude of language and its power in constructing the self. Even meanings that escape the dominant meaning are ultimately re-encapsulated and avowed with double meaning, and so contribute to this understanding of the sublime nature of language.

In order to assert the presence of women within discourse, women must engage with an embodied subjectivity. This is not to say that women must become associated with the body in a move to align women with the natural and emotional, but that an embodied subjectivity assertively places women within discourse and challenges the establishment of disembodied language.

Representation and the Real

Given that both language and the performance of the body are both forms of representation which seek to enact feminist agency, representation and performance become key issues in examining feminist subjectivities. The exploration of identity demands an examination into the relationship between representation and the 'real'. Indeed, the politics of identity are interdependent on understandings of the 'real'. Discussions on agency seem to me to have been linked to understandings of centre discourse, which in turn is intrinsically linked to negotiations around the 'real' and representation. Any exploration of the politics of identity needs to consider the implications of the primary relationship between the real and centre discourse. The position of the 'real' appears to me to be that intrinsic part of central discourse in which we identify ourselves as autonomous subjects of agency, and feel ourselves to be real-ised as present. In order to insist upon the power of the real, centre politics depends upon a distinction between the 'real' and the un-'real'. I want to argue that this necessitates the creation of the fictional un-'real' of representation and the power of the sign. It also demands an investment in the discourse of duality, whereby the un-'real' becomes divorced from the so-called factual political 'real' and the power of meaning. One of the important aspects of this discussion for feminism seems to be the extent to which the real as centre politics depends upon representation. As I will discuss later in this chapter, the importance of this relationship for feminist identity politics concerns the fallacy that women are fully present within the political locus of the real of centre discourse. Advocating a centre for subjectivity (even an admittedly misrecognised centre) continues to place value in the presence and permanence of that centre.

As centre discourse depends upon the power of the 'real', one of the important aspects of the discussion of representation and the real is the extent to which any representation is itself 'real'. The representation of happenings which are 'real', as opposed to events which have been made safe for the spectator by the

inclusion of, and dependence on, the convention of the illusion of the real, actually serves to disrupt the dichotomy on which the division between representation and the real rests. This is important because it serves to challenge these safety mechanisms which are in place during representations, and as such serves to challenge notions of subjectivity as they are understood in the discourse of humanism. Prevalent within the force of these conventions is the dependence on mimesis as a form of representation's interaction with the real, which in turn serves to maintain the dichotomy.

Psychoanalytic understandings of the 'real' return to the 'law of the father', and establish the 'real' as the powerful site of the symbolic order. Many feminists have examined this reference to the 'real', and have been keen to point out that this 'law' remains powerful despite being simply one discursive practice among many. Judith Butler, in her essay in *Bodies That Matter*, 'Arguing with the Real', explores the work of Slavoj Zizek, who argues that the real is a site of originary trauma. This trauma exists in the incapacity of language and symbolic systems to provide a full recognition in which the subject becomes fully realised. The trauma that is the real represents the lack of recognition, and, according to Zizek's theory, the trauma of the real is constantly seeking to disrupt itself, to disrupt that part which represents the inability to reach full recognition, and so to disrupt the real itself. The traumatic, in this theory, is paradoxically both within and outside of the real, as it is that which threatens to return. As we will explore in Chapter Two, "The Cathartic Subject", revisions of catharsis in performance reveal the impossibility of an 'originary' trauma, one which is outside discourse (the prediscursive is actually a discursive category, as Butler herself says).[68]

Mimetic theories seek to give representation a role within the real. Within this model representation becomes a performative medium, as it depends upon a mimetic relationship between representation and the real. Elin Diamond, in her investigations into the relationship between the real and representation, seeks to negotiate modes of representation that work to subvert gender identity as it is both represented and constituted within the power of the 'real' itself. In her essay "Mimesis, Mimicry, and the 'True-Real'", Diamond states that the real is expressed

as a static and absolute 'Truth', and that the "universal standard for measuring the true is the masculine, the universal male who stands in for God the Father".[69] She argues, however, that mimicry displaces mimetic submission to mirroring the subject position within the symbolic order of the law of the father; "Subverting patriarchal mimesis is what we might call mimesis-mimicry".[70] Diamond takes this idea further, in her essay "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory", by attempting to work towards feminist performance practices which use and benefit from the alienation techniques of Brechtian theatre as this would work to reveal gender as a naturalised concept rather than a natural progression of biological sex. In her exploration of this theoretical and practical approach, Diamond discusses the extent to which the meaning in the present appears contained and self-referential:

> Verfremdungseffekt also challenges the mimetic property of acting that semioticians call iconicity, the fact that the performer's body conventionally resembles the object (or character) to which it refers.[71]

This seems to me to be a useful technique for performance practices which seek to examine and expose the ideological construction of gender. It works by revealing the sign-system of cultural ideology as it is inscribed onto the bodies of sexed individuals, and therefore reveals the extent to which culture is in fact an entirely constructed sign-system. However, in understanding gender as "mapped across the bodies of females and males" Elin Diamond is radically at odds with feminist theories which seek to explore the radical gendered and heterosexist constructions of biological sex itself. Judith Butler challenges the assumption that the body exists in some kind of prediscursive paradise of innocence which has been lost in the palimpsestic drives of the cultural inscriptions of gender.

However, when one considers this analysis as a discursive practice amongst many, the understanding of the real, as a closed, categorical system, appears to have been symbolised out of its existence as the primary law. The promise that you are going to come to full realisation, and the failure of this promise to come into recognition, seems to me to represent the peculiar condition of the real. The subject then exists at a symbolic site, of which no symbolisation is possible; it is not possible for the subject to 'real'(ly) exist.

Ritual

The performative is the enactment of convention through ritual. In this analysis of representation and performativity the question of conventional force in the constitution of identity seems to be particularly important for the construction of women's identities. In discussing the performative statement, the importance of modes of representation have particular resonance for feminist critiques. Much of the preceding chapter has been concerned with analysing the extent to which identity is formed in language. Many feminist critiques of subjectivity have focused on this analysis in order to attempt to understand the construction of identity in ways that recognise the implications for women in the humanist idea of 'self'. However, the importance for feminism of the mode of representation itself has often been missed in such analyses of subjectivity. In Lacanian psychoanalytic and poststructuralist discourse the subject is formed in language, and in the utterance of the 'I' the subject is constituted as it appears to express an inherent idea of 'selfhood', importantly perceived as external to discursive practices. One crucial aspect of this theory is that feminists need to question what it means to be constituted by such a phallocentric structure. Given the work done by feminist theorists on the phallocentric structure of language, we need to explore the implications for women of the construction of identity in a mode of discourse which itself does not represent genders equally. Studies by Dale Spender, in *Man Made Language*, amongst other feminist critics, reveal the unequal bias of language, and lead to the need to examine the constitution of gender identities when women's access to language socially is often barred. Thus, language itself becomes an important aspect in the construction of feminist identities.

The Conventional Force of Ritual

Given that performativity carries with it the conventional force of the 'historic present', performative utterances enact the force of ideology, and in so doing can

interpellate ideological force into identity formation. In her discussion of the work of Monique Wittig in *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler illustrates the extent to which language constructs the subject as universal, and that for Wittig, women cannot assume the subject position contained in 'I' because to speak as a woman is at once to position oneself as 'marked' within culture. Butler states that this privilege to speak "I" establishes a sovereign self, which maintains a centre of absolute plenitude and power. Thus, speaking establishes "the supreme act of subjectivity".[72] The extent to which ideology is interpellated through performative utterances is argued by Butler: "Language assumes and alters its power to act upon the real through locutionary acts, which, repeated, become entrenched practices and, ultimately, institutions".[73] Thus the conventional force carried in the performative act is reinforced through repeated enactment. Butler's revision of Althusser sees performativity constructing "social positionality" in absence of the particular subject it constructs: "The act 'works' in part because of the citational dimension of the speech act, the historicity of convention that exceeds and enables the moment of its enunciation".[74] As such it is indeed the historicity of ideology which constructs the conventional force of the performative act and as such enable the power of the performative moment.

Performativity is in this respect both separate from the sovereign subject whilst seeming to enable the power of the sovereign subject. It depends upon an absence of the sovereign subject at the same time as it seems to empower the sovereign subject. As such it seems to interpellate the subject into ideology through simultaneously constructing and enabling this subject position to be. Indeed, as Sara Mills states on discourse, following on from Foucault, performative theory places the power of ideology in the historicity of convention contained in discourse. Thus it moves away from stabilising theories of power which construct subjects as powerful and others as powerless, to a negotiation of disempowering and empowering discourses, created in the clash of discourses. This thus enables the mobilisation of power. Sara Mills writes that:

> Discourse theorists do not deny the importance of institutional power
> … but perhaps they are more concerned with mapping out the
> multiple sites where power is enacted and negotiated… And these

discourses… will be in conflict with other discourses, which will force them to change in structure and content and which will make available to women and to men spaces wherein they can resist and construct their own sense of self.[75]

Given this conventional force contained in the performative act, the performative act can be seen as an enactment of ritualistic exchange. Indeed, part of the ritual of the performative comes through its operating power being found in citational repetition. As Judith Butler illustrates when discussing hate speech and responsibility as a critique of the sovereign subject:

> The speaker assumes responsibility precisely through the citational character of speech. The speaker renews the linguistic tokens of a community, reissuing and reinvigorating such speech. Responsibility is thus linked with speech as repetition, not as origination.[76]

Within each ritualistic exchange, the importance of conventional force means that as subjects we must situate ourselves in relation to this historicity, not as a sovereign subject, but instead as a feminist subject-in-process. Indeed, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick writes in *The Epistemology of the Closet*, it is strategic for feminists "Repeatedly to ask how certain categorizations work, what enactments they are performing and what relations they are creating, rather than what they essentially *mean*".[77]

Ritual is a social contract. It performs an act that allows the individual to perform a transition from one identity state to another, and it usually functions as an exchange in society. In order to provide this for the individual it inscribes the individual into the conventional force of the ideological discourse of that society. As such it functions as a societal exchange by requiring of the subject an initial sacrifice of subjective sovereignty in order to provide this catharsis for the subject. It requires that you acknowledge the extent to which you are inscribed into discourse, at least for the duration of the ritual, and requires that you behave accordingly, therefore it legitimates your identity by "regulating behaviour", to refer once again to the point made by Austin on performative acts. Felicia Hughes-Freeland states, in her introduction to *Ritual, Performance, Media*, that:

> Ritual generally refers to human experience and perception in forms which are complicated by the imagination, making reality more complex and unnatural than more mundane instrumental spheres of

human experience assume.[78]

These readings of ritual place it within the bounds of alienated human experience, and so ritual becomes an alienated practice which serves to highlight human experience through its very distance from it. In the same way that Roland Barthes argues that myth naturalises the abstract concept of the sign in language; "[a]rticulated language, which is most often robbed by myth, offers little resistance. It contains in itself some mythical dispositions, the outline of a sign-structure meant to manifest the intention which led to its being used: it is what could be called the expressiveness of language"[79]; so ritual naturalises societal ideology. Both language and act, ritual is a process of naturalising societal conventional force, and incorporates us into societal ideology through alienation. When we enter this social contract we sacrifice part of ourselves; the part that is felt to exist in presence. Through the processes of alienation we become absent from ourselves and seek to find our presence in the recognition of ritual, which becomes a sacrificial circular contract. It is, as we shall see, impossible to find the presence sought in the ritualistic act as presence can never be that of the sovereign subject, as we can only be present as absent. The loss of this in traditional psychoanalytic circles is what makes us search for the unity thought to be found in the recognition of the social contract.

Thus as it is part of a social exchange ritual is performative. It is this focus on identity which makes performativity the interesting concept for exploring presence and absence of identity and recognition in social exchange in identity formation. In its alienation ritual is itself a performance; it is an enactment of identity recognition, and so an attempt to gain full presence. Theatre as a space seems to fit readily into this description of ritual as a societal exchange. Peter Brooks essay on theatre as a holy space sees theatre as a communal space of catharsis. As Philip Auslander states on Brook's holy theatre:

> Divorced from reality yet reflecting it, communal theatre carries
> artists and audience together to a level of universal emotional
> response then returns them to quotidian reality with a keener sense of
> the psychic structures shared by all people.[80]

This idea that catharsis is experienced universally, is something that Auslander describes as: "[t]he impression that author and actor experience the same catharsis as

the audience further enables the spectator to enter into the performance emotionally, to be at one with it".[81] This commonality of emotional experience in ritualistic performance enables performance to operate ritualistically. Ritual acts are perhaps the most easily recognisable acts of performativity. However ritual is used in the performance of identity, the social contract is at work in forcing the recognition of the individual into the societal space through the performative act. Thus it exists in discourse as it exists in both language and performance. The performer sacrifices her/himself to the emotional experience of the spectator.

Judith Butler has identified ritual as rites of passage that inscribe the subject into the society in which the subject lives. This is of course how ritual works. Yet ritual is also the means through which this subject can enable identity transition from one stage to the next. An interesting point about performative statements seems to me to be Austin's definition of an unhappy or infelicitous performative. Austin states that in order for performatives to work there has to be a genuine intention behind the performative act. However, it seems to me that performatives still constitute, even when they are unhappy. If, for a performative to work, it carries with it the force of convention, then the unhappy performative carries the full weight of that convention in the moment of the performative. It is not just that a happy performative may be refused by the addressee or witness as we see in the work of Judith Butler on hate speech, where racist interpellation may be resisted by the addressee. It may be that the unhappy performative is a performative that is inherently resisted by the performer, with the intention of deceit or some other unhappy condition, but it does not follow that it will then fail to constitute the addressee or witness in some way. Furthermore, it seems to me that performatives may actually guard against the direct constitutional value which their face value seems to portray. For example, a promise in Austin's terms must be made with the intention of being kept, otherwise it falls into the category of failed or unhappy performatives. However, whether or not it has the intention of being kept there remains a constitutive effect on the listener. It attempts to constitute the listener in various ways, not least of which is as 'trusting' – namely in the power of the one who promises. Unless the promise is rejected within the performative moment, an unhappy performative promise is more difficult for the

'promisee' than a happy performative promise, and there remains, nevertheless, a constitutional effect on this 'witness'.

To look at performativity from the idea of constituting gender seems to me to be one of the most important factors in considering how performatives work. One area important for feminist analyses of performative subjects is the constitutional power of the performative moment. Challenging ritualistic gender performatives threatens the social order. Dale Spender, in her study of the use of language, *Man Made Language*, quotes a conversation between a husband and wife in which the wife had decided to go out of the home to work. This conversation interestingly reveals the conventional force through which ritual and the performative moment operates:

> he got upset. He said I wasn't sticking to the bargain. I mean I didn't know what bargain he was talking about and I said so. I said I didn't remember making any bargain. But that was when he said it went without saying that we had made a bargain... He had always been the sort of initiator in a way and I had reacted. Now he didn't know what to do, then, not when I started saying what *I* wanted.[82]

It is clear from this conversation that the conventional force of the wedding ceremony was so heavily inscribed with cultural ideology as to make the 'bargain' a latent part of the ritual. It is this latent force of discourse as it constitutes subject positions that is interesting for feminist discourses. Gender roles seem to be heavily inscribed in many of the rituals which our society endorses. Yet, within feminist performatives, to what extent does a latent aspect of the performative statement carry with it the force of feminist discursive practices and so work to form feminist subjectivities. It may follow that unhappy performatives retain the power to not only constitute the witness, but to also constitute the subject herself. If, as Judith Butler insightfully states, performatives work through historical repetition, then feminist performatives which seek to claim the subject position for women may constitute women as subjects even when the performative is unhappy.

Agency; or Subversion from Within

One of the problematic areas within theories of agency, is that there remains a movement to claim a space for women within the rational subject of enlightenment. Feminist approaches that are critical of postmodernism focus on the rationality of progress and on the primacy of the central position for political efficacy. Looking at why there has been a return to centre politics, particularly by feminist theorists, leads to an exploration of areas of crisis for contemporary feminist discourses. One of the crucial questions around agency is how women might experience presence and action in the world. In exploring the theories of agency examined in the preceding chapters in relation to representation, one of the dangers appears to be an investment in nostalgia for the loss of centre politics, a centre in which the presence of women has been rendered 'safe' by the use of representation. This insistence on centre politics is intrinsically linked to the need to maintain an active presence within the world. As such there remains an assertion that subjectivity depends upon the value of permanence in order to construct meaning, and this seems to me to lead to an investment in representation. This assertion seems to be prevalent even when feminist theorists argue for the recognition of the heterogeneous and changing nature of material subjectivity. I find this standpoint problematic because value becomes intrinsically linked with the permanence and presence associated with the centre. As such, agency becomes a crucial issue. Within this discourse, therefore, agency becomes the means through which the subject can make sense of the world, and can seek to maintain control of the subject position itself. Thus, as I see it, agency is problematic because it is the means through which the subject performs its centrality. Consequently, modes of representation become important to subjectivities.

However, performative theory has implications for theories of agency as the power of the subject actually emanates from the historicity of the performative statement and not from the 'sovereign' subject. It seems especially important to explore the operation of such theories in the formation of fragmented subjectivities, as an awareness of how subjectivities are constructed may constitute fragmented

identities in ways which are better equipped to negotiate discursive power formations.

A performative act does not always have to have the constitutive effect it appears to have. There is no absolute condition behind the performative, as it is not self-referential in Derrida's terms. In his essay 'Signature, Event, Context', Derrida has written about the idea of the remainder through which meaning might escape the constitutional and interpellated force of the performative act. In order to take issue with what Derrida sees as implied in Austin's exploration of the performative; 'an absolutely full meaning which is master of itself'[83]; Derrida establishes the concept of the 'remainder'. Thus, the performative can be cited, because it is 'iterable' in Derrida's terms, 'in the absolute absence of the addressee',[84] so it is not self-referential even whilst it constitutes that sense of subjectivity. Derrida's remainder is what escapes the 'present totalisation', and for Derrida represents:

> a new concept of writing which also corresponds to whatever always
> has resisted the former organization of forces, which always has
> constituted the remainder irreducible to the dominant force which
> organized the – to say it quickly – logocentric hierarchy.[85]

The performative is constitutive in the sense that it constitutes the subject and attempts to constitute the Other. The 'remainder' provides the possibility for escaping that constitution, in which lies the possibility for agency

The notion of underlying structures to concepts which we perceive as "natural" has been much discussed amongst postmodern and feminist writers alike. Following on from the work of Ferdinand de Saussure who examined the unified and oppositionally differential structure of language, Derrida examines the nature of structure itself, what he has termed "the possibility of that total system".[86] Beginning with the idea of a total system, Derrida explores the openings which can be found in the structure, and this search for gaps and openings in what would otherwise remain closed totalities of oppositional difference reveals the political flux of postmodernism. He explores the construction of closure and opening within structure itself, concluding that:

> it is always something like an opening which will frustrate the
> structuralist project. What I can never understand, in a structure, is
> that by means of which it is not closed".[87]

The focus on the "structurality of structure" will enable postmodern feminist politics to understand the construction and the maintenance of power and domination.

One of the ways in which feminist practitioners are experiencing agency, as we will explore in the following chapters, is in the fragmentation of supposedly connected states. However, it is obviously not beneficial if the subject becomes so fragmented that it breaks down completely. Extreme fragmentary states can be a learning process through which change occurs, and through which the conflicts of discourses may be recognised. In order to have action in the world the subject must recognise the conflict of discourses, and be able to act upon these conflicts. Thus, the discourses do create the subject, but the contradictory or problematic or conflicting discourses stimulate action.

Gender seems to be strongly reinforced by convention, and seems to be strongly dependent on this "'historic' present". By refusing gender specific performatives and by changing the ways in which we react to such attempts to interpellate us into ideology, feminist practitioners play a crucial part in the formation of a contemporary feminist politics of assertion in the creation of identities. If the assertively performative quality of language constitutes subjects, then performatives that make identity statements, at the same time as they constitute subjectivities, bring the subject into a vertiginous awareness of her/his own subjectivity. Performative statements are assertive in that they commit the subject to an action at the same time that s/he makes the performative gesture or action. This may be seen to be especially the case for women. Bringing the subject into an awareness of her/his own subjectivity, an awareness of her/his position as a subject, remains the 'force' with which the performative operates. This awareness of subjectivity appears to place agency within the subject's force. Revolution in terms of Baudrillard's theory consists in a turning around of the rules of the game of signs, of the ways in which signs signify and the ways in which the subject as 'individual' decodes those signs. He writes: "Retaliation, reversion of the code according to its own logic, on its own terrain, gaining victory over it because it exceeds semiocracy's own non-referentiality".[88] This is one way in which the performers and artists

explored in the next sections of the thesis explore and challenge conventional modes of identity formation.

Language and discourse are the means of constituting the subject position, and theories of performativity and the use of language are important in the construction of identity. In the history of humanism women have been placed outside of the rational subject position, and constituted as Other to that subject position.[89] The importance of the performative act lies in its construction of subject positions. Not only do performatives constitute and interpellate through language and repetition, but also they define that subject position and attempt to set the parameters for how it wishes to be defined. It seems useful to explore the ways in which performatives appear to enable women to be assertively present. Coming into an awareness of subjectivity seems to be the 'force' with which the performative operates. This awareness of subjectivity appears to place agency within the subject's force. However, it is important to recognise that this agency remains located in discourse. The power of the subject comes from the historicity of the performative statement and not from the 'sovereign' subject.[90] An awareness of how performative acts contribute to the constitution of subjectivities may equip women with even more assertive practices in the construction of identities. As we form new discourses we may enable the subjectivities of women to grow in even more positive ways. It is for this reason that this thesis now goes on to explore the political locus of modes of representation in relation to subjectivity. The problematic relationship between the 'real' and representation created by these writers, performers and artists, determines ways in which the negotiations of these terms may lead to performative feminist subjects.

Performing Subversion from Within

The agency contained within feminist performances is directly related to the politics enacted by these performances. The performer's enactment of identity transition directly performs the feminist politics at stake through an engagement with the wider

social signification of women's lived experiences. In her essay "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism", Jeanie Forte has stated that: "[t]hrough the lens of postmodern feminist theory, women's performance art (whether overtly so or not) appears as inherently political".[91] Forte has also argued, in a different essay, entitled "Focus on the Body: Pain, Praxis and Pleasure in Feminist Performance", that when feminist performance artists "purport to be 'themselves' in the act of performing" they force a disruption in the relationship between the real and representation. Thus, she argues that such performers are "inviting their audiences to 'read' their actions in the wider context of their lives outside of performance".[92] Feminist performances thus enact agency.

Whilst gender theory explores the idea that gender is something that is always performed, theatrical performance highlights this notion of gender performance through 'performing performing gender'. In this way, gender can be seen to be adopted, rather than natural or inherent. Gender theory within theatrical performance focuses on this emphasis of performance in gender. The poltical nature of theatrical performance enables the categorisation of gender to be critiqued. The ability of the theatrical space to highlight the performance of gender as ideology is fundamentally tied to the performance of the presence of the body as integral to the theatre space. As Lynda Hart argues in her introduction, "Performing Feminism", to the anthology on women's performances, *Making a Spectacle*:

> By seizing the body and subverting its customary representations, these playwrights create a theatrical discourse that highlights the politicization of feminine appearance, foregrounding the categorization, containment and misrecognition of women's diversity. The presence of the living, speaking body in the theatre maximizes the potential for such startling reconceptualizations. The feminist playwright's collection of subversive exits from the dominant discourse multiplies in power when the physical stage space is restructured and acknowledged as a political arena.[93]

Hart goes on to argue that the theatre is a powerful feminist space because it directly foregrounds the relationship between women, and thus she politicises the relationship between the performer and the spectator:

> As a form, the drama is more public and social than the other literary arts. The woman playwright's voice reaches a community of spectators in a public place that has historically been regarded as a

highly subversive, politicized environment. The theatre is the sphere most removed from the confines of domesticity, thus the woman who ventures to be heard in this space takes a greater risk than the woman poet or novelist, but it may also offer her greater potential for effecting social change.[94]

Theatrical masquerade can be a powerful tool in exposing gender as a construction. Masquerade is useful for performers because it clearly performs gender in extreme measures, and therefore works in two ways. Firstly, it highlights the fact that gender is always a performance. Secondly, when used in theatrical performance, it performs the act of performing gender. This performance of gender in the theatrical sense illustrates the performance of the discourse around gender. Thus theatrical performances of gender highlight performance as a discursive functioning of gender in everyday circumstances by performing the performance of gender.

Geraldine Harris in *Staging Femininities* argues for the political efficacy of theatrical masquerade. In so doing, Harris draws on the argument made by Joan Riviere in her essay "Womanliness as Masquerade", and argues that masquerade "describes a woman who in some way usurps masculine prerogatives, in Riviere's terms 'has stolen the father's penis' and dons the mask of 'excessive femininity' as a defensive, placatory strategy to avoid punishment".[95] Indeed, Harris goes on to reference Riviere's extension of this premise to state that "in her view there is no difference between this masquerade and 'real' femininity, 'they are the same thing'".[96] The concept that one is always performing gender seems at first to take away the power of the theatrical as a site of performance. However, the theatrical performance draws attention to the performance of this performing of gender. Through using the extremity of the conventions of theatrical performance gender can be critiqued as a construction.

In order to see theatrical performance as politically effective it is necessary to explore the relationship between the performer and the spectator. This traditional theatrical relationship is shifting. In *The Domain-Matrix* Sue-Ellen Case argues that contemporary understandings of theatre reveal "the alteration in the critical study of performance from a perspective based on the practice to one based on its

reception".[97] This shift in the relationship between the performer and the spectator is important for feminist performance because of the political arena of the theatrical space. Case goes on to argue that:

> Private property is celebrated in a new way. Rather than individual ownership in the traditional sense, of something outside oneself, the self has been amplified across the terrain of what was once an 'outside' to finally encompass all property within its subjectivity. In the rise of the individual as theater, and *the conflation of audience member with performer,* the private individual has become the arena of the public" (my emphasis).[98]

Thus performance art is interesting in its reworking of the conventions of theatrical performance, and the extent to which the relationship between the performer and the spectator is currently being renegotiated.

A key aspect of feminist performance art is performing the female as subject in order to challenge the construction of women as passive and silent Others. Forte argues that it is "precisely this denial of women as 'speaking subjects' [by patriarchy] that women in performance art both foreground and subvert".[99] In order to question this construction of women as objectified Others the performance art discussed in the following chapters enacts the body as a site of signification. Josette Féral, in her essay "Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified", argues that performance deals with "*the manipulation of the body*", and as such she argues that:

> The body is made conspicuous: a body in pieces, fragmented and yet one, a body perceived and rendered as a *place of desire*, displacement, and fluctuation, a body the performance conceives of as repressed and tries to free – even at the cost of greater violence.[100]

The medium of performance operates through encoding the body as 'text' through which to enact embodied subjectivities. As such, feminist performance art performs the body as Other in order to critique the construction of Woman as a site of the objectified Other.

There are, however, problems in representing the female body, not least of which is the threat of patriarchal efforts to contain the female body as the object of exchange upon which representation rests. Whilst the female body in performance resists the immateriality of discourse, it nevertheless opens feminists to the risks of

critiquing patriarchal oppression through the very site which has been used to control women; the body. Concerns around the meaning of the female body in performance have prompted feminist performers to consider the boundaries of the body and the integrity with which they mark the subject. Part of the critical project of performance lies in exploring not only the way in which works are read but also the way in which they are taught and examined in performance workshops. This develops the analytical process of reading performance into an exploration of pedagogical practices, which engages not only with the performance process but also with the reception of the politics contained in these performances. Thus, Elaine Aston argues for feminist practitioners of performance to consider women's bodies and their relationship to identity and codes of patriarchal signification. In discussing performance exercises for feminists Aston argues for an awareness of the body as a locus of power for women:

> But in the sculpting exercise, women (and men) need to be clear
> about the boundaries of touching and need to feel comfortable with
> being touched, rather than physically invaded, which may give rise to
> damaging emotional memories.[101]

Enacting the body as a site of control over women's lived realities is the medium through which performance art effects feminist political agency. Feminist performances enact the female as embodied subject and the physical performance of women's bodies enables feminists to refuse the position of body-object and perform instead an active, embodied subjectivity.

Performing the female body carries with it the danger of appropriation by patriarchal models of representation. This critical project not only engages with feminist performance but also engages with theories of reception. As the body is the site of power for women, so enacting subjectivity through the body opens feminists to the codes of objectivity by which masculinist ideologies define 'the female'. As Forte states:

> Agreed, sexually explicit material in a woman's performance can
> often invoke representational processes that consume the female body
> as a sexualized object; but here the construction and communication
> of the artist as erotic agent intervenes to break down her cultural
> construction as fantasy object and replace it with something not
> previously perceived – the subject-performer.[102]

Given this political agenda, one problem for feminist performances with enacting subversion from within, however, lies in the danger of assimilation. There is a real threat of containment by patriarchy of feminist performance art in reducing it to expressions of female bodies as self-obsessed narcissism. This appropriation of feminist performance seeks to contain the feminist within codes of Otherness even as she seeks to explode the terms by which Otherness is defined. As Vivian M. Patraka has argued, there is the danger that postmodern feminist performances are "even assimilable into an alternative narrative of expressions of the feminine, a 'gynesis' separate from historicized female experience".[103] Thus, Forte also argues that "[t]he threat and power of assimilation is constant".[104] However, whilst the codes by which the female body is read present a very real threat to engaging effectively within feminist performances of subjectivity, the concern around appropriation illustrates the extent to which feminist performance challenges the terms of patriarchy from within. As this thesis will go on to illustrate, performing the female body-object whilst insisting upon the female as subject subverts the creation of Otherness from within the very terms of masculinist ideology.

PART TWO

CHAPTER TWO

The Cathartic Subject

> Subjectivism is a subterfuge, a vile myth, an ultimately meaningless
> mystification. Contempt is enough to discredit it, outrage enough to
> destroy it. Why trouble to understand what is beneath serious
> understanding? Why value what does not even have face value?
> Donald Kuspit[1]

Catharsis has been interpreted as working in-between the binary of 'high' and 'low'
art, where so-called 'low' art appeals to the emotions and 'high' art appeals to the
intellect. It seems that it is the embodied nature of catharsis in performance which
categorises such art as 'low', and that it is only when the performance calls upon the
powers of reason that such art may cross boundaries to become socially valuable;
that is, 'high'. As an embodied performance, catharsis depends upon the theory that
the audience desires the physical suffering of the artist. This is a means of
experiencing the emotions and thoughts of the suffering, whilst, crucially, avoiding
being subjected to the pain of suffering themselves. Thus, they make themselves safe
within the subject position by sacrificing the Other to pain. The suffering
characteristic of catharsis can be viewed in two ways. Firstly, catharsis has been
connected to a reinvestment in sacred rites and analysed alongside the prelapsarian
trope of the ritualistic reading of Christ's crucifixion and his ascension into heaven.
However, it can also be viewed as a transgressive pleasure whereby the audience
experiences the physical suffering of the performer as breaking the taboos behind the
valorisation of the body into a bound object.[2]

Performing subjectivity through this embodied nature of catharsis, however,
does not necessarily lead to the enactment of embodied subjectivities. One
problematic area of catharsis is that it allows for the maintenance of subjectivity as a
space bound by the body, and so identity becomes fixed. Consequently, some
cathartic performances can invest in the breaking of taboos around the bound and
impenetrable body, and the accompanying unified subjectivity, whilst simultaneously

keeping the social order 'safe'. Thus the presentation of pain, suffering and transgression, actually serve to maintain the illusion that subjectivity remains inherent and ultimately safe from external 'distortions'.

Platonic catharsis only comes to fruition through the use of rationality, as the feelings and senses of the body must be thoroughly reasoned with. The 'frenzy of the soul'[3] is evaluated after the cathartic act, and this is when catharsis becomes useful to the social body. Catharsis for Aristotle, however, works by repeating this 'frenzy' in order that 'repressed' and 'instinctive' drives may be acknowledged. Through repeating the 'frenzy' locked into the body and re-experiencing this state in an enacted manner one can merge the body with the mind. This trauma of the body is then merged as part of the social. As Kristeva writes:

> To Platonic *death*, which owned, so to speak, the state of purity, Aristotle opposed the act of *poetic purification* – in itself an impure process that protects from the abject only by dint of being immersed in it. The abject, mimed through sound and meaning, is *repeated*. Getting rid of it is out of the question – the final Platonic lesson has been understood, one does not get rid of the impure; one can, however, bring it into being a second time, and differently from the original impurity.[4]

Consequently, within this traditional model of catharsis, enactments which use catharsis to release and merge these drives perform a social function. Thus, performance functions as the repetition of the denial of embodied subjectivity.

In his essay, "Katharsis: The Ancient Problem", Andrew Ford discusses the meanings of Platonic and Aristotelian catharsis. Ford sees catharsis as "intellectual 'clarification'", achieved through ritual cleansing and purification. He thus interprets catharsis as a "technical term for the expulsion of noxious bodily elements through 'purging'".[5] He goes on to argue for the social function of catharsis, exploring the idea that catharsis operates through the interaction between thought and emotion. In this way:

> katharsis becomes a complex engagement of our feelings and judgements together, not a gross orgy of weeping, but a structured evocation of emotions that shapes them so they may better conform to proper judgements in real life.[6]

This analysis by Ford is problematic as it relies upon defining 'proper' judgements. Ford goes on to explore the extent to which catharsis has become "a kind of pleasing

and relaxing emotional experience which supervenes on certain stimuli", indicating the extent to which, what he terms as "tragic katharsis", has been "made safe by the fact that the tragic spectacle is only an imitation of suffering".[7] He concludes that, "if we are trained to respond in a certain way to an imitation, we are likely to feel the same way toward the original".[8] Ford's reading of tragic catharsis enables us to see clearly these three problematic areas that revisions of cathartic practice might challenge. The reliance on 'proper judgements', as well as the rendering 'safe' of the suffering experienced in catharsis, and the manner in which 'we are trained to respond' to the performance, all seem to indicate the 'conventional force' of this traditional model for understanding catharsis. The danger with cathartic enactments is the extent to which they contain the power to inscribe the individual into dominant ideologies. Cathartic performance does not inherently lead to the enactment of embodied and empowered feminist subjectivities.

Indeed, the catharsis contained in ritual acts may serve to reify ideological interpellation. In the light of theories of performativity, which are dependent on the force of convention, these proper judgements need to be questioned because of the extent to which they reinforce 'normative powers of reason'. In terms of the conventional force contained in cathartic performance Darko Suvin has written on what he sees as a problematic aspect of Happenings[9]:

> it becomes obvious what Happenings assume: that the techniques of mass persuasion have badly weakened the normative powers of reason, and the only approach left is to subject people to a nonexplicit, more primitive and aggressive kind of experience, which will reorient them through "direct perception".[10]

Given that much contemporary performance art can be considered a "more primitive and aggressive kind of experience", this argument around the common use of catharsis to communicate "direct perception" relies upon the power contained in the performative moment. However, as with Ford's 'proper judgements', this statement is problematic. Contrary to this argument, one reason why performance might return to an emphasis on catharsis is not because popular culture has weakened "the normative powers of reason", but may, in fact, be because popular culture can just as easily strengthen normative powers as it can challenge them. The use of catharsis in performance is indeed an attempt to "reorient" people, but it is, in its most radical

form, an attempt to make people question these very powers of 'reason'. It is the reliance on 'normative reason' which otherwise interpellates the subject into dominant ideologies and so, like Kate Bornstein's description of gender, it "is not based on informed consent".[11]

In an effort to perform a reading of catharsis which bypasses such 'normative powers of reason', Elin Diamond places catharsis clearly within the body itself. For Diamond, catharsis relies on the shared connection of bodily experience, and operates in the interplay between the performer and spectator. In her essay, "The Shudder of Catharsis", she discusses catharsis as a way of escaping the alienation and objectification of subjectivity, as "a way of feeling the otherness of the other".[12] In elaborating her theory Diamond references Theodor Adorno:

> In the final analysis aesthetic behavior might be defined as the ability to be horrified … the subject is lifeless except when it is able to shudder in response to the total spell. And only the subject's shudder can transcend that spell. Without shudder, consciousness is trapped in reification. Shudder is a kind of premonition of the subjectivity, a sense of being touched by the other.[13]

The cathartic experience depends upon a connection between the body of the performer and the body of the spectator. When, as Diamond does, you introduce gaze to catharsis, rather than the powers of reason, it is the embodied connection between the self and the other which puts meaning onto the cathartic moment. Catharsis, in Elin Diamond's essay, is experienced as a bodily connection between the self and the other, and between the performer and the spectator. This reading reworks catharsis through a radical continual connection between self and other, not so much to reach purity as a goal but, rather, to create a "shuddering without end: permanent catharsis".[14]

Sacrificing the Subject

Historically, the interplay between the spectator and the performer happens through the performer representing the object to the spectator's subject. To refer to Richard Schechner's model of ritual:

At the place where the actor meets the audience, that is, in the theatre place, society faces the sacrificial victim twice-removed... The actor performs the character behind whom is the victim. The actor's performance is a representation of a representation. But in a ritual like the Eucharist, a layer of representation is stripped away from the actor's side. There is no character...

[victim] → actor::congregation ← [society]

... And in other rituals a person faces the representatives of society directly and an actual sacrifice takes place:

victim::celebrants ← [society].[15]

The performer sacrifices her/himself to the emotional experience of the spectator. Thus catharsis is reached through a process of substitutional sacrifice. On the role of catharsis in theatre and the Theatre of Cruelty, Antonin Artaud has stated that "[t]he reservoir of the energies made up of Myths which men no longer incarnate is incarnated in the theater".[16] Indeed on the process of catharsis Artaud states:

I propose to return in the theater to that fundamental magic idea, picked up by modern psychoanalysis, which consists of attempting the cure of a patient by making him assume the exterior attitude of the state to which one would restore him.[17]

Eric Sellin interprets this in terms of the relationship between the spectator and the performer, arguing that:

Thus the spectator does not, through some arcane process, see himself as he truly is, but rather sees the mirror image of his true self actually staged, which, by eliminating the psychological or cerebral intermediary of word-meaning, appeals directly to the senses.[18]

This reading of the relationship between the performer and the spectator is useful for rethinking contemporary negotiations into the subject-object relationship which is currently being interrogated by many contemporary performers. This relationship of substitutional sacrifice sees the performer corporealise the suffering and pain of the social body into their own body in a process of literal enactment. Thereby, the sacrificed performer relieves the social body of responsibility for this suffering and pain which becomes purified through performance, and thus allows the spectator to return to the social order purged of responsibility and with renewed normative powers. However, it is this strategy of understanding the social function of catharsis in performance which is radically challenged by contemporary performance strategies.

This process of substitutional sacrifice reveals the belief in the purifying element of cathartic performance. This sacrificial reading of the artist and performer as the healer of social wounds is enlightened by understandings of the processes of performance in shamanistic rites. In his essay on shamans and performance practices, "Performance Theory, Hmong Shamans, and Cultural Politics", Dwight Conquergood discusses the extent to which the shaman cures the patient by becoming the sufferer themselves, and thereby purifying the patient of the problem. He quotes *Woman, Native, Other*, by Trinh Minh-ha, which is also useful to cite here:

> They derive their power from *listening* to the others and *absorbing* daily realities. While they cure, they take into them their patient's possessions and obsessions and let the latter's illnesses become theirs. Their actions imply a personal investment... The very close relationship these healers maintain with their patients remains the determining factor of the cure.[19]

The shamanic performance rites of the healing rituals of shamans illustrates the substitution by which the sufferer is relieved of the symptoms. Conquergood goes on to analyse the performance techniques and their healing powers, concluding that:

> [the shaman's] performance is both mimetic and appropriative. It is purgative for his patients because it convincingly mimes their listlessness, depression, and heaviness of spirit... The logic of shamanic performance is that making a spectacle of something is a strategy for control and subjugation... seeing situates the observer in a power relationship over that which is watched, inspected, surveyed.[20]

Conquergood's analysis of the power of the gaze over the object as physical manifestation places power with the owner of the gaze.

This exploration of shamanistic performances enables us to see problems for the identity of the performer in this substitutional and sacrificial relationship of performer/spectator, especially when examined from the perspective of the performer-as-subject, rather than as sacrificial object. In this sacrificial relationship power, it seems, is placed firmly within the realm of the spectator-as-subject who views the performer-as-object. Cathartic performance reveals the 'frenzy' of the embodied state as a way of maintaining control over that which is performed. Within this model transgression always returns the spectator-as-subject to the power of

dominant ideologies. However, this relationship is fragile. Thus, Nick Land, in "Meat (or How to Kill Oedipus in Cyberspace)", argues that:

> [t]he function of shamanism is to implement what is forbidden, exactly and comprehensively as why it is forbidden, but in specially segregated compartments of the socius [because as Land states] [a]n epidemic shamanism – feeding all the codes back upon themselves – threatens absolute social disaster.[21]

Shamanistic performances as embodied enactments of social inscription, it seems, are segregated because of the fear that such enactments may lead to the collapse of distinctions between subjectivity and objectivity by refusing or negotiating this substitutional, sacrificial relationship. Indeed, as Conquergood goes on to state, the strategy of the gaze for gaining power over that which is enacted also enables the shaman to be "persuaded by his own performances".[22] Through enacting identity shamanistically, the shaman performatively constructs his subjectivity *as shaman*. This identity is then recognised by the other's gaze. The owner of the gaze, however, need not be present, as the very need for shamanistic performance indicates that the subject carries the gaze of the other within.

This threat of absolute disaster was enacted by Antonin Artaud. Artaud's concept of catharsis as developed in his Theatre of Cruelty evolved from a basis of Aristotelian catharsis. Part of the process of catharsis, for Artaud, depends upon the release of cruelty through the body of the performer. As Naomi Greene states: "He believes that our dreams disclose the terror and cruelty which govern our fundamental instincts. And it is the task of the theater to present these dreams in all their nightmarish reality".[23] This model of catharsis indicates that the performer makes a sacrifice of themselves to the repressed terror of humanity in order to allow the spectator a different vision of reality in which repressed dreams become real. Thus theatre, as segregated space, performs a purification of society, by allowing people "to portray instincts capable of destroying society if released in the world of reality".[24] Artaud's model, however, is more complex than this analysis made by Greene. Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty does not seek to perform these 'instincts' in order to purify them and so release them 'safely', but rather to "give full rights and existence to acts that are by nature hostile to the life of societies".[25] This is, in fact, done *with the purpose of* being hostile to those societies.

In "The Suffering Shaman of the Modern Theatre" Gene Plunka states that within Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty "[s]piritual healing occurs in the theatre when the spectator confronts the malevolent powers repressed within his or her psyche, submits to them, suffers from the evil within, and ultimately triumphs over the Dionysian forces".[26] The model of catharsis most often associated with Artaud is the one of substitutional sacrifice which we have so far examined. Thus, Philip Auslander writes that for Artaud catharsis is about the purgation and the release of "repressed psychic materials".[27] Whilst Auslander goes on to state that "[i]n Artaud's vision of theatre, the actor experiences catharsis before the audience, not simultaneously with it",[28] Artaud's model of catharsis does recognise the power of the Other.

In attempting to create a 'language without repetition', Artaud attempts to bypass "inevitable submission to the principle of repeatability and reproduction"[29] inherent to language. The problem of language, as was discussed in more detail in Chapter One, "Performing Subjectivities", remains for Artaud the very historicity of ideology contained with the linguistic moment. This historicity is for Artaud not merely the power of the Other over subjectivity, but is also the power of the Other within the Self. In "La Parole Soufflée", Derrida argues that the sense of alienation suggested by the need for catharsis, for Artaud, suggested a desire to regain a connection to "My body [that] has… always been stolen from me".[30] Language steals the body from the self through the "voice of the other" which you carry within the self due to the repetitious nature of the historicity of language. Whenever the subject speaks, s/he speaks another's words, and "in repetition you hear the voice of the other".[31] This generates a double consciousness whereby the subject splits her/himself from the articulations of the other. This 'second self' remains "the 'cruel' self", because it can never be articulated. Catharsis for Artaud, it would seem, enables one to articulate an embodied sense of subjectivity which exists singularly outside of language. This notion of the body as a pre-linguistic site that escapes signification is problematic, however, as it fails to recognise the encoding of the body itself within the signification of the other. Yet, this concept of language and the

body lead Artaud to perform his own identity transition, and it is this use of catharsis which concerns us here.

Writing about Artaud's performance at the Vieux Colombier, where, after reading his poems and reading from the manuscript of his life-story, he began to speak freely in a way that ensured his "impressive cruelty was attested to by all who witnessed it",[32] Helga Finter argues that this amounted to a "manifestation of the Real". She argues that this eruption clouded over the causes of Artaud's sufferings due to the conventions of the theatre as representation:

> In the context of the symbolic contract implicit in a lecture on a theatre stage, the irruption of the Real in the form of sickness, suffering and insanity was perceived as sensational exhibitionism and histrionics. Artaud became aware during the course of his "performance" of the impossibility of making himself heard in a theatre of the Real.[33]

Artaud, it seems, remained trapped within the model of catharsis as sacrificial substitution, and his performance of alternative identities was never able to become an empowering force. John Stout has written about "Ci-gît" and "Artaud le Mômo", discussing the extent to which these writings created what Lillian Feder describes as "an aesthetic of madness".[34] Work enabled Artaud to create a new identity,[35] and in "declaring that the old Artaud is dead and has been replaced by a ghostly double, the 'mômo', who is the product of incarceration and electroshock",[36] he enacted this identity.

Catharsis can be seen to resist rationalisation by an insistence on an embodied and emotional investment. The use of catharsis in performance works to challenge the conventional historicity of performative subjects. However, this challenge to the conventional force of performative 'utterance' is problematised for performers by Austin's famous condition, which makes theatre redundant as a performative space:

> a performative utterance will, for example, be in a peculiar way hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage… Language in such circumstances is in special ways – intelligibly – used not seriously, but in ways parasitic upon its normal use – ways which fall under the doctrine of the etiolations of language.[37]

However, Artaud's concept of catharsis in theatre questions such an interpretation:

the picture of a crime presented in the right stage conditions is
something infinitely more dangerous to the mind than if the same
crime were committed in life.[38]

The revision of catharsis through literal enactment challenges both these theories

through offering an objection to traditional processes of substitutional sacrifice. This

revision has come about through the recent work of performers whose aim is to

present an alternative, embodied and empowered enactment of identity.

Performing the Cathartic Subject

Joseph Beuys, the German artist who worked with performance and actions, created

a self-generated identity through his art. A German fighter pilot during World War II,

Beuys was shot down and rescued by Tartars, who, so the story circulated by Beuys

goes, regenerated him through rubbing him with fat and wrapping him in felt. It

seems that this was a profound experience which, as Donald Kuspit argues in his

essay "Joseph Beuys: Between Showman and Shaman", may be part of Beuys'

personal mythology as a constructed fiction. It was this fiction that enabled him to

perform his identity transition. Thus, the recurrence of fat and felt in his art also

works in a similar way, Kuspit argues, allowing Beuys to create his identity as artist.

In actions and objects of Beuys's art Beuys is presented as an active subject.

The still photographs taken as records of his actions show a captured moment of

Beuys in action; that is, active, and often moving from one position to another. This

does indicate the transition of identity which his work deals with, and yet it is also

connected to Beuys as a masculine figure of subjective agency. These photographic

evidences of Beuys as the subjective agent are doubly inscribed with his constructed

identity as subject and agent, as they are literally inscribed with his name.

"Democracy is Merry" (1973)[39] shows Beuys leaving the administrative offices of

Düsseldorf Art Academy after a sit-in to demonstrate in favour of open admission to

the Academy, a demonstration which cost Beuys his job. This ironic print, which

carries Beuys's signature in large letters across his torso, has caught Beuys in the

moment of action as identity. Thus, he is able to construct his identity as active

subject, simultaneously as he constructs the artistic identity "Joseph Beuys". Writing his name, indeed signing his signature, across the front of his pieces of art constructs his identity in multiple ways. It takes the idea of the art work authored by the artist and inscribes the process manifestly by signing his authorship across the middle (often) of the work of art. Yet, the represented work which the artist is authoring is the artist himself, and thus he makes manifest the process of the self-construction of identity.

Thus, Beuys deals with identity formation directly, prompting Donald Kuspit to argue that the presence of Beuys's subjectivism in his actions performs a personal mythology. However, in order to argue that creative subjectivism is valid, Kuspit argues that creativity is inherently primitive as a process because it springs from a universal, humanist, repressed, primeval instinct. Kuspit takes Ernst Kris's concept of personal mythology,[40] the concept that the subject creates its own self-represented image in order to repress personal trauma, and so develop a self identity which is personally created and experienced as a positive reaction to negative trauma. This, it seems, is one way of using catharsis to create a self-constructed identity. However, it is problematic to the extent that it is based on repression. Kuspit argues, however, that Beuys's actions

> do not blindly repeat the trauma. The artist refuses to be its victim.
> Beuys engaged his trauma voluntarily, rather than submitted to it
> compulsively. His actions creatively transformed it to make a larger
> point: they implicated the people who witnessed his art in the trauma
> it mediates... His creative accommodation to and assimilation of his
> trauma was motivated by his wish to heal others as well as himself.[41]

The shamanistic aspect of Beuys's art, for Kuspit, involves a use of catharsis which is Aristotelian in form as it "involves the civilising of the pathologically primitive by warmly containing it".[42] Kuspit argues that Beuys's personal mythology enables him to perform his personal and artistic identity as sacrificed victim to the spectator's empathy in post-war Germany which in turn enables the spectator to experience a transition of self:

> Beuys' performance is invariably about a victim of destruction...
> Beuys of course is the main victim – the victim symbolising all
> victims (he has been called a kitsch Christ)... In a gesture of empathy,
> the victimiser's guilt leads him or her to lend his or her life to the

victim, which means that the victimiser feels what it would be like to live and die as a victim… if internally rather than in external reality. It is this almost impossible emotional task – almost impossible personal engagement with Germany's victims – that Beuys demands of his German audience.[43]

It is this relationship of the performer to the work being performed, seen in the interpretations of the work of Beuys, as well as in the work of Artaud, which is being revised in the contemporary challenge to understandings of catharsis. This strategy of challenging the workings of catharsis understands the performance as a negotiation between performer and spectator. As the performer refuses to sacrifice themselves for the spectator, so the traditional concept of the 'suffering artist' is challenged, and the traditional catharsis experienced by the spectator, which allows them to 'return' to the world purged of responsibility and purified, is refused. The spectator is never allowed to make the transition from empathetically experiencing the suffering of the performance to a reasoned explanation of this suffering, as it is no longer performed on the spectator's behalf. Thus, the suffering inherent in the performance is never purified.

Renegotiating this, the performer now refuses to be sacrificed, refusing to embody the sacrifice of the 'suffering artist'. This is a radical move away from the cathartic performances of the Happenings, Actions, and performance art of the 1970s, which investigated the relationship between the performer and the body as artistic object. As will be explored more thoroughly in the remaining chapters of this section, these performances often resulted in an attempt to escape the confines of material existence and reach new experiences of self through transcendental spirituality. In discussing the work of Gina Pane, for example, RoseLee Goldberg writes that "she believed that ritualized pain had a purifying effect: such work was necessary 'in order to reach an anaesthetized society'".[44] Performers such as Marina Abramovic and Chris Burden sacrificed themselves in order to help the spectator reach this enlightened state. As Goldberg writes, "Burden's painful exercises were meant to transcend physical reality".[45] These performers[46] provided catharsis for the spectator in their work in the manner in which the experience of the performance led from sacrifice to purification. Positioned as body-object, the performer's body becomes a site of sacrifice. When the sacrificed body is a female body, the logic of

refusing the spectator the privilege of catharsis becomes a loaded issue of subjectivity and objectivity as feminist agency, and this becomes the focus of the following chapters. The performance has become a means for the performer to renegotiate this position of sacrifice, by forcing the audience into the position of suffering spectator.

In rejecting this contract of substitutional sacrifice the performer becomes empowered to experience the purification of catharsis themselves. Thus, the performer is able to use performance as a means of identity transition and formation. In referring to performers who attempt to enact the 'Real' of subjectivity, observed by Helga Finter in Artaud's Vieux Colombier performance, it is not to argue, as does Finter, that "Real physical exhaustion and pain" are used "as a form of authentification".[47] It is, on the contrary, to argue that these forms of enacting the 'real' empower the performer to construct and achieve the processes of identity formation as a *recognised construction,* rather than calling upon an elusive authentic origin. Instead, this 'origin' is revealed in this work to be as constructed as the identity achieved through performance itself. Artaud did indeed seek a way "to stage the tortured body in his theatre and to make audible the origins of his wounds",[48] but the work which follows takes the trajectory further than such an analysis of sacrifice allows, by refusing to become, even if only for the duration of the performance, the embodiment of substitutional sacrifice. Performance thus becomes a means of literally enacting the processes of performativity in identity formation.

As the performer enacts the identity of the performance, s/he repeats and enacts new identity strategies and thus takes on identity as it is experienced in the performance. Enacting sacrifice in order to challenge the very structure of sacrifice, contemporary performance artists inherited a tradition of ritual and catharsis expounded by Antonin Artaud. In seeking cathartic abjection as a purifying experience, Artaud sought to re-unite as 'flesh', as 'spirit',[49] the mind and the body:

> *Cruelty*: There can be no spectacle without an element of cruelty as
> the basis of every show. In our present degenerative state,
> metaphysics must be made to enter the mind through the body.[50]

His use of catharsis, however, does not only attempt to reach the mind through the body, but to break through the philosophy of thought which separates them. This is

why his work attempts to 'purify' the body through the process of catharsis. Through witnessing the sacrificed body of the performer, as in Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty*, the spectator attempts to reach purity through sacrifice. As Derrida states in "La Parole Soufflée", "Death is an articulated form of our relationship to the Other. I die only of the other: through him, for him, in him".[51] The 'suffering artist' is sacrificed to the purity of the spectator. Both Derrida and Artaud, however, overlook the categorisation of Otherness as a feminine/female space:

> We ought to note that everything feminine, everything which is surrender, anguish, a plea, an invocation, stretching out towards something in a gesture of supplication, also rests on exertion pressure points, only like a diver who touches the sea bed to rise to the surface. A kind of vacuum ray remains where the tension had been.[52]

In the case of many of the female performers who will be examined in the following chapters, it is the female Other who embodies the threat to the subject, and augurs death through the "tension" of the uncontainable body. Crucially, this feminist work also claims the subject position for female identity, and recognises that in the model of substitutional sacrifice, it is because of the female subject's sacrificial relationship to Derrida's 'him' that these females 'die'. Thus, catharsis and performativity work through the social body to inscribe identity onto the performer. Yet the performer is simultaneously inscribed by conflicting discursive forces, and so performs their identity as active subject through enactment. Performance is indeed the means through which the performer performs their subjectivity.

CHAPTER THREE

Body Boundaries and the Territory of Identity

> People tend to hate art that addresses victimization because it's easy
> to manipulate your audience with that stuff.
>> Bob Flanagan[1]

Discussions of the body often reify it as abstract space. In creating a 'universal' body as a bound space of identity such masculinist models attempt to territorialise the body as a 'female' space in order to achieve a transcendental and unified understanding of selfhood. Feminist responses to this abstraction of the body are to situate the body within specific discourses, and, in so doing, to seek to confront the immateriality of the body that discourse seems to create. One of the ways this problem can be approached is through the embodied discourse of performance. Performance has become the means of actively presenting presence in the world through the embodied presence of the material, specific body.

Body Limits

This chapter explores the perameters of the body as defined by masculinist ideology, and negotiates the 'edges' of the body as its substance disappears in discursive practices. It will also address the body as a site of the disappearance of the self. Given the integrity of self felt to exist in the unified subject position discussed in Chapter One, "Performing Subjectivities", the creation of a body with distinct and enforced boundaries seems a natural extension of this unified integrity. As this unified self is felt to fully represent the presence of the subject in the world, so it seems that this bound body becomes the essential element in gaining full presence. Creating and maintaining the body as a site of containment enables the maintenance of identity as separate from others, and it clearly enables divisions of difference to be

established. This enables the formation of identity as oppositional. It would seem from this scenario that a move away from this situation would be positive in opening up the available fields along which identity is formed, recognised, and legitimated. However, this is not necessarily the case. Many of the ways in which the boundaries of the body are seen to be opened out in order to create access to different identity states appear to involve the sacrifice of the previously 'uncontainable' body to the maintenance of the body as a last bastion of the stable, bound self.

Investigating the crossing of bodily boundaries, is, however, a problematic task. Laden with meaning in each performative context, the signification of the body is open to the maintenance of dominant ideologies. Many contemporary investigations into crossing the boundaries of the body do provide positive ways to renegotiate this sacrifice, and attempt to challenge problematic areas. One approach has been to challenge the construction of gendered identity beyond the heterosexual restrictions of the duality that maintains heterosexual dominance, as identified by Judith Butler.[2] Another way in which these investigations into the bound space of the body are problematic is in any attempt to transcend the space of the body through engaging with an essence of self that is transcendental and unified. This transcendental self may, in fact, be one of the problems encountered in the contemporary investigations into the relationship between new technologies and the body.

The self as a unified concept depends upon an understanding of a true and original essence of identity which transcends any material sphere. This self, somewhat paradoxically, can be seen to rely upon the concept of the body as a bound and integral space of identity. In her introduction to *Body Space*, "(Re)placings", Nancy Duncan references Iris Marion Young on the universal, disembodied self:

> The ideal of universality and impartiality, as Young and others have argued, is based upon a model of an individual abstracted from any real context – an individual as Young puts it, who has "no particular history, is a member of no communities, has no body". Those who come closest to the abstracted ideal human are able to dominate the public sphere.[3]

The 'essence' of self which is identified as the subject depends upon solid boundaries of self and body. In order that the self may be left intact the body must

have impenetrable boundaries. Creating the body as a bound space becomes a means of controlling territory.

The work of Deleuze and Guattari has been instrumental in exploring responses to the body as a bound space. In their book, *Anti-Oedipus,* they deterritorialise the bound body to open out the body to an ever-increasing connectivity. In attempting to create this connectivity they take issue with the bound body, and see it as a site of territorialisation by capitalist processes which seek to inscribe into flesh the Oedipal Law of the Father. Influenced by the Body Without Organs of Antonin Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari state:

> Desiring-machines make us an organism; but at the very heart of this production, within the very production of this production, the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all.[4]

Deleuze and Guattari argue that the subject exists in the surface residue of events, whereas Foucault argues that the "body is the inscribed surface of events (traced by language and dissolved by ideas), the locus of a dissociated Self (adopting the illusion of substantial unity), and a volume in disintegration".[5] Thus the body becomes a mode of signification within power. In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault in his critique of "the will to knowledge" that supports the "polymorphous techniques of power"[6] and discourse as "an imperative",[7] states that:

> A twofold evolution tended to make the flesh into the root of all evil, shifting the most important moment of transgression from the act itself to the stirrings – so difficult to perceive and formulate – of desire.[8]

Thus, we can see how the body as a site of signification both writes the body out of discourse at the same time as it inscribes the body into discourse.

Rosi Braidotti, in *Nomadic Subjects*, takes issue with this abstraction of the body. Braidotti aligns the abstraction of the 'feminine' in discourse, predominantly Lacanian psychoanalytic discourse, with that of the body:

> Just like the body, the "feminine" is re-presented as a symbolic absence. It may signify a set of interrelated issues, but per se, it is not one notion, not one corpus. There is "no-body" there.[9]

Thus there are problems for understanding the concept that the body creates ultimate presence in the world. The body, it seems, has become both the means through which

we act our presence in the world, and simultaneously the surety of our never being able to be fully present in the world. It becomes the site that signifies our loss of ourselves.

In terms of the relational self of feminist theory it is this abstracted, bound, integral space of the body as a site that protects the masculinist, unified and universal self, and maintains the body as a female space whilst ensuring the absence of the 'feminine' subject. This "mapping space as a signifier of control"[10] has come under question from feminist critics. Indeed, it is often the 'space' of the woman's body that is mapped in order to be controlled. The configuration of woman as all body has much to do with this creation of the body as a bound space, as we shall see. In her essay, "A Cyborg Manifesto", Donna Haraway references Hilary Klein, quoting her belief that Marxism and psychoanalysis are dependent upon "the plot of original unity out of which difference must be produced and enlisted in a drama of escalating domination of woman/nature".[11] Klein's analysis reveals the connection made in this philosophy between woman and nature, and suggests a determined essentialist connection between the two as controlled territory. The way in which this difference is produced has been through constructing the body as a female space. As was discussed in Chapter One, "Performing Subjectivities", 'the' body, far from actually signifying the abstraction of the 'universal' self, actually signifies universal transcendence, and inscribes embodied space as female.

The permeability of the female body operates as a threat to the bound space of territory. In *Gender Trouble*, Judith Butler has written about the boundaries of the body, arguing that the production of stable body boundaries inscribes the dominance of heterosexuality:

> The construction of stable bodily contours relies upon fixed sites of corporeal permeability and impermeability. Those sexual practices in both homosexual and heterosexual contexts that open up surfaces and orifices to erotic signification or close down others effectively reinscribe the boundaries of the body along new cultural lines.[12]

Indeed, it is the constant threat of escape, of permeability, and of the female body that constantly threatens to erupt the logic of the bound and integral body. As Butler again writes:

This figuration of masculine reason as disembodied body is one
whose imaginary morphology is crafted through the exclusion of
other possible bodies. This is a materialization of reason which
operates through the dematerialization of other bodies, for the
feminine, strictly speaking, has no morphe, no morphology, no
contour, for it is that which contributes to the contouring of things,
but is itself undifferentiated, without boundary.[13]

The threat of the fluid body to the masculine, confined, ideal self has been written
about by Luce Irigaray. In an essay on the bound self as territory, Gillian Rose cites
Irigaray's analysis of the body of the mother:

Fluid has to remain the secret remainder, of the one. Blood, but also
milk, sperm, lymph, sliva, spit, tears, humours, gas, waves, airs,
fire... light. All threaten to deform, propagate, evaporate, consume
him, to flow out of him and into another who cannot easily be held on
to. The 'subject' identifies himself with/in an almost material
consistency that finds everything flowing abhorrent... Every body of
water becomes a mirror, every sea, ice.[14]

Even whilst the female body operates as a threat to this signification of the
bound body, the attributes of the female biology becomes exteriorised in an attempt
to control this threat of permeability. As such, these mechanisms of control permeate
the female body in an attempt to control this threat, before it is able to reveal its
threatening potential. As Arthur and Marilouise Kroker have written on the
exteriorised body:

Alienated Wombs: the ideological constitution of birth which is
marked by the medicalization of the woman's body and the breaking
into the body of a whole technological and juridico-discursive
apparatus typified by the exteriorization of reproduction in the form
of in vitro fertilization and technologies of genetic reproduction.[15]

An analysis of the female body in dominant discourse serves at least two
functions. Firstly, it acts as the incarnation of all biology; enabling subjective reason
to be premised on the rational abstraction of identity from materiality. Secondly, the
female body serves also as the containment and curtailment of impermeability. It is
this signification of the female body as carrying the meaning of the male that
feminist practitioners refuse to accept. Controlling the space of the female body
attempts to confine women to the bound and private sphere, and attempts, together
with the silencing of women's voices, to deny their performative power in creating
culture.

"Up To and Including Their Limits": The Threat of the Uncontainable Body in Carolee Schneemann and Franko B

The exercise of control by women over their bodies is a key issue in feminist thinking around the deterritorialisation of the body. Creating a bound space of identity may help women to gain political control over their bodies.

Refusing to be complicit with the insistence that the female body should remain bound in order to incorporate the self as body, Carolee Schneemann's work is concerned with performing the uncontainable body of the female subject. *Meat Joy* (1964), which Schneemann describes as an "erotic performance ritual",[16] was her first performance piece to be performed in front of an audience. Part of this erotic ritualistic process derives from Schneemann's conscious decision to work from her understanding of her self. She has stated that "[o]ne of the things that became critical to my work was that I would always use myself and not construct a persona".[17] However, in using herself she recognises a certain loss of control over the body as the site of the self: "there was this strange sense that I would deprivatize my body by using it publicly. I wanted to lose that private domain because it was full of lies and deceptions and false constructions".[18]

Schneemann documents her performances in her book *More than Meat Joy*. In her diary entry from 1965, she describes the dismissal of her subject matter and the control over her work that she experienced as a direct result of using her naked female body as the literal 'subject' matter:

> When I am saying what I see, men find it difficult to hear that *I* say it – they take it away, use my words as their own because a female source of illumination registers negatively… To some extent this also occurs in regard to my Happenings, Kinetic Theater pieces. So – definitely – in its brief new life here – a man's enterprise, that I get a sort of wavery regard, as if my work is a vagary, dismissable, *because* my aggressions, anxieties are not those the male community recognizes, prizes.[19]

Jill Dolan discusses the extent to which Schneemann's performances seek to offer a challenge to patriarchal readings of the female body through connecting the

performer's body with that of women in the audience. Dolan believes, however, that this project necessarily fails because the naked female body "is still a sign which, when placed in representation, participates in a male-oriented signifying practice".[20] Dolan states that:

> Many of these artists use nudity as an attempt to fulfil *l'écriture féminine*'s proposal that women can articulate their subjectivity by writing with their bodies. Carolee Schneeman, for instance, in *Up To and Including Her Limits* (1975), which she performs nude, reads from a long scroll she removes from her vagina as a kind of feminine writing drawn from Lacanian lack.[21]

It can, of course, be argued that whilst the performances of both *Up To and Including Her Limits* and *Meat Joy* seek to disable the boundaries on which the confines of the female body are based, they do incorporate women into the dominant, masculinist ideology of reading the naked female body. The naked female body writhing and covered in blood, in *Meat Joy*, cannot escape dominant readings that seek to place this performance into discursive practices that control the female body. This may be done even though the performance seeks to critique this very process by connecting the female body with the treatment of dead animals and their use value as 'meat'.

However, Carolee Schneemann's work enacts the desire by female artists to reterritorialise the site of the female body as 'nude', and in claiming this space to challenge male conceptions of what it means to be a naked woman in performance. *Interior Scroll* (1975-1977) enacts the fear of the female body as uncontainable by explicitly revealing the openings of the body, and in so doing enacts the fear of interiority that the female body represents. In *Interior Scroll* Schneemann pulled a written text from her vagina, which she then read to the spectators. This cord of text was written on a long, coiled roll of paper. This performance of Schneemann's enacts the interior space of the body, and seeks to enact both the status of the female body as object and the performance of the female within the subject position. This is achieved both through the physicality of the performance, and through the words which Schneemann speaks as she vocalises her position as subject. As Amelia Jones has written of this performance:

Carolee Schneemann, *Interior Scroll* (1975-1977), as it appears in Andrea Juno and V. Vale, *Angry Women*

> Schneemann plays out the oscillatory exchange between subject- and object- ivity, between the masculine position of speaking discourse and the feminine position of being spoken. By "speaking" her "spokenness" already and integrating the image of her body (as object) with the action of making itself, Schneemann plays out the ambivalence of gendered identity.[22]

Indeed, clearly within the work of Schneemann this is an enactment of societal and cultural creation of 'absence' in female creativity and assertion, and not an attempt to speak from an 'authentic' sense of female identity. As Rebecca Schneider writes in her book *The Explicit Body in Performance*, Schneemann's vaginal text is "split

between an invocation of sacrality and a recitation of the history of her delimitation within patriarchy – not, as some cultural feminists might have hoped, a transcendent 'newly born woman'".[23]

The threat performed by the uncontainable body is similarly enacted in the performance art of Franko B, who works with body art in a way that performs and enacts the breaking of the boundaries around the masculinist self. Within his artistic project Franko B enacts identity transition in a manner that performs the connection between art and the body politic. It is possible to read Franko B's performances as a purely subjective reaction to personally experienced trauma: his childhood was disturbing as his mother abused him, calling him "Franko the Dog", enslaving him, and locking him into a box at night; his father was absent; the Red Cross intervened and he was sent to an orphanage, from which he ran away at fifteen. Later he gained a degree in Fine Art and Media from Chelsea College. Whilst Franko B has spoken about the catharsis he experiences through his performances: "[t]he performance is to do with survival. What I do in performance makes me feel totally free… This obviously goes some way to making me feel better in myself. I am doing something which allows me to feel that I have some kind of respect, of dignity; feeling that it's worth me living"[24]; simply reading his work as the subjective out-pouring of trauma seems a facile dismissal of the discursive potential contained in his project.

Franko B's work performs the body in extremity. For the performance *I'm Not Your Babe* (1997), performed at the Institute of Contemporary Art, London, Franko B's body is painted white, in order to act as a canvas for his enactment, which is likewise performed on a white canvas. Prior to the performance two to three pints of blood are removed from his body at four to six week periods, and are stored for use in the performance, in order to give his body time to generate more which will be drained throughout the duration of the piece. The blood removed prior to the performance was poured over his body, and blood poured onto the canvas floor from a catheter placed in his arm. More cuts were made into his flesh and he bled onto his body-canvas. He was then hung from his feet. Due to this draining aspect of his work, his performances are extremely demanding and are limited to no more than four a year.
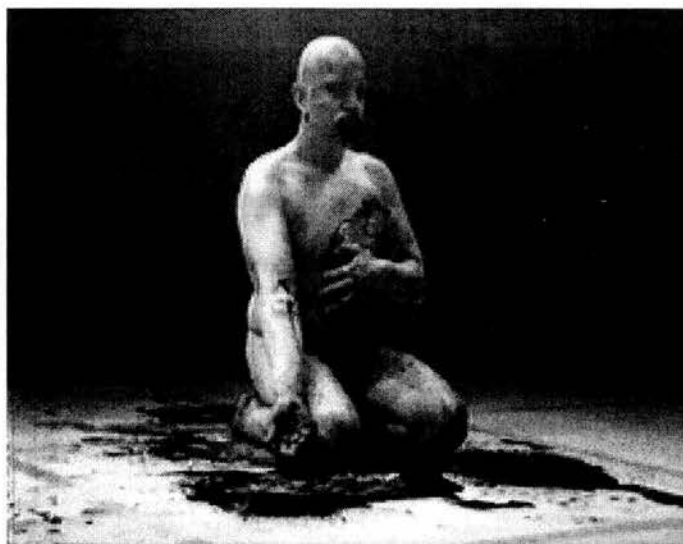
Franko B, *I'm Not Your Babe* (1997). Film still taken from *The South Bank Show,* Daniel Wiles director/producer, edited and presented by Melvyn Bragg

The ritualistic nature of his performances investigate the artistic body-in-pain and interrogate the relationship between the 'suffering artist' and the audience. The extremity of his bleeding body-in-pain raises questions around the nature of the bound body as a container for a masculinist, unified, and transcendental self. Part of performing this threat to the bound self lies in the manner in which he encodes his body into discourse. Rachel Armstrong has argued that Franko B's performances perform an 'authentic' body:

> Franko's performative account conveys the assertion of a life which has been restricted, abused, instrumented and invaded, provoking a spontaneous outpouring of his bodily fluids, urine, saliva, faeces, blood. Through this act of cleansing, his flesh is stripped of all means of identity. By creating an impersonal body, Franko creates a painful vision of what the body is, rather than what it is dressed up to be.[25]

Armstrong goes on to argue that Franko B's body performs an enactment of an 'abstract' body:

> Abject, abused and naked amongst his own blood and effluvia, his work evokes those aspects of being a body which we try to forget. Subverting medical practice and reducing human existence to an

abstract, bloodied object.[26]

Contrary to this argument by Armstrong, performing the artistic body as a canvas, whilst simultaneously performing this body bleeding in extreme ways, disturbs the spectator's position in relation to both the body-as-object and the performer as 'suffering artist'. Indeed, performances such as *I'm Not Your Babe* raise questions around the body as a sacred and naturalised site. Rather than create an 'abstract' body, which would reinscribe masculinist constructions of 'the body', Franko B performs this construction of the body as abstract in order to disturb such understandings of 'the body'. It is not in vain that this body is bleeding. Furthermore, *I'm Not Your Babe* implicates the spectators in the creation and maintenance of both the abstract, masculinist body and the artist as body-object. Franko B refuses to resolve the issues of the performance, and *I'm Not Your Babe* ends with the image of Franko B's bleeding body hanging upside down from a noose tied around his ankles. By refusing to provide a cathartic release for the spectator, Franko B's performances resist the substitutional sacrifice by which the artist heals social wounds in a shamanistic manner. In this way, Franko B enacts the threat of the uncontainable body.

Pain: Silencing the Threat of Fluidity

Throughout the history of performance art that uses the body as the object of the work, many performers used pain as a means of reaching a higher state of consciousness. This higher state of selfhood often depended upon reaching a self abstracted from materiality. This tradition has been challenged by many contemporary performance artists who use pain not to reinforce body boundaries, but instead to interrogate the use of pain in self/other dichotomies. The investigation of catharsis by these performers attempts to investigate the use of pain as a connection between performer and spectator, especially as a means of creating fluid and relational boundaries of the body and subjectivity.

In her book, *The Body in Pain*, Elaine Scarry discusses the silencing of the pain experienced by the body as a form of controlling the space of the subject in pain. The body-in-pain is discussed as an extreme representation of the separability and division experienced by bound subjects, and the manner in which this division is used to control the body space of the Other. Pain becomes a record of the boundaries of the body as they contain the self; the body is signified as a separate, wholly distinct, unified, and integral space. Scarry writes:

> For the person whose pain it is, it is 'effortlessly' grasped (that is, even with the most heroic effort it cannot *not* be grasped); while for the person outside the sufferer's body, what is 'effortless' is *not* grasping it (it is easy to remain wholly unaware of its existence; even with effort, one may remain in doubt about its existence or may retain the astonishing freedom of denying its existence; and, finally, if with the best effort of sustained attention one successfully apprehends it, the aversiveness of the 'it' one apprehends will only be a shadowy fraction of the actual it).[27]

Pain thus seals the body into this bound space. It records the universal, transcendental self through stabilising the boundaries of the intact body.

Continuing this intact status of the body-in-pain, Scarry discusses the extent to which pain escapes language. The inability to effectively convey the experiences of the body-in-pain resists recording in language, and often places the individual in a position outside of language through the sounds used to express the pain experienced. This serves to further enforce the boundaries of the intact bodily space. Scarry explains how this is due to the non-referentiality of pain, arguing that:

> Contemporary philosophers have habituated us to the recognition that our interior states of consciousness are regularly accompanied by objects in the external world, that we do not simply 'have feelings' but have feelings *for* somebody or something... a consistent affirmation of the human beings capacity to move out beyond the boundaries of his or her own body into the external, sharable world... physical pain – unlike any other state of consciousness – has no referential content. It is not of or for anything. It is precisely because it takes no object that it... resists objectification in language.[28]

As a movement from language to silence the status of the body-in-pain can be used, through silence, to translate pain into power, as Scarry informs us. Thus, the status of the body as bound represents universal, abstracted identity, and becomes a means of punishing bodies that refuse to remain 'bound'; through using pain and its

accompanying silence to enforce the status of the bound body and subject. Bodies that refuse to remain bound are categorised as Other to the stability of the bound self.

Pain, as we have established, is used to silence the body of the individual. Both Michel Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality*, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, have also written about the silencing of the body through identifying an 'escape' of experience unique to the body, which can then be used to place the subject in question outside of the discourse of language; the dominant discourse. Language becomes the means of writing the experience of the body out of existence. As such a crucial binary opposition between language and the body has been established. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, in *The Phenomenology of Perception*, argues that:

> Whether it is a question of another's body or my own, I have no means of knowing the human body other than that of living it, which means taking up on my own account the drama which is being played out in it, and losing myself in it.[29]

This inability of expressing the experience of the body contributes the construction of the body as a bound, separate and unified space of existence. This point is further elucidated by Foucault, in *The History of Sexuality*, where he discusses the extent to which the body is silenced through 'the incitement to discourse'. Here, it is language's very objectivity which reduces the body's "fragile materiality" to silence. Discussing the discourse of sex and the body, Foucault writes:

> As if in order to gain mastery over it [sex] in reality, it had first been necessary to subjugate it at the level of language, control its free circulation in speech, expunge it from the things that were said, and extinguish it from the words that rendered it too visibly present.[30]

Indeed, the connection between the disappearance of the body and the control of physical pain as a way to control identity connects the work of Scarry with that of Foucault. As Foucault writes in *Discipline and Punish*:

> The body now serves as an instrument or intermediary: if one intervenes upon it to imprison it, or to make it work, it is in order to deprive the individual of a liberty that is regarded both as a right and as property. The body, according to this penalty, is caught up in a system of constraints and privations, obligations and prohibitions. Physical pain, the pain of the body itself, is no longer the constituent element of the penalty. From being an art of unbearable sensations punishment has become an economy of suspended rights.[31]

The wound as a sign of these suspended rights has been investigated by performance artists, whose work often explores physical pain as a means of engaging with the construction of the body itself as property.

The Performing Body in Pain: Transcendence and Signification

Artists who challenge the rationality of human understanding, desiring to effect a change in the way in which we perceive ourselves, have often been placed outside of society. As was explored in the preceding chapters, the suffering of the performer as 'Other' has been used to effect a reinvestment in the safety of the status quo. The use of apparent pain and suffering by such artists is taken as a sign of their inability to communicate 'rational' subjectivity, and this is because of, and not in spite of, their being understood as a direct challenge to rationality itself. Artists such as Chris Burden, Gina Pane, Marina Abramovic, Bob Flanagan, Ron Athey, Franko B, Stelarc and Orlan work with relations between subject/object formations, making explicit the transformation of the artist into an object. Such artists use pain to investigate attitudes around rationality and reason in identity formation.

Performance artists since the early Happenings and actions of the 1970s have been investigating the position of the body in relation to both art and identity. Many of these artists began to explore this new territory by using the physical boundaries of the body in order to negotiate these perameters. Pain becomes a means of testing the physical limits of the artists' bodies, and the relationship of the body to the construction of the self. In an attempt to explore the grounding, stabilising effect of identity in the space of the body many of these artists began by using pain to escape and transcend the material, biological plain to achieve what they felt to be a transcendental and authentic sense of the self separated from material concerns. These enactments see the realisation of the self most fully in an absence from the body. Testing the limits of the biological body enables the artists to negotiate the limits of the self. This seems paradoxical, and in terms of more recent developments within performance art, where in fact the body is negotiated as integral to any

understanding of subjectivity, it is. However, these works enabled the status of the body-as-object to be investigated in a way that had not previously been possible; with the body being seen merely as the *mediator* of ideas and interpellation by social forces. In these works the body is seen, portrayed, and negotiated as inscribed, even though this is by leaving the bounds of the body itself.

Gina Pane, Marina Abramovic and Chris Burden were instrumental in investigating this relationship between sacrifice and purification. In his performance piece *Doomed* Burden lay under a sheet of glass, totally stationary and without food or water, for 31 hours. The performance was stopped after these 31 hours on medical advice. According to records of this performance the extreme stillness of Burden was met with an extreme reaction by the spectators:

> The crowd screamed, whistled and mocked him in what seemed to be some kind of a preorgasmic state which gradually increased as they saw Burden keeping calmly motionless.[32]

Burden has used pain and ritual to challenge ideas around violence and subjectivity. In performances such as *Trans-fixed*,[33] performed in 1974, Burden was nailed to the roof of a Volkswagen Beetle in the style of a crucifixion. *Trans-fixed* links the sacrifice of the body to a fixed state of identity.

Gina Pane was one such artist working with the body and the experiences of pain. In "The Conditioning", the first part of the three-part performance *Autoportrait(s)*, (1973), Pane lay on an iron bed underneath which burned fifteen tall candles.[34] Gina Pane explains her shamanistic exploration of self-inflicted pain in her art:

> My wound in this and other actions might be explained as the magic act which the medicine-men of Ancient Greece practiced when they inflicted the very wounds they had to cure on their own bodies.[35]

Pane's use of the wounding of the body as a language indicates the extent to which the body is inscribed in identity. As Pane states:

> My real problem was in constructing a language through this wound which became sign… The act of self-inflicting wounds on myself represents a temporal gesture, a psycho-visual gesture which leaves traces.[36]
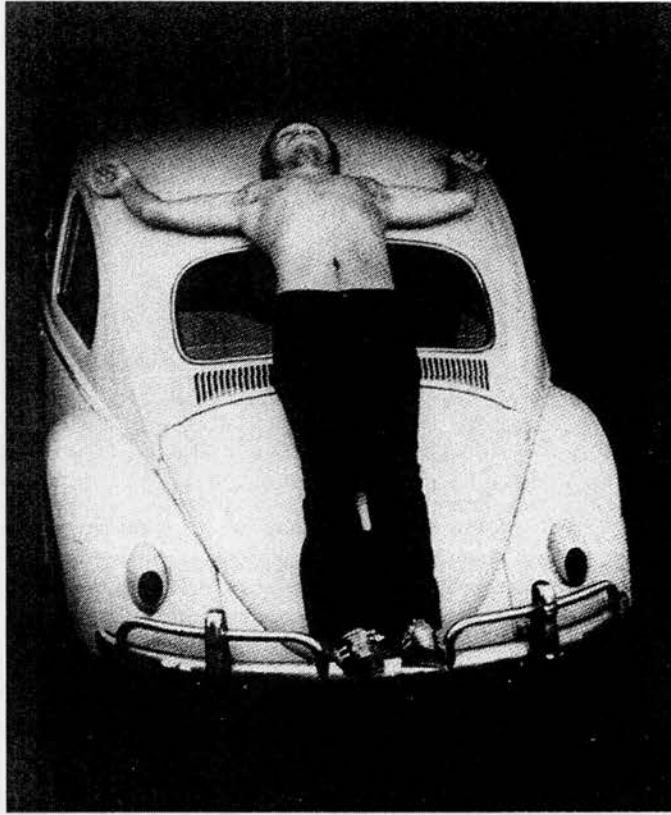
Transfixed, Chris Burden, 1974; a performance given at Venice, California. As it appears in Amelia Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject.*

Thus the body acts as a surface on which to record social processes. These processes operate ritualistically, providing rites of passage through which Pane experiences the processes of catharsis. These wounds, as she states, record the transient processes of performance through which this catharsis is brought into play. This makes the processes of identity transition manifest in the action, as indeed they operate as a "psycho-visual" document. Indeed, Pane has spoken about the extent to which she sees the body as "transformation", rather than simply "representation".[37] One of the problems with this work is the extent to which it engages with feminist understandings of subjectivity. Pane, it seems, is performing the female body as a marker of the wounded female self. The sight/site of this pain inscribed on the body performs the inscription of the female body-in-performance into the dominance of the normative pain-free readings of the male body. The wounding of Pane's body is self-directed, and in this way Pane reinscribes her identity into the position of Other.

However, rather than perform the threat contained in the enactment of the Other, Pane seems to accept the sacrifice of her female body to the shamanistic cure of the body politic.

This use of pain by artists to explore what RoseLee Goldberg has termed "the disconnectedness that occurs between the body and the self",[38] can also be found in the performances of Marina Abramovic. In her investigations into this disconnectedness between body and self Abramovic examined the influence of ritual:

> When I went to Tibet and the Aborigines and I was also introduced to some Sufi rituals, I saw that all these cultures pushed the body to the physical extreme in order to make a mental jump, to eliminate the fear of death, the fear of pain and of all the bodily limitations we live with. We in Western society are so afraid. Performance was the form enabling me to jump to that other space and dimension.[39]

Abramovic uses performance to experience the catharsis of moving beyond received rationality, and she uses extreme bodily sensation in order to do this. She has also used pain in performances in a way that directly calls into question the relationship between the performer and spectator. *Rhythm O* (1974) literally enacted the sacrifice of the performer. In this performance Abramovic locked herself into a small space for six hours with spectators and various instruments of pleasure and pain, which the spectators were to use on her body at their will. The performance had to be halted after one of the spectator's pointed a loaded gun at Abramovic's head.[40] Clearly, the sacrifice of the female body-object within performance has consequences for the politics of the body in feminism.

Whilst these performers were instrumental in developing theories around catharsis and the use of ritualistic acts within performance as a critique of ideology, there are problems in using the extreme experience of pain in this way.[41] The idea that the transcendence of the body through extreme sensation would provide a neutral basis from which to "jump" to another "space and dimension" is problematic in the extreme. That this concept associates extreme bodily states with authentic experience of universal selfhood reveals a lack of understanding of both the cultural inscription of bodies and their experiences, and the total inability to escape from materiality. Another problem is that these artists experience pain from the privileged

position of the healthy body,[42] knowing that they can return once again to this pain-free existence at will.

Pain, Absence and the Record of Death: Bob Flanagan

Performance artist Bob Flanagan lived with the constant pain of cystic fibrosis until he died on the 4th January 1996. Throughout his life and his art he used the pain of living with his debilitating illness to investigate the relationship between sexuality, identity and the body. Part of his analysis into pain and catharsis is dependent on his inability to escape his painful existence. As a masochist, Flanagan lived with his partner, dominatrix Sheree Rose. Much of his work involves their sadomasochistic relationship, and all of it involves his enactment of his masochistic desires, in a way which makes visible the pain and pleasure of sadomasochistic relationships. The physicality of his ill body-in-pain affects his formation of identity.

"Wall of Pain" is a collection of facial photographs that record his experience of being hit by his partner Sheree Rose. This record of the pain and pleasure of his masochistic relationship with Rose visibly represents his agency as desiring subject. This collection was displayed in *Visiting Hours*, performed at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York (1994) where Flanagan presented himself as an art object lying in a hospital bed. During this live performance spectators were able to speak to him and ask him questions, as he lay in his hospital bed. The document of this performance in the biographical film, *Sick*, directed by Kirby Dick, shows Flanagan naked, except for a hospital gown which falls away as he is hoisted into the air by his feet, and his body-in-pain is revealed. Flanagan's artistic project continues to insist on the visibility of the disease, and he has stated that he was "making it an object, something people have to look at".[43] The title itself, *Visiting Hours*, indicates the extent to which the spectators can choose to experience Flanagan's pain, in the safety of the knowledge that they are able to leave this pain behind after the performance has finished.

Wall of Pain, from *Visiting Hours,* by Bob Flanagan. Film still taken from *Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist,* produced and directed by Kirby Dick

In his work he becomes both subject and object in an interesting interplay. Whilst presenting himself as art object he remains within the agency of the subject position ,and, crucially, he remains in control of his work. As he states, "I'm more the mad scientist than the guinea pig".[44] In fact it is clear from considering Flanagan's performances that his engagement with the body-as-object performed a catharsis which enabled him to explore the agency of his identity as masochist. Indeed, as Flanagan states; "The masochist has to know his or her own body perfectly well, and be in full control of their body, in order to either give control to somebody else or to give control to pain".[45] Flanagan's performances engage with the construction of both the body-in-pain and the masochistic body as the body of the 'suffering artist'. As Dennis Cooper writes in his essay "Flanagans Wake": "His performances, while exceedingly graphic and visceral, involved a highly estheticised, personal, pragmatic challenge to accepted notions of violence, illness and death".[46] Indeed, this performative enactment of identity is something very central to Flanagan's art. Sheree Rose has written of his engagement with the role of the artist in *Visiting Hours*, that:

> When people see Bob in the hospital bed, it's Bob Flanagan they're
> seeing, but it's also Bob Flanagan *playing* Bob Flanagan. And it's
> only the part of him that he's revealing at that moment, not the
> totality.[47]

Indeed, Flanagan's performance of his body-in-pain enacts both a subjective agency in the face of illness, and also, crucially, a critique of the sovereign self of masculinist unity and control. Through actively performing his body-in-pain Flanagan enacts a fluid, masculine and un-masculinist body.

Amelia Jones has written about Bob Flanagan, arguing that "his self-inflicted bodily transgressions had to do specifically with externalizing his pain and projecting it onto his observers" so that "the original sufferer can attain some semblance of self-containment".[48] Jones cites Didier Anzieu's *The Skin Ego* for her explanation of this position:

> Pain cannot be shared except by being erotized [*sic*] in a sado-
> masochistic relationship.... Inflicting a real envelope of suffering on
> oneself can be an attempt to restore the skin's containing function.... I
> suffer therefore I am.... It is through suffering that the body acquires
> its status as a real object.[49]

Amelia Jones argues that Flanagan's work is an attempt "to externalize his internal pain".[50] By doing this Jones argues that the force of the pain becomes "presumably stoppable". Jones contrasts Flanagan's performance style with that of Hermann Nitsch and Chris Burden, arguing that Flanagan's amiable style draws the spectators in "as collaborators in his masochism".[51] However, Jones goes on to reference the work of Paul Smith on masochism, from his essay "Action Movie Hysteria", where Smith argues that in the production of male hysteria the body disappears, making the hysterical male an anti-female and anti-homosexual production. Masochism becomes "a struggle to maintain in a pleasurable tension the stages of a symbolic relation to the father – a struggle in which, ironically, the body becomes forgotten".[52] Jones, however, argues convincingly for the 'non-normative' body of Flanagan. She states that the body of Flanagan acts in the opposite way to Smith's description of masochism, as his work does not suppress the body of the male artist in order to allow male subjectivity to emerge transcendent, but rather "[t]hrough Flanagan's overly hystericized (not to mention punctured, deflated, depleted, and otherwise

materially shattered) body, the conventional model of the male artist is definitively dispersed".[53]

Whilst Flanagan's work enacts the pain of his illness, his insistence on performing his agency leads him to compare himself to the superhero in his poem "Superman". In an ironic and humorous performance of the poem in the biographical film *Sick,* made by Kirby Dick in the three years leading up to and including Flanagan's death, he performs the poem in his humorous style: "And in a never-ending battle not just to survive but to subdue my stubborn disease, I've learned to fight sickness with sickness".[54] Indeed, in his poem which links his performances to his illness he expresses a belief in his super-abilities. He states;

> Yes, it's me, and most of the time I feel as though I come from
> another solar system. And despite my skinny physique and frail
> sensitivities, I possess certain powers and abilities far beyond those of
> so-called normal human beings.[55]

The breakdown of body boundaries in Flanagan's performances perform a critique of the artist as suffering body-object by insisting on enacting the agency of his desire. The extent to which he refuses to accommodate the objectification of the suffering body-in-pain disturbs the spectator's understanding of art performance as a shamanistic ritual. This calls into questions notions around pain, subjectivity and artistic production.

Recording his own death Flanagan engages with issues around creating presence through the ultimate absence. Often the body, through its materiality, is seen as the ultimate signification of presence in the world. Maurice Merleau-Ponty has written about the body and its relationship to our sense of presence in the world in *The Phenomenology of Perception*:

> When I say that my body is always perceived by me, these words are
> not to be taken in a purely statistical sense, for there must be, in the
> way my own body presents itself, something which makes its absence
> or its variation inconceivable.[56]

Indeed, the body as a "vehicle of being in the world",[57] represents presence in the world through its seeming lack of potential absence. Just as language represents presence in the world as absent, so the body can often be removed from this potential for absence. However, the discourse surrounding the body as a means to provide

Demonstration of *The Viewing*, by Bob Flanagan. Film still taken from *Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist*, produced and directed by Kirby Dick

presence in the world operates through language and as such discursive practices render the body absent in this effort to provide the presence of the body. Bob Flanagan engages with the ephemerality often constructed through the discourse of the body, and challenges the idea that the body can escape the confines of discursive strategies.

Kirby Dick's film of Flanagan's life and death, *Sick*, records the death of Flanagan, creating a pain in the spectator which is excruciating in its revelation of the connection between Flanagan and the spectator; no matter how unlike the pain experienced by Flanagan himself . Trauma becomes a means of connecting the self with the other in Flanagan's work. As Parveen Adams has argued that Orlan creates a "body of suffering" in the spectator, so Amelia Jones goes on to develop this theory of 'bodies of suffering' in relation to the work of Bob Flanagan. Jones records Sheree Rose's hope to complete this project envisioned with Flanagan, stating that "[t]he piece would also literalize the dispersal of the subject that occurs with death".[58] So Flanagan's *Memento Mori* pieces record the processes of his own death,

and through this play with notions around presence and absence in subjectivity and artistic agency. However, only one of the three pieces has been completed so far. *Video Coffin*, was performed two years before Flanagan's death in 1994. In this performance the spectator is presented with a coffin decorated with items associated with death and possible ways of dying; including razor blades, tablets, baseball bats, scalpels, knives, snakes, bullets, hammers, hypodermic needles, a bouquet of flowers and the Grim Reaper. This coffin is partially opened at the head to reveal a television screen showing Flanagan's face. As the spectator moves closer the image of Flanagan's face is replaced with the spectator's own.[59] Another piece from *Momento Mori* is *Dust to Dust*, which, unlike *Video Coffin*, has not been performed. *Dust to Dust* would also play with our ideas of presence and absence, involving a coffin containing photographs of Flanagan throughout his life. *The Viewing* is perhaps the most radical and disturbing of the proposed pieces, involving a video camera placed in the coffin of the dead Flanagan which would document the decaying of his physical body and relay this literal presentation of the act to an audience elsewhere. Whilst this piece has not been performed, Flanagan enacted a demonstration of this performance of his own death whilst he was still alive. This desire to record death as the last piece of work records the continued presence of Flanagan as artist, at the very moment that he is confronted by the ultimate absence. The absence of Flanagan in death is performed through the use of representation that reveals his face, his most subjective bodily part, in video screens and eventually photographs that record and document his presence in the face of the very fact of his absence.

The focus on the body as the material existence of the subject enables Bob Flanagan and other performers to create agency in the world through the threat of their disappearing bodies. Flanagan and Franko B perform the extreme nature of their bodies in pain in order to communicate their anxieties around identity formation to the spectator. In so doing, they perform the body-in-pain in a way that forces the spectator to confront their own implications in the subject-object formations that are at play in these artists' works. Gloria Anzaldúa is a feminist writer whose work also engages with the body as material, lived experience. Anzaldúa's work explores the

pain of her identity in the borderlands, and similarly forces the reader to recognise their implications in the cultural imperialism that leads to her body-in-pain.

Resisting the Territory of the Body: *Borderlands/La Frontera* by Gloria Anzaldúa

Gloria Anzaldúa is a Mexican American woman writer who grew up in South Texas in the aftermath of the U.S. Mexican war when the border of Texas had been moved one hundred miles further south by North America. Anzaldúa describes this process: "The border fence that divides the Mexican people was born on February 2, 1848 with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo. It left 100,000 Mexican citizens on this side, annexed by conquest along with the land".[60] For Anzaldúa this border has become a symbolic enactment of her multiple and bordered identities. She describes her genealogical identity as belonging to Native Mexican, Spanish and Northern Native Americans. Establishing her identity as descendant from the mestizos she explains this as the birth of a new race of "mixed Indian and Spanish blood" born from the Spanish Conquest of Mexico, which was then ruled by the Aztecs. Calling herself a Chicana she explains this as a Mexican-American woman, the next generation of mestizo and Northern Native American peoples. This divergent identity, for Anzaldúa, is performed though her body and her language which has become an important part of Anzaldúa's discussion of identity in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. The border, for Anzaldúa, functions as *los atravesados*[61]; the place where people cross over.

For Anzaldúa the sealing and territorialisation of the land is performed through the simultaneous sealing and territorialisation of the female body. Anzaldúa's project in this way engages with the discourses of postmodernism and postcolonialism. As Kwame Anthony Appiah states in "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern" postcolonial writing should be seen as "a repudiation of national history; to see the text as postcolonially postcolonialist as well as anti-(and thus, of course, post-) nativist".[62] In this way, postcolonial writing "is not postmodernism

but postmodern*isation*; not an aesthetics but a politics, in the most literal sense of the term".[63] In seeing that the "work of *mestiza* consciousness is to break down the subject-object duality that keeps her prisoner",[64] as Anzaldúa herself states, she enacts this postmodernisation of postmodern writing. For Anzaldúa the insistence on the border as a liberating position of fluid identities is at once a celebration of postmodern fluid subjectivities, and a reclamation of her identity as *mestiza*.

In *Women Reading Women Writing*, AnaLouise Keating describes Anzaldúa's *mestiza consciousness* as a "process that breaks down the rigid boundaries between apparently separate categories of meaning".[65] Keating sets up a distinction between French feminist, and specifically Cixous', l'¾criture f¾minine and the writing through the body of Anzaldúa, which she argues is an intensely painful and psychic experience, as opposed to what she sees as a celebratory style of french feminism. This painful experience works through the colonisation of languages and territory, and this is inscribed on Anzaldúa's female body. What Keating finds interesting about this work is Anzaldúa's "ability to transform alienation into new types of connection".[66] Claiming transitional identities from the mestiza consciousness performs a political threat to the "cultural imperialism"[67] that seeks to stabilise difference and in so doing control territory.

In *Women Reading Women Writing*, AnaLouise Keating argues in her book on Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde, that "[i]t is these transformational possibilities that distinguish the works of Allen, Anzaldúa, and Lorde from those of many other contemporary social actors, for in the process of reinventing themselves, they reinvent their readers".[68] Keating argues that these authors perform this reinvention through two stages. Firstly, by challenging "the dominant culture's sociopolitical inscriptions – the labels that define each person according to gender, ethnicity, sexuality, class, and other systems of difference",[69] they thus perform their autobiographies in a philosophical way, and present their subjective experiences as a direct challenge to 'objective' truth. Secondly, by working towards deconstructing "all such notions of unified, stable identities" in what Keating calls "transformational identity politics",[70] these writers perform the postmodern fluidity of identity. In Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/La Frontera* this

enactment performs a direct threat to the stabilising categories of the unified, masculinist self.

Anzaldúa speaks many languages formed from variations of English and Spanish, as she discusses, and she describes Chicano Spanish and Tex-Mex as closest to her identity. She argues for the validity of the latter as a new language as it is a combination of Spanish and English. This language performatively enacts Anzaldúa's identity as Chicana. Just as she experiences her identity as Mexican-American her language as Mexican-American actively performs this identity. As she argues:

> For a people who are neither Spanish nor live in a country in which Spanish is the first language; for a people who live in a country in which English is the reigning tongue but who are not Anglo; for a people who cannot entirely identify with either standard (formal, Castillan) Spanish nor standard English, what recourse is left to them but to create their own language? A language which they can connect their identity to, one capable of communicating the realities and values true to themselves – a language with terms that are neither *español ni inglés*, but both.[71]

This analysis of language in the text recognises the borders established between the subject performed in the text – Anzaldúa – and the Anglo reader as Other. The text is written in both English and Spanish without translations of either language. In this way Anzaldúa enacts a critique of cultural imperialism. Anglo-American readers are forced to acknowledge their privileged position in relation to the use of English that has been established as dominant through cultural imperialism. As such, Anzaldúa resists the need to "accommodate the English speakers rather than have them accommodate me".[72] As an English speaker who speaks no Spanish you are positioned outside the Spanish aspect of this text and this sets up borders, something which performs for the reader the borders enacted through this text, and which must be crossed. Thus, her enactment of the language that is "neither *español ni inglés*, but both" politicises her identity, and in this way her speech performs a threat to imperialist discourse. Simon During has argued in "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism Today" that the discourses of postmodernism and postcolonialism are not consonant as "[p]ostmodern thought also recognises, however, that the Other can never speak for itself as the Other".[73] Anzaldúa's project clearly performs her

status as both Other and subject with agency and, in so doing, threatens the colonisation of her as Other as she resists this objectification.

The borderlands of identity experienced through her race as Mexican and her language as Spanish and English are enacted on and through her experience of her body. In her book *Body Talk*, Jacquelyn Zita argues that Gloria Anzaldúa creates a body which is radically at odds with the Cartesian dualistic split of mind and body. As was discussed in Chapter One, to discuss 'the body' often means that you discuss 'it' in abstract terms, instead of connecting the specific body to the material environment. Abstractions of the body reduce the body to discourse and remove it from the material realm. Zita discusses how Anzaldúa's naming of the borderland as "*una herida abierta*", an open wound, "marks the border as a place of bodily suffering and historical violation".[74] Zita writes that Anzaldúa uses "violent body metaphors".[75] Indeed, the pain of the Chicana experience is recorded in the bodily experience of *Borderlands*: "*Con el destierro y el exilo fuimos desunados, destroncados, destripados* – we were jerked out by the roots, truncated, disembowelled, dispossessed, and separated from our identity and our history".[76] For Anzaldúa this borderland is felt in the body, and must be crossed in order to validate her identity as *mestiza*. The conflict of not totally agreeing with Anglo-American or Mexican culture creates for Anzaldúa an "internalized ... borderland conflict that sometimes I feel like one cancels out the other and we are zero, nothing, no one".[77]

As Zita writes the "Anzaldúan body is a body in the process of decolonization".[78] Indeed as Anzaldúa has written "As mestizas – biologically and/or culturally mixed – we have different surfaces for each aspect of identity, each inscribed by a particular subculture. We are 'written' all over, or should I say, calved and tattooed with the sharp needles of experience".[79] This leads Anzaldúa to enact the processes of transition through the material body. Jacquelyn Zita argues that "Anzaldúa's writing *of the body* brings us to a *body as activity* in resistance, survival, and historical transformation".[80] Indeed she argues that the objectification of the body in Western culture is part of distancing oneself from material reality. Part of Anzaldúa's creative project in returning to the body as a means of locating identity is

a denial of Western, white rationality, as a cultural means of ensuring 'cultural imperialism', demands that Other cultures dismiss their own cultural practices as "mere pagan superstition".[81] The focus on the performance of an active body revealing an active subject of agency is revealed in *Borderlands/La Frontera*.

Anzaldúa discusses the social function of art in the performances of the shamans. The artist and writer for Anzaldúa performs a cathartic function within the social body as a whole:

> The ability of story (prose and poetry) to transform the storyteller and the listener into something or someone else is shamanistic. The writer, as shape-changer, is a *nahual*, a shaman.[82]

Thus, the work for Anzaldúa is at once a cathartic process and performative. Her writings are "'enacted' every time they are spoken aloud or read silently",[83] and in this way the work performs a performative function. For Anzaldúa, clearly the written word embodies a performative power, that does, indeed, perform this power through the ritual enactment of reading. However, she locates the performative moment only within the act of performance itself. Speaking of the power of ritual she states that "[a] mask may only have the power of presence during a ritual dance and the rest of the time it may merely be a 'thing'".[84] Art for Anzaldúa contains a level of social sacrifice of a tribal and Dionysian quality of purging through blood-letting, "goat or chicken".[85] For Anzaldúa the performance ritual is an integral part of the "presence of power" of a ritualistic object, as to remove it from this context involves an imperialisation of culture, in which the objects themselves become important at the expense of the *enacted* culture of the people and the rite which the object performs.

However, whilst the artistic product can provide catharsis for the reader through enactment, it is the very process of creation which for Anzaldúa provides catharsis. As she *re-enacts* through creation a site of *original* trauma which "invokes images from my unconscious",[86] so the process of writing performs originary trauma in order to resolve it. As she states:

> in reconstructing the traumas behind the images, I make "sense" of them, and once they have "meaning" they are changed, transformed. It is then that writing heals me, brings me great joy.[87]

This positionality works through the body for Anzaldúa and happens through experiencing catharsis through the body: "My soul makes itself through the creative act. It is constantly remaking and giving birth to itself through my body".[88]

There are, however, problems with Anzaldúa's sense of the creative as a cathartic space, as it relies on the concept of the 'suffering artist' to legitimate her project. The artist suffers in order to bring a sense of purification to the social world; "Living in a state of psychic unrest, in a borderland, is what makes poets write and artists create".[89] In fact, it is the state of living in a borderland which creates this need for catharsis, as in working through "the internal tension of oppositions" she realises that "in descending to the depths I realize that down is up, and I rise up from and into the deep".[90] In fact she recognises the extent to which "metaphor and symbol concretize the spirit and etherealize the body",[91] just as interpellation seeks to concretise identity. Given this cathartic relationship with the body, Anzaldúa writes:

> This is the sacrifice that the act of creation requires, a blood sacrifice.
> For only through the body, through the pulling of flesh, can the
> human soul be transformed. And for images, words, stories to have
> this transformative power, they must arise from the human body –
> flesh and bone – and from the Earth's body – stone, sky, liquid, soil.[92]

For Anzaldúa the body is a body-in-transition. The body becomes a site for transformation. Zita argues that through writing Anzaldúa's "body crosses over to the body of the reader".[93] Anzaldúa herself discusses this offering to the reader in terms of performing a sacrifice: "piercing tongue and earlobes with a cactus needle are my offerings, are my Aztecan blood sacrifices".[94] These sacrifices enable Anzaldúa to perform her agency as subject through her very position as Other. The sacrifice Anzaldúa makes of her body and her identity to the transitional states of the reader perform her identity as Other in a way that seems to duplicate the discourse of self/Other. Yet, this discourse of sacrifice is particularly problematic when it performs the sacrifice of the postcolonial, female body.

Yet, the agency that Anzaldúa enacts through this text makes it impossible to dismiss her work as assimilable to masculinist, imperialist discourse. This agency arises from the extent to which she recognises catharsis as a temporary rite of passage. Of the ritualistic act she states:

> In order to escape the threat of shame or fear, one takes on a
> compulsive, repetitious activity as though to busy oneself, to distract
> oneself, to keep awareness at bay. One fixates on drinking, smoking,
> popping pills, acquiring friend after friend who betrays; repeating,
> repeating, to prevent oneself from "seeing".[95]

It is this emphasis on catharsis and ritual as a temporary process that enables

Anzaldúa to return to her position as subject and to perform her agency as a threat to

such masculinist, imperialist ideologies.

CHAPTER FOUR

Escaping 'The' Body: Ritualistic Sacrifice and Technology

> Psychoanalysis and religion agree in saying : "One must not attack the body", "One must accept oneself". These are primitive, ancestral, anachronistic concepts. We react as if the sky would fall on our heads if we were to tamper with the body.
>
> Orlan[1]

The negotiation of sacrifice in performance, and in the formation of identity, appears to be a defining feature of the enactments that use the body as the focus of the performance. This reinvestigates the relationship between the performer and the spectator in ways that seek to create embodied subjectivities.

Catharsis works by creating a safe and sanitised environment in which people can experience taboo and transgressive pleasures.[2] Ritual throughout the ages has played with the use of catharsis as a means of social manipulation. As Richard Schechner states in *The Future of Ritual*: "The violence of ritual, like that of theatre, is simultaneously present and absent, displayed and deferred. The ritual actions are displayed even as the 'real events' are deferred".[3] In discussing ritual, Schechner reveals the 'redemptive' quality of ritual, arguing, with René Girard, that it is "the 'sacrificial crisis' which is remedied by the mimetic violence of ritual".[4] In relation to this critique, performers, including Orlan in *The Reincarnation of St Orlan*, which began in 1990, and Franko B in performances such as *I'm Not Your Babe*(1997), enact the "sacrificial crisis". This forces the spectator to confront the display of the "real event", which both Orlan and Franko B refuse to defer. Since Peter Brook wrote in "The Holy Theatre", with some sense of despair, that "we now find ourselves rejecting the very notion of a holy stage",[5] there has been a considerable effort by contemporary performance artists to investigate this very concept of theatre as a 'holy' space.

In their essay "Theses on the Disappearing Body in the Hyper-Modern Condition", Arthur and Marilouise Kroker discuss the 'disappearing body' in light of Foucauldian criticism of the discourses of subjectivity:

> For we live under the dark sign of Foucault's prophecy that the bourgeois body is a descent into the empty site of a dissociated ego, a 'volume in disintegration', traced by language, lacerated by ideology, and invaded by the relational circuitry of the field of postmodern power.[6]

They argue that the body is located as the centre of subjectivity, in a way that links their understandings of the postmodern body with the metaphysics of presence:

> Epistemologically, the body is at the center of a grisly and false sense of subjectivity, as knowledge of the body (what Californians like to call 'heightened body consciousness') is made a basic condition of possibility for the operation of postmodern power.[7]

Indeed, they argue that the body is now understood in terms of "the exteriorization of all the body organs as the key telemetry of a system that depends on the outering of the body functions".[8] The Krokers argue that the body is doubly dead. That the 'natural' body died with the social critique of the body, and that the 'discursive' body died "with the disappearance of the body into Bataille's general economy of excess".[9] This seems to tie into the argument that the discursive body writes the actual material physical body out of existence. This over-prescribes the body out of a fear of the body's arguable ephemeral quality.

The work of Foucault on the body is useful when considering readings of ritual and performativity. Rites of passage do indeed possess the power to inscribe the subject into the dominant ideological discourse:

> The more one possesses power or privilege, the more one is marked as an individual, by rituals, written accounts or visual reproductions... all these are procedures of an 'ascending' individualization. In a disciplinary regime, on the other hand, individualization is 'descending': as power becomes more anonymous and more functional, those on whom it is exercised tend to be more strongly individualized.[10]

The re-working of ritual by contemporary performance artists illustrates both a concern around identity within power structures and a focus on the body as it is inscribed into systems of power. As such many contemporary performances explore the body as a site of signification. The spectacle of the body in performance

investigates the relationship between the body and power structures. On this subject Foucault stated in *Discipline and Punish*: "The disappearance of public executions marks therefore the decline of the spectacle; but it also marks a slackening of the hold on the body".[11] Thus, performances that challenge masculinist notions of the body and identity reinvestigate the body-as-sign, and explore the connection between social relations, spectacle, and the body as they are interpellated into identity.

In "Art and Sacrifice" Jindrich Chalupecky argues that the artistic project provides strength for a society which has denied the sacred. Thus, as Chalupecky argues, the artist is removed from society and must place her/himself within the sacred in order to engage with that which is "beyond his knowledge and will".[12] According to Chalupecky, this performs a cathartic release for society: "All the archaic and historical societies considered it necessary to have certain places and certain times where and when a man could liberate himself from the implicit life in order to renew it and return to its origins".[13] According to this model, the artist performs a cathartic function in society as a whole by relieving the populace of its sins against the sacred. This, it seems, renews the vigour with which individuals may return to the 'profane' world. This romantic view of the 'suffering artist' reinforces the transcendence of the unified, masculine self as "[t]he suffering the artist brings upon himself takes a form of separation from society. The artist degrades, humiliates and ridicules himself".[14] Through this suffering the artist does indeed use the experience of catharsis as enacted throughout performance to move to new identity positions; "He faces the difficulties of having to remake and rebuild himself during the process of his work in order to become a new being which has a new relationship with the universe. By becoming a creator of his own work he also becomes a creator of himself".[15] However, this concept of art and society understands sacrifice as a substitution, and it is this understanding which is currently being questioned in performance art, as a means of working through the shift in understandings of subjectivity itself. Chalupecky writes of sacrifice and substitution that "[t]he ultimate act is an act of human sacrifice. It is always a substitutional sacrifice: one man sacrifices himself for the others, an animal is sacrificed for a man".[16] Chalupecky does not recognise, however, that in this model of subjectivity, which is enacted

performatively through this concept of the suffering artist, woman is sacrificed for man. Part of this investigation involves rethinking this project of substitution.

In understanding the use of sacrifice as it is enacted through the body of the artist Chalupecky recognises a sacrifice of the body:

> He [the artist] does not want to create a new work of art, but a new body. It should no longer be a deserted and lonely body, but rather one that is receptive to the world and to other people – a body communicating and being communicated to, a body whose ownership has been given up, sacrificed.[17]

There is a contradiction, here, in the need for the artist to separate himself from the world in order to be receptive to that world. In becoming receptive to the world he loses control over his own body as he sacrifices himself to the sacrificial needs of the population at large. His body becomes public property. Feminist performers have been dealing with this control over the female body as territory for some time.

Sacrificing the Dangerous Body

The contemporary investigation into ritual, sacrifice, and the body does not always endeavour to insert into performance the "non-normative bodies" referred to by Amelia Jones.[18] The abreaction plays (*Abreaktionsspiel*) of Hermann Nitsch seek the cathartic release of aggressive impulses through art. His *Theatre of Orgies and Mysteries* pursues purification through the interpretation of ancient myth and ritual, particularly those of Dionysus and Christ. These enactments include the slaughter of animals, notably the sacrificed lamb of God, in an attempt to achieve redemption through the release of the repression of aggressive and libidinal desires, which Nitsch, disturbingly and unquestioningly, sees as springing from the same motivating force.[19] As Nitsch has stated, the purpose of his work is to create "the self-realisation of the spectator".[20]

> The intellectual and conscious control of our lower life energies is pushed aside in order to attain an insight into our subconscious, unbridled, chaotic libido. A short contact with these vital forces leads to their liberation. They are pushed to extreme satisfaction, ecstasy, joyful cruelty, sadomasochistic reactions, excess… The result is

psychic cleansing (catharsis). An effect is produced that hits the spectators and their psyche.[21]

However, this work leaves the female spectator questioning whose subjectivity is 'purified' in these enactments, and whose, exactly, is sacrificed.

In a review of Hermann Nitsch's *Six-Day-Play,* enacted at Prinzendorf Castle in Austria from August 3 to August 9 1998, Fenella Crichton finds "repugnant" Nitsch's use of animals and women:

> Although probably about a third of the actors were women they were given roles which were especially subservient and humiliating. I saw one woman with her legs held apart by ropes and another with her arms pulled out on struts facing a naked man on a cross, so that her face was close to his genitals.[22]

Crichton is not alone in finding the performances of Nitsch problematic in this way. Amelia Jones documents the enactment of the "horrifying" *Mariae Empfängnis* which took place in Munich in 1969, arguing that his work enacts a "misogyny that is structurally linked to the heroization of the penis/phallus".[23] According to photographic documentation during the action *Mariae Empfängnis*:

> a woman's body is shown ripped open at the crotch, internal organs visible; a large shaft penetrates her vaginal canal, now a muscle stripped of its bodily surroundings.[24]

The dynamic of sacrifice is 'marked'ly different from that in the works of other performance artists who seek to reinvestigate the relationship between contemporary society, ritual and catharsis, seen, for example, in the work of Carolee Schneeman, Franko B, and Orlan. Nitsch's work actually reinvests in the central subject position as a site of masculine power. The sacrifice which Nitsch offers is not that of himself to the 'self-realisation' of the spectator, but the sacrifice of other marginalised groups to the ritualistic elements that maintain the masculine as the ideological dominant. Ron Athey is one artist who has been working with ritual in an attempt to renegotiate the sacrifice of the artist and the body. Contrary to Nitsch, Athey is clearly exploring the use of ritual in cathartic practice in order to question societal development from the perspective of the sacrificed body. His work investigates primitive and tribal ritual as a means of encoding, displaying, perpetuating, and reifying social beliefs and practices in society. As a HIV+, gay man, who has also been a heroin addict,
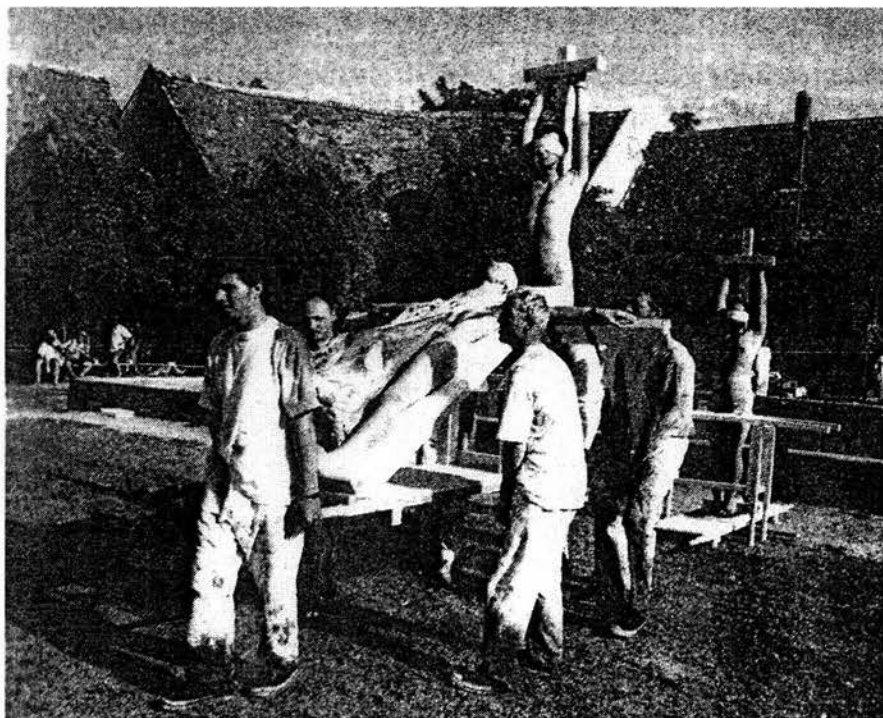
Six-Day-Play, Herman Nitsch, 1998, as it appears in Fenella Crichton,
"Blood and Soil", *Art Monthly*

Athey's work directly challenges the spectator with the notion of the sacrifice of his
specific, sexed, pierced, and infected body. Clearly, Athey's work reveals a desire to
use the cathartic experience of ritual to affect changes in identity. His performances
enable him to deal with his HIV+ status. As such, his work provides catharsis,
through ritual, for his development of a dynamic and positive identity.

Athey's performance in Minneapolis of *Excerpts from Four Scenes in a
Harsh Life* in 1994, uses instruments of surgical procedure together with instruments
associated with the spread of HIV to challenge perceptions around AIDS. During the
performance, Athey carved a symbol onto the body of Darryl Carlton using a surgical
scalpel. Using hypodermic needles Athey also pierced his own arm. Since the
paranoia and scapegoating of people living with AIDS, both instruments have
become closely associated with the fear around the spread of HIV. Athey created
images in blood by pressing paper towels onto the carved patterns on Carlton's back.
These towels were then hung over the audience, a part of the performance that
instigated the mobilisation of people's panic about and judgements of HIV. Carlton's

HIV status was not known to the audience at the time of the performance.[25] However, critics of the work began to express their paranoia, stating that: "Potentially, if a blood-soaked towel had come in contact with an open cut, for example, there could be exposure to the HIV virus".[26] When performing *Four Scenes in a Harsh Life* in New York after this incident the spectators had to sign a written agreement. As Kathy O'Dell documents:

> Athey's decision to hang the towels seemed to be an attempt to 'negotiate' with the audience over just how much they knew about HIV and its transmission. Had knowledge been adequate, the bloodied towels overhead would have served as a reminder of basic facts about HIV and would not have induced fear. Because some audience members failed the negotiation test in Minneapolis, when the performance came to New York this process of negotiation was made more obvious through a type of written contract.[27]

Athey's performance confronts the spectators with their fear of contamination from one person's interior to the other. Indeed, it seems as if the fear of transmission was in fact transmitted more easily than the disease itself.

Extreme Exposure: The Performance Art of Orlan

Confronting the spectators with the processes of ideology inscripted onto the body of the performer is similarly a central focus in the work of Orlan. The French performance artist Orlan uses surgical procedures as the medium of her art. Her work with surgery began when she became ill and needed to be operated on. She is filmed undergoing surgery to transform her image into a computer generated self-portrait. Within the series of operations *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan*, which began in 1990, she created a self-portrait, using computer technology, of her image morphed with representations of mythologised women; the Mona Lisa, Diana, Venus, Europa and Psyche[28]. The operations are disturbing, as the spectator is confronted with the details of each performance. The incisions into the skin are foregrounded, and the spectator's focus is directed to the opening of the skin as the insides are revealed. The operations enact the process of alterity; the identity 'Saint Orlan' was created by Orlan from her previous performances critiquing various religious female images.

Some of the ways in which her work can be read are through explorations into identity, and through the concepts of catharsis and ritual. Her interrogation into embodied subjectivity critiques the notion of the body as a vessel for a transcendental self. By making her body into a text she explores the extent to which subjectivity may be seen to be bound by the body. This can be seen to be important for feminist discourses in at least two ways. Firstly, in opening her body for inspection she violently exposes the ground of integrity on which humanist notions of selfhood are founded. This notion of self as agency depends upon a bounded identity where the self ends at the skin. This is in direct conflict with recent feminist thought on subjectivity as relational and dynamic. Because of the focus on the process within Orlan's work, she can be seen to enact a subjectivity which is constantly in flux. Secondly, her work questions a transcendental and rational concept of selfhood by insisting on a materialist understanding of subjectivity as the means by which we become socio-historic beings.

The historicity of ideology contained in ritual inscribes the body-in-performance into signification. As such, using the body to perform ritual does not in itself create work that refuses the sacrifice inherent in cathartic release. Despite the connection through a contemporary negotiation of ritual, Orlan's work can be seen to differ ideologically from the investment in traditional rites reinforced by Viennese Aktionist Hermann Nitsch. For Nitsch, the body becomes the means through which the subject can escape societal repression, and consequently functions as unproblematic and 'natural'. In the work of Orlan, the female body becomes a site of political enactment. Orlan seeks to empower female agency through questioning the historicity of masculinist ideology contained within many ritualistic acts. Her treatment of iconographical images uses parodic masquerade to expose such patriarchal performatives, and through this her work creates a performance space which enacts feminist subjectivities.

Through these performances Orlan resists the identity of woman as impermeable. If woman is supposed to be accessible to masculine discourse, to only open her body for the purpose of nurturing, Orlan's work explodes this paradigm. During the interventions her body becomes multi-permeable. Furthermore, not only

does her work break down the bound entity of her body through insisting upon its status as permeable, but her work takes this permeability further by removing pieces of her body and placing them in jars on display in galleries.

As such, Orlan makes a text of her body. In so doing, she exposes the textual nature of the body itself. As Alluquere Roseanne Stone writes in "Speaking of the Medium", Orlan's work challenges the "conservation of identity", what Stone sees as a human "atavistic need to stabilise our personal identification of self".[29] However, in focusing on the body Orlan seeks to destabilise this identification:

> By repeatedly attacking the link between her body shape and her self-identity, Orlan threatens the last remaining place in which the sovereign self may take refuge.[30]

The discourse surrounding the body and identity politics insists on a bounded notion of existence through which the subject is placed within the world. Therefore, the body is the means by which we become socio-historical beings. Rather than seeking to escape the body through technology, the ultimate dream of a transcendental rationalising self, she uses technology to intervene in the construction of identity, and to violently expose the part that the body-as-text plays in the formation of identity. The fact that her appearance is always changing is part of this process. Identity is never fixed, but constantly responds and changes according to the discourses in which it is involved. As Stone writes:

> The dislocation and revulsion at watching Orlan's operations is a reflection of the much deeper and more powerful revulsion of finding our own identities annihilated.[31]

Whilst the recording of the intervention fixes the performance, the work is always in progress, always subject to change, and the subject who changes is exposed through the body of Orlan herself. Certainly, this disturbance of fixed, stable and bound identities provides one explanation for the disturbance experienced by the spectator. As with the performance issues raised within Happenings, Orlan's work "is not content merely with interpreting life; it takes part in its development within reality". The relationship demanded between the art 'object' and the spectator is radically altered. Her work does, indeed, "threaten their defense mechanisms", but rather than suggesting "a deep link ... between real and imaginary"[32] it has taken this supposition on which the tolerance of art by society rests, and literally enacted this

The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan, 1990, as it appears in Duncan
McCorquodale ed. *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...*

dialectic. Orlan's work precisely places the notion of the self within the body, and
through her use of spectacle and the grotesque she forces the viewer to confront
notions of the self and the body.

By sacrificing the performer in this way the performer creates a space within
society in which to experience taboo emotions and thoughts. However, Orlan goes
beyond this binary opposition between the subject and object. Positioning herself as
an object she simultaneously claims for herself the position of subject. This links her
work to the history of Happenings, which, according to Jean-Jacques Lebel, in "On
the Necessity of Violation", necessitates:

> Going beyond the aberrant subject-object relationship (looker/looked-
> at, exploiter/exploited, spectator/actor, colonialist/colonized, mad-
> doctor/madman, legalism/illegalism, etc.) which has until now
> dominated and conditioned modern art.[33]

As Michael Kirby writes in his introduction to *Happenings*, many such performances reject the traditional convention of theatre, described by Kirby as an 'information structure'. Contemporary performance art has much in common with this 'non-matrixed'[34] performance of Happenings. Orlan's art works in a similar way. Whilst relying heavily on matrixed performance it simultaneously challenges the spectator's conventional tools of interpretation by negotiating the concept of the matrix itself. Orlan's work indeed shifts stable roles. *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* disturbs the theatrical code of the 'suffering artist',[35] and in so doing refuses the catharsis negotiated by Antonin Artaud, and discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis, "The Cathartic Subject".

In the Theatre of Cruelty Artaud sought to challenge the conditioning of rational understandings, in a way which has proved influential on many aspects of performance and art. His ideas seek to bypass the mind and to reach what he terms as more physical understandings of the world, which the mind with its interpellation in received philosophies serves to block:

> One cannot separate body and mind, nor the senses from the intellect, particularly in a field where the unendingly repeated jading of our organs calls for sudden shocks to revive our understanding.[36]

Whilst the ideas behind this work seem to tie into understandings of the relationship between the natural and the cultural, suggesting a natural essence of humanity which is disturbed by cultural conditioning, his work is useful in its critique of 'natural' rationality. Orlan's work aims to operate in a similar way. As she explains in her presentation speech:

> Few images cause us to close our eyes:
> Death, suffering, the opening of the body, certain aspects of pornography (for certain people), or for others, birth.
> Here the eyes become black holes into which the image is absorbed willingly or by force. These images plunge in and strike directly where it hurts, without passing through the habitual filters, as if the eyes no longer had any connection with the brain.[37]

Through its ritual element the performative act constitutes subjectivity through the historicity of convention, something Austin describes as "the 'historic' present".[38] As we have discussed in Chapter One, in order to recognise that an act has been committed, the performative needs a presumed spectator. This need for a

witness is important to feminism because of the connotations of the Other, usually constructed as an empty space onto which identities are projected. The traditional barrier between subject and object, performer and witness, is broken down in Orlan's performances as she refuses to provide a cathartic release for the spectator. Thus, her work challenges the cathartic aspect of Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty:

> Practising cruelty involves a higher determination to which the executioner-tormentor is also subject and which he must be resolved to endure when the time comes.[39]

Making herself into the object, Orlan's work demands that the spectator recognise the role of objectivity, and the literal enactment of subject/object positions. Sarah Wilson feels the pain of Orlan's transformation: "[a]s spectators we witness her virtual martyrology, we know that her operations on flesh and spirit are both real and metonymic – an emblem for so much pain".[40] Orlan's body-object seeks to acknowledge the status of her body within signification.

As Elin Diamond interestingly observes in her essay "The Shudder of Catharsis in Twentieth Century Performance", "catharsis involves a disturbing oscillation between seeing and feeling".[41] She goes on to discuss the extent to which Aristotelian catharsis can be seen as an attempt to move closer to a spiritual self through the expulsion of bodily concerns. Twentieth century performance plays with this understanding of catharsis by insisting on bodily interpretations of performance and representation. A bodily reaction to the presence of the Other implies a recognition of the Other within the self. Orlan constantly challenges the perception of sacrifice, by refusing to allow the spectator any sense of his/her own cathartic release. Sarah Wilson has argued this refusal of catharsis in Orlan's work:

> We are witnesses at a tragedy which we are forced to experience empathetically (transexually for the male viewer), as an aggression on ourselves. Catharsis – even as challenged in Artaud's *Theatre of Cruelty* – is rigorously denied.[42]

Due to Orlan resisting catharsis she systematically refuses any desire to see her sacrificed as female body-object.

The emphasis in Orlan's work is on the extent to which women are encouraged to sacrifice themselves in order to be valued.[43] Orlan states:

> Religion has always hated the body, it has hated women... It has tried
> to kill the body; to deny its ability to experience pleasure, sexually or
> otherwise. According to religion we must abstain, and through pain
> achieve redemption or purification".[44]

Thus it may not provide the spectator with a cathartic release. As Homi K. Bhabha
has written in an essay on victim art, "Dance This Diss Around", the objection to art
which exposes "suffering, victimage, hurt, and historical or personal trauma"[45] only
exists when such art refuses to purify such pain. Questioning such sacrifice "Orlan's
abject body puts in crisis the unitary subject position of the spectator with the specter
of its own dissolution".[46] Part of this process is the evolving and changing position
of Orlan as subject, which she is careful to emphasise in each performance. Sarah
Wilson stresses the extent to which Orlan's project plays with the traditional image
of abject woman:

> Those ['monstrous-feminine'] film heroines, however, ultimately
> place women as abject – her abjection, not her power is symbolised
> by her position as victim, as bleeding wound, as blood, "the fantastic
> semantic crossroads" (Kristeva) to which Orlan constantly returns,
> bent on corroboration and revenge.[47]

Carey Lovelace argues for the cathartic experience for the spectator in Orlan's
performance: "Behind its campy insouciance there is a shamanistic quest, a reference
to the metaphysical healing potential of performance".[48] In describing her work
Orlan states that she is "re-creating the self through deliberate acts of alienation".[49]

The refusal to provide catharsis for the spectator, and through this the
enactment of processes of control, performs a feminist tract within Orlan's
interventions. This strategy forces the female spectator to recognise the workings of
ideology in the inscription of gender through ritual. Yet, at the same time, it is also
one of the most problematic aspects of her work, as in order to do this she must
submit to the very ideology which she wishes to question.

Given the historicity of catharsis and sacrifice so far discussed, Orlan denies
catharsis to the spectator. Her enactment of metaphor performs a critique of the mark
of femininity through ritual, and, simultaneously, can be seen to place her work
within the constraints of the dominant ideology. The extremity of the action
positions the spectator as rational to her 'madness', as it confronts the spectators
with the violence of their own reaction. The violence of Orlan's actions, not against
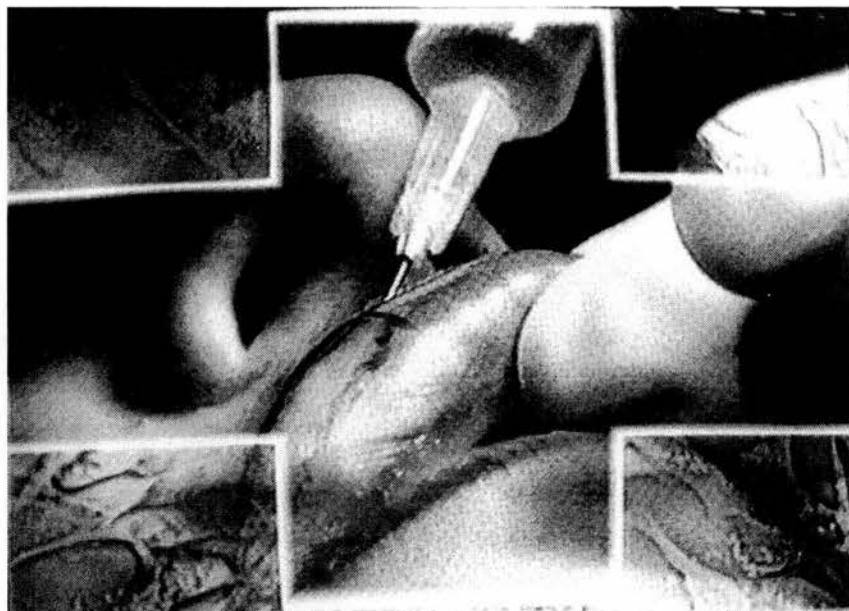
The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan, 1990, as it appears in Duncan
McCorquodale ed. *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...*

her own body, but against the sensibilities of the audience, forces them to take a
position in relation to her work. In presenting the unpresentable, the spectator sees
Orlan's body displayed in what is usually a vulnerable position for women. The
display of parts of her body in extreme states of exposure certainly creates images
that have the appearance of violation. Orlan literally turns herself into an object for
consumption – both as the female body consumed by masculine culture, and as the
body as art object. Presenting the inside of her body in her operations, Orlan reveals
the threat of the 'hysterical' body. This fluid, female body exhibits masculinist fears
of the uncontainable body, and the constant fear of the refusal to remain bound.

As Orlan is injected with local anaesthetic, which she uses for the facial
operations, and the skin is peeled back from her face, the bleeding interiority of her
head is revealed. Like all violence, the shock is reverberated through the body and is
felt as a violation of subjective boundaries. Indeed, as Orlan herself states in her
conference presentation, "These images plunge in and strike directly where it
hurts".[50]   The manner in which this extreme exposure is recorded and presented is a

powerful tool in the denial of catharsis as the focus remains on the intervention, providing the spectator with no resolution or escape. When the spectator is female this symbolic, enacted violation may force an understanding of the ideological control over women's bodies through a close connection between female performer and female spectator. The body remains a site of social control of women, and Orlan's enacted sacrifice represents the violation of women's control over their own bodies. As we can see, the introduction of gender into the debate around subjectivity and the body enacts the violations of feminist agency. In denying the spectator any release, Orlan resists performing the redemption of sacrifice. The spectator is never allowed the privilege of purifying the enactment of feminine inscription. This works on one level as a feminist consciousness-raising session in a represented and enacted form because of the unrestrained detail inherent in the performance. This extremity can seem inexplicable in terms of the dominant masculinist ideology, and is thus categorised as madness in regard to the discourse of the 'hysterical' body.

Technological Projections: The Body as "Meat"

The contemporary concern with technology as we move into a new technologically dominant age has repercussions for the body, both as the body in the formation of identity and the body-in-performance. Recent analyses of technology place it in a binary oppositional relationship with the body; either in maintenance of that opposition or in an attempt to blur the boundaries of it. Explorations of technology often attempt to define the body within masculinist perameters. It is this masculinist notion of the body which much feminist performance and writing aims to critique.

One of the dangers with the uses made of technology is that it reinvests in and reinforces the logic of the dominant discursive practices of the self as a bound space. Just as pain has been used by performance artists to achieve a true and transcendental sense of selfhood with clear boundary divisions from the material world, technology is also being used to reinvest in this nostalgia for the bound and integral self. Technologies of 'cyberspace' as a means of leaving behind the body to

experience the information network of 'pure mind', and even to experience the pseudo-body as more intensely biological than the actual body, maintain a division between the body and technology. The power of biotechnologies, as discussed in the feminist writings of biopolitician Donna Haraway, reveal that technology again invests in the maintenance of the masculine as dominant; exemplified in the exteriorisation of reproductive technologies.

This ambivalence towards the biological body could be interpreted as a blurring of the boundaries of nature/culture, and interior/exterior, and could be seen politically as subversion from within. Donna Haraway in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women*, argues for ambivalence itself as a standpoint for biopolitics:

> From one perspective, a cyborg world is about the final imposition of a grid of control on the planet… From another perspective, a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints. The political struggle is to see from both perspectives at once.[51]

Seeing the body as a site where markings on the flesh inscript the body into ideology enables the performative aspect of the body in discourse. In this way the biological is "hacking the future", as Arthur and Marilouise Kroker have stated in *Spasm*: "[c]rash aesthetics is about the recuperation of the body, morally rearmed, technologically fit for riding the envelope of high-tech into the crash zone".[52] The human body has become a site for investigating the relationship between technology and biology.

Arthur and Marilouise Kroker have written about the exteriorisation of the mind in a technological society, arguing that "the valorization of intelligence is a certain indication that we are living the great paradigm shift prefigured by the exteriorization of mind as the dynamic momentum of technological society".[53] This exteriorisation of the mind through technology bears many similarities with some uses of pain in attempting to exteriorise the experience of identity from the bounds of the body itself. Given that identity is linked to the rationality of the mind, the technological impulse of the communication of intelligence and information, as the Krokers and other postmodern critics inform us, can be seen to expand the trajectory of subjectivity as rational knowledge.

This use of technology to escape from the biological body and the natural is seen in the use of technology in contemporary literature and performance art, as we shall see. This concern around escaping the confines of the body is discussed by opposers of technology, 'technosceptics', and advocates of technology, 'technotopians', alike in the creation of Biosphere 2. In an attempt to develop ecosystems to promote distanced space travel, Space Biosphere Ventures attempted to create an enclosed vivisystem spanning three acres, generating enough life to sustain eight humans. This closed system contains its own ecological flow generated by a variety of different species and environments, and is supported by technology. Seeming to blur the boundaries between the opposition of the body and technology, this system actually seeks to reinvest in the transcendental self as it seeks to achieve transcendence and maintain control of the material, biological space. The very fact that the vivisystem was an enclosed space named Biosphere 2, is indicative of its relationship to the controlled and mapped out space of Biosphere 1 – Earth – and illustrates the desire to replicate and control these environments. Kevin Kelly, in *Out Of Control,* expresses an optimism for the biosphere which Arthur Kroker does not share. Kelly describes it "[a]s we improve our machines they will become more organic, more biological, more like life, because life is the best technology for living".[54] However, Kroker sees this as an attempt to escape the confines of biology and nature in an attempt to use technology for the ultimate escape: "That's the escape theme that pervades the promotional language of the Biospherians: escaping from earth, escaping from the body, escaping from America".[55]

Given this continuation of masculinist desires to control the territory of the biological body, by maintaining a transcendent self, there is a danger in blindly accepting the reconfiguration of the body through technology. The work of Stelarc is a prime example of this need for careful consideration of the implications of technology. Women must question the ramifications of a world where, as Stelarc says, "what results is a situation in which I am no longer, in a sense, the possessor or the owner of my own body".[56] The idea that someone else may be able to move or use women's bodies without consent is not a positive one within patriarchy. Donna Haraway's interpretation of this connectivity with others in *Simians Cyborgs and*

Women, brings together the relational self of much recent feminist thought on identity formation with the connectivity between women's bodies and other bodies. Haraway asks, "Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?".[57] Clearly this concern with the boundaries of the body is important in feminist understandings of agency.

Stelarc's performances are concerned with investigating the boundaries of the body in a way that extends the subject outside of their skin, and connects to Haraway's work on cyborg identities. Stelarc has also extended this concept of body boundaries. His most recent work involves an exploration into the discourse around the interior of the body. As such he begins to explore the maintenance of solid body boundaries in a way that questions the creation of the private, interior masculinist self. Stelarc's work incorporates surveillance systems into his investigation of technology. Stelarc sees his work in terms of negotiating a space for the body in contemporary focuses on technology. If, however, as we have explored in the preceding chapters, identity is dependent on material understandings of existence, so Stelarc's focus on the body simultaneously emphasises his experiences of identity alterity. His interest in surveillance systems provides an interesting understanding of the body in the technological age. He has developed an interest in researching biological microchips which could be swallowed in order to provide observation of the internal workings of the body. Rather than bringing the inside of the body outside, as we see with the work of Orlan, he is interested in bringing the outside world into the internal space of the biological body. His idea is for technology to eventually provide us with surveillance systems which live in the blood and detect chemical changes in the body, so that illnesses such as cancer could be detected before the internal growth is manifested externally, which is often too late for sufferers. This would initially be done technologically through biological microchip technology, as technological advances need to be made before this surveillance system would be possible. This reveals an interesting take on Foucault's understanding of surveillance systems internalised in subjectivity. Literal surveillance of the body would lead from the surveillance of the subject.
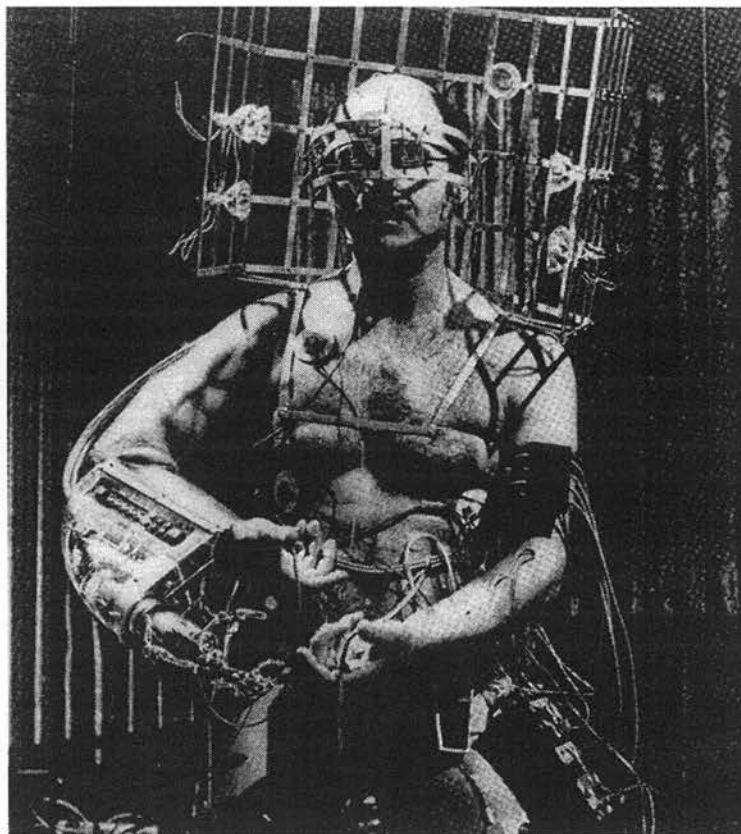
Stelarc, as he appears in Jim McClellan, "Body Builder", *The Observer*

Through the use of technology, Stelarc's work involves not only internal body technology, but also involves the operation of the body externally from the body itself. In "Split Body: Voltage In/Voltage Out", electrodes were placed on the muscles of Stelarc's limbs, and these electrodes were stimulated by external forces over the internet to move Stelarc's body through external control. Stelarc thus loses all control of his own body. In using the internet Stelarc may position himself in Australia whilst his body is manipulated from Britain. Stelarc states:

> If we were interactively connected, I could touch my body in Melbourne, you touch your body in London and that generates a feedback loop so I'm feeling my touch through your body feeding back from London to Melbourne....[58]

Stelarc's work on the body and technology investigates what he terms as a "multiplicity of agency",[59] as the body becomes split through the use of electrodes

which enable others to operate his body by bypassing his control. His work enables virtual technology to function in 'real' space and time. However, this seems to me to be problematic. Within the cartesian model of the head split from the body, the body becomes absent; through over reliance on the transcendence of rationality and mind, and through the investment in discursive practices which dematerialise the body. Stelarc argues that his use of technology within the site of the material, functioning body subverts the idea of the body as an individual, as the self has to be reconfigured, Stelarc argues, to allow surveillance systems inside the body itself. However, the body remains a container for technology in this model, even though it moves into a symbiotic relationship.

Thus, humanist understandings of subjectivity as contained, unified and whole are questioned. The body is no longer seen as a contained space in which boundaries of identity are held intact through a notion of physical integrity. This perceived physical integrity has been used as a model for identity which is particularly humanist in outcome and understanding. The idea of a subjectivity which is bound in this model is felt to mirror a 'natural' state of bound physicality. The work of Stelarc, as well as the work of Orlan, can be seen to be concerned with investigating bound identity. This work not only investigates the bound identity, but, as in the work of Orlan, also creates portrayal of ideology at work. It is this literal enactment of ideologies around the maintenance of a bound identity, together with an autonomous subjectivity which is interesting in Stelarc's work. As Stelarc himself states:

> This is intriguing because historically, metaphysically and personally
> we like to think we function as free agents. But here, what results is a
> situation in which I am no longer, in a sense, the possessor or owner
> of my own body.[60]

This important refusal to invest in a bound self in the face of changing and dynamic notions of subjectivity pave the way for an exploration into understandings of the politics behind a more open and integrated and relational account of subjectivity. But this is not to say that the use of such technologies is celebrated by such performers at the expense of a certain degree of scepticism when facing new technologies. It is clear that such technology could be used against the will of those involved, and it is

for this reason that we should investigate such revisioning of identity politics as figured in contemporary performance art.

Stelarc also investigates the 'obsolescence' of the biological body in relation to ever rapid modes of technological advancement. On the obsolete body, he states:

> The body's survival parameters are very slim and I feel the body is obsolete in both form and function. It will not be capable of performing in these new technological terrains, these new information environments, these new off-the-planet spaces it's going to find itself propelled into.[61]

His work is peculiarly paradoxical in relation to the human body. His basic premise is that the biological body is obsolete and is restricted by limitations that technological advances may help the body to surpass. This has often been termed the 'post-human' body by critics. This understanding of his work is problematic, as it often misses the point. Whilst there is no doubt that Stelarc's work raises issues for feminists around the body, *Voltage In/Voltage Out* is premised on developing cultural and material existence through a greater understanding of the biological limitations of the body. The cybercultural work of Stelarc on the relationship between the biological body and technology has much in common with the work of Pat Cadigan. Cadigan also uses technology to explore the connection between the body and identity. Her work seeks to create a feminist identity through examining ownership of the female body.

Pat Cadigan's Feminist Body

Cyberpunk, a sub-genre of science fiction, investigates identity construction and the construction of boundaries around the body. As a genre, cyberpunk deals explicitly with the relationship of the human body to technology. To date, it is an almost exclusively masculine genre, and amongst the mainstream cyberpunk writers there is only one female novelist, Pat Cadigan. Many of cyberpunk's conceptions of the body extend to the wider frame of cyberculture, so called because of a desire to explore the ramifications of technology and to investigate the limitations of the biological human body. One of cyberculture's main contentions is that we are now living in a 'post-

human' age, which is characterised by the obsolescence of the human body as pure biological organism. Indeed, it is argued that the human body is so limited that it can no longer function efficiently without the intervention of technological advances. The human body, proponents of cyberculture argue, is obsolete.

Cyberpunk deals exclusively with the relationship between technology and the biological, material body. Within cyberpunk the obsolescence of the human body, that is explored in the work of Stelarc, reveals an often romantic idea of technology as the means by which society will overcome these perceived 'limitations' of the biological realm. Reinvesting in the Cartesian oppositional duality between mind and body, the body is then reconfigured as 'meat'; a dead space of pure biology without mind. Indeed, as John Perry Barlow, an advocate of technology states: "[n]othing could be more disembodied than cyberspace. It's like having your everything amputated".[62] This is illustrated in *Neuromancer* by William Gibson, which is widely acknowledged as the definitive and original cyberpunk novel. In *Neuromancer*, the naming of the protagonist, Case, indicates the extent to which his body is a mere case in which his mind exists; the body is literally figured here as *en(case)ing* Case's mind. As protagonists are often isolated, masculine anti-heroes whose rejection of the biological in favour of the technological indicates a desire to invest in a transcendental self, so the naming of Case illustrates another theme in cyberpunk that extends this investment in the binary opposition between mind and body. As Mark Dery argues, in *Escape Velocity*, the naming of Case symbolises "[a] hard case out of a noir novel, a head case banged around by rough living".[63]

Pat Cadigan's investigation into the body, identity, and technology focuses on issues of gender, and critiques the masculinist, romantic constructions of technology generated by many male cyberpunk authors. Within Cadigan's writing there are three recurring themes that she investigates as a way of illustrating the implications of gendered identity and technology. Firstly, the biological body within her work is presented as a fragile body, and is often revealed as a body that is vulnerable and under threat. Secondly, her work continues to demand the material, lived space of the body, even as it questions how this lived experience might be explored. In fact it is

through the genre of cyberpunk, and through the ability to explore the fragility of the body, that she is able to question the status of the body as gendered and to demand an investment in the materiality of existence. Finally, her work investigates a shamanistic relationship to identity and technology. In this investigation Cadigan critiques the singular investment in technology made by much masculine cyberpunk writing, and questions the sacrifice of the body to the healing potential of technology as advocated by many writers and artists within cyberculture.

In her short story, "Rock On", Cadigan established her technological concept of synners, which she later developed in the novel *Synners*. Synners are human synthesisers who are fitted with sockets in their heads in order that they may transmit synthesised music and videos directly from their minds to the minds of the music groups, as well as to a computer. They do this so that the audience may plug into the computer and experience these virtual reality images directly from the mind of the synner. In "Rock On", the synner Gina has been kidnapped by the music group *Misbegotten* in order that they can force her to synthesise their music for them. For Cadigan, cyberpunk reveals a world in which the female is under threat. In a similar manner to that of Margaret Atwood in *The Handmaid's Tale*, where Atwood develops a trajectory of female oppression in late twentieth century society through to the dystopian society of Gilead set in the future,[64] Cadigan's writing exposes the masculinist ideologies of twentieth century Western societies. Within "Rock On" she focuses on ownership of the body by using the same technology that she later uses in *Synners* to question masculinist desires for the transcendence of the body. Whilst ownership of the body is being radically dispersed by theorists and artists, such as Stelarc, Cadigan positions this scenario clearly within a feminist reading of ownership of the female body. Within "Rock On", *the* body in all its abstract discursive distancing of bodies as lived space becomes the *female* body, and furthermore becomes *this specific female* body. Thus the body here is clearly signified as gendered and material. Not only do *Misbegotten* take the control of Gina's body away from her, it is done in such a way as to reveal the extent to which they take as implicit their power to do so. In order to query women's lack of control

over their own bodies Cadigan uses the technology she has envisaged as a metaphor for rape.

In his book, *Escape Velocity*, Mark Dery argues that "Rock On" is "a reexamination of the meaning of rock 'n' roll and the values of the sixties counterculture in the MTV eighties".[65] Whilst this is undoubtedly true, such an analysis misses the intricate analysis to which Cadigan subjects this trope of music synthesisers in order to establish a feminist reading of bodies. Dery goes on to observe a "mystical humanism" in Cadigan's work which he reads persuasively as a demand for the real. Referencing Larry McCaffery's introduction to *Storming the Reality Studio*, Dery states:

> Despite McCaffery's thesis that science fiction, specifically cyberpunk, is the preeminent literature of postmodern culture, in which 'reproduced and simulated realities… have begun subtly to actually *displace* the 'real', rendering it superfluous," Cadigan is an unregenerate romantic: She accepts no substitutes (Muzak, rock video, synthesizers) for the inviolate, irreducible real to which all referents supposedly point.[66]

"Rock On" does indeed present, as Dery observes, "a series of dualisms, counterpoising the authentic with the synthetic",[67] and Cadigan does demand an investment in the real, but she does this is in order to present a feminist re-reading of the theme of technology addressed in the genre of cyberpunk. Thus it is not possible to argue that Cadigan invests in a "mystical humanism", since her use of technology is more concerned with the continued control of women through their bodies, than with establishing a universal, human condition.

The tone of the short story, as indeed with all of Cadigan's writing, is aggressive, and uses a first person narrative in order to present the events from the perspective of the kidnapped woman:

> "Leave me alone. I just want to go and sin no more, see? Play with yourselves, I'm not helping." I grabbed the counter with both hands and held on. So what were they going to do, pop me one and carry me off?
> As a matter of fact, they did.[68]

The manner in which Cadigan presents the forced synthesising as physical rape reveals the way in which sexuality is used as a means of controlling women's bodies through ideology. The woman never has possession of her body taken for granted

within this masculinist ideology, and someone who 'sins' for a living does not have immediate right of ownership when she is forced to 'sin' against her will:

> *Are you experienced?... Well, I am.*
> (Well, *I* am.)
> Five against one and I couldn't push them away. Only, can you call it rape when you know you're going to like it? Well, if I couldn't get away then I'd give them the ride of their lives.[69]

The extent to which this troubling narrative reveals the lack of ownership over her body is emphasised in the extent to which the sacrifice of Gina to the technology enables the masculinist ideology to invest in its power as dominant:

> "No more," I was saying, and he was saying, "But you don't know anything else, you shitting? ... Your contract goes another two and I get the option, I always get the option. And you love it, Gina, you know that, you're no good without it."
> And then it was flashback time and I was in the pod with all my sockets plugged, rocking Man-O-War through the wires, giving him the meat and bone that made him Man-O-War".[70]

Cadigan presents the scene with a very strong sense of embodiment, portrayed in the presentation of the physical pain that Gina suffers:

> "Eat your soup. They want to go again shortly."
> "No." I touched my lower lip, thickened to sausage size. "I won't sin for Man-O-War and I won't sin for you. You want to pop me one again, go to. Shake a socket loose, give me aphasia.".[71]

The rape of Gina, as Cadigan notes, results in her silencing. Within a world in which women are controlled and judged according to their bodies, rape, all too often, results in an ideological aphasia.

The shamanistic aspect of Cadigan's portrayal of the synner and technology that Dery observes in her writing is not as he argues about an "ability to access 'some primal dream spot'",[72] but rather attempts to portray the sacrifice of the shaman, the artist, and the woman to ensure the dominance of the masculinist rational ideology.

Synners takes the synthesising head socket technology envisaged in "Rock On", but sets the novel before "Rock On" at the time of the invention of this technology. In *Synners* Cadigan creates a post-earthquake world in which technology has been used to resolve all of human problems; from implants for mental illness to virtual reality for the socially inept, and an artificial intelligence called Art created from computer viruses that evolved through minor net crashes. Sam, a female expert

computer hacker, connects to the net directly through nanotechnology which enables her to use her body as an alternative power source, ensuring that her system never crashes. Gina works for the company that is trying to market the head sockets. Gabe, who works for the same company, is Sam's father and spends most of his time in virtual reality. Visual Mark is a human synthesiser, who creates the virtual experience of music that the company market.

In *Synners* Cadigan chooses a male human synthesiser, and this allows her to explore feminist investigations into the body from a different perspective. Of the four central characters, the two male and two female characters portray very different attitudes to the human body. Gabe and Visual Mark experience technology as a way to escape from a biological body that they experience as pure 'meat', and in this way these male characters represent masculinist ideologies that place emphasis on the expanding capacities of the mind. Sam and Gina, however, have the capacity to merge their experiences of technology with their experiences of their specifically identified and material bodies. It is this capacity for combining technology and nature, and mind and body, that enables Cadigan to present a feminist space between opposing and hierarchised dualisms, and to reveal this as the means by which both Sam and Gina are able to empower themselves within the text.

Cadigan's interest in technology is a trope through which to engage with ideas around feminist identities and masculinist ideologies. As such, within her work the experience of technology is grounded within the biological realm of experience. Within "Rock On" and *Synners* the characters rarely enter technology, instead technology penetrates the boundaries of the biological body. As such the body is established as a material basis for identity and agency. Given this grounding of identity as material, a key concern of *Synners* and "Rock On" is feminist agency. Thus a central focus within *Synners* is the extent to which the biologically specific understanding of identities will "change for the machines".[73] Indeed, a central worry for Cadigan is that any loss of materiality, or a focus on transcendence and mind over material bodies will result in a lack of agency for women. As Laura Chernaik argues in "Refiguring Nature, Science and Technology", two of Cadigan's main concerns are "interpretation and action".[74] As I have discussed, in a world in which women

are defined as 'the body', continued duality can only result in lack of agency for women. Thus Cadigan writes that pure focus on the mind would result in an inability to act: "Pretty soon it would all be happening at the speed of thought, before it could actually happen, so that nothing would ever have to happen again".[75]

Visual Mark sees the invention of brain sockets as a literal way for him to exit his body and live permanently within the 'System'. When the sockets are in place Visual Mark becomes a cyber-junkie, considering his body a 'meat-jail'. His final sexual experience with Gina is his way of saying goodbye to the body before he permanently transcends it for a cyberspace existence, and he fails to understand Gina's determined attachment to bodily pleasures, leaving the body behind his mental 'self' feels only freedom as the biological body is left behind: "He lost all awareness of the meat that had been his prison for close to fifty years, and the relief he felt at having laid his burden down was as great as himself. His self".[76] After spending a considerable amount of time in the 'System', Mark asks Gina to unplug the wires from his head so that he may exist entirely in the 'System' and his biological body may be left to die. Before Gina is able to remove the wires Mark has a major stroke and this carries down the wires as a mutated virus and infects the 'System', resulting in a complete shut down of all technology connected to the 'System' and of the deaths of people on-line through the use of head sockets at the time of Mark's physical death.[77]

The world in Cadigan's novel comes to a stand-still through Mark's desire to permanently transcend the body. However, Sam's ability to biologically merge the body with the computer, and so to take the computer into a material specified existence, saves it through maintaining an independent source of power to create a host computer in which to house Mark and the artificial intelligence Art until the situation is resolved. This results in the merging of Mark with the artificial intelligence Art, and the resulting machine-human hybrid is known as Markt.

This focus on the merging of the biological with the machinic has been written about by Anne Balsamo. In her essay "Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body In Contemporary Culture", Balsamo expands on some aspects of her argument raised in her book, *Technologies of the Gendered Body*. Within

Synners Balsamo extrapolates four types of 'postmodern bodies' highlighted through technological embodiment. Furthermore, Balsamo identifies these embodiments as specifically marked through race and gender.[78] The Labouring body, she names as 'mothers as wombs' and microelectronic workers, whilst the Marked body she identifies as the body of cosmetic surgery and multi-cultural mannequins. These first two she identifies as bodies marked by race and gender. Whilst the Repressed body of Virtual Reality and Computer Communication, and the Disappearing body is often found where the body meets databases and in the construction of bio-engineering. These latter two she identifies as masculinist constructions of the biological body in relation to technology.[79] Balsamo identifies the repressed body as follows: "Repression is a pain management technique. The technological repression of the material body functions to curtail pain by blocking channels of sensory awareness. In the development of virtual reality applications and hardware, the body is redefined as a machine interface".[80] In this argument Balsamo indicates that "the female body is coded as a body-in-connection and the male body as a body-in-isolation".[81] Thus the body for Pat Cadigan is never an abstract body, but, instead, is always gendered.

As Balsamo states, in *Synners*, given the gendered state of her four categories of embodiment, she identifies two contrasting arguments in relation to Kroker's disappearing body:

> that there is no singular form of postmodern embodiment, and that the disappearing body is not a post-human body-without-gender. In contrast, I argue that the disappearing body' is a gendered response to cultural anxieties about body invasion. masculinist dreams of body transcendence and, relatedly, masculinist attempts at body repression, signal a desire to return to the 'neutrality' of the body, to be rid of the culturally marked body".[82]

This argument by Balsamo reveals that the body is always a specifically gendered body, and that within *Synners* "information is never merely discursive",[83] as Balsamo states. Indeed, discourse acts on bodies. Indeed, for Sam as an expert computer hacker the 'System' has meant connectivity to other beings rather than separation from them. Sam personifies "a kind of disassembled and reassembled, postmodern collective and personal self" that Donna Haraway advocates that "feminists must code".[84] Indeed, as Mark Dery observes in *Escape Velocity*, "Sam's

insulin-powered hacking symbolizes a reconciliation of meat and mind, organs and synthetic – Haraway's cyborg politics at work".[85]

Feminist explorations into the relationship between the body and technology take issue with the abstract body of masculinist ideology that enables the transcendence of the body as a biological obsolescence. The body within feminist work of this kind is always established as a gendered body, and in this way the ideology of patriarchal understandings of the body are challenged. Thus, instead of portraying the escape of the 'confines' of the biological, feminist investigations into technology often explore the penetration of the body by technology. This enables feminists to challenge ideological inscriptions as they are reinscribed onto female bodies in the name of advancing technology.

PART THREE

CHAPTER FIVE

Representation and the Sight of Power

> My body was the most important tool; I felt it was important
> politically to use the female body to create art. So when I did my
> performance work, I usually did it naked. I was concerned with the
> male *gaze*: I knew that if I did it naked I would really change how the
> (mostly male) audience would look at me. There would be no
> pornographic or erotic/sexual desire involved – so there would be a
> *contradiction*.
>
> Valie Export[1]

In 1968, Viennese Feminist Aktionist Valie Export performed "Touch Cinema",
firstly at a street fair and later on the streets of Munich. In this performance piece,
Export strapped a box over her naked breasts. The box covered her breasts from
sight, but left two holes through which members of the audience could touch her
breasts for thirteen seconds. Export's performance highlights the politics of
representation in feminist terms. "Touch Cinema" disturbs both the framing of the
female body within representation, and the conventional power contained in the male
gaze. The feminist investigation into the power of representation can be seen in the
questions raised by this performance. The politics of representation cause the
spectator to ask why Export covered her breasts from sight whilst still allowing them
to be touched. This performance also forces the spectator to as why she performed
such a provocative piece on the streets, instead of in the relatively safe and controlled
environment of a gallery or theatre space. Perhaps the most telling question to ask,
though, is why, having made the decision to allow strangers to feel her breasts in a
public space, Export limited each encounter to just thirteen seconds. Exploring these
questions raised by this performance necessarily calls into play the debate amongst
feminist practitioners and theorists on representation.

"Touch Cinema", Munich, 1968, as it appears in Andrea Juno and V. Vale, *Angry Women*

Claiming the Power of the Real

"Touch Cinema" incensed male, female and feminist critics alike, as Export herself states:

> Most of the men didn't accept it and were against me – they laughed at me or said, "That's feminist shit," or, "There's no need for that." I didn't have support from men or from women. Other women didn't like me because what I did was too 'suspect' for them: to use my own body, to be naked in front of an audience, and to get the audience involved in what you're doing. So I had a lot of enemies – female enemies, too; they really hated me when I did that.[2]

The depth of reaction to Export's performance indicates an understanding of the performative power contained in representation. In exploring the relationship between identity and representation an examination of theories of performativity play

an important part in understanding how women may present an embodied subjectivity. Given that the performative statement takes place in actions, as well as words, that convey and propel conventional force in their execution, the performative moment reveals powerful insights into the creation of subjectivity in the social body.

The politics of representation are dependent on understanding whether or not representation is performative. One interpretation of the real sees representation as actually working as the real itself, and not separated by a mimetic understanding of any relationship between the two modes. For Jean Baudrillard, in *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, everything has become simulation. Not only is representation 'dead', for Baudrillard, but the real and art are also 'dead'. The division between the real and fiction has collapsed because all that is real is fictional and all that is fictional is real. For Baudrillard the real has become a question of reading the signs. However, Baudrillard is not uncritical of this position of the sign possessing no referent, and for him it represents "the symbolic destruction of social relations".[3] The 'emancipated sign' "dreams of its predecessor, and would dearly love to rediscover an *obligation* in its reference to the real".[4] In this scenario, the real has become "*that of which it is possible to provide an equivalent reproduction*".[5] In order to reach such an understanding of the operations of the real Baudrillard establishes three orders of simulacra:

> (classical representation is not equivalence but transcription, interpretation and commentary). At the end of this process of reproducibility, the real is not only that which can be reproduced, but *that which is always already reproduced*: the hyperreal.[6]

He goes on to state that the "hyperreal is beyond representation ... only because it is entirely within simulation".[7]

Whilst this interpretation of the hyperrealist reality is interesting, and may have some positive political associations, feminist critiques have to consider fully the political implications of this 'death of the real'. For Baudrillard, the "euphoria of simulation"[8] has taken over from the sign's obligation to the real. In talking about the real as 'reduplication' he interprets the real as a closed system which 'protects itself in this way from the referential and the anxiety of the referential".[9] He states that "(a)esthetic reality is no longer achieved through art's premeditation and

distancing".[10] Within such an understanding of the real and representation the sign seems to have taken on a new power. Yet, at first glance, it appears to be a peculiarly empty power. If, indeed, the sign no longer refers to an external reality, then it appears that representation has lost the peculiar power of agency which was attributed to it in the politics of mimesis. However, there may, indeed, be benefits for feminist subjectivities in such an understanding of this lack of distancing in representation.

This understanding of the real as a cathartic space of social maintenance through ritualistic exchange is important for understandings of subjectivity. One mode in which the subject has been bound as a safe and unified space is in the creation of a humanist, private self. In discussing this private individuality Baudrillard interprets ritual as symbolic, stating:

> This form of symbolic designation is annihilated by our social structure which imposes a *proper* name and a *private* individuality on everyone, shattering all solidarity in the name of an urban, abstract and universal sociality.[11]

In this sense symbolic ritual is seen as totally dependent on modes of exchange. In Baudrillard's terms, acknowledging the exchange of privileges would be the solution to this problem of the unified concept of private individuality. In fact, for Baudrillard, working within the realm of the code itself is the most challenging form of subversion, and, indeed, has become the only true revolution open to the political in the age of simulation. The representational has always been seen as the 'non-real', which connects with the real in a mimetic way. However, Baudrillard challenges this understanding of the dominance of the real by arguing that representation is not a non-real mimetic space. This demands an investigation into the often discussed 'use-value' of art and ritual.

As a mode of societal exchange ritual is dependent upon the conventional force of value. In his essay on value systems "Economies of Value", John Frow argues that in a multi-discoursed society it should no longer be possible to make judgements based on an exclusive and universally-applied code of values. In order to consider how codes of value can be applied he establishes a system that he calls 'regimes of value'. Expanding on the work of both Georg Simmel and Arjun

Appadurai on economic value and commodity exchange, respectively, Frow argues that cultural value is created by the interaction of "reciprocal sacrifice and power".[12] He goes on to discuss the manner in which regimes of value enable 'value-equivalence' across cultures. This is done by freeing the notion of value from any fixed or intrinsic relation to the specific environment, and by revealing the 'mechanisms of signification' that create the notion of value. So the 'regime of value' established within a particular discourse operates by politically organising the 'exchange of sacrifices' within a particular regime, at a particular time, and for a particular effect. As Judith Butler has written in *Bodies That Matter*:

> As resistance to symbolization, the 'real' functions in an exterior relation to language, as the inverse of mimetic representationalism, that is, as the site where all efforts to represent must founder. The problem here is that there is no way within this framework to politicize the relation between language and the real. What counts as the 'real', in the sense of the unsymbolizable, is always relative to a linguistic domain that authorizes and produces that foreclosure, and achieves that effect through producing and policing a set of constitutive exclusions.[13]

Given that the real is constituted ritualistically on a notion of exchange the performative force of ritual operates within the discursive practices of the real. The artistic project of ritual crosses the supposed divide between the real and modes of representation. In this way the symbolic exchange of ritual challenges the discursive dominance of the real. The exchange of women, which is discussed in both the work of Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler, amongst many other feminist critics, perpetuates and ensures the symbolic order of patriarchal and patronymic society. For Butler, this mode of exchange raises questions as to how performativity "stabilizes its signified through a set of differential relations with other signifiers within discourse".[14] The use of ritual as a means of symbolic exchange is a method of both stabilising and opening up discursive practices.

This mode of exchange is intrinsic to the performative nature of representation. An important aspect of the politics of performativity is the need to consider representation as part of the real; otherwise the danger is that representation will be seen as totally separate from the formation of discursive realities. Susanne Kappeler has argued this point in *The Pornography of Representation*, where she

states that "representation itself is not considered a part of the real; as fiction it is opposed to fact, and it does not apparently involve any acts, activity, action, save fictional ones in its content".[15] The point Kappeler makes is that the object of representation is presented as an object of pure societal exchange. In discussing the murder of Thomas Kasire, a black man in apartheid South Africa, Kappeler states that Kasire's white murderers took photographs of the attack. Kappeler, who is rightly appalled by this horrific event, leads from a discussion of this specific event to make a general theoretical point about what she sees as the nature of representation itself:

> The victim does not come out of the picture [as the murderers do, to take up the subject position], the victim is dead. In this case literally, in the general case of representation virtually, or functionally, as there is no designated role in the world, and in the continued existence of the representation, for the victim to take up. If the person filling the role of victim is not actually dead, s/he should be.[16]

Kappeler argues that representation exists within the real, and as representation acts on the real so it becomes part of the real. Within this construct the object of representation is removed from the subject position within the real.

On the Subject of Representation

Representation plays a significant role in the performance of feminist subjectivities. The concern with enacting feminist agency has lead to a debate around representation and power. Part of this project is an attempt to reveal the discourse of representation in order to challenge it. As Jill Dolan has argued on the critique of representation made by materialist feminists:

> Far from reifying sexual difference, materialist feminism works to understand how women have been oppressed by gender categories. It attempts to denaturalize the dominant ideology that demands and maintains such oppressive social arrangements.[17]

Jill Dolan argues that "[w]omen have use-value in the representational space, as they are the conduit through which the phallus passes".[18] On the deconstruction of gender within representation Dolan argues that "[w]hen the representational apparatus is

foregrounded, its once mystified ideology becomes clear".[19] Foregrounding the apparatus of representation enables feminists to focus on ways to challenge and change the ideology of gender in representation. Part of the mark of gender for women is the extent to which the symbolic use of women as exchange value in masculinist society carries through to become the logic of representation itself.

This represents women as an object of exchange within both representation and the logic of the real itself. One aspect of concern is the extent to which representation acts upon the real. Catharine MacKinnon and Andrea Dworkin argue that representation is directly causative. MacKinnon and Dworkin's work on representation focuses on pornography as the most explicit means of portraying what they see as the causative relationship between representation and women's experience. They argue that pornography performs women as objects within representation, constructing women passively as objects of desire. This leaves women no space to take up the subject position which is reserved solely for the male viewer of pornography. As such, MacKinnon and Dworkin argue "that commercially available pornography causes sexual violence against women".[20] One reason for this position is the belief that in this way pornography both mirrors and performs gender behaviour as mutually exclusive. Taking the pornographic magazine *Playboy* as an example of the genre of 'soft-core' pornography they have stated:

> The use of women as objects in *Playboy* is part of how *Playboy* helps
> to create second-class status for women. Women in *Playboy* are
> dehumanized by being used as sexual objects and commodities, their
> bodies fetishized and sold. The term 'bunny' is used to characterize
> the woman as less than human – little animals that want sex all the
> time, animals that are kept in hutches.[21]

Thus, their argument contends that portraying women as sexual objects without subjective agency, "in postures of submission and sexual servility",[22] works to performatively enact the conventional force of patriarchal constructions of women as objects.

As a consequence to this Dworkin and MacKinnon argue for the eradication of pornography. In her book *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, Andrea Dworkin argues that:

> We will know we are free when the pornography no longer exists. As long as it does exist, we must understand that we are the women in it: used by the same power, subject to the same valuation, as the vile whores who beg for more.[23]

MacKinnon and Dworkin distinguish between pornography and erotica. They define pornography as the sexual submission of women to men, containing images that perform "the basic theme of all pornography: that all women are whores by nature".[24] On the opposite framework to this, they define erotica as "material which is sexually explicit and does not show power orientation between males and females".[25] The logic of this position, which contends that representation performs the power roles it depicts, leads to an argument for changes in the images of women in representation. Furthermore, supporters of this argument state that the causative relationship between representation and power means that, in performing women as subjects within representation, women would be more likely to experience this within lived reality.

The argument against the causative nature of representation has been put forward by Judith Butler in *Excitable Speech*.[26] Butler takes issue with Catharine MacKinnon's standpoint in *Only Words*, where MacKinnon argues that pornographic representations of women constitute women as the Object in relation to a masculinist subject position. In Butler's critique of MacKinnon and Dworkin's public hearings on pornography in Minneapolis,[27] Butler cites the case of Anita Hill who describes her traumatic experiences of pornography. Butler criticises MacKinnon's standpoint because "[a]s Hill utters the sexualized discourse, she is sexualized by it, and that very sexualization undercuts her effort to represent sexualization itself as a kind of injury".[28] Butler argues that the logic of representation implies the agency of the represented party. This analysis is problematic, as it then becomes impossible to discuss the terms of such abusive experiences in order to challenge such readings of representation. For Butler, representation is performative, but not causative, and she distinguishes between the two. Furthermore, she argues convincingly that focusing on representation as the cause of experiences of disempowerment guides attention away from other causes. Butler sees as inherently problematic the understanding of "speech as conduct"[29] whereby representation is seen as directly causative. She

argues that such readings of representation refuse the gap that enables dominant discourses to be challenged. Given this argument around causative representation, it is important to explore this relationship between representation and the real in order to investigate how performativity enables the subject position for women.

In *Unmarked*, Peggy Phelan critiques the feminist position which sees representation as a site of political empowerment for women. She makes the valid point that "[i]f representational visibility equals power, then almost-naked young white women should be running Western culture".[30] However, whilst Phelan's analysis of the gap between representation and the real is useful for feminist analyses of agency, she seems to suggest that women ought to adopt a unified, centred position. Phelan's observations lead her to conclude that "fractures make [women] easy targets for a relatively unified Right".[31] Within Phelan's argument about "almost-naked white women running western culture" is the argument that representation possesses its own logic that disturbs the equation of visibility with power. This argument hypothesises that the correlation between representational visibility and power results in the logic of representation freezing and fixing the image as Other. Therefore, the greater visibility the subject has the less power s/he has. Consequently, it does not follow that the more representation the subject has the more empowering the experience. As Phelan has identified in *Unmarked*:

> The fetishization of the image is the risk of representational visibility
> for women. It secures the gap between the Real and the
> representational and marks her as Other.[32]

Phelan goes on to argue that the transitory nature of performance reflects the transitory nature of subjectivity. In this way, she argues that performance is separate from representation, which is given value by permanence. The power of representation then rests upon its feature as permanent in a time when subjectivity insists upon transience. Representation is a powerful aspect of centre discourse. It aligns itself with the real because of this value given to permanence; a value that is dependent upon a depreciation of the transitory.

In *Unmarked* Phelan suggests a kind of ephemerality to subjectivity by attempting to place it in a transient framework that exists in a space that cannot be reproduced. Therefore, Phelan argues that subjectivity "cannot be reproduced within

the ideology of the visible", and thus she argues it "cannot be surveyed within the boundaries of the putative real".[33] Phelan argues that actual power lies in that which is unseen because it is that which is the 'unremarkable' and obeys the Law of the Father through which it becomes the norm. This marks all others as the Other in order to reproduce the logic of Otherness which differentiates the marked from the unmarked norm. Thus, power lies in being the unseen viewer, the possessor of the gaze, and the holder of subjectivity. This seems politically viable as a means of understanding the logic of representation and power as a causal model. However, it creates problems for feminists in negotiating the dilemma around representation that it raises. The continuous reproduction of the mark of the Other within representation makes empowering the Other through representation impossible within this model. Phelan argues that "[v]isibility is a trap...; it summons surveillance and the law; it provokes voyeurism, fetishism, the colonialist/imperial appetite for possession".[34] Yet, clearly, within Western cultures of representation the image of the Other is reproduced continuously. In this way, lack of visibility has, decidedly, been about being silenced, rather than choosing to refuse the logic of visibility.

One way to negotiate these positions within feminist critiques, is to place the powerful position with the Other. In this way, feminist writers and performers challenge the manner in which subjectivities are constructed. This, in turn, offers new models for negotiating the workings of power within representation. Within this understanding of reperesentation, the lack of representational power translates into the lack of political power. "Almost-naked white young women" are not running western culture because they are disempowered in representation. Here, performative representation enacts women without power. Consequently, greater visibility equals less power. If, however, representations 'act' in the moment of being recognised, then performing the position of Otherness empowers the Other to negotiate the performative effect. Thus, performative representation empowers the Other as subject through performing the position of the Other itself.

Framing the Gaze: Valie Export

Performing the mark of gender can be a radical challenge to the status of woman as Other. Such performances seek not to reproduce the terms of the Other within the dominant economy, but to critique the dominant ideology from within its own logic, and to perform the female as an embodied subject.

As will be discussed throughout section three, the feminist project may lie in performing the monstrous Other that threatens masculinist society, rather than in seeking to challenge this objectification through using the arguably masculinist tools of distancing and rationality. Such performers and writers clearly use aggressive and extreme measures to challenge directly the confinement of lived and specific experience.

In performing "Touch Cinema" on the public street, rather than in the relatively controlled space of a gallery or theatre, Valie Export establishes the power of representation to engage with the real. In taking her performance to the people on the streets Export accepts the vulnerability of this unsafe position of the real for women. Export has also stepped outside of the traditional framing of representation, and taken the power of her performance into a realm which is immediately recognised as a lived experience of the real. When art is placed in a gallery or in a theatre space this focus on separating the real from representation can maintain the ideology of representation. This calls to mind the political locus of demonstrations in feminist political actions which take place in the space of the real. Thus, Export exposes representation as the lived reality of women; establishing a performative relationship between representation and the real.

Covering her breasts whilst allowing them to be touched, Export disturbs the power of the gaze to frame her breasts as they cannot be seen. It also displaces the logic of the power of representation which ensures that the possessor of the gaze may fix the object through remaining unseen. In "Touch Cinema" if the spectator wishes to touch the object of desire s/he must be seen, and yet the object remains unseen. As Export told members of the audience:

> I said that this was a feminist film, a 'mobile film,' and that you should come participate, and that *you will be seen* when you do that (that was the interesting point: that everybody could see you while you touched the breasts).[35]

This incorporates the unseen power that Peggy Phelan has identified as the object of representation. In doing this, it ensures that the spectator can no longer remain the passive owner of privilege within the power position, but must, instead, take action to attain the 'subject' of desire, as Export states:

> They *hated* this contradiction: that the object of desire is standing in front of them and you *can* have it – but you have to *do* something for it. You're not in an intimate sphere now, you're in a public sphere and *that's* where you can have it. So I offered my body in the way *I* wanted to.[36]

Limiting the amount of time a member of the audience could feel her breasts to thirteen seconds ensures that Export remains in control of the gaze. It is this time limit which allows her to question the power of the male gaze without being in danger of having her questioning of power reclaimed by the person (mainly men) feeling her breasts. Export has stated that:

> This actually was a very strong experience because, while participating, everybody stared into my eyes and I stared into theirs – everybody was *afraid*, really, during the encounter.[37]

The idea that Export is able to make direct eye contact with the person who seeks to position her sexually challenges the power of the masculine gaze to frame her silently, and thus diffuses the power of the gaze in representation. Yet, what Export does not explain is the reasoning behind her thirteen second time limit. It seems that the encounter must be kept short to avoid the spectator being able to reclaim the power of the subject. Thirteen seconds is not a long enough time for the male spectator to reclaim his position as subject within patriarchy by, for example, disrupting her power to return his gaze, and reinscribing masculinist power by sharing his position of holder of the object with other members of the audience. These measures are in fact needed in patriarchy if Export is to remain within the empowering position of subject.

CHAPTER SIX

Negotiating the Mark of Gender

> I've come to see gender as a divisive social construct, and the
> gendered body as a somewhat dubious accomplishment... See, I'm
> told I must be a man or a woman. One or the other. Oh, it's OK to be
> a transsexual say some – just don't talk about it. Don't question your
> gender any more, just be a woman now – you went to so much trouble
> – just be satisfied. I am so, not satisfied... I write from the point of
> view of a gender outlaw because I don't want to hear: We don't want
> you in our club / We don't want you on our land / We don't want you
> in our march.
>
> Kate Bornstein[1]

The mark of gender, as was discussed in Chapter One, "Performing Subjectivities",
always exists to mark as Other that which does not belong to the masculine,
heterosexual 'ideal'. This 'ideal' subject creates a dominant space that is constructed
as genderless. Within the logic of this discourse the female gender is marked as
Other in order to be set apart from this masculine, and yet genderless, 'ideal'.
Feminist performers and writers are challenging this construction of gender. One
important question around such challenges is the political efficacy of performing the
status of the female as 'marked'. Consequently, feminist performers often negotiate
agency for female subjects through performing this status as Other. For the female
subject the power is revealed in these performances in the moment in which the mark
becomes a masquerade.

In negotiating this 'marked' status of woman within masculinist economies
feminist theorists and artists have explored the potential agency in attempting to
refuse this marked construction of gender. In her book, *Nomadic Subjects*, Rosi
Braidotti has observed an investment in the "image of the androgynous, sexless,
angelic, unisexed body"[2] within contemporary popular culture. Braidotti interprets
this as an attempt to eradicate sexual difference, and she argues that, far from

eradicating the mark of gender, this attempt actually serves to further enforce a construction of femininity as a 'boy toy':

> Popular culture is marketing perfectly manicured "gender-benders" of the quality of Michael Jackson (Diana Ross revisited), Boy George (the eternal feminine reconquered), and endless variations on Tootsie... Blurring sexual difference, desexualizing masculinity precisely at the historical moment when the feminism of sexual difference is calling for the sexualization of practices seems to me to be an extraordinarily dangerous move for women.[3]

Braidotti's argument focuses on the sexualised materiality of bodies in considering subjectivity. As can be seen from this argument, attempts towards eradicating the mark of gender, by advocating a move towards a gender-free notion of identity, are problematic. Not only would such a move problematise the organisation of any feminist politics based on the socio-political construction of the gender 'woman', but it also remains within the logic of the masculinist self. This logic seeks to incorporate the female within the 'universal' terms of its identity construction in order to insist on 'femininity' as a marked and sexualised site of masculine heterosexual desire.

Braidotti takes issue with this construction of gender identity, which she sees as seeking to eradicate the positionality of a female space from which to challenge the maintenance of the masculine as the central discourse. In this approach, Braidotti explores the work of Deleuze and Guattari whose work on identity has been instrumental in deconstructing the universal self. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that taking up the position of the Other is part of this destabilisation of the universal self. The problem with Deleuze and Guattari's proposal to take up 'marked' identities, here, is the extent to which they categorise this position as 'becoming-woman'. This categorisation clearly maintains the marked status of the female as Other, in a way that actually works to stabilise the masculinist, universal self. As they state in their discussion of the becoming-woman of Judge Schreber:

> Returning yet again to the case of Judge Schreber... God will find a way of taking his pleasure with Schreber, even if in order to do so Schreber must transform himself into a woman. But Schreber experiences only a residual share of this pleasure, as a recompense for his suffering or as a reward for his becoming-woman.[4]

Within this model the marked status of the female is not seen as a political locus in which to organise for the challenge to the dominance of masculinist ideologies, but instead remains within the very terms of the masculinist order. By positioning woman as the object of pleasure for the masculine subject they refuse women the position of subjectivity herself and her pleasure is the 'residual' pleasure of sacrificial suffering in the name of masculine subjectivity.

Not only is this problematic because of the extent to which it remains within the system of keeping woman marked in order that she may remain purely as the object of desire, in which man is maintained as the possessor of subjective agency, but it is also problematic for Braidotti to the extent to which it places woman in a privileged position of Otherness, setting up a hierarchy of "minority-consciousness". As Braidotti states:

> [I]nsofar as man, the male, is the main referent for thinking subjectivity, the standard-bearer of the Norm, the Law, the Logos, woman is dualistically, that is, oppositionally, positioned as the "other". The consequences accordingly are that: (a) there is no possible becoming-minority of man; (b) the becoming-woman is a privileged position for the minority-consciousness of all.[5]

Clearly Braidotti recognises the problems in arguing for a feminist politics that seeks to eradicate the marked position of the female. The subject position, within this scenario, remains predicated as male, and woman remains the object of enjoyment for this subject; she is configured as the 'to-be-enjoyed'.

Artists and practitioners who seek to eradicate the mark of Other see this marking existing purely within the terms of the dominant masculinist ideology from which it cannot escape. Seeking to eradicate this they seek to blur the boundaries of gender and argue for advocating a state of being in which gender is no longer confined to an opposed duality. This is problematic as it often exposes a desire to move beyond the specified, sexed, gendered, and raced body important within the politics of positionality. In a discussion of transgendered sex and transsexuality, the Krokers argue for a third sex, a movement away from the oppositional duality of the "sacrificial violence" of "the last sex", towards a cross gendered state:

> Neither male (physically) nor female (genetically) not their simple reversal, but something else: a virtual sex floating in an elliptical orbit

around the planet of gender that it has left behind, finally free of the powerful gravitational pull of the binary signs of the male/female antinomies in the crowded earth scene of gender.[6]

The argument around identifying a third sex comes from a need to eradicate the negativity of being placed in a position of marked identity. Yet, this suggests an eradication of the marked specific body by which women organise for change. Their argument is based upon a desire to eradicate 'sacrificial violence'. Yet, if anything, this third sex is never "finally free" of sacrificial violence, but is in fact subjected to sacrificial violence because of its status as a 'third' sex. Only by 'passing' as one gender or another is this body free from sacrificial violence in an age of patriarchal dominance which depends upon the division of gender into two. The identification of a third sex in the terms of the Krokers reveals a desire to make the body abstract in the name of neutrality. The political key, here, as was discussed in Chapter One, is in maintaining the specificity of the lived experience of gendered and raced bodies, whilst at the same time arguing for a renegotiation of what it means to be gendered. This may be a more difficult position to negotiate as it is one of process rather than the fixed definities of the abstract, gender-free body, yet it is the only politically viable solution for bodies that are marked as Other by patriarchy.

Kate Bornstein: Crossing the Gender-Free Zone

The definition of the specificity of marked bodies is a paramount focus within the work of Kate Bornstein, whose work as a performer foregrounds her status as a male-to-female transsexual. Born Albert Herman, Bornstein underwent surgery to transform herself into Kate Bornstein and her work raises awareness around gender stereotyping. This awareness directly arises from her own experiences of gender, but it develops this issue further by seeking to challenge the discursive modes by which all gender is defined as mutually exclusive. Her work questions the extent to which gender is felt to be an inherent, biological condition, and in questioning this she investigates gendered behaviour as it is defined as 'feminine' or 'masculine'.

Bornstein states that "being 'male' is the default".[7] In this statement she illustrates that the masculine is always taken as the assumed setting for gender requirements. In order to challenge this masculine assumption she argues that everybody is "in the middle of some sort of gender revolution".[8] Bornstein writes on gender identity:

> Gender, like sexuality, just happens to be an identity that nearly everyone in most cultures is forbidden to play with; and with the recent developments in medical technology over the past fifty or so years, genital manipulation has come to be considered an extreme way of bending gender; but it's not the only way, not by a long shot.[9]

She describes gender as a 'closet', because "membership in gender is not based on informed consent. There is no way out without being ridiculed and harassed".[10] Indeed, as part of her exploration into the inscription of gender she devises a gender/identity/power pyramid in her book *My Gender Workbook*. This pyramid reveals the weight of the power balance in favour of the biologically male and gendered masculine body and identity.

Much of Bornstein's work is based on the idea of 'passing' within a 'bipolar gender system'. Gender stereotypes insist that we "pass" within culture according to the prescription of patriarchal gender codes, and she defines these patriarchal codes as the maintenance of heterosexuality whereby "sexual orientation is currently tied to gender".[11] This presents a very real danger for people who do not 'pass'. Questioning such a restricted view of identity, Bornstein celebrates 'gender blur'. In her performance piece *Hidden: A Gender* she created a character who sold 'gender defender' in appropriate pink and blue bottles for the illness 'gender blur'.[12] Beginning with the premise that "there is no such thing as gender, other than what we say it is",[13] Bornstein advocates becoming a "gender outlaw".[14]

Part of the political process of disturbing gender boundaries lies in the performance of 'gender outlaw' identities. For Bornstein, gender is a performance, and in her book, *Gender Outlaw*, she cites Riki Wilchins on the performative nature of gender to illustrate this point:

> If I identified as a lesbian, I was welcome [in a Lesbian Avengers meeting]. When I sometimes jokingly identified as just your average straight white guy with a cunt, heads started to turn and folks started

to get anxious. I had not changed, but my cultural identity had, simply by saying aloud the words "I am..." Instant sex-change. Gender not only as performance, but as performativity.[15]

However, part of this performance of gender is problematic as it works within the categories of gender that are mutually exclusive. In order to negotiate these dualistic categories of identity Bornstein emphasises the transitional aspects of her performances. In doing so, she draws the attention of the spectator to the status of identity as transitional and fragmented. Indeed on performance as part of identity formation Bornstein writes:

> I keep trying to integrate my life. I keep trying to make all the pieces into one piece. As a result, my identity becomes my body which becomes my fashion which becomes my writing style. Then I perform what I've written in an effort to integrate my life, and that becomes my identity, after a fashion.[16]

Part of her concern with the performance of gender leads her to work within the discourse of gender within society. As part of this process of raising awareness around gender, Bornstein runs a gender studio in which she explores gender stereotyping. *My Gender Workbook* is a written example of the work she performs in her gender studio and is full of exercises for the reader designed to question received notions of gender identity. Part of this process lies in questioning how gendered identity is inscribed, and in so doing she refuses the pronouns that inscribe masculine and feminine identities:

> ESSAY FOR EXTRA CREDIT:
> Using as much or as little paper as necessary, and by whatever means you'd like to communicate it, set down your opinion on the following statement and questions. Given the multifaceted model of gender-as-construct as laid out in the gender/identity/power pyramid, it should be possible for an artist to become, if only for the moment of creation, that which ze is creating, even though that may not be hir home identity or gender. And if that can be done by an artist using some form or medium, could we not do that ourselves? Could we not create ourselves as the artistic representation of our desire, using our bodies and social interactions as our media? Would this be art? Could doing this transcend some art/life binary?[17]

Bornstein clearly negotiates a marked, gendered body, and performs this body in order to challenge the lack of "informed consent" in the enactment of gendered identities.

Cosmetic Surgery and the Power of the Other

In *The Beauty Myth* Naomi Wolf contends "that something important is indeed at stake that has to do with the relationship between female liberation and female beauty".[18] The beauty myth is a "violent backlash against feminism that uses images of female beauty as a political weapon against women's advancement".[19] Within this critique of the ideology of female beauty and patriarchy provided by Wolf, the constraints placed on the female body and identity inscribe the mark of femininity as Other. Indeed, Wolf argues that the beauty myth is actually about power and control and *"is always actually prescribing behavior and not appearance"*.[20] As she argues, the link between beauty and identity in women ensures that women "remain vulnerable to outside approval".[21] It is this connection between the appearance of the female body as it is encoded by patriarchal significations of beauty that is being challenged by feminist performance artists. These performers explore the site/sight of the female body and the relationship of women to discourses of power and agency.

Thus, Wolf links the acquisition of power for women in patriarchy to beauty. As she states: "'[b]eauty' had to be defined as a legitimate and necessary qualification for a woman's rise in power".[22] Furthermore she argues that the acquisition of beauty is connected to suffering:

> If a woman's sexual sense of self has centered on pain as far back as the record goes, who is she without it? If suffering is beauty and beauty is love, she cannot be sure she will be loved if she does not suffer. It is hard, because of such conditioning, to envisage a female body free of pain and still desirable.[23]

In this way beauty becomes attached to power in a way that ensures women will never acquire power in their own right, no matter how beautiful they may be. The search for beauty actually serves to disempower women by conditioning women to suffer for beauty. In this way Wolf argues that: "[c]osmetic surgery processes the bodies of woman-made women, who make up the vast majority of its patient pool, into man-made women".[24]

This argument by Wolf, in which she equates female power and agency with the physical inscription of patriarchal control onto the territory of the female body, has prompted many feminist theorists and practitioners to consider the issue of cosmetic surgery. Wolf goes on to establish the 'Surgical Age' as follows:

> The Surgical Age took over from the institutionalization of female "mental illness," which had in turn overtaken the institutionalization of nineteenth-century hysteria, each phase of medical coercion consistently finding new ways to determine that what is female is sick.[25]

The Surgical Age, as argued by Wolf, separates women from their bodies. An important question feminists must consider in this equation of beauty with power is the focus of cosmetic surgery in the formation of feminist agency. In this debate on cosmetic surgery feminists have asked whether surgery performs the transformation of the self through consciously changing identity, or whether it disempowers the female as suffering body-object.

In her essay "On the Cutting Edge", Anne Balsamo cites Carole Spitzack's argument that the surgeon's gaze is "situated within apparatuses of power" and that:

> This gaze disciplines the unruly female body by first fragmenting it into isolated parts – face, hair, legs, breasts – and then redefining those parts as inherently flawed and pathological. When a woman internalizes a fragmented body image and accepts its "flawed" identity, each part of the body then becomes a site for the "fixing" of her physical abnormality.[26]

This fragmented relationship with the body, it would seem, translates into perceptions of self-identity as fragmented. Balsamo goes on to argue that video morphing technology within the surgical industry "dramatically undermines a patient's ability to distinguish between the real, the possible, and the likely in terms of surgical outcomes".[27] Indeed, Balsamo agrees with Wolf that cosmetic surgery ensures that "the female body comes to serve as a site of inscription, a billboard for the dominant cultural meanings that the female body is to have in postmodernity".[28]

Kathryn Pauly Morgan, in her essay "Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the Colonization of Women's Bodies", also takes issue with cosmetic surgery as a means of territorialising the female body. She argues that "Rather than aspiring to self-determined and woman-centered ideals of health or integrity,

women's attractiveness is defined as attractive-to-men".[29] Indeed, Morgan also argues that "[w]omen have traditionally regarded (and been taught to regard) their bodies, particularly if they are young, beautiful, and fertile, *as a locus of power* to be enhanced through artifice and, now, through artifact".[30] One of the major concerns here with cosmetic surgery and its status as a locus of power is the extent to which women seek this as a means of self transformation. Morgan goes on to argue that:

> electing to undergo the surgery necessary to create youth and beauty artificially not only appears to but often actually does give a woman a sense of identity that, to some extent, she has chosen herself.[31]

With regard to the agency of the female subject, Morgan illustrates that "what appear at first glance to be instances of choice turn out to be instances of conformity".[32] For Morgan the only feminist response is to resist the logic of cosmetic surgery, whilst recognising that:

> It may well be that one explanation for why a woman is willing to subject herself to surgical procedures, anaesthetics, postoperative drugs, predicted and lengthy pain, and possible "side effects" that might include her own death is that her access to other forms of power and empowerment are or appear to be so limited that cosmetic surgery is the primary domain in which she can experience some semblance of self-determination.[33]

In resisting surgery Morgan argues that feminists should use the medium to create difference from masculine norms. She argues that one way to enact this resistance is to use surgery to achieve ugliness. Thus the mark of gender as it is inscribed onto the female body is restricted. Another way this inscription might be challenged is through the work of Orlan.

Orlan: Performing the Mark of the Other

Through using cosmetic surgery as the medium of her performances, Orlan challenges the inscription of the female as Other. Indeed, Orlan prefers to call her operation-performances 'interventions', as this calls up the idea of medical intervention in women's bodies. In representing this 'intervention' Orlan clearly positions herself as both object and subject within the medical space. She actively

positions herself as present in a situation in which the woman as subject is usually simultaneously present-as-absent. Although one of the premises of her work is an exploration of female beauty and plastic surgery, the 'result' of the surgery is not the main focus of her work, either during the performance itself or in gallery exhibitions after the event. Instead a major concern with Orlan's work is the extent to which she chooses to place emphasis on the process itself as opposed to the end result. In this way Orlan argues that her operations perform a 'woman-to-woman transsexualism', and throughout the interventions the spectator is confronted with the literal enactment of this inscription.

Orlan's work investigates a concern with a fractured sense of identity directly through its interrogation of the body. Her decision to refigure the female body through the use of plastic surgery pushes the idea of identity in confrontational ways, presenting a literal enactment of gender construction. One of the ways in which she literally enacts ideological interpellation is through her conscious presentation of herself as object. This is not to say that she distances herself from the subject position, instead she maintains her space as subject even as she actively presents herself as object: "'I is an other' (Je est un autre). I am at the forefront of confrontation".[34] The structure of binary oppositions depends upon a tearing apart of 'opposites', and, by incorporating many dualisms simultaneously, Orlan's literal representation of this structure makes it difficult for spectators to watch her work. As a spectator you are watching the power of supposedly metaphorical 'intervention' in its literal form.

Risking the Mark of the Other

One of the problems Orlan's work raises is the question of cosmetic surgery as a means of empowerment for women. In many readings of Orlan's work there is an assumption that just by using cosmetic surgery as her medium Orlan becomes part of the patriarchal standards of feminine beauty, and is, therefore, implicated in the restrictions placed on women who choose surgery as a means of social

empowerment. In *Escape Velocity* Mark Dery argues that Orlan objectifies her body unproblematically as she refers to her body as "it" and "the work". Dery misreads Barbara Rose's statement in her essay "Is it Art? Orlan and the Transgressive Act", that Orlan performs "the madness of a demand for an unachievable physical perfection".[35] The difference in reading, here, is the difference between seeing her work as simply an embodiment of this search for 'perfection', or indeed in performing this search for 'perfection' in order to critique it. Reading Orlan's work as assimilable to masculinist discourse, Dery compares Orlan to the 'beauty myth' espoused by Naomi Wolf, arguing that Orlan has become "something out of Naomi Wolf's nightmares".[36] The suggestion that she is attempting to create herself within an accepted ideal of femininity has been emphatically denied by Orlan:

> My work is not a stand against cosmetic surgery, but against the standards of beauty, against the dictates of a dominant ideology that impresses itself more and more on feminine (as well as masculine) flesh. Cosmetic surgery is one of the areas in which man's power over the body of woman can inscribe itself most strongly.[37]

The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan thus radically challenges accepted images of women within patriarchy.

Barbara Rose argues for the political efficacy of Orlan's project in her essay, "Is it Art? Orlan and the Transgressive Act":

> By turning herself into a receiving set for signals sent by men to women for millenia, she absorbs and acts out the madness of a demand for an unachievable physical perfection.[38]

A central premise of Orlan's work is her use of 'literal enactment' to make manifest our understandings of identity formation. As Barbara Rose rightly argues, an interesting aspect of Orlan's art is her literal enactment of the demands placed on women within our society in order to disturb the spectator through manifest representations of latent metaphors. Orlan's project is open to charges of assimilation because of the extent to which it performs the Other and enacts the threat perceived in this position. In her article on Orlan, Laura Cottingham has written that:

> Orlan's performance, however, delivers her body to one of the most authoritative institutions in modern society – the medical establishment. Or perhaps prostitution is the most apt metaphor: First Orlan gives her body over to authority, then she sells it.[39]

Cottingham is one critic, amongst many, to argue that "Because of its collusion with the traditional cultural hatred meted out against the female body ... Orlan's Reincarnation..., if it means anything, shows that misogyny is so engrained in our social ideology that we don't call violence its name, barbarism – we call it art".[40] Indeed, Jill O'Bryan, drawing on Vivian Patraka's essay "Binary Terror and Feminist Performance", argues that "the debate around her performances locates her in what might even be termed a feminist/misogynist binary".[41] Orlan's project, however, aims to explode the very terms by which charges of assimilation contain her.

Kathy Davis in her essay on cosmetic surgery as feminist utopia in the work of Orlan entitled "'My Body is My Art' Cosmetic Surgery as Feminist Utopia" argues that the utopian response to cosmetic surgery espoused in the work of Orlan and Kathryn Pauly Morgan contains an important and empowering critique of the "technological beauty imperative".[42] Davis has performed an analysis of the cosmetic surgery industry in her earlier work, *Reshaping the Female Body*, where she argues that cosmetic surgery is indeed a viable option for women who seek self-empowerment in a gendered society. Davis begins "My Body is My Art" by arguing that Orlan's surgical art works in conjunction with women who have the surgery from a position of empowerment, and that they both reveal "a utopian revisioning of a future where women reappropriate cosmetic surgery for their own ends".[43] However, Davis argues that this utopian approach to cosmetic surgery contains problems because it sets up a distinction between surgery in art and surgery in the lived reality of women. Davis's research into cosmetic surgery revealed a complicated response for women in their approaches to surgery, and that, in particular, their decisions to have surgery to change their appearance revealed both their compliance to and resistance of patriarchal definitions of female beauty. It is this ambivalence in women's responses to surgery that interests Davis. She argues that whilst it is not part of Orlan's project to "provide a feminist polemic against the unimaginable lengths to which women will go to achieve an ideal of beauty as defined by men"[44], Orlan and Morgan's project, as "utopian models" of cosmetic surgery, nevertheless "privilege the flamboyant, public spectacle as feminist

intervention and deprivilege the interventions which are part of living in a gendered social order".[45]

However, as a theatrical performance of gender distinctions Orlan's project exposes the patriarchal discourse defining women in a gendered social order. Her critique of femininity as literally inscribed on female flesh exists in her movement between gendered identity states in her performances. This 'reincarnation' enables Orlan to perform the difference of feminist subject positions through her enactment of 'woman-to-woman transsexualism'. Sue-Ellen Case, in her book *The Domain-Matrix*, argues that for Orlan agency lies in the dynamic and polymorphous performances of her identity: "Orlan is making a 'live' performance of her changing body, at the moment of intervention by medical technology".[46] For Case it is Orlan's very use of cosmetic surgery that allows her to perform multiple identity positions. Case references the work of Sandy Stone, who defines herself as a trans-gendered identity, and writes on transsexuality as Sandy Stone and on cyberculture as Allucquere Roseanne Stone. Stone argues that the singleness of the body operates as a site that demands a single identity:

> The single body, the integer, thus warrants subjectivity and citizenship. Multiplicity is confounded simply by the practice of referencing the singleness of the body. The body acts as a location, and that location holds back the virtual play of multiple identities".[47]

Given this, Case argues that, rather than going to the internet to perform multiple identities online as Stone does, we ought to be "locating change in bodies rather than in that universalized space".[48] Consequently, for Case *The Reincarnation of St Orlan* performs the challenge to the stable body that inscribes a singleness of gendered identity, and as such deconstructs gender as it performs woman-to-woman transsexualism:

> The body as actively inhabiting the position of 'trans,' in the flesh, performing rather than registering, is the necessary tie that binds accountability to play, labor to end product, and death to repetitive loops".[49]

Allucquere Roseanne Stone interprets the 'woman-to-woman transsexualism' of Orlan's project as "playful and ironic, because of the way it stands binary opposition on its head".[50] Stone argues that "transgender rescues us from the lethal

essentialism of sex".[51] Whilst this is certainly a useful aspect of her work, this transformation of identity is problematic for many critics. Considering Orlan's desire to "bring appearance round to reality", Philip Auslander cites Orlan from Sharon Waxman's interview:

> It's a transsexual operation – from woman to woman. I was always very timid, very tender, fragile. I was like that as a young girl. But when I wanted to do things in society I had to create an aggressive, hard personality.[52]

Auslander finds this problematic because he sees Orlan's use of cosmetic surgery as a desire "to cut through the rough, masculine social mask in order to reveal her true, vulnerable, tender, feminine essence".[53] Consequently, Auslander believes that her work "seems disturbingly to play right into the hands of cosmetic surgery as an oppressive, gender-political cultural practice".[54] Whilst this concern with cosmetic surgery is valid, this gender emphasis is not present in Orlan's own reading of her work which she stresses is a woman-to-woman transsexualism. This need to equate vulnerability with a feminine 'essence' and roughness with a masculine 'social mask', is one of the ideologies which Orlan's work is trying to break through. That, in fact, there is no essence behind the appearance. Orlan's work explicitly is not an "expressed desire to become more feminine",[55] her transition is between female identities in order to explore what it means for gender to be "what we say it is".[56]

Woman as Absent Other

This philosophy of Orlan's work began in the 1970s with performances such as *Occasional Strip-Tease With the Help of the Fabric of the Trousseau.*[57] These performances did not use plastic surgery, but they did perform her transition between socio-cultural feminine identities in a woman-to-woman transvestism; performing a strip-tease in the trousseau she would enact a movement between feminine roles. Within this period one of the central issues of her work emerged, as she began to investigate the inscription of ideology onto the female body.

Orlan, *les femmes ressemblent á la lune mes yeux á des fleurs ou autoportrait aux narcisses*, 1993

One of the problematic areas within Orlan's project lies in this idea of woman-to-woman transsexualism. This project performs the enactment of identity as interior and exterior states through the inscription on the body of an identity of ideology. In her presentation speech Orlan confronts this problem of appearance and reality, by referring directly to the use made in her performances of the work *La Robe* by Eugenie Lemoine-Luccioni:

> Skin is deceiving... in life, one only has one's skin... there is a bad exchange in human relations because one never is what one has... I have the skin of an angel, but I am a jackal... the skin of a crocodile, but I am a puppy, the skin of a black person, but I am white, the skin of a woman, but I am a man; I never have the skin of what I am. There is no exception to this rule because I am never what I have.
>   Eugenie Lemoine-Luccioni, *La Robe*

...we have begun to have the means of closing this gap.

Orlan[58]

This notion of a gap between interior and exterior identity states again opens her work to charges of assimilability, and is criticised by feminist scholars.[59] This notion of a gap in identity formation is analysed by Parveen Adams in her essay "Operation Orlan". Adams argues that a possible problem with cross-gendered transsexualism is a desire to become 'The Woman' in an attempt to "become the phallus through castration". According to Adams the logic of cosmetic surgery insists on 'completeness' and, ultimately, the work of Orlan resists this ideology by revealing that whilst Orlan "may become an image... the image in question is made empty by the operation".[60] Indeed, as Adams rightly emphasises, one of the main points of Orlan's work is to reveal the emptiness of the image itself. Concerned with the "coming to self through the subjugation of the body", Gabrielle Griffin has argued that Orlan's work is problematic in this respect as in presenting herself as object Orlan portrays "appearance without essence". Drawing on the work of Adams, Griffin argues that this results ultimately in a representation of woman as "gap", and as "absence".[61]

In an article examining the connection between Orlan's interior and exterior selves, Jill O'Bryan states that "In her attempt to locate her interior image she has placed her exterior physique in a state of flux. It is not still and not fixable".[62] This is, in fact, one of the comments on identity which Orlan's literal enactments make. Indeed, rather than performing a successful connection between interior and exterior selves, Orlan's work reveals that the self is in fact a process and that any ultimate fixing of the relationship between the selves would result in the stultifying stability of self which Orlan's work seeks to make us question. Orlan's work is an attempt to confront the 'unnatural' state of existence, enacting the processes of 'naturalisation' which usually remain metaphorical:

> If there is a conflict between what is natural in the mind and what is
> biologically inherited (natural) in the body, then how can one
> judge which natural image should or should not be portrayed?[63]

This forces the spectator to question the 'natural', a category which demands that it remain unquestioned in order for the preservation of gender roles. Orlan "is playing

with the gap between words and the unspeakable – between representation and the unrepresentable".[64] It seems, though, that Orlan concludes that it is all representation, that the idea of the unspeakable and unrepresentable is what keeps the economy of the natural in process.

This challenge to ideas of the 'natural' is part of Orlan's relationship to power structures. It is drastically examined in order to investigate the extent to which women relate to power structures at the level of object. Orlan performs this idea in the field of representation, in which women are traditionally viewed as objects, who are not in control of the images but instead are present-as-absent. As such she becomes fetishised as image, and in turn performs this idea of woman as fetishised image. So extreme is she in her representations of this fetishisation that she creates a space in which woman becomes marked as Other. She then enacts her agency as subject and in this way she performs her violent refusal to accept her position as marked. In order to do this effectively, Orlan plays with the female body as object, referencing the forms of representation which objectify women. In her performance of *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* the juxtaposition of images explores this aspect. Shots of Orlan's legs opening and closing are juxtaposed with images of multiple injections in the fragmented style of pornography focusing on parts of her body rather than on a whole person. Similarly, images of liposuction rods violently entering her legs are juxtaposed with images of her applying red lipstick. This application of red lipstick turns into shots of her lips being sliced with a surgeon's knife, as blood runs from her mouth in a literal interpretation of the violence of femininity. However, Orlan plays with this logic of violence by insisting on her gaze looking assertively at the spectator.

As Carey Lovelace has written, in order to "make a space for herself to preserve her authenticity in this, Orlan adopts an edge of irony".[65] Using this "edge of irony" undoubtedly enables Orlan to create a space for her subjectivity which is essential to her project of turning herself into an object and maintaining a space for female agency. However, rather than preserving her 'authenticity', this space actually serves to question to what extent identity can be seen as 'authentic'. In "Conference", the presentation paper Orlan presents before and during her video

Baiser de l'artiste, Orlan, 1976, as it appears in Duncan McCorquodale ed.
Orlan This is my body… This is my software…

exhibitions she uses humour to play with the spectator's fears. She tells the audience
not to look in a way that suggests an ironic awareness of the inability to deal with the
difficulties presented in her work. In fact the jokes in Orlan's performances are often
directly challenging. As Sarah Wilson states on Orlan's performance piece *Baiser de
L'Artiste*, "the kiss on offer is a joke but also an aggression: 'Roll up, roll up, come
to my pedestal, the pedestal of myths: mother, whore, artist' she cried".[66]
Conference lectures and discussions given by Orlan are integral to her maintenance
of the subjective position. When watching Orlan's video installations the spectator is
struck by the objectification and intervention of her body happening on screen, in

front of which Orlan presents her papers. This goes some way to ensuring her presence as both speaking subject and objectified body.

Her political, artistic project thus performs the female body as marked. In her performance piece *Documentary Study: The Head of Medusa*, for example, Orlan displayed her menstruating vagina through a magnifying glass with half of her pubic hair painted blue. Screens revealed the heads of the spectators, and on leaving they were given a text from Freud's *Head of Medusa* stating "At the sight of the vulva even the devil runs away". Such disturbing images of the oppression of women on which the symbolic order has been founded enact the oppression implicit in the metaphor, and the spectators' responses to this literal interpretation were emphasised as part of the performance. This literal enactment of 'interpellation' challenges the spectator. Her investigation into confined female roles continued in her critique of Judaeo-Christian iconography. Works such as *The Draping* and *The Baroque* perform the draped Madonna unfurling to reveal 'woman' devouring the unswaddled infant.

In reterritorialising the female body, in acknowledging the status of the body as text and then reclaiming this site for feminist issues of empowerment, she asserts her presence as a subject whose integral space is the body. Again her work explodes binarisms by insisting on both the need for women to maintain control over their own bodies and simultaneously accept the fluidity of connections that demand that the subject relinquish control. Accepting the deterritorialisation of the female body her work also enacts the need for simultaneously reterritorialising our bodies. Reterritorialising the female body seeks to place women as a present within dominant discursive practices whilst refusing to be the container of an self. Within this economy the body becomes the vessel, and traditionally for women the empty vessel where no self can reside. Given that Orlan's work interrogates feminist conceptions of socio-historical embodied subjectivities, her use of her body as text represents the mapping of territory onto the female body.

One problematic area in performing the mark of gender in literal enactment is the extent to which this project can become constructed through the terms of the pleasure of voyeurism. The nature of Orlan's performances where the private act is

made public is a central trope of voyeurism and part of Orlan's literal enactment in the subject/object formation of subjectivity. By literally turning herself into an object, but simultaneously reclaiming a subject position, Orlan forces the spectator to confront the pleasure of turning her into an object. Through its literal enactment Orlan's work engages with feminist concerns around voyeurism and the gaze. Action performer Jean-Jacques Lebel has written that:

> Contemporary art demands the active intervention of the spectator. In these conditions, the voyeur, by his very deficiency, has no part in the action. With the art of participation, the looker-on no longer makes the picture.[67]

Orlan's work differs from this in the extent to which she implicates the voyeur, forcing the spectator to confront the extent to which we find her objectification pleasurable; as such she negotiates the terms of scopophilia. As Parveen Adams writes, Orlan's work exposes "the treatment of the face to the point where we see that the face is detachable. Finally, the horror at seeing this, at not knowing where all this seeing will end".[68] In performing the mark of the Other, Orlan forces the spectator to see the unseeable; the literal enactment of the discourses of the Other. Through this she enacts her agency as a subject.

The fluid, unstable identity of Orlan as enacted through her use of her fragmented body in her performances illustrates the importance for feminism in recognising the agency for women in fragmented identities. The work of Pat Cadigan expresses a similar concern around the body and fragmentation. Like Orlan, Cadigan presents a single body with multiple identities. Orlan's response to this problem is to put the body into a state of flux. Cadigan's response, on the other hand, is to reveal the agency for women in multiple identities and so to question the political efficacy for feminism of the single, fixed, stable body.

Enacting the Mark in Fragments: Pat Cadigan's *Fools*

In her novel *Fools*, Pat Cadigan investigates subjectivity, directly focusing on the concerns raised by many feminist critics with postmodern subjectivity. In *Fools*, Cadigan interrogates postmodern ideas of fragmentation. She creates a novel in which the characters experience fragmented subjectivity, and a fictional world in which the fragmentation of socio-political realities leads to a politics which is no longer grounded in the subject and is no longer static, but, like the subjects themselves, is fluid and dynamic. In interrogating the political ramifications of fragmented subjectivity, Cadigan positions the reader alongside the protagonist of the novel. This enables Cadigan to avoid simply representing fragmentation. By actively and directly creating a fragmented state for the reader Cadigan refuses to maintain the rational space of realist fiction, where the reader is in a privileged knowledge position in relation to the central character.

The reader begins the novel by thinking that the central character is, in fact, two different characters. As the narrative develops with the 'second' character the reader's confusion begins to follow the modernist epistemological steps by wondering how the 'two' 'narratives' will fit together. Discussing the confusion of the reader in *Fools*, Nicola Griffith, in a review of *Fools*, indicates the extent to which Cadigan uses the first section of the novel to establish a central character, in order to later challenge the reader's perceptions of how the central position is established. Griffith writes: "When the reader reaches the end [of the first part] she thinks she knows, more or less, what has happened. Then she hits the opening of the second part, and the focus of the book suddenly jumps, and she realizes she was wrong, wrong, wrong".[69] It is only with the advent of the 'third' character that the sudden juxtapositions of the characters' narratives become more frequent, and the reader becomes aware of the protagonist's fragmentation. However, neither the reader nor the protagonist is ever fully aware which character is the 'original', and this enables Cadigan to question the political efficacy of fragmented identity for women. As with *Synners* and "Rock On", in *Fools* Cadigan plays with the idea of issues of control in identity formation.

Whilst there is only one central body within this text, there are three central characters, and they inhabit the same biological space. Marceline is a "memory junkie" who buys memories and gains pleasure from experiencing someone else's sense of identity. Marva is a method actress who uses technology to become the character she is playing. Finally, there is a "brain police" officer whose mission is to eliminate Marceline. The three characters exist exclusively within the body, and each persona is unaware of the existence of the others. In creating this extremity of fragmentation, Cadigan presents the reader with a feminist critique of postmodern, decentred subjects. This enables her to question the political efficacy of fragmentation for feminist agency.

Within *Fools* Cadigan again portrays a body which is fragile and under threat. Within Cadigan's novel the reader experiences the need for a fragmented and yet relational sense of self, which is thwarted by identity which is totally fragmented and separate. Each character's extreme fragmentation is portrayed in their relationship to other characters around them. The characters from Marceline's 'life' appear in Marva's and vice versa, and this suggests that it is the connection between people that keeps the subject 'whole' and seems to 'ground' them in 'lived' experience. This is also a cause of anxiety for the characters as their fragmentation is so extreme that they do not recognise the other characters around them. This often results in the blurring of the boundaries between the characters, and causes narrative leaps from one character to the next.

> The left side of my vision became unusually vivid. I could feel a sort
> of mental searching or groping, as if I were trying to remember
> something. Except I wasn't. Aliens, I thought, bombarding my head
> with thought-control rays. So this was schizophrenia. And even *that*
> didn't feel like my own thought. Maybe this *was* schizophrenia.[70]

The mark of fragmentation is disempowering here as it results in rigid boundaries of fragmentation, without the blurring of identity between the female characters.

This extreme fragmentation results in a lack of control for women over their own bodies. Marceline feels as if her body is being used by someone else; "[j]ust as my feet hit the floor, I get the oddest damned sensation, this damned feeling that *I'm* not moving. More like I'm being steered. Used".[71] Furthermore, she has lost control over her mind. When she is forcibly abducted by Bateau and her mind is read against

her will, this lack of agency is revealed by Cadigan in the extent to which Marceline has no control over her own memories; she has no control over which memories she experiences, in what order, and at what speed.

Furthermore, she feels that she's not in control of her own body, as her mouth says things that she doesn't think her mind is telling her to say:

> I swallowed and cleared my throat again for another try. Before I could make a sound, the left side of my vision gave a funny jump and I could no longer remember how to talk. But my voice came out anyway."She had a cop," I heard myself say. "She was a cop. She was Brain Police in deep undercover." Pajamas looked from Anwar to the tint and back to me. "What *are* you talking about?" I'm *not talking*, I tried to say, but my voice went on without me.[72]

The extreme passivity of the characters in the novel reveals a lack of agency for women in separated fragmentation.

Yet, when the boundaries begin to blur around the characters the fragmentation can be read as empowering and positive because it enables each character to move freely in the novel between many different compartmentalised areas of society, and enables her to escape dangerous situations. As the fragmented characters build up relationships with the characters around them they experience an active presence that enables identity transitions as a positive state. Performing the mark of fragmentation for the reader enacts the anti-realist, and anti-masculinist stance that critiques masculinist notions of a unified, confined self.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Performing Right on the Mark

You see, I WAS NOT EXPECTED TO BE TALENTED.
And when I see you
after you beat me
after you degrade me
and you stand on top of me
in some god-awful museum
you say to me.
There are no great women artists!
There are no great women artists!
There are no great women artists!
We are always the exception.
I was not expected to be talented.

Karen Finley[1]

I wanted to say to certain guys, "Hey, you want to see pussy? I'll
show you more pussy than you'll ever want to see."

Annie Sprinkle[2]

As was discussed in Chapter One, "Performing Subjectivities", theories of mimesis attempt to create a corollary relationship between the real and representation. Mimesis is recognised by Elin Diamond, in her essay "Mimesis, Mimicry and the True-Real", as patriarchal because it maintains the power of the real through maintaining the relationship between representation and the real. It thus maintains the real as a space of power and insists upon the real as a masculine site, thereby insisting, in turn, on its corollary representative, representation, as enforcing patriarchal performatives. Diamond argues that mimicry alters this relationship between the real and representation. Furthermore, she has argued, in her essay "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory", that alienation techniques serve to reveal the constructed nature of gender identities themselves. This, in turn, challenges the mimetic relationship between representation and the real. Thus, Diamond's challenge to mimetic theories investigates the role of the spectator in enforcing such

conventional force, "releasing the spectator from imaginary and illusory identifications".[3]

If the real is unsymbolisable, and the 'feminine' is that which "is outside the circuit of discursive exchange… and hence is not available as a political signifier",[4] feminist writers and performers need to consider the challenge to the notion of the real as a space in which women operate as exchange commodities. In turn, they need to challenge the manner in which these ideologies become reified through ritualisation. Elin Diamond, in her essay 'Brechtian Theory/ Feminist Theory', argues that one approach is to develop Brechtian theatre practices for feminist performance. In this way, Diamond argues that the spectator can look beyond representation by being confronted with the 'remainder' of meaning. In an explanation of the usefulness of the Brechtian concept of Gestus, she writes:

> Each action must contain the trace of the action it represses, thus the meaning of each action contains difference. The audience is invited to look beyond representation – beyond what is authoritatively put in view – to the possibilities of as yet unarticulated actions or judgements.[5]

Diamond also locates pleasure in the "indeterminacy of multiple meanings", and this is useful for a feminist theory of representation and performance which seeks to question the construction of identity. If pleasure comes from meaning, and particularly from the moment when we are fully present in meaning in the pronouncement of the "I", the pleasure in the absence of meaning becomes a pleasure of not knowing or fixing our identity – but instead rests in the possibilities at *that moment* of multiple identities. Challenging the modes of recognition that endorse ideology as ritual provides interesting analyses of feminist subjectivities.

In his essay "Signature, Event, Context", Derrida explores the theory that forms of representation, but particularly writing, depend upon absence as an extension of presence. Derrida goes on to theorise that as a result representation becomes an idealised presence. Consequently representation does not contain the self as fully realised in the present moment, as only the mark of the self emerges in the representation. In order for representation to work there must be a threat of 'absolute absence'. Derrida goes on to say that there is no experience of pure presence, but only of differential marks which emerge in the present moment of representation. It

is because this mark can be extracted and cited, to use Derrida's terms, that it reveals a general state of nonpresence, and as such has no absolute centre of meaning. As representation is only the mark of presence and not presence itself, so presence is not the mark of subjectivity that it appears. When the subject is represented as present it appears that one is represented *as* a subject, but this cannot be the case when subjectivity does not lie in presence. One of the ways in which subjectivity has appeared to operate, is in the construction of 'marks' of presence which appear to contain identity constructions and positions. In this system of performing 'marks' the subject position does not lie behind the representation, it merely appears present in the performative instant of representation, and one way in which subjectivity is recognised as fluid and changing is the way in which it refuses to be contained by representations.

It seems that the recognition required from a performative representation actually denotes the fragmentation of subjectivities. This recognition, however, is not full presence, but the mark of it and in this way the recognition of identity is necessary for identity to be constructed. One problematic aspect for feminist subjectivities within this use of the 'witness' to subjectivity is the understandings of the female as a site which represents both subject and object.[6] This seems to indicate that woman needs the recognition of the Other inside herself in order to recognise herself as a subject. This has been problematic for women and for feminism, as we have explored in the preceding chapters, as it means that the recognition has come from already validated modes of identity positioning. Deflectors of this position see only determinism and lack of control. However, feminist investigations into performative subjectivities embrace the 'unknown', as we shall see. Unlike psychoanalysis, where the unknown reveals a repressed tendency which can be brought to the surface and so made known, explorations into agency and identity often perform the female as mark as a direct threat to masculinist ideologies around subjectivity.

Representation seems concerned with the continued presence of the artist. This seems to me to be about the continued presence of the artist as subject and, indeed, the continued presence of the spectator as Other. In this scenario, art as

representation creates and maintains the spectator as Other. In seeking to affirm the position of oneself as a central subject the artist is placing her/himself in a site of continued presence within representation. One reason why much of this art is focused on the body of the artist her/himself is a move towards recognition as a subject in the performance of the mark of the Other as a political means of enacting feminist agency. As Gillian Rose has argued in her performance essay "As if the Mirrors had Bled", the construction of the space of the in-between is an essential in the formation of relational subjectivities:

> This strategy of deconstruction from within means that the risks entailed in her writing (Irigaray), and this performance, are high; masquerade may be assimable to masculinist discourse as just another example of feminine superficiality.[7]

It is this performance of the mark of the feminine in extreme ways that the performance artists discussed in this chapter challenge. Karen Finley and Annie Sprinkle enact the exposed body of the other and in so doing critique its status of passive object, and reveal the threatening potential contained in the agency of the Other.

Karen Finley and the Angry Other

Performing the anger and sadness of lived experiences of the mark of gender, Karen Finley's performances are both powerful and disturbing. Her work is often extreme in both the images of herself as performer that she chooses to represent, and in the words she uses to communicate the issues she wishes to raise. In "Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts: The Taboo Art of Karen Finley", C. Carr describes the unpredictable aspect inherent to Finley's performance strategy:

> She might be stealing the male voice... Might be spitting on the stage. Tearing at her taffetas. Smearing food on herself. She might say or do anything up there. On stage Karen Finley represents a frightening and rare presence – an unsocialized woman.[8]

This presentation of herself as 'unpredictable' is integral to her performance style.

Finley studied at the San Francisco Art Institute, and is now based in New York. Within the work of performance artists there is an effort to place the artistic impetus within a personal, tragic or epiphanic moment. This often ties the performer dealing with extreme images into a pathology of behaviour and provides a rational for the extreme measures undertaken in the performance, and for which the spectator can find no other reasonable 'rationale'. In this way, the personal tales of Franko B's disturbing life can thus be made to explain a disturbing artistic project, as can Ron Athey's HIV+ status, and Bob Flanagan's cystic fibrosis. As these performers enact the 'non- normative' body analysed by Amelia Jones, the extent to which reasons and rationale are needed to rationalise the performative enactment perform the masculinist economy at work. In order to give reasons why these performers insist upon their subjectivity and perform it as a direct challenge to masculinist, heterosexual dominant normalcy, the tragic real moment can be made to explain the existence of these challenges to heterosexual, masculine dominance. Within feminist performance art, however, such reasons are often found to be unnecessary, since it follows the logic of patriarchy to construct women as the hysterical Other.

Feminist performance artists clearly demonstrate this point in different ways. Orlan refuses to allow information of her personal life to be widely referred to, causing her to be accused of promulgating the mysterious enigma of the 'star' artist. In contrast to this Finley adopts an excessively personal role, and clearly refers to her father's suicide as a tragic moment of realisation that "makes me interested in real time".[9] Rather than refuse to discuss this personal experience Finley draws attention to it in order to politicise the reduction of feminist performance to subjective confessional impulses. This has led to a focus in Finley's work on portraying extremity through specified 'real' enactment.

Indeed, Finley's concern with performing to disrupt the real is illustrated in the beginnings of her interest in performance, as documented by C. Carr:

> Finley began to 'perform' as a teenager. Her favorite routine was to stage an epileptic seizure in front of a restaurant – or pretend to vomit – to see whether or not people would keep eating. Mostly, they would.[10]

Constant State of Desire, Karen Finley, 1986, a solo theatrical performance at The Kitchen Center, New York, as it appears in RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present,* 1988

This insistence on locating her work within the real leads her to establish a specifics of situation within performance. This specification of located and experienced pain is informed by the feminist need to see the personal as political. The style of her performance enables her to take her rage and locate it within the experience of the personas she adopts in performance, which lends the extremity of her performance even more power through being attached to specific situations.

> I grew up to the stories of my Aunt Mandy.
> In public it was cancer of the uterus, in private
> Aunt Mandy died because she was butchered.
> She died from an abortion, a hatchet job.
> She lay dying in the basement.

> They found the rats eating her insides out,
> in fact all of her blood drained out of her.
> All of the women bowed their heads
> at the story of Aunt Mandy
> 'Cause they knew it could have been them.[11]

In "Aunt Mandy", part of *We Keep our Victims Ready*, Finley performs the political feminist concern with the right of women to control their own bodies in terms of reproduction and abortion, through locating this feminist politics within the specific case of one woman's plight.

Given that the performative operates through the enactment of ideology formed in repetition through conventional force, Finley's insistence on performing the voice in her performances politicises the use of language and convention in silencing the voice of woman. When, in performance, Karen Finley speaks about this positioning in language, and she is present physically and assertively vocal, this performance radically challenges such constructions of female identity. In *We Keep our Victims Ready*, she challenges the notion that women are not supposed to be able to assert their position vocally, seen in the opening quotation to this chapter: "I keep all this to myself because I was not expected to be talented".[12] In saying this aloud she acknowledges the pressure to 'keep all this to herself', but simultaneously refuses this repression as she acknowledges it. The physical presence of Finley as she challenges this assumption radically disturbs the rational self's positioning of the body as a relegated space from which the subject should, at best, escape and, at worst, tolerate as a means of material existence.

Karen Finley explores female identities in her work as she investigates the roles of women in society. Her work has an assertive edge that has much in common with contemporary investigations into feminist identity. Feminist identities have embraced explorations into identity alterity in a way which rejects the notion that women must experience themselves as whole if they are ever to reach a point of decentred subjectivity as positive for women. On the contrary, much of this recent work seems to suggest that women are actually embracing multiple and changing subjectivities in such a way that they are seen as liberating women from the confines of rigidly imposed social roles. Finley's work "The Constant State of Desire" explores female identity and embraces an assertive and aggressive feminist

exploration of the confines of female identity. In this performance piece Finley moves rapidly between identity positions suggesting the rapid movement between positions which women in patriarchal societies have developed in order to function effectively.

In this way, Finley's work has been linked to the 'madness' of the performing woman. Part of the reasons for this accusation could be connected to her presentation style, which is deliberately trance-like. C. Carr in "Unspeakable Practises, Unnatural Acts" argues that within Finley's performances:

> There's no nonsense here about taking an audience out of itself and into the performer's world. Even an artist like Spalding Gray – whose work tells the ongoing story of his own life – sees an I'm-not-acting persona, removed at some level from a "real" self. Finley doesn't offer such wholeness; she presents a persona that has shattered, a self unable to put a face on things.[13]

The trance-like state in which Finley performs breaks with the mimetic relationship between the performer and the real. Finley states:

> That state of being is very natural, so I'm surprised when people call it a trance state. It's something really lacking in our culture – any kind of religion, or any kind of spiritual mask, or any way of breaking the usual routine of day-to-day acting.[14]

Clearly this ritualistic aspect to her performances challenges traditional mimesis. Ritual for Finley is connected to her style of performance, which she does not rehearse beforehand. When she performs an extended run of a piece, which she terms a "performance procedure", she changes it as she does so.[15] The writing procedure comes similarly from her process of automatic writing, and so the characters she performs are not characters in the traditional mimetic sense.

Part of this performance style is clearly for Finley part of her anti-masculinist, anti-rationale stance. David Frankel argues that her use of aggressive, confrontational language and her challenging use of her body in her performances, performs "a feminist impulse" because of what he sees as Finley's "avoidance of the mystification of mastery".[16] Finley has been dismissed by certain spectators, as David Frankel discusses:

> They missed, or refused, her ideas, as if thought were incompatible with such deeply felt expulsions – yet those performances had the

quality of bringing what might have seemed sociological or theoretical (the way objectification and consumption work on women's bodies, say) into fraught but clear vision.[17]

In her essay "Motherhood According to Karen Finley", Lynda Hart discusses the efforts being made to reclaim Finley within dominant masculinist culture and to rewrite the political locus of her work in this effort to "conventionalize her".[18] Hart argues that:

> This emphasis on her domestic/sexual 'normality' comes just a bit less than a year after she was casually tossed in with the homosexual threesome – Holly Hughes, John Fleck, and Tim Miller. The heterosexual family circle strives to reenclose the author of the "Black Sheep" monolog – Finley's assault on the nuclear family as a primary site of oppression.[19]

Finley's performances work with investigating catharsis in performance. As Lynda Hart argues, Finley performs "a kind of martyrdom as she absorbs, experiences, and transmits the suffering of a variety of oppressed peoples".[20] Indeed, Hart has argued that the rage Finley expresses throughout her performances functions as a kind of cathartic release for Finley, which serves to 'purify' her anger at her 'containment' within the patriarchal system.[21] Hart celebrates this performance rage as it "permits transgressions of the unitary, coherent humanist subject",[22] yet celebrations of catharsis that focus on the purifying aspect such rage performs are problematic in relation to Finley.

Indeed, part of Finley's performance strategy seems to be a desire to challenge rationalism itself as a male discourse. Part of this project, it seems, actually challenges the conventional relationship between the performer and the spectator. In her essay "Spectator Response and Comprehension", Catherine Schuler's critique of Finley's performance style focuses on the performance of "Hate Yellow", part of *Constant State of Desire*:

> Understanding "Hate Yellow" depends upon a relatively obscure connection between women and the color yellow. If my survey is representative, responses revealed that not only did no one understand the contradiction between the words and the visual motif, their responses were almost entirely emotional and impressionistic and indicated no grasp of Finley's ideas or objectives.[23]

Yams Up My Granny's Ass, Karen Finley, 1986, a performance at The World, a New York club. Photograph by Dona Ann McAdams, as it appeared in Elinor Fuchs, "Staging the Obscene Body", *TDR*, 1989

Such critiques of Finley's performance style indicate the extent to which her performances aim to challenge the theatrical communication of 'aims and objectives'. The fact that this point is often missed indicates the power of the force of convention which she is critiquing. When male performers, artists and writers make what seem unusual and disconnected associations which are 'misunderstood' the work itself is claimed as art. The misunderstanding actually serves to prove the nature of the work as art, because this aligns it with the irrational and emotional processes of catharsis. However, when women artists, performers and writers make these associations the work is ultimately critiqued as obscure and meaningless. Masculinist discourse argues that because the spectator cannot understand the work

in a rational way the female artist has not communicated effectively. The problem with this scenario is the extent to which it positions the spectator within masculine parameters, as the 'knowing' subject who interprets the art object presented for their gaze. The purpose of Finley's performance style challenges this construction of the spectator. As was established in Chapter Two, "The Cathartic Subject", Finley it seems refuses the sacrifice of the performer to this masculine system of knowledge production, and in her use of unexplained emotion which she refuses to purify for the spectator. Thus the spectator is not provided with this cathartic release.

Another critique levelled at the performances of Finley is the charge of pornography. This accusation seems to come from a need to position her work within categories that can be easily assimilated to masculinist discourse. Performing naked and aggressively, and attacking this masculine privilege whereby women are supposed to view themselves through the eyes of this dominant masculine gaze, challenges this privilege. C. Carr argues that Finley "renders the pornography impotent" within her work through working "beyond rage to the trigger for that rage".[24] However, it is this element of rage and sex which is troubling within Finley's work as she associates sex with power, and so appropriates the symbolic power of masculinist ideology. C. Carr argues that:

> Finley often appropriates the male point of view and male desire in her language. Or some woman character starts fucking whoever up the ass, magically acquiring the power of men. Her work returns again and again to oral or anal sex, usually associating them with power.[25]

Despite this argument by Carr that the "tired old vocabulary of abuse has never sounded so sad",[26] this appropriation is problematic. It does, as Carr argues, put a new twist on it because we see it differently when these masculinist abusive languages are heard from the mouth of a woman who names these acts as abuse. The problem is not in the extent to which she appropriates this masculinist discourse, as she uses it performatively to subvert it. The problem is in the extent to which she links sex with power. It is not as simple as merely eradicating "the gender difference based on possession or lack of a dick" as Carr argues, when the association of power remains.

Finley has argued against the accusation that her work is pornographic, and in an interview with Richard Schechner she argues that:

> If I was doing porn they'd be very happy. When they book me they think they're going to get some kinky chick from New York going out there shoving my tits in their face. When they find out I'm more than that – well, in London I was cancelled out this summer, I was banned by the Westminster Council and Scotland Yard.[27]

Clearly from this, we can see that it is something other than pornography that is threatening. Indeed, Schechner argues that:

> It's not only the ideas behind what you're saying, but the very words themselves that scare people – because "sexual women" are often constructed by males as being visible, physical, and literally dumb, without words.[28]

Finley received notoriety for her performance of *We Keep Our Victims Ready*, in which she covered her body with chocolate. In her interview with Finley, "Telling the Awfullest Truth", C. Carr argues that Finley used the chocolate in a ritualistic way, symbolising that "women are treated like shit". This ritual then led into a positive creation of identity in which Finley transformed the shit and "recreated herself, applying sprouts and red candles and tinsel, till she appeared to be wearing a strange and beautiful costume".[29] In this way she enacted a transition from patriarchal oppression to feminist agency. The fact that the costume becomes strange and beautiful illustrates the power in this feminist position. By maintaining her 'strange' look Finley is able to perform her otherness, and she is thus able to enact the power of the other in a way that contains agency and critiques patriarchy.

Whilst it is possible to understand that it may be impossible for the marked female body to escape being encoded with pain, and the naked female body certainly must struggle to defy being contained within codes which presuppose it as pornographic, Finley's performances challenge, rather than present, that pornographic construction of the female body. Indeed, despite this, as Catherine Schuler argues, "Karen Finley's name continues to be associated with pornographic images of canned yams and naked buttocks".[30] These images are not pornographic inherently and are being constructed as pornography in order to lay claim to work which is challenging to traditional constructions of women as passive consumption, and similarly they work for reasons to ban and control images in which women

actively take control of their sexuality and present their subjective activity assertively, challenging patriarchy aggressively.

Jill Dolan claims that:

> Finley does not offer herself as a passive object. She forces men to be passive in the face of her rage, and she desecrates herself as the object of their desire, thereby mocking their sexuality. Her refusal to play the game leaves the male spectator nowhere to place himself in relation to her performance. He can no longer maintain the position of the sexual subject who views the performer as a sexual object.[31]

Catherine Schuler takes issue with this position of Dolan's. Schuler argues that it is necessary to have a level of understanding of feminist theory in order to comprehend fully Finley's performances, and that Dolan's argument relies on an assumption of biological essentialism as Schuler argues that Dolan assumes that "*female* spectators… will automatically position themselves appropriately in relation to Finley's performance".[32] As a critique of this perspective Schuler argues that spectators of Finley's performances find her work alienating irrespective of differences of gender.[33]

In doing this, Finley it seems is performing her status as marked Other. If we accept this point made by Schuler that Finley's performances alienate the spectator, and that this alienation in part comes from her performance style, it seems that it is the extreme nature of this performance style as "emotional" and "irrational" that performs her status as marked Other and alienates the spectator through literal enactment. With Finley the performance of this mark of gender performs the fear of the Other, and as such politicises the mark of Other rather than merely reinforcing it. It is through performing this seemingly irrational and trance-like state of identity inscription that Finley can find the power of her performance, and can empower herself through becoming the screaming Other of which masculinist society is afraid.

Enacting the Power of the Mark

Laura Mulvey in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", argues that the pleasure of the "invisible" viewer, peculiar to cinema as a genre, creates the spectator as male through being the possessor of the masculine gaze. In this essay, Mulvey discusses scopophilia, in which voyeurism as a fantasy is produced through this "invisible" spectator. Mulvey argues that this also creates narcissism. Mulvey states:

> In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness.*[34]

In this essay Mulvey establishes a difference between what she terms sadistic voyeurism and fetishistic scopophilia as two structurally different types of pleasure in looking. Mulvey links voyeurism with sadism because "pleasure lies in ascertaining guilt... asserting control and subjugating the guilty person through punishment or forgiveness".[35] Fetishistic scopophilia, in contrast, "can operate outside linear time as the erotic instinct is focused on the look alone".[36]

In *Ways of Seeing* John Berger argues that because the presumed spectator is always male, women are judged according to appearance, and are established as narcissistic in order to conscript them into viewing themselves as objects. According to Berger this results in a split in women's identities, in which women experience their identity as split into both surveyor and surveyed, and that these aspects of herself are always experienced as "distinct elements of her identity as a woman".[37] Crucially, Berger describes this access to power in terms similar to those critiqued by Naomi Wolf in *The Beauty Myth*. Berger writes:

> She has to survey everything she is and everything she does because how she appears to others, and ultimately how she appears to men, is of crucial importance for what is normally thought of as the success of her life. Her own sense of being in herself is supplanted by a sense of being appreciated as herself by another.[38]

In this scenario, as Berger argues:

men act and *women appear*. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relations of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight.[39]

Such critiques of the gaze have prompted feminist authors such as E. Deidre Pribram to question how we have come "to perceive all forms of filmic gaze as male", and thus to seek "a female spectatorial position" "in which women were engendered as subjects".[40]

Shelagh Young argues that when considering the possibility of establishing a female gaze, in opposition to the male gaze analysed previously, women should remain aware of the power positions within the gaze, and "consider just who is looking and at whom!".[41] In an analysis of fetishism in the videos of Madonna, Young observes the workings of such a feminist gaze:

Madonna confidently returns the fetishist's gaze while wearing his favourite sexual accessories, she reveals herself to be in the possession of knowledge; she *knows* because she has looked and is now *looking back*. This parody of a classic pornographic peepshow reveals the sophistication of a new young female audience that knows the difference between feeling powerful and feeling powerless.[42]

The important distinction here, I feel, is that in order to be in the position of *looking back* the female subject must first have *looked*. This issue clearly highlights what is for women a problematic area, and is performed by Annie Sprinkle in her enactment of her pornographic body.

Performing the Mark of Other: Annie Sprinkle

Making the change from pornographic model, actress and prostitute to feminist pornographic performance artist means that Annie Sprinkle enacts the lived experience of the politics of representation through her performances. Her work has much in common with feminist work on the body and identity and has an extreme edge which forces the spectator to consider their implications in the voyeuristic aspect of objectifying the female body and controlling women through sex. This

Ellen wants to get married
and have children.

Annie wants fame, fortune,
and a career.

"Ellen/Annie", as it appears in Annie Sprinkle *Post-Porn Modernist*

extreme aspect of her work together with the confrontation of the spectators allows no room for the spectators to resist responsibility for their part in this control of female identity. In performing her pornographic body Sprinkle enacts her identity as a feminist subject and agent. In the process of this she performs identity transition.

Annie Sprinkle, 'post porn modernist', clearly uses performance as a basis for identity metamorphosis, a concept that she refers to as 'metamorphosex'. In her first performance art piece, *Deep Inside Porn Stars*, she performed her identity transformation from shy Ellen Steinberg to exhibitionist Annie Sprinkle in the poem "Ellen/Annie":

> I chose to illustrate with slides, words, and a few props, how shy, insecure, scared Ellen Steinberg had re-created herself as Annie Sprinkle, exhibitionist, confident, fearless sex slut.[43]

However, this transition into Sprinkle does not stabilise her identity. Her work continues to metamorphosise as her identity transforms. Her show *Post Porn Modernist* altered over the five years she performed it as a direct result of her enactment of identity transition through performance; "as I changed the show

changed, and vice versa".[44] Sprinkle is explicit about this relationship between performance and identity metamorphosis:

> I discovered that through performance art I could create my own
> future. If I performed who I wanted to become, I would become it.[45]

This direct connection between identity and performance began with her decision to work in pornography. A total of one hundred and fifty feature sex films, twenty feature sex videos, and fifty eight-millimetre loops document her life as Annie Sprinkle 'fearless sex-slut'. She describes going into prostitution and pornography as a very real choice in which she was able to express a sexual exhibitionist identity that was repressed in her life as Ellen Steinberg. She describes her experience of making pornographic movies in positive terms:

> Having sex in front of people was fun and easy... Once, I even tried
> out for a part in a "straight" big-budget feature film, *48 Hours*,
> starring Eddie Murphy. They were looking for someone to play a bit
> part as a hooker. Dozens of women showed up for the casting call,
> and we had to wait for two and a half hours. They treated us like
> children and were very disrespectful. That ended my interest in a
> straight movie career. I decided to stay in pornography, where I was
> treated with more respect.[46]

Even though Sprinkle portrays her experiences as a porn star in mainly positive ways, her work as a pornographic performance artist critiques patriarchal definitions of both pornography and women.

Sprinkle ends *Post Porn Modernist* with the performance of Anya, whom she describes as a 'sacred prostitute'. This new persona of Anya evolved from her experiences of losing friends from AIDS. Within the performance of this transition from Annie to Anya she draws on interpretations of ancient ritual. Finally she masturbates to orgasm on stage in what she describes as a sexual energy of connection with the audience who are given rattles to shake. This performance of Anya is arguably the most problematic aspect of *Post Porn Modernist*, but it may also be a critically engaging part of her show. This ritualistic performance of Anya that ends the performance of *Post Porn Modernist* exposes the categorisation of women into sexual categories. Through performing this ritual Sprinkle draws attention to the patriarchal discourse through which 'porn stars' are constructed as

'whores', and to the fragmented nature of identity. Rather than accept patriarchal discourse, though, Sprinkle uses identity transition in order to enact her political, feminist agency.

In *Staging Femininities,* Geraldine Harris argues that Annie Sprinkle performs an attempt to achieve a linear identity based on a logical progression from one persona to another:

> Sprinkle's three personas tend to be represented as a linear, developmental accumulation in temporal terms, so that each one seems to represent a stage in her progress forwards as an individual towards 'growth'.[47]

This view of Sprinkle's focus on sex and identity within her performances rightly places emphasis on the transitional state of Sprinkle's identity. However, instead of seeing Sprinkle as deconstructing the processes of identity, Harris suggests that each of these identity transitions are separate stages that supplant one another. As such Harris argues that Sprinkle works towards constructing a 'whole' and unified identity which has achieved 'growth'. However, given that Sprinkle's performances change and adapt to her identity transitions, both her performances and her identity resist the construction of identity as whole. Explicitly documenting her identity transition as 'metamorphosex', Sprinkle critiques "developmental accumulation in temporal terms".

This argument is illuminated further by another of Harris's concerns about the performance. Harris explains her experience of watching *Post Post Porn Modernist*, at the Glasgow Centre for Contemporary Art in 1994, during which Sprinkle performs her transition from shy Ellen to sex-slut Annie and finally to goddess Anya. Harris found that whilst she wanted to see Sprinkle's performance as liberatory for Sprinkle she could not be convinced by Sprinkle's liberation and instead found herself alienated from the performance. Harris's problem in identifying the feminist agency of transitional identities lies in her response to being a spectator at *Post Post Porn Modernist*. Harris's reaction to this performance by Sprinkle highlights many of the issues that I want to focus on in Sprinkle's performance. These aspects bear connections to the relationship with the spectator that I have

"Club 90 meets Carnival Knowledge", as it appears in Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*

argued work not only in Sprinkle's performances but also in those of Orlan, Karen Finley, Franko B and Bob Flanagan.

I would like to focus on Harris's reaction to the performance in order to engage with feminist issues around the positioning of the spectator and the performer. I am not aiming to take issue with Harris's understanding of Sprinkle, but instead to use the points that Harris raises as a feminist spectator of Sprinkle to explore the relationship created in such extreme performances as Sprinkle's between the performer and the spectator. Harris argues that she feels alienated from Sprinkle's performance because Sprinkle privileges sexual difference. For Harris this privileging of sexual difference seems to work in two ways. Firstly, by addressing the men in the audience Sprinkle establishes sexual difference as a primary law.

Secondly, Sprinkle's performance of her identity transitions creates problems of identification for Harris as a feminist academic.

Sprinkle's address to the men in the audience is not in the name of "education and reassurance" as Harris finds so alienating, but instead is done in order to challenge them. Aspects of Sprinkle's performance do open her to charges of assimilation to masculinist cultural discourse. Her performance of her sexual body can be read as part of the patriarchal discourse that seeks to control women through their bodies. Her address to the males in the audience could, in such a reading, be understood as an attempt to 'reassure' male spectators. Charges of assimilation are a very real concern within postmodern feminist performances that critique the discourses of patriarchy from within its own logic, even though this is done with the intention of exposing this very logic. Orlan also addresses the audience in a way which is often taken at face value. In comforting the suffering spectator, by telling them not to feel pain on her behalf, Orlan draws attention to the suffering of the spectator. I would argue that because this fits the logic of her work drawing attention to the suffering of the spectator is her intention. Sprinkle's address to the males in the audience works in a similar way. It draws attention to the very structures of patriarchy by which men look at the sexual object, and women perform as that object. Harris is not alone in understanding Sprinkle's performance as assimilable to masculinist discourse. Indeed, in order to develop this alienated response Harris draws on the response experienced by Elinor Fuchs, and described by her in her essay "Staging the Obscene Body", to Sprinkle's performance in Richard Schechner's show *The Prometheus Project*. Harris cites Fuchs's reaction to this performance, and although it is long it is worth citing at length here to appreciate the depth of Fuchs's alienation:

> I shrink back from the spectacle in my seat, filled with rage at
> Schechner who is submitting me and other women to this assault on
> our bodies via this alien medium this ... who is she? Is she a woman
> like me? [...] the act becomes more threatening as Sprinkle offers to
> give a little demonstration of cock sucking. By now blind to critical
> judgement, whatever might be the case, I feel violated and furious at
> my entrapment.[48]

An important point to emphasise here about Sprinkle's performance as experienced by Fuchs, is that this performance draws attention to the patriarchal discourse by which Sprinkle is constructed as 'whore'. Whilst performing her identity as a sexual subject of agency is important to any analysis of Sprinkle's performances, the point that stands out from Fuchs reaction is the extent to which Sprinkle is successful at drawing the spectators attention to the discursive practices that establish 'feminine' identity within the virgin/whore dichotomy. In exposing patriarchal discourse, but refusing to sacrifice herself to it, Sprinkle performs her feminist position.

Harris is also alienated from Sprinkle's performance because of Sprinkle's enactment of sexual subject, which alienates Harris as a feminist academic spectator:

> In short, rather than identifying with Sprinkle as a 'female' spectator, mostly I found myself denying Sprinkle's authorship and dismissing her subjectivity, perceiving her as an effect, rather than a critic of certain cultural myths.[49]

The problem here is that Harris 'dismisses' Sprinkle because her performance of identity appears to be an 'effect', and not an authentic subjectivity. However, Harris recognises the challenge contained in Sprinkle's performance to the spectator's subjectivity, stating that:

> Certainly, in the course of *Post Post Porn Modernist* I found myself forcibly becoming aware of and questioning some of the pre-existing assumptions I held not only about her practice but also about my own subjectivity.[50] (148)

Sprinkle's identity transitions thus enact identity as a construction, rather than as an authentic process towards unified 'growth'. Identity is indeed an 'effect' and it is in this way that Sprinkle performs as a "critic of certain cultural myths".

It is as a "critic of certain cultural myths" that Sprinkle, as part of the performance piece, *Post-Porn Modernist*, performs her worst sexual experiences. Entitled "100 Blow Jobs" this is a disturbing aspect of Sprinkle's performance that directly exposes the patriarchal objectification of women:

> Using a prop made of a row of dildos nailed onto a board, and accompanied by a prerecorded audio tape of mean and nasty voices recalling moments of abuse, I vigorously suck, gag on, and sometimes vomit on the dildos, releasing deep emotions from my gut.[51]
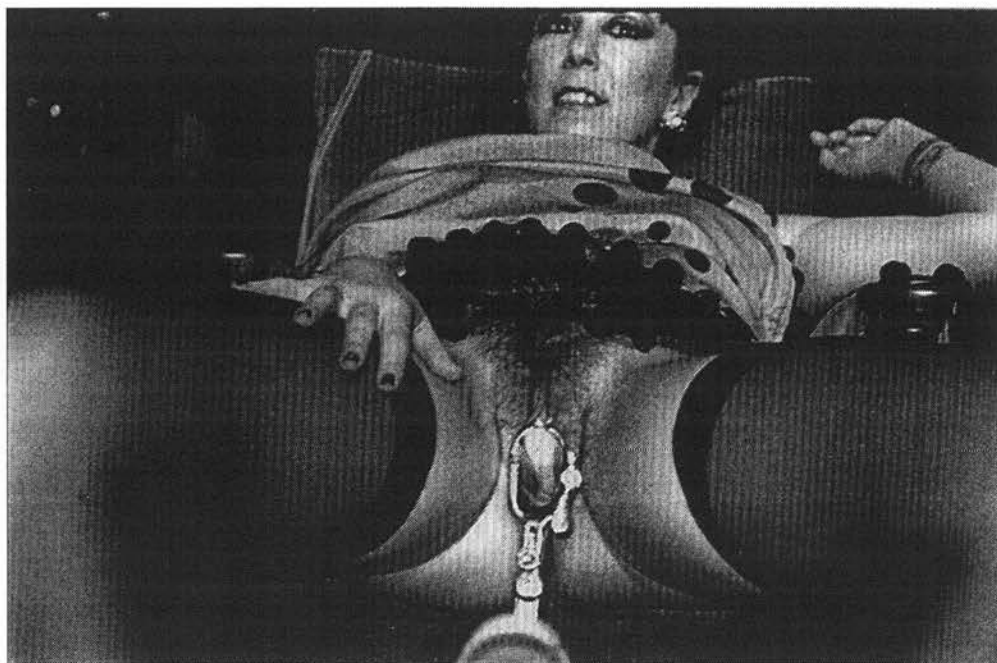
Annie Sprinkle, "Public Cervix Announcement", as it appears in *Post-Porn Modernist*

Harris has argued that "Sprinkle is able to transcend her negative experiences as sex worker through their graphic representation in her show".[52] However, although Sprinkle describes the catharsis that she experiences in "100 Blow Jobs", this catharsis does not enable her to transcend this negative experience, but instead to ground this experience firmly within feminist politics. Juxtaposed with celebratory images of Sprinkle as sexual subject, this piece directly confronts the audience with their complicity as voyeurs in maintaining women as sexual objects.

As part of the performance piece *Post Porn Modernist*, Sprinkle performs 'The Public Cervix Announcement' using a speculum to display her cervix to members of the audience, in an attempt to negotiate sexuality and the body in identity formation. She describes the reasons why she decided to perform "The Public Cervix Announcement" as springing out of a desire to challenge "taboos that were not in our best interest", and expresses a desire "to exemplify vaginal pride. Shame about one's own vagina is totally unnecessary".[53] Annie Sprinkle's work

expresses an assertive performance of feminist identities, and this is exemplified in her expression of one of her reasons for showing her cervix, cited at the beginning of this chapter: "I wanted to say to certain guys, "Hey, you want to see pussy? I'll show you more pussy than you'll ever want to see."".[54] This assertive performance style bears similarities to the assertive style adopted by many contemporary feminist performers and authors explored in this thesis. In this piece Sprinkle performs her sexual objectification in a way that refuses the very terms of objectification. Rather than present her sex as sexy she denies this patriarchal view of women as objects and instead enacts her identity as a performance of feminist agency.

In working closely with notions of voyeurism, Sprinkle's work demands that we explore our own implications in voyeurism. She refuses to let the spectator sink into traditional ways of viewing her work, and so refuses traditional pornographic narratives. As Linda Williams has written in "A Provoking Agent: The Pornography and Performance Art of Annie Sprinkle":

> In this first series of sexual performances in which she first wasn't, and then was, hailed a whore, we can see the discovery of an agency that is not opposed to, but rooted in, the discourse that constructs her... But in that acceptance she also sees room for what Butler calls 'subversive repetition' which becomes an articulation of something that is not named in 'whore': her own desire.[55]

and this is one reason why her work is so threatening to the spectator. Sprinkle's art does indeed refuse to decide "which side of any binary a 'proper' feminism belongs".[56]

In performing her sexed body in this way Annie Sprinkle is able to resist the positioning of her female body as body-object by insisting on her agency as subject. This enables her to critique masculinist ideology from within its own terms, whilst simultaneously refusing the logic of this ideology. In performing her marked body as Other Sprinkle subverts the codes by which women are sealed as sexual objects and creates a space for her own agency as sexual subject.

> I will no longer be made to feel ashamed of existing. I will have my
> voice: Indian, Spanish, white. I will have my serpent's tongue – my
> woman's voice, my sexual voice, my poet's voice. I will overcome
> the tradition of silence.
>
> Gloria Anzaldúa[57]

Performing the mark of the Other in order to challenge masculinist, heterosexist
ideology from within its own logic is a mode of critique enacted by Gloria Anzaldúa
in *Borderlands/La Frontera*. Like both Karen Finley and Annie Sprinkle, Anzaldúa
recognises prescriptions around sexuality as a means of controlling the behaviour of
women. As was discussed in Chapter Three, "Body Boundaries and the Territory of
Identity", Anzaldúa's mestiza identity exists not only in the territory of the border
between Mexico and the United States of America, but also exists in Anzaldúa's
body as an inscription of this border identity. Anzaldúa attempts to create a position
of agency for women out of the experiences of living within patriarchal, white,
heterosexist, Western dominant ideologies. As part of this attempt to enact agency,
she performs the empowerment she finds within the position of Otherness.

   Borderlands/La Frontera performs the process of identity transition that
Anzaldúa undergoes. As *La mestiza* identity crosses borders, so it means that for
Anzaldúa subjectivity cannot be fixed. This understanding of the agency found in the
fluidity of an empowering fragmentation has been generated by recognising the
matrix of oppressive discourses in which the *la mestiza* lives:

> she is subjected to a swamping of her psychological borders. She has
> discovered that she can't hold concepts or ideas in rigid boundaries.
> The borders and walls that are supposed to keep the undesirable ideas
> out are entrenched habits and patterns of behaviour; these habits and
> patterns are the enemy within. Rigidity means death.[58]

Since these 'habits' convey the interpellation of the conventional force through
which the performative works, *la mestza* must be flexible, and open to new
interpellations. In order to find empowerment through performing the mark of the
Other, Anzaldúa must first confront this interpellated aspect of her subjectivity. As

part of this process, she experiences her identity as fragments, and, initially, she sets up these aspects of herself in opposition:

> I have internalized rage and contempt, one part of the self (the accusatory, persecutory, judgmental) using defense strategies against another part of the self (the object of contempt).[59]

Yet, this process of recognising what is originally a negative, disempowering fragmentation caused by oppression, enables her to perceive the empowerment she eventually finds in acknowledging and expressing this Otherness of her identity.

Anzaldúa recognises the aspect of herself which determines upon rebelling against this oppression as "the Shadow-Beast". This rebellious force is an aspect of her self which is not within the control of her accepted parts of her self. In fact, she distances "the Shadow-Beast" from this conscious aspect of her self by describing it in these monstrous terms and objectifying 'it'. As Anzaldúa writes: "It refuses to take orders from my conscious will, it threatens the sovereignty of my rulership".[60] Yet this Other aspect of her identity proves to be a powerful force in enabling both identity transition and challenges to the conventional weight of the interpellated dominant cultures that seek to silence and stultify her subjective agency.

However, in her essay, "Wild Tongues Can't Be Tamed", Ann E. Reuman finds Anzaldúa's analysis of her fragmentation, and her description of "the Shadow-Beast", problematic. Reuman argues that Anzaldúa attempts to "kill off" aspects of herself which do not conform to the dominant ideology:

> Yet even more insidious than her parents' pressure to assimilate is Anzaldúa's own excision of her darker selves, which she represents variously as an animal, an intruder, a "dark shining thing." And when it is not a part of herself that she alienates or denies, it is a part "lovingly" put to death.[61]

Reuman argues that "the Shadow-Beast" is an aspect of Anzaldúa's subjectivity which Anzaldúa must either exorcise or assimilate into a unified sense of subjectivity in order to gain some sense of agency. One reason for Reuman's analysis can be found in the reality of the silencing and oppression which Anzaldúa has experienced as *la mestiza*. As Reuman notes:

> Yet if she *is* heard, she faces the threat of violent silencing: by invalidation of her voice as "too angry," "too harsh," or "too strident"

(read "too political"); by "invitations" to blanch representations of her culture, her language, and her sexuality; or by figurative-literal mutilation.[62]

This silencing is, for Reuman, the force which leads to her fragmentation, and which can only be resolved through integration:

> Wrestling her own denials as well as cultural pressures to conform, she finally (though not without constant grappling) accepts and integrates "that dark shining thing" and the serpent-sexuality that are parts of herself.[63]

Thus, Reuman goes on to argue that Anzaldúa "takes responsibility for her own complicitous rejection of socially unapproved parts of herself and learns to mother herself".[64]

However, Anzaldúa's exploration of her periods of identity transition and her experiences of subjectivity at the borderland of cultures, enables her to find empowerment through writing about this "dark shining thing" that has been made Other by dominant ideologies. Yet, for Anzaldúa the answer seems to lie not in integrating this aspect of self into a unified whole, but in recognising the fear of this position of Other. Thus, in performing this Other she analyses it in terms that are so monstrous as to perform the *mark* of the Other. Part of this process involves recognising the power of the masculinist gaze as a form of fixing the Other within the "rigidity [that] means death". However, Anzaldúa also discusses the power of the gaze from the perspective of the subject recognising her self:

> There is another quality to the mirror and that is the act of seeing. Seeing and being seen. Subject and object, I and she. The eye pins down the object of its gaze, scrutinizes it, judges it. A glance can freeze us in place; it can "possess" us. It can erect a barrier against the world. But in a glance also lies awareness, knowledge.[65]

Part of performing the power contained in the mark of the monstrous Other, for Anzaldúa, lies in the "knowledge" of enacting the fear of the Other. She connects this state of seeing and knowing to the *Coatlicue* state, which, as a sexually powerful force, acknowledges masculinist fears of female sexuality and mobilises the site of this fear.

She identifies as a source of power the "*Coatlalopeuh*, She Who Has Dominion Over Serpents". In so doing, she acknowledges the "Snake Woman"

within herself, which is a part of her monstrous animal body that she had split from herself. Working to acknowledge this "Serpent" power, she states: "Forty years it's taken me to enter into the Serpent, to acknowledge that I have a body, that I am a body and to assimilate the animal body, the animal soul".[66] Anzaldúa rewrites the myth of the *Coatlalopeuh*, regaining the heritage of the Indian *Coatlalopeuh* from its colonised writing over into the virginal *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, and regaining her feminist connection with the sacrificed figure of female Otherness. Anzaldúa writes that:

> The male-dominated Azteca-Mexica culture drove the powerful female deities underground by giving them monstrous attributes and by substituting male deities in their place, thus splitting the female Self and the female deities. They divided her who had been complete, who possessed both upper (light) and underworld (dark) aspects. *Coatlicue*, the serpent goddess, and her more sinister aspects, *Tlazolteotl* and *Cihuacoatl*, were "darkened" and disempowered much in the same manner as the Indian *Kali*.[67]

Indeed, as Reuman notes, "she resexes the virginized *Guadalupe*".[68] However, there are problems with Anzaldúa's reclaiming of this image, because, whilst she describes the *Coatlicue* as "a symbol of the fusion of opposites", *Coatlicue* remains a headless creature of the underworld. Yet, by refusing to be objectified as subjugated Other, Anzaldúa resists the terms of which define Otherness, and so she embodies the threat contained in the site of the Other.

Anzaldúa connects this serpent with female sexuality, and through his image she regains with a sexuality which has been used to control women:

> She, the symbol of the dark sexual drive, the chthonic (underworld), the feminine, the serpentine movement of sexuality, of creativity, the basis of all energy and life.[69]

She discusses the experiences of control and oppression she endured in order to lay a ground and a firm basis from which to organise for change and to experience agency as a feminist subject. As she writes in "Entering Into the Serpent" in *Borderlands*,

> I wonder if this story and similar ones were the culture's attempts to "protect" members of the family, especially girls, from "wandering". Stories of the devil luring young girls away and having his way with them discouraged us from going out. There's an ancient Indian tradition of burning the umbilical cord of an infant girl under the house so she will never stray from it and her domestic role.[70]

For Anzaldúa, the challenge to gender stereotyping and to the heterosexual matrix comes from adopting the position of the sexualised woman, and performing the threat to masculine ideologies which this contains.

Enacting this threat through embodied sexuality, Anzaldúa does more than integrate this sexual subjectivity into her identity. Keating has argued that for Anzaldúa:

> Coatlicue remains a monstrous emblem of the other. As her submersion into the Coatlicue state reveals, however, it is only by confronting this other and re(con)ceiving it as part of herself that she can begin stripping away the internalized oppression that led to the Coatlicue state. This process entails a doubled movement in which Anzaldúa simultaneously redefines this supposedly alien figure and incorporates it into her own self-definition.[71]

Yet, rather than reconstructing the image of the monstrous Other to eradicate its status as Other, Anzaldúa seems to become this monstrous Other in order to explode the terms of masculine, heterosexual dominance through embodying the threat of the sexualised woman. She does, indeed, attempt to recover a precolonial history as Sidonie Smith argues in *Subjectivity, Identity and the Body*, discovering "a source of inspiration and countermythology in the 'complete' figure of the pre-Azteca-Mexica great goddess".[72] Yet, in becoming this resexualised creature she embraces not a newly 'complete' figure, but the power to threaten masculine dominance in her assertion of her sexuality.

It is this *Coatlicue* state that enables her empowerment. It is this very split of her identity which empowers Anzaldúa to achieve agency within her own life. She writes:

> I see *oposición e insurrección*. I see the crack growing on the rock. I see the fine frenzy building. I see the heat of anger or rebellion or hope split open that rock, releasing *la Coatlicue*. And someone in me takes matters into our own hands, and eventually, takes dominion over serpents – over my own body, my sexual activity, my soul, my mind, my weaknesses and strengths. Mine. Ours. Not the heterosexual white man's or the colored man's or the state's or the culture's or the religion's or the parents' – just ours, mine.[73]

The fact that this reveals a separate identity within Anzaldúa which is keen to claim agency and power as a mode of expression indicates the extent to which she wishes to personify the 'monster'. However, rather than see this fragmentation of identity as

totally disconnected in a way that would lead to a breakdown in the ability to move between cultures, she locates a feminist agency in this explosive *Coatlicue*.

Coatlicue becomes the state which enables identity transition through creating "rupture in our everyday world".[74] Yet this rupture of Anzaldúa must contain both fluidity and connection. It is this subject of agency which brings together the disempowered aspects of herself and brings meaning from her oppression:

> And suddenly I feel everything rushing to a center, a nucleus. All the lost pieces of myself come flying from the deserts and the mountains and the valleys, magnetized toward that center. *Completa*.[75]

Whilst she describes the centre in this way, this connection between separate aspects of herself occurs through her lesbian sexuality, which she performs as a threat to masculinist, heterosexual dominance. Rather than representing an homogenised, unified subjectivity these connections remain fluid, maintaining her ability to cross over the borderlands. As she states: "Identity flows between, over, aspects of a person. Identity is a river, a process".[76] Her centre is found, it seems, in the ability to make connections between these monstrous aspects of herself. In so doing, she resists patriarchal, imperialist impulses to separate conclusively and territorialise identity.

As Keating argues, Anzaldúa's work reveals that "oppositional forms of resistance *can* subvert culture from within".[77] Indeed, Anzaldúa herself illuminates this point with an assertive refusal to be silenced:

> I want the freedom to carve and chisel my own face, to staunch the bleeding with ashes, to fashion my own gods out of my entrails. And if going home is denied me then I will have to stand and claim my space, making a new culture – *una cultura mestiza* – with my own lumber, my own bricks and mortar and my own feminist architecture.[78]

Unleashing the monstrous Other Anzaldúa enacts the empowerment of the feminist subject.

CONCLUSION

In exploring the performative inscription of gender in feminist performance art and literature, this thesis has crossed genres. In so doing, it has examined feminist practitioners from as wide a range as possible, in order to focus on the celebration of fluid subjectivities within contemporary feminism. These discursive and artistic practices share the commonality of enacting feminist subjectivities, and consequently they assertively perform the agency of the feminist subject. Through operating performatively, these works enable feminist subjects to resist the inscription of gender by conventional force. This bridges the gap between performativity and performance, and performance and textuality. Performances by Orlan, Annie Sprinkle, and Karen Finley, as well as texts by Pat Cadigan and Gloria Anzaldúa, engage with representing the subject as active agent. Performing fragmented and embodied subjectivities, these artists and writers use catharsis as a means of enacting identity transition.

As such, feminist practitioners celebrate multiplicity in identity formation. Fundamentally, it is the dispersal and fragmentation of the subject within multiple discourse that enables political efficacy. Flexible, fluid and decentred subjectivities place emphasis on the process of change. This is important for feminist politics as it facilitates change in the present moment of lived reality. As the emphasis is placed on the lived experience of women so the 'real' is negotiated by feminist practitioners. This critique of the 'real' as the primary law enables the real to be seen as one discourse amongst many. As such the subject exists at a symbolic site which indicates the promise of realisation in subjectivity through presence. It is this enactment of the promise of the real that enables fragmentation as agency in postmodern, feminist identities. Given this focus on fragmented identities, subjectivity is enacted through performance. As the subject is always in a state of performing gendered identity, theatrical performance is in a powerful position to highlight the status of gender and identity as performances that enact particular discourses.

As such, masquerade can be a powerful tool to expose gender as a construction. Through performing gender identity to extremes masquerade works in two ways. Firstly, it highlights that there is a performance taking place, and as such it emphasises that gender is always a performance. Masquerade as theatrical performance critiques the definitions of gender that divide masculinity and femininity into opposing dualities. By performing the extremes of femininity, performers are able to challenge the terms by which 'feminine' and 'female' are understood. This performance is politically effective, and engages with performative understandings of performance and subjectivity to critique dominant discourses of gender and power.

Catharsis and Agency

The performative moment enacts discourse and ideology through the historicity contained in each performance or utterance. The power of the performative moment lies in the relationship between the performer and the witness. It is this emphasis on the witness that allows dominant ideology to be subverted. This thesis has explored the empowering and challenging capacity of the performative in order to discuss feminist agency. As the performative contains within it the historicity of ideology so it constructs the subject through the discourse of that ideology. For feminist performers and writers this principle of ideological interpellation must be exposed and challenged. It is through the role of the witness as feminist spectator or reader that the ideology of masculinist discourse can be challenged. Theatrical performance enables the performer to perform a critique of this masculinist ideology, and so subverts its intentions of constructing gendered identity as mutually exclusive. The performers and authors explored in this thesis perform the discourse of femininity to extremes. In this way their masquerade of femininity critiques the logic on which masculinist ideologies are based.

The performers explored in this thesis use catharsis to create an embodied experience of identity that seeks to critique masculinist rationality. Through enacting performances that are embodied and 'irrational' feminist performers create an

experience that is not able to be processed according to masculinist imperialist understandings of identity that seek to categorise and control. As such feminist performers such as Orlan, Karen Finley and Annie Sprinkle engage with the hysterical other in order to explode patriarchal control, just as the anti-masculinist performances of Bob Flanagan and Franko B challenge masculinist ideologies.

Catharsis depends upon the shared connection of bodily experience, and operates in the interplay between the performer and spectator. As such, catharsis is reached through a process of substitutional sacrifice. In the conventions of catharsis inherited by contemporary performance artists the performer sacrifices her or his identity to the emotional experience of the spectator. Thus the performer is positioned as body-object to the spectator's subject position. It is this relationship of subject and object positions that is being negotiated in the performances and texts discussed in this thesis. This relationship of substitutional sacrifice sees the performer corporealise the suffering and pain of the social body into their own body in a process of literal enactment. This cathartic exercise purifies the social body of transgressive discursive practices, and in the process purges the spectator of any responsibility in the maintenance of hegemonic discourses. In challenging this classical operation of catharsis contemporary performers inherit a practice expounded by Antonin Artaud. Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty did not aim to purify societies, but instead to give presence to the transgressive elements of those societies. Contemporary negotiations of catharsis extend this principle into the relationship between the performer and the spectator. As the performer refuses to sacrifice themselves for the spectator, so the traditional concept of the 'suffering artist' is challenged, and the traditional catharsis experienced by the spectator, which allows them to 'return' to the world purged of responsibility and purified, is refused. The spectator is denied the cathartic experience as the suffering experienced by the performer is never rationalised. The spectator is denied the process of moving from the empathic experience of the performers body-in-pain to a reasoned understanding and therefore explanation of this pain. The suffering inherent in the performance is never purified.

Following on from this refusal of catharsis, the performer also rejects the self-sacrifice inherent to the cathartic moment. The performer's body-in-pain is not sacrificed, and as such the audience is forced into the position of suffering spectator. In rejecting this contract of substitutional sacrifice the performer becomes empowered to experience the purification of catharsis themselves. In this way the performer experiences the cathartic moment and uses this process to perform transformations between identity positions. However, these fragmented identities are not enacted as a way of achieving a unified and authentic subjectivity, but instead to draw attention to the status of identity as a performance. In this performance of the performance of identity subjectivity is revealed as a recognised construct. Performance thus becomes a means of literally enacting the processes of performativity in identity formation.

Enacting sacrifice in order to challenge the very structure of sacrifice, cathartic performance enables the performer to claim and enact their position as active subject. As the performer enacts the identity of the performance, s/he repeats and enacts new identity strategies and thus takes on identity as it is experienced in the performance. Performance is the means through which the performer performs their subjectivity.

Negotiating catharsis enables these practitioners to perform agency, and in this way to refuse to be sacrificed as the suffering and passive object. Enacting the active feminist subject challenges the mark of gender that has inscribed woman as Other. In performing the threat contained in this mark of gender, these feminist practitioners recuperate the monstrous Other. Embodying the threat to masculinist ideologies enables feminists to transform the Other into an assertive embodiment of a feminist, active subject position.

Cathartic Bodies and Enactment

Catharsis is enacted by the performer as an embodied experience. Given this focus on the body in the processes of identity transition feminist performers and authors

investigate the female body in patriarchal discourse. The abstracted, bound, integral space of the body as a site that protects the masculinist, unified and universal self, and maintains the body as a female space whilst ensuring the absence of the 'feminine' subject. Taking issue with the masculinist, stable, bound body feminist practitioners perform a fluid, shifting and destabilised female body. As such they enact the threat of impermeability and perform the position of other in ways that challenge patriarchal constructions of women. Male performers such as Franko B and Bob Flanagan also enact a critique of the masculinist body, and in so doing they destabilise the boundaries of identity that surround patriarchal discourse.

The ritualistic nature of Franko B's performances investigates the artistic body-in-pain and interrogates the relationship between the 'suffering artist' and the audience. The extremity of his bleeding body-in-pain raises questions around the nature of the bound body as a container for a masculinist, unified, and transcendental self. By refusing to provide a cathartic release for the spectator, Franko B's performances resist the substitutional sacrifice by which the artist heals social wounds in a shamanistic manner. In this way, Franko B enacts the threat of the uncontainable body, in a manner that connects his work with the performances of Bob Flanagan. The breakdown of body boundaries in Flanagan's performances perform a critique of the artist as suffering body-object by insisting on enacting the agency of his masochistic desire. The extent to which he refuses to accommodate the objectification of the suffering body-in-pain disturbs the spectator's understanding of art performance as a shamanistic ritual.

Orlan's performances also engage with shamanistic catharsis in order to challenge the sacrifice of the performer to the cathartic experience of the spectator. Given the historicity of catharsis and sacrifice so far discussed, Orlan denies catharsis to the spectator. Within the logic of patriarchal discourse the extreme nature of her surgical operations positions the spectator as rational to her 'madness'. This can be seen as an effort to contain the threat to masculinist ideology that her work performs. Orlan confronts the spectators with the violence of their reaction and

so forces them into the position of the suffering spectator. In this way Orlan is able to use the catharsis of her performance to enact identity transitions, as can be seen from the series of operations entitled *The Reincarnation of St Orlan*. This focus on embodied and multiple identity positions places the point of emphasis on the process of transformation, rather than on achieving a unified sense of self. Although one of the premises of her work is an exploration of female beauty and plastic surgery, the 'result' of the surgery is not the main focus of her work, either during the performance itself or in gallery exhibitions after the event. Instead a major concern with Orlan's work is the extent to which she chooses to place emphasis on the process itself as opposed to the end result. In this way Orlan argues that her operations perform a 'woman-to-woman transsexualism', and throughout the interventions the spectator is confronted with the literal enactment of this inscription.

The performance of identity fragmentation in a way that challenges patriarchal discourse is also a central feature in the work of Karen Finley. In enacting her transition from one subject position to another Finley, like Orlan, has also been open to charges of 'madness'. This presentation of herself as 'unpredictable' is integral to her performance style, and challenges the patriarchal discourse at work. This thesis has explored the containment of anti-masculinist work within the discourse of patriarchy. This means of controlling the threat to patriarchy does not occur only in the work of Orlan's surgery or Finley chanting voice of madness but also accounts for the dismissal of work by Annie Sprinkle, Franko B and Bob Flanagan. Attempts to locate the artistic impetus within a personal or tragic event aim to frame the artist within the discourse of the hysterical other. It is this discourse of the hysterical other that these performances enact in order to critique, and this reveals the risk for practitioners in subverting ideology from within the terms of its discourse. Charges of 'hysteria' often tie the performer dealing with extreme images into a pathology of behaviour and provide a rational for the extreme measures undertaken in the performance, and for which the masculinist spectator can find no other reasonable 'rationale'. In this way, the personal tales of Franko B's disturbing life are made to explain a disturbing artistic project, and the same rationale occurs in such readings of Bob Flanagan's cystic fibrosis. Within performance art that

challenges masculinist discourse, however, it is the very enactment of patriarchal logic that enables the performer to perform their agency through enacting and critiquing their position as hysterical other.

Karen Finley challenges patriarchal constructions of female identity within her performances. Her assertive performance style insists upon her enactment of her multiple subject positions as a positive experience for women. In this way Finley engages with notions that women must construct the whole and unified subject position of patriarchal discourse if they are to have any action in the world. Finley's work is indicative of the contemporary move towards multiple and changing subjectivities within postmodern feminist politics which this thesis has explored. Within Finley's performance piece "The Constant State of Desire" multiple identity positions are celebrated as a way of liberating women from the rigid social roles employed by patriarchal discourses.

Annie Sprinkle has also performed a critique of the patriarchal restrictions placed on women. As a pornographic actress turned performance artist Sprinkle's work engages with the prescription of female sexuality imposed by patriarchal discursive practices. Performance pieces such as "The Public Cervix Announcement" enact Sprinkle's pornographic body as a direct challenge to masculinist notions of the female body. Sprinkle refuses to perform her body as sexual purely for the heterosexual spectator, and in presenting her cervix she presents her body part most associated with sexual pleasure in an asexual way. In performing her sexed body in this way she is able to resist the positioning of her female body as body-object by insisting on her agency as subject. This enables her to critique masculinist ideology from within its own terms, whilst simultaneously refusing the logic of this ideology. As such, Sprinkle challenges the logic by which women are seen as sexual objects, and insists on performing her own subjectivity. In doing so, Sprinkle also performs identity transition as a means of enacting her feminist agency. The insistence by these three feminist performance artists, Sprinkle, Finley and Orlan, on performing multiple identity positions as an integral part of their feminist agency indicates the celebration of fragmented identities with the revisioning of catharsis in performance.

In engaging with postmodern feminist debates on the multiplicity of identities and the confinements of the body in patriarchal discourse this thesis has examined theories of catharsis and performativity. As the performative act exists in embodied performance and the historicity of ideological force contained in language this thesis has explored performative literature as well as performance. Gloria Anzaldúa's book *Borderlands* engages with the fragmentation of identity as it is inscribed onto the female body. For Anzaldúa the sealing and territorialisation of the land is performed through the simultaneous sealing and territorialisation of the female body. Thus, the work for Anzaldúa is at once a cathartic process and performative. For Anzaldúa, clearly the written word embodies a performative power, that does, indeed, perform this power through the ritual enactment of reading. *Borderlands* never privileges the reader in the position of rational knowledge in relation to the text and so the reader experiences the fragmentation of Anzaldúa's identity positions in the process of reading. Anzaldúa's identity as mestiza performs a body that has become a site of territorialisation for dominant, white, patriarchal discourses. Her reaction to this is to reterritorialise her body. However, she does not do this in an attempt to create a solid, unified space of existence in order to seal the self into rigid subjectivity. Instead she enacts her identity transitions through engaging with her body as a fluid site of transition, a site in which her position on the borderland of identities enacts her feminist agency.

The second feminist author explored in this thesis also critiques masculinist ideology in order to assert feminist agency. Pat Cadigan's work focuses on the relationship between the body and technology, and develops fragmented, multiple identity positions as a way of enacting feminist subjectivities. Within her novels *Fools* and *Synners* the recurring theme of the biological body as a fragile body under threat is expounded. This engages with the central concern of this thesis to protect the space of the female body from violation in patriarchy, whilst at the same time deconstructing the boundaries of the body in order to enact multiple subjectivities. Cadigan's work acknowledges this concern and demands an investment in the lived, material space of the body rather than a utopian celebration of the investment

in technology often advocated by many masculinist writers within cyberculture. Cadigan's enactment of multiple identities performs feminist agency in a direct critique of patriarchal discursive practices. It is this connection between the appearance of the female body as it is encoded by patriarchal significations that is being challenged by feminist performance artists. These performers explore the site/sight of the female body and the relationship of women to discourses of power and agency.

The masculinist subject is under threat. Although the centre discourse of patriarchy threatens to be reaffirmed in performances by Hermann Nitsch, for example, the destabilisation of the bound, controlled site of patriarchal bodies and identities is celebrated by Orlan, Karen Finley, Annie Sprinkle, Kate Bornstein, Bob Flanagan and Franko B. The investigation into contemporary reworkings of catharsis in this thesis enabled me to explore the changing relationship between the performer and the spectator. The manner in which the feminist performers are negotiating sacrifice and using catharsis to perform agency in multiple identities suggests promising possibilities for assertively feminist futures.

NOTES

Notes to Chapter One

Performing Subjectivities

[1] Richard Schechner, "Fundmentals", presented at *Here be Dragons. Mapping the Undiscovered Realms of Performance Studies: Boundaries, Hinterlands and Beyond*, 5th Performance Studies international Conference, 9th-12th April 1999, The University of Wales, Aberystwyth

[2] Here, Schechner follows in the footsteps of the long line of philosophers who have used the table to argue a philosophical point. This calls to mind Mrs Ramsay from Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, who argues that the table for her husband, a philosopher, sits up a tree, removed and distanced from any direct relation to the world, whilst her table, on the other hand, sits in the kitchen and serves as a focal point of discussion and human activity.

[3] Gayle Austin, *Feminist Theories for Dramatic Criticism*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990, p.6. Cited in Janelle G. Reinelt, "Introduction", in *Critical Theory and Performance*, ed. Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach, p.226

[4] Geraldine Harris, *Staging Femininities. Performance and Performativity* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, p.7

[5] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1988, p.70

[6] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1988, p.72

[7] Geraldine Harris, *Staging Femininities. Performance and Performativity* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, p.12

[8] Linda Hutcheon, *The Politics of Postmodernism*, London: Routledge, 1989, p.151

[9] Jane Flax, *Thinking Fragments: Psychoanalysis, Feminism, and Postmodernism in the Contemporary West*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1990, p.92

[10] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press 1994, p.235

[11] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and the State", *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader, Second Edition*, Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh eds. London and New York: Edward Arnold, 1992, p.58. Althusser's essay was originally published in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, London: New Left Books, 1971

[12] Louis Althusser, ibid. p.62. The italics are Althusser's own; the underlining is my emphasis.

[13] J. L. Austin, *How to do Things With Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa eds. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p.64

[14] J. L. Austin, ibid. p.107

[15] J. L. Austin, ibid. p.109

[16] It is interesting that the conventional concept of "I do" forcefully prevails within contemporary culture, despite, as the editors inform us, being incorrect: "Austin realized that the expression 'I do' is not used in the ceremony too late to correct his mistake. We have let it remain in the text as it is philosophically unimportant that it is a mistake". The prevalence of the concept of "I do" indicates the conventional force through which ritual operates, which in fact illustrates the philosphical *importance* of this point. J. L. Austin, ibid. p.5

[17] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, London: Routledge, 1997, p.3

[18] See page 44 of *How to do Things with Words*, where Austin states on the conventional aspect of performatives: "The whole point of having such a procedure is precisely to make certain subsequent conduct in order and other conduct out of order". J. L. Austin, *How to do Things With Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955*, J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa eds. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p.44

[19] Monique Wittig, in "The Mark of Gender", argues that language is marked according to gender and that this system of value is interpellated into identity. Wittig states that philosophers "call gender the

lexical delegation of 'natural beings,' their symbol. Being aware that the notion of gender is not as innocuous as it appears, American feminists use gender as a sociological category, making clear that there is nothing natural about this notion, as sexes have been artificially constructed into political categories – categories of oppression. They have extrapolated the term *gender* from grammar and they tend to superimose it on the notion of sex. And they are right insofar as gender is the linguistic index of the political opposition between the sexes and the domination of women. In the same way as sex, man and woman, gender, as a concept, is instrumental in the political discourse of the social contract as heterosexual". Monique Wittig, "The Mark of Gender", *The Straight Mind and Other Essays*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992: 77

[20] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, London: Routledge, 1974, p.136

[21] Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics: An Essay on the Thoughts of Emmanuel Levinas", *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1978, p.152

[22] Michel Foucault, "What is Enlightenment?", *Postmodernism: A Reader*, Patricia Waugh, London: Edward Arnold, 1992, pp.96- 108

[23] Michel Foucault, ibid. pp.96- 108

[24] Chris Weedon, *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987, p.8

[25] Linda Hutcheon, *A Poetics of Postmodernism History, Theory, Fiction*, London: Routledge, 1988, p.xi

[26] Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism and Consumer Society", *Postmodern Culture*, Hal Foster, London: Pluto Press, 1985, p.119

[27] Joni Lovenduski and Vicky Randall, *Contemporary Feminist Politics: Women and Power in Britain*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, p.327

[28] Mary Poovey, "Feminism and Postmodernism – Another View", *Feminism and Postmodernism*, Margaret Ferguson and Jennifer Wicke eds. Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994, p.43

[29] Mary Poovey, ibid. p.43

[30] Rosalind Coward, *Female Desire: Women's Sexuality Today*, London: Paladin, 1984, p.118

[31] Dale Spender, *Man Made Language*, London: Routledge, 1980, p.46

[32] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.191

[33] Judith Butler, ibid. p.190

[34] Judith Butler, ibid. p.191

[35] Sandra Lee Bartky, "Agency: What's the Problem?", *Provoking Agents: Gender and Agency in Theory and Practice*, Judith Keegan Gardiner ed. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995, p.186

[36] Gayle Greene, "Looking at History", *Changing Subjects. The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism*, Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn eds. London: Routledge, 1993, p.23

[37] Christine Di Stefano, "Dilemmas of Difference: Feminism, Modernity and Postmodernism", *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Linda Nicholson ed. New York and London: Routledge, 1990, p.64

[38] Sandra Lee Bartky, "Agency: What's the Problem?", *Provoking Agents. Gender and Agency in Theory and Practice*, Judith Keegan Gardiner ed. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995, p.182

[39] Georg W. F. Hegel, *Phenomonology of Spirit*, translated by A. V. Miller with Analysis of the Text and Foreword by J. N. Findlay, F.B.A., F.A.A.A.S. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1977, p.111

[40] Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick eds. *Performativity and Performance*, New York and London: Routledge, 1995, p.9

[41] For a detailed analysis of feminism, patriarchy, and ideology, see Chris Weedon *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987

[42] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 1987, p.16

[43] Patricia Waugh, *Practising Postmodernism/Reading Modernism* London and New York: Edward Arnold, 1992, p.129

[44] Patricia Waugh, *Modern Literary Theory: A Reader, Second Edition*, Philip Rice and Patricia Waugh eds. London: Edward Arnold, 1992, p.352

[45] Gayle Greene, "Looking at History", *Changing Subjects. The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism*, Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn eds. London: Routledge, 1993, p.15

[46] Sarah Mills, Lynne Pearce, Sue Spaull, Elaine Millard, *Feminist Readings/Feminists Reading*, London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1989, p.193.

[47] Catherine Belsey, "Constructing the Subject. Deconstructing the Text", *Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class and Race in Literature and Culture*, Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt eds. New York: Methuen, 1985, p.595

[48] Gayle Greene, "Looking at History", *Changing Subjects: The Making of Feminist Literary Criticism,* Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn eds. London: Routledge, 1993, p.23

[49] Susan Hekman, "Subjects and Agents: The Question for Feminism", *Provoking Agents: Gender and Agency in Theory and Practice,* Judith Keegan Gardiner ed. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995, p.203.

[50] Susan Hekman, ibid. p.201

[51] Susan Hekman, ibid. p.203

[52] Susan Hekman, ibid. p.203

[53] This term is used by Pat Cadigan in her novel, *Fools,* to convey feelings of fragmentation within subjectivity, whereby the subject constructs identity based on memories occurring in an individually experienced time frame. Pat Cadigan, *Fools*, London: HarperCollins, 1994

[54] "Interpretative communities" is a term used by Stanley fish to denote "those who share interpretive strategies". Fish argues that "these strategies exist prior to the act of reading and therefore determine the shape of what is read rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way round". Stanley Fish, "*Interpreting the* Variorum", *Literature in the Modern World: Critical Essays and Documents*, Dennis Walder ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, p.60, also published in Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in this Class*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1980

[55] Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson, "Social Criticism Without Philosophy: An Encounter Between Feminism and Postmodernism", *Feminism/Postmodernism*, Linda Nicholson ed. New York and London: Routledge, 1990, p.34.

[56] Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, London: Vintage, 1993, p.23

[57] Rosi Braidotti, *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy,* translated by Elizabeth Guild, Oxford: Polity Press, 1996, p.7

[58] Gillian Rose, "As if the Mirrors had Bled: Masculine Dwelling, Masculinist Theory and Feminist Masquerade", in Nancy Duncan, *Body Space*, p. 70. Rose cites Luce Irigaray, *The Irigaray Reader*, edited by M. Whitford, Oxford, Blackwell, 1991, p. 64.

[59] Luce Irigaray, "The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine", *This Sex Which is Not One*, translated by Catherine Porter, New York: Cornell University Press, 1993, p. 68

[60] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, 1990, p.6

[61] Judith Butler, ibid. p.19

[62] Judith Butler, ibid. p.129

[63] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* , London: Routledge 1993, p.30

[64] Judith Butler, ibid. p.55

[65] Helene Cixous and Catherine Clement, *The Newly Born Woman*, translated by Betsy Wing, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, pp.63-64.

[66] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, 1990, p.140

[67] Allan Kaprow, quoted in Jindrich Chalupecky, "Art and Sacrifice", *Flash Art*, Feb/Apl. International Edition, 1978, pp.33-35, p.35

[68] See page 195 of *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* , London: Routledge 1993

[69] Elin Diamond, 'Mimesis, Mimicry, and the "True-Real"', in *Modern Drama: Volume 32*, no.1, March, 1989, pp.58-72

[70] Elin Diamond, ibid. p.65

[71] Elin Diamond, "Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory: Toward a Gestic Feminist Criticism", *A Sourcebook of Feminist Theatre and Performance. On and Beyond the Stage,* Carol Martin ed. London: Routledge, 1996, p.123

[72] Butler is citing Monique Wittig, "The Straight Mind", *Feminist Issues*, vol. 1, no. 1, summer 1980, p.105, Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, 1990, p.117

[73] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, 1990, p.116

[74] Judith Butler, "On Linguistic Vulnerability", *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*, London: Routledge, 1997, p.33

[75] Sara Mills, *Discourse*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997, pp.93-94

[76] Judith Butler, "On Linguistic Vulnerability", *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*, London: Routledge, 1997, p.39

[77] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Epistemology of the Closet*, London: Penguin Books, 1991, p.27

[78] Felicia Hughes-Freeland ed., *Ritual, Performance, Media*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p.2

[79] See Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, translated by Annette Lavers, London: Paladin, 1973, p.142 – 143

[80] Philip Auslander, "'Holy Theatre' and Catharsis", *From Acting to Performance*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997, p.19

[81] Auslander ibid. p.19

[82] Dale Spender, *Man Made Language*, London: Routledge, 1980, p.119

[83] Jacques Derrida, "Signature, Event, Context", *A Derrida Reader. Between the Blinds*, Peggy Kamuf ed. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991, p.100

[84] Jacques Derrida, ibid. p.90

[85] Jacques Derrida, ibid. p.109

[86] Jacques Derrida, "Structure Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences", in *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1978, p.45

[87] Jacques Derrida, ibid. p.160

[88] Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, translated by Iain Hamilton Grant, introduced by Mike Gane, London Thousand Oaks New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1993, p.78

[89] This point is much laboured within feminist criticism. However, the fact that this point has become strained illustrates the importance of this position in constructing feminist identities. As Judith Fetterley stated in her introduction to *The Resisting Reader*; "Literature is political. It is painful to have to insist on this fact, but the necessity of such insistence indicates the dimensions of the problem"(pxi).

[90] See Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*, London: Routledge, 1997

[91] Jeanie Forte, "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism", *Performing Feminisms, Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, Sue-Ellen Case ed. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990, p.251

[92] Jeanie Forte, "Focus on the Body: Pain, Praxis, and Pleasure in Feminist Performance", *Critical Theory and Performance*, Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach eds. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p.250

[93] Lynda Hart, "Introduction: Performing Feminism", *Making A Spectacle. Feminist Essays on Contemporary Women's Theatre*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, p.8

[94] Lynda Hart, "Introduction: Performing Feminism", *Making A Spectacle. Feminist Essays on Contemporary Women's Theatre*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, p.2

[95] Geraldine Harris, *Staging Femininities. Performance and Performativity* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, p.59

[96] Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as Masquerade", quoted in Geraldine Harris, *Staging Femininities. Performance and Performativity* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, p.59

[97] Sue-Ellen Case, *The Domain Matrix. Performing Lesbian at the End of Print Culture*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996, p.22

[98] Sue-Ellen Case, *The Domain Matrix. Performing Lesbian at the End of Print Culture*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996, p23

[99] Jeanie Forte, "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism", *Performing Feminisms, Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, Sue-Ellen Case ed. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990, p.255

[100] Josette Féral, "Performance and Theatricality: The Subject Demystified", *Modern Drama*, v.25, 1982, pp.170-181, p.171

[101] Elaine Aston, *Feminist Theatre Practice: A Handbook*, London and New York: Routledge, 1999, p.46

[102] Jeanie Forte, "Focus on the Body: Pain, Praxis, and Pleasure in Feminist Performance", *Critical Theory and Performance*, Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach eds. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p.257

[103] Vivian M. Patraka, "Binary Terror and Feminist Performance", *Discourse*, v.14, n.2, Spring 1992, pp.163-185, p.173

[104] Jeanie Forte, "Women's Performance Art: Feminism and Postmodernism", *Performing Feminisms. Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, Sue-Ellen Case ed. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1990, p.268

Notes to Chapter Two

The Cathartic Subject

[1] Donald Kuspit, "Joseph Beuys: Between Showman and Shaman", *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques,* David Thistlewood ed. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995, p.27

[2] Avital Ronell has written about the sacrificial and transgressive pleasure of the image of Christ's crucifixion: "What could be more pornographic than a crucifix? Here you have this virgin body that is totally S&M'd, wounded, bloody, crushed against a restraint and naked in pure offering, in a sacrificial ceremonial. What's *odd* is the wide-spread *non*-recognition of the completely S&M culture that Christianity has always embodied". Avital Ronell in Andrea Juno and V. Vale eds. *Angry Women,* San Francisco: Re/Search, 1991, p.138

[3] Julia Kristeva describes the cathartic state for Plato as 'frenzy', a word which symbolises the uncontrollable chaos associated with the body. See Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror,* translated by Leon S. Roudiez, originally published as *Pouvoirs de l'horreur,* Éditions du Seuil, 1980, New York: Columbia University Press, 1982, p.28

[4] Julia Kristeva, ibid. p.28

[5] Andrew Ford, "Katharsis: The Ancient Problem", *Performativity and Performance*, Andrew Parker and Eve Kosovosky Sedgwick, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.111

[6] Andrew Ford, ibid. p.113

[7] Andrew Ford, ibid. p.113

[8] Andrew Ford, ibid. p.117

[9] During the performance art of the 1970s, a form of performance which sought to break down traditional conventions of staging sprang up. These performances became known as Happenings. Allan Kaprow first used the term to describe his piece *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, which is widely acknowledged as the first Happening. See Mariellen R. Sandford, *Happenings and Other Acts,* Mariellen R. Sandford ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1995 and Michael Kirby, *Happenings,* New York: E. P. Dutton and Co. Inc. 1965

[10] Darko Suvin, "Reflections on Happenings", *Happenings and Other Acts*, Mariellen R. Sandford ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.303

[11] Shannon Bell, "Kate Bornstein: A Transgender, Transexual Postmodern Tiresias", *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies*, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. London: Macmillan Press, 1993, p.111

[12] Elin Diamond, "The Shudder of Catharsis in Twentieth-Century Performance", *Performativity and Performance,* Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick eds. London and New York: Routledge, 1995 p.161

[13] Elin Diamond, ibid. p.161

[14] Elin Diamond, ibid. p.166

[15] Richard Schechner, *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance*, London and New York: Routledge, 1993, pp.234-235

[16] Antonin Artaud quoted in Eric Sellin, *The Dramatic Concepts of Antonin Artaud*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, p.93, originally published in Antonin Artaud, *Œuvres*, v, pp.272-73

[17] Antonin Artaud quoted in Eric Sellin, ibid. p.97, originally published in Antonin Artaud, *Œuvres*, iv, p.96

[18] Eric Sellin, *The Dramatic Concepts of Antonin Artaud*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968, p.97

[19] Trinh Minh-ha, *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989. Cited in Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Theory, Hmong Shamans, and Cultural Politics", *Critical Theory and Performance*, Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach eds. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p.44

[20] Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Theory, Hmong Shamans, and Cultural Politics", *Critical Theory and Performance*, Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach eds. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p.45

[21] Nick Land, "Meat (or How to Kill Oedipus in Cyberspace)", *Cyberspace/Cyberbodies/Cyberpunk: Cultures of Technological Embodiment*, Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows eds. London: Sage, 1995, p.194

[22] Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Theory, Hmong Shamans, and Cultural Politics", *Critical Theory and Performance*, Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph R. Roach eds. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1992, p.41

[23] Naomi Greene, *Antonin Artaud: Poet Without Words*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970, p.115

[24] Naomi Greene, ibid. p.115

[25] Antonin Artaud, quoted in Naomi Greene, ibid. p.115, originally published in Antonin Artaud, *Œuvres*, iv, p.34

[26] Gene A. Plunka, "The Suffering Shaman of the Modern Theatre", *Antonin Artaud and the Modern Theater*, Gene A. Plunka ed. London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994, p.21

[27] Philip Auslander, "'Holy Theatre' and Catharsis", *From Acting to Performance*, Philip Auslander, London and New York: Routledge, 1997, pp.19-21

[28] Philip Auslander, ibid. pp.19-21

[29] John C. Stout, *Antonin Artaud's Alternate Genealogies, Self-Portraits and Family Romances*, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996, p.118

[30] Jacques Derrida, "La Parole Soufflée", *Writing and Difference*, translated by Alan Bass, London: Routledge, 1978, p.180

[31] Jacques Derrida, ibid. p.180

[32] See Helga Finter, "Antonin Artaud and the Impossible Theatre: The Legacy of the Theatre of Cruelty", *TDR The Drama Review: the journal of performance studies*, v.41, n.4, Winter 1997, pp.15-41, p.18

[33] Helga Finter, ibid. p.18

[34] Lillian Feder, *Madness in Literature*, Princeton, 1980. Quoted in John C. Stout, *Antonin Artaud's Alternate Genealogies. Self-Portraits and Family Romances*, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996, p.115

[35] Claude Schumacher, in his introduction to *Artaud on Theatre*, suggests that "[electrotherapy] allowed him to shed his assumed personality of 'Antonin Nalpas' (Nalpas was his mother's maiden name) and to reassume his true identity". Schumacher goes on to recognise Artaud's "mission": "For most people, there is everyday life and there is theatre, a fictional world animated by actors at premeditated times, in a special building where actors and spectators arrange to meet on either side of the footlights of the proscenium arch. It is precisely this division, based on the notion of 'spectacle', of 'mimesis', of 'imitation of life *outside* life' that Artaud rejects. He assigns to the theatre no less a mission than to renew life itself. Strictly speaking, Artaud never meant to 'work in the theatre', but to renew life by revolutionizing the theatre." Claude Schumacher, *Artaud on Theatre*, London: Methuen, 1989, pp.23-24

[36] John C. Stout, *Antonin Artaud's Alternate Genealogies. Self-Portraits and Family Romances*, Ontario: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996, p.115

[37] J.L.Austin, *How to do Things With Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955,* J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa eds. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p.22

[38] Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, London: Calder, 1993, p.65

[39] Joseph Beuys *editions*, Schlegel Collection, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, 3rd July-12th September, 1999

[40] Donald Kuspit is referencing Ernst Kris, "The Personal Myth: a Problem in Psychoanalytic Technique", *The Selected Papers of Ernst Kris*, New Haven, CT. Yale University Press, 1975, pp.272-300. Donald Kuspit, "Joseph Beuys: Between Showman and Shaman", *Joseph Beuys: Diverging Critiques*, David Thistlewood ed. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press and Tate Gallery Liverpool, 1995, p.28

[41] Donald Kuspit, ibid. p. 28

[42] Donald Kuspit, ibid. p. 36

[43] Donald Kuspit, ibid. p. 39

[44] RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, London: World of Art, 1988, p.165

[45] RoseLee Goldberg, ibid. p.159

[46] Chris Burden, Gina Pane and Marina Abramovic were instrumental in investigating the relationship between the sacrifice of the performer and the catharsis experienced by the spectator. See Chapter Three, "Body Boundaries and the Territory of Identity", for a more detailed discussion of these performers.

[47] Helga Finter, "Antonin Artaud and the Impossible Theatre: The Legacy of the Theatre of Cruelty", *TDR The Drama Review: the journal of performance studies*, v.41, n.4, Winter 1997, pp.15-41, p.18

[48] Helga Finter, ibid. p.21

[49] See Jacques Derrida, "La Parole Soufflée", *Writing and Difference,* London: Routledge, 1978, p.179

[50] Antonin Artaud, "The Theatre of Cruelty", *The Theatre and its Double*, London: Calder, 1993, p.77

[51] Jacques Derrida, "La Parole Soufflée", *Writing and Difference,* London: Routledge, 1978, p.180

[52] Antonin Artaud, "An Affective Athleticism", *The Theatre and its Double*, London: Calder, 1993, p.93

Notes to Chapter Three

Body Boundaries and the Territory of Identity

[1] Bob Flanagan, from "Rack Talk "an interview with Bob Flanagan and Sheree Rose by Deborah Drier, *Art Forum*, April 1996, pp.78-81, p.79

[2] Judith Butler and the heterosexual division of two sexes which defines gender into two mutually exclusive categories.

[3] Nancy Duncan, "Introduction: (Re)placings", in *Body Space*, Nancy Duncan ed. London: Routledge, 1996, p.2. Duncan references Iris Marion Young, "Impartiality and the Civic Public: some implications of feminist critiques of moral and political theory", in Seyla Benhabib and Drucilla Cornell eds. *Feminism as Critique*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, pp.56-76, p.60

[4] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: The Athlone Press, 1984, p.8

[5] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History" in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, Donald Bouchard ed. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977, p.148. Cited in Greg Ostrander, "Foucault's Disappearing Body", *Body Invaders*, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987, p.167

[6] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol. One an Introduction*, translated by Robert Hurley, London: Penguin, 1990, pp.11-12

[7] Michel Foucault, ibid. p.21

[8] Michel Foucault, ibid. pp.19-20

[9] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1994, p.47

[10] Nancy Duncan, "Introduction: (Re)placings", in *Body Space*, Nancy Duncan ed. London: Routledge, 1996, p.6

[11] Hilary Klein quoted in Donna Haraway, *Simians. Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Women*, London: Free Association Books, 1991, p.151

[12] Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London: Routledge, 1990, p.132

[13] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* , London: Routledge, 1993, p.49

[14] Gillian Rose, "As if the mirrors had bled", *Body Space*, Nancy Duncan ed. London: Routledge, 1996, p.71. Rose is quoting Luce Irigaray, "Volume-Fluidity", *Speculum of the Other Woman*, translated by Gillian C. Gill, New York: Cornell University Press, 1992 p.237

[15] Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, *Body Invaders*, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987, p.31

[16] Carolee Schneemann, "On the Body as Material", *ArtWeek Focus*, v.4, Oct. 1990, pp.24-25, p.25

[17] Carolee Schneemann, ibid. p.24

[18] Carolee Schneemann, ibid. p.24

[19] Carolee Schneemann "From *More Than Meat Joy*: From *The Notebooks, Meat Joy* and *Snows*", *Happenings and Other Acts,* Mariellen R. Sandford ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.251

[20] Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic,* Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1991, p.83

[21] Jill Dolan, ibid. It seems that Dolan has confused the performance *Up To and Including Her Limits* with *Interior Scroll*. In *Interior Scroll* (1975-1977) Schneemann pulls a long, thin piece of paper from her vagina from which she reads a text about the control of her work because of its focus on the naked female body. This performance does indeed perform a naked female body that can be clearly (although by no means singularly nor necessarily) read along dominant masculinist lines, as Dolan observes. During Schneemann's performance *Up To and Including Her Limits* (1973-1976) she was suspended in a harness from a rope for eight hours, of which she states: "this piece had to do with getting rid of intentionality or repetition – trying to change my own *habits*. Because I was a point of weight on this rope which built up an incredible momentum and started to turn me". The extent to which Schneemann explores the body as the site of action along the continuum of inter-related intentionality and repetition within this piece, performs the body as an habitual space of performative action. Schneemann cited in "Carolee Schneemann", *Angry Women*, Andrea Juno and V. Vale eds. San Francisco: Re/Search, 1991, pp. 66-77

[22] Amelia Jones, "'Presence' in Absentia: Experiencing Performance as Documentation", *Art Journal*, v.56, n.4, 1997, pp.11-18, p.13

[23] Rebecca Schneider, *The Explicit Body in Performance*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997, p.132. Here Schneider is taking issue with Héléne Cixous and Catherine Clément in their work *The Newly Born Woman*, translated by Betsy Wing, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986. Whilst recognising that "Cixous's is not a naïve essentialism", Schneider takes issue with what she sees as "essentialist cultural feminism in its attempt to mend the wrongs of culture through a celebration of the 'rights of nature'. Schneider, ibid. p.205 note 13.

[24] Franko B quoted in John Daniel, "Baying for Blood", *Total Theatre,* v.9, n.4, Winter 1997/8, p.15. Cited in Helen Freshwater, "Embodying the Avant-Garde", an unpublished paper presented at Leicester University conference, *Rethinking the Avant-Garde,* 1998.

[25] Rachel Armstrong, "An appreciation of Franko B" cited at http://filament.illumin.co.uk/ica/Bulletin/livearts/frankoB.html

[26] Rachel Armstrong, ibid.

[27] Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987, p.4

[28] Elaine Scarry, ibid. p.5

[29] Marcel Merleau-Ponty, *The Phenomonology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p.198

[30] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol. One an Introduction*, translated by Robert Hurley, London: Penguin, 1990, p. 17

[31] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated by Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin Books, 1991, p.11

[32] *The New Art Examiner*, Chicago, May, 1975. Cited in Jindrich Chalupecky, "Art and Sacrifice", *Flash Art*, February-April. 1978, pp.33-35, p.35

[33] See Barbara Rose, "Is it Art? Orlan and the Transgressive Act", *Art in America*, v.81, n.2, February 1993, pp.83-87 and p.125, p.84

[34] "The Conditioning", by Gina Pane, described in RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, London: World of Art, 1988, p.165

[35] Gina Pane, "The Wound as Sign; An Encounter with Gina Pane", *Flash Art*, Oct/Nov 1979, pp.36-37, p.37

[36] Gina Pane, ibid. p.36

[37] Gina Pane, ibid. p.37

[38] RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, London: World of Art, 1988, p.165

[39] Marina Abramovic, *Marina Abramovic objects performance video sound*, Oxford: Oxford Museum of Modern Art, 1995, p.63. Quoted in Helen Freshwater, "Embodying the Avant-Garde", unpublished paper presented at Leicester University conference, *Rethinking the Avant-Garde*, 1998.

[40] *Rhythm O* cited in RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, London: World of Art, 1988, p.165

[41] Fakir Musafar, a performance artists based in San Francisco, has been experimenting with the use of pain in ritualistic enactments, often investigating and drawing on the rites of passage in so-called primitive societies. In "Dances Sacred and Profane" (1987) Musafar enacts a South Indian ritual of body piercing in which the subject is pierced with hooks at precise points along his body and carries a cage which is attached to the hooks pierced into his body. This reinvestment in the rites of passage of other, more 'primitive' cultures is problematic because it appropriates for Western use the traditions and culture of societies, turning them into 'art'. However, Musafar enacts these rituals because he believes that Western society has negated the experiences of the body, causing the body to disappear through rationalisation. This concept of experiencing the sensations of the body through pain seems to create a paradoxical situation. Musafar experiences intense pain in his enactments, and links together the physical sensations of pain and ecstasy, believing that these two sensations are ultimately connected in the body. However, he attempts to experience a state of disembodiment through pain, stating that in performing one such ritual he experienced the connection between the body and the spirit through pain "I separated from my body and floated upward". Fakir Musafar's enactment of "Dances Sacred and Profane" was shown in *The South Bank Show*, produced and directed by Daniel Wiles, edited and presented by Melvyn Bragg, London Weekend Television Productions, along with an interview with Musafar, from where these quotations are taken.

[42] In a paper on performance art and the avant-garde, Helen Freshwater raises the issue of pain and the healthy body in relation to both Franko B and Orlan. Helen Freshwater, "Embodying the Avant-Garde", an unpublished paper presented at Leicster University conference, *Rethinking the Avant-Garde*, 1998

[43] Bob Flanagan, "Rack Talk "an interview with Bob Flanagan and Sheree Rose by Deborah Drier, *Art Forum*, April 1996, pp.78-81, p.79

[44] From the documentary about Flanagan's life and death, *Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist*, produced and directed by Kirby Dick.

[45] *Sick: The Life and Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist*, ibid.

[46] Dennis Cooper, "Flanagan's Wake", *Art Forum*, April 1996, pp.74-77, p.77

[47] Sheree Rose in an interview with Deborah Drier, "Rack Talk", *Art Forum*, April 1996, pp.78-81, p.79

[48] Amelia Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p.229

[49] Amelia Jones is quoting Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, translated by Chris Turner, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1989, p.201. She explains that Anzieu is analysing the skin's containing function from the point of view of 'improper' mothering; a perspective of blaming the mother with which Jones as a feminist author is at odds. Amelia Jones, ibid. p.230

[50] Amelia Jones, ibid. p.230

[51] Amelia Jones, ibid. p.231

[52] Paul Smith, quoted in Amelia Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p.234

[53] Amelia Jones, ibid. p.234

[54] Performed in the film *Sick* by Kirby Dick, and transcribed on Bob Flanagan's website at www.sickthemovie.com

[55] Bob Flanagan, "Superman", 1990, performed in the film *Sick* by Kirby Dick, and transcribed on Flanagan's website at www.sickthemovie.com

[56] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, translated by Colin Smith, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p.91

[57] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, ibid. p.82

[58] Amelia Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p.237

[59] Video Coffin is shown in the film *Sick* made by Kirby Dick, and described in Amelia Jones' *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p.236

[60] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, p.7

[61] The translations of Anzaldúa's Spanish come from Jacquelyn N. Zita's essay on the Anzaldúan body in, *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.169

[62] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern", *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin eds. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.122. Originally published in Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House; Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, London: Methuen, 1992

[63] Kwame Anthony Appiah, ibid. p. 122

[64] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, p.80.

[65] Anna Louise Keating, Women Reading Women Writing/ Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996, p.7

[66] Anna Louise Keating, ibid. p.180

[67] Kwame Anthony Appiah, "The Postcolonial and the Postmodern", *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin eds. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.119. Originally published in Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House; Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, London: Methuen, 1992

[68] Anna Louise Keating, *Women Reading Women Writing/ Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996, p.5

[69] Anna Louise Keating, ibid. p.5

[70] Anna Louise Keating, ibid. p.5

[71] Gloria Anzaldúa *Borderlands/La Frontera*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, p.55

[72] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.59

[73] Simon During, "Postmodernism or Postcolonialism Today", *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin eds. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.125. Originally published in *Textual Practice* 1(1), 1987

[74] Jacquelyn N. Zita, *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.169

[75] Jacquelyn N. Zita, ibid. p.170

[76] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, pp.-8. Quoted in Jacquelyn N. Zita, *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.170

[77] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.63

[78] Jacquelyn N. Zita, *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.170, p.171

[79] Gloria Anzaldúa *Making Face/Haciendo Cara,* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1990 pp.xv-xviii in Jacquelyn N. Zita, *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.172

[80] Jacquelyn N. Zita, *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.168

[81] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera,* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987,   p.36

[82] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.66

[83] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.67

[84] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.67

[85] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.68

[86] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.70

[87] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.70

[88] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.73

[89] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.73

[90] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.74

[91] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.75

[92] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.75

[93] Jacquelyn N. Zita, *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.177

[94] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera,* San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987 in Jacquelyn N. Zita, *Body Talk: Philosophical Reflections on Sex and Gender,* New York: Columbia University Press, 1998, p.177

[95] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.46

Notes for Chapter Four

Escaping 'The' Body: Ritualistic Sacrifice and Technology

[1] Orlan, "Conference", in *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...* Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 1996, p.91

[2] See Andrew Ford, "*Katharsis*: The Ancient Problem", *Performativity and Performance,* Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick eds. London and New York: Routledge, 1995

[3] Richard Schechner, *The Future of Ritual: Writings on Culture and Performance,* London and New York: Routledge, 1993, p. 231.

[4] Richard Schechner, ibid. pp. 232, 238

[5] Peter Brook, *The Empty Space,* London: Penguin, 1990, p.51

[6] Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. *Body Invaders,* New York: St. Martin's Press 1987, p.20

[7] Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. ibid. p.21

[8] Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. ibid. p.21

[9] Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. ibid. p.22

[10] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* translated by Alan Sheridan, London: Penguin Books, 1991, p.192-193. Also cited in Greg Ostrander, "Foucault's Disappearing Body", *Body Invaders,* Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987, p.173

[11] Michel Foucault, ibid. p.10

[12] Jindrich Chalupecky, "Art and Sacrifice", *Flash Art*, Feb/Apl. International Edition, 1978 pp. 33-35, p. 33

[13] Jindrich Chalupecky, ibid. p.33

[14] Jindrich Chalupecky, ibid. p.34

[15] Jindrich Chalupecky, ibid. p 34

[16] Jindrich Chalupecky, ibid. p.35

[17] Jindrich Chalupecky, ibid. p.35

[18] See Amelia Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998

[19] Günter Berghaus, "Happenings in Europe: Trends, Events and Leading Figures", *Happenings and Other Acts* ed. Mariellen R. Sandford, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, pp. 362-364

[20] Hermann Nitsch, *The Official Hermann Nitsch Das Orgien Mysterien Theater Website*, http://home.inreach.com/vissol/synopsis.html

[21] Hermann Nitsch, "On the Essence of Tragedy" ("Vom Wesen der Tragödie") [1963] (1965), cited in Günter Berghaus, "Happenings in Europe", *Happenings and Other Acts* ed. Mariellen R. Sandford, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 364

[22] Fenella Crichton, "Blood and Soil", *Art Monthly*, October 1998, no.220, pp.7-10

[23] Amelia Jones, *Body Art/ Performing the Subject*, Minneapolis and London: The University of Minnesota Press, 1998, p. 287, Jones is referencing Renate Berger, "Pars pro toto: Zum Verhältnis von künstlischer Freiheit und sexueller Integrität" in *Der Gasten des Lüste. Zur Deutung des Erotischen un Sexuellen bei Künstlern und ihren Interpreten*, ed. Renate Berger, Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat, Cologne: DuMont Buchverlag, 1985, p. 170

[24] Amelia Jones, ibid. p. 170

[25] Kathy O'Dell documents the fact that the blood hung in the performance was not in fact Athey's, in her book on Masochism and art, *Contract with the Skin*. Kathy O'Dell, *Contract with the Skin*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1998

[26] Michael McCann, president of the Center for Safety in the Arts in New York. Documented in Robin Cembalest's article, "Ritualistic Physical Mortification", *ARTnews,* Summer 1994, v. 93, n.6, p.56

[27] Kathy O'Dell, *Contract With the Skin*, Minneapolis and London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1998,
p.81

[28] See David Moos, "Memories of Being. Orlan's Theatre of the Self", *Art and Text*, n.54, 1996, pp. 66-72, for an analysis of self-portraiture in Orlan's art. Moos compares her work with the emphasis on process in the work of Willem de Kooning.

[29] Alluquere Roseanne Stone, "Speaking of the Medium: Marshall McLuhan Interview", in *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...* Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 1996, p.49

[30] Alluquere Roseanne Stone, ibid. p.49

[31] Alluquere Roseanne Stone, ibid. p.49

[32] Jean-Jacques Lebel, "On The Neccessity of Violation", *Happenings and Other Acts,* Mariellen R. Sanford ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.271.

[33] Jean-Jacques Lebel, "On the Necessity of Violation", *Happenings and Other Acts,* Mariellen R. Sanford ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.269

[34] Michael Kirby "Happenings: An Introduction", *Happenings and Other Acts*, Mariellen R. Sandford, London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.7

[35] See Darko Suvin, "Reflections on Happenings", *Happenings and Other Acts*, Mariellen R. Sandford, London and New York: Routledge, p.293

[36] See Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double*, translated by Victor Corti, London: Calder, 1993, originally published in *Antonin Artaud: Oeuvres Completes. Tone IV* by Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1964, p.66

[37] Orlan, in *Orlan: This is my Body... This is my Software...* Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 1996, p.83

[38] Austin, J.L. *How to do Things With Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University in 1955,* J.O. Urmson and Marina Sbisa eds. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1976, p.64. See Chapter One, "Performing Subjectivities", for a more detailed discussion of conventional force and the role of the witness in the performative act.

[39] Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and its Double*, translated by Victor Corti, London: Calder, 1993, originally published in *Antonin Artaud: Oeuvres Completes. Tone IV* by Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1964, p.80

[40] Sarah Wilson, "L'Histoire d'O, Sacred and Profane", in *Orlan: This is my Body... This is my Software...* Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 1996, p.9

[41] Elin Diamond, "The Shudder of Catharsis in Twentieth-Century Performance", *Performativity and Performance,* Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick eds. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.153

[42] Sarah Wilson, in *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...* Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 1996, p.16

[43] Peggy Phelan has discussed the extent to which women sacrifice pleasure in order to be valued. See Peggy Phelan *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance,* London and New York: Routledge, 1996

[44] Orlan, cited in 'The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan', page 10

[45] Homi K. Bhabha, "Dance This Diss Around", *Art Forum,* April 1995, pp. 19-20, p.19

[46] "The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan", page 12

[47] Sarah Wilson, "L'histoire d'O, Sacred and Profane", in *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...* Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 1996, p.8. Wilson is referencing Barbara Creed's interpretation of Julia Kristeva in *The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis,* London, Routledge, 1993, p.259

[48] Carey Lovelace, "Orlan: Offensive Acts", *Performing Arts Journal,* n.49. 1995, pp. 13-25, p.25

[49] Orlan, *L'Acte pour L'Art,* cited in Barbara Rose, p.83. "Is it Art? Orlan and the Transgressive Act", *Art in America,* v.81, n.2, February 1993, pp.83-87 and p.125

[50] Orlan, "Conference", transcribed in *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...* Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog, 1996, p. 84

[51] Donna Haraway, *Simians. Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Women,* London: Free Association Books, 1991, p.154

[52] Arthur Kroker, *Spasm: Virtual Reality, Android Music and Electric Flesh,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993, p.44

[53] Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, *Body Invaders,* Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987, p. 31

[54] Kevin Kelly, *Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines,* London: Fourth Esatate, 1994, p.212

[55] Arthur Kroker, *Spasm: Virtual Reality, Android Music and Electric Flesh,* New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993, p.17

[56] Stelarc, "Erasure Zone: Obsolete, Absent and Invaded Bodies" a performance and speech presented at *Virtual Futures Cyberevolution,* a conference at Warwick University, 26th-28th May 1995. Also cited in an article by Jim McClellan, "Body Builder", *Observer Life,* 18th June 1995, p.73

[57] Donna Haraway, *Simians. Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Women,* London: Free Association Books, 1991, p.178

[58] Stelarc in "Long Live the New Flesh", Mike Goldsmith, *.NET,* issue 21, July 1996, p22

[59] Stelarc, "New Directions in Multimedia Performance: Michael Snow, Walter Fabeck, Stelarc" a conference performance presented at *Rethinking the Avant-Garde,* Phoenix Arts, Leicester and The Centre for Contemporary Arts, De Montfort University, Leicester, 30th October to 1st November 1998

[60] Stelarc, cited in Jim McClellan, "Body Builder", *Observer Life,* 18th June 1995, p.73

[61] Stelarc in Mike Goldsmith, "Long Live the New Flesh", *.NET,* issue 21, July 1996, pp.22-25. I am grateful to Angeliki Tseti for bringing this article to my attention.

[62] John Perry Barlow quoted in Kevin Kelly, *Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines,* London: Fourth Esatate, 1994, p.239

[63] Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century,* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, p.249

[64] See Jenny Wolmark, *Aliens and Others: Science Fiction, Feminism and Postmodernism,* London: Harvester Wheatsheaf , 1993, who writes that "Atwood examines the way in which the hegemonic structures of patriarchy both repress women and invite them to collude in their own repression". p.101

[65] Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century,* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, p.101

[66] Mark Dery, ibid. p.100. Dery quotes Larry McCaffery ed. "Introduction", *Storming the Reality Studio,* Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1991, p.6

[67] Mark Dery, ibid. p.100

[68] Pat Cadigan, *Rock On,* in *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology,* Bruce Sterling ed. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994, p.37

[69] Pat Cadigan, ibid. p.38

[70] Pat Cadigan, ibid. p.39

[71] Pat Cadigan, ibid. pp.40-41

[72] Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century,* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, p.100. Dery is quoting from *Synners*, in which Visual Mark, the human synthesiser, "had a pipeline to some primal dream spot, where music and image created each other". Pat Cadigan, *Synners*, London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991

[73] Pat Cadigan, *Synners*, London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991, p.227

[74] Laura Chernaik, "Refiguring Nature, Science and Technology", *Feminist Review. Debating Discourses, Practising Feminisms*, n.56, Summer 1997, pp.61-84, p.71

[75] Pat Cadigan, *Synners*, London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991, p. 228

[76] Pat Cadigan, ibid. p.234

[77] This vision of the body as a 'meat-jail' is common within cyberculture, and the desire for transcendence is expressed through the uses made of technology. The Japanese Manga film *Cyber City Oedo 808,* directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri, Madhouse/Japan Home Video Productions, 1990, portrays one character expanding into the computer system whilst his biological body decays and becomes machinic.

[78] Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, London and Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, p.144

[79] See Anne Balsamo, "Forms of Technological Embodiment: Reading the Body in Contemporary Culture", *Cyberspace/Cyberbodies/Cyberpunk:Cultures of Technological Embodiment*, Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows eds. London: Sage, 1995, pp.214-237. Also, see Balsamo, "Feminism for the Incurably Informed" in her book *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997, pp.133-156.

[80] Anne Balsamo, "Forms of Technological Embodiment", *Cyberspace/Cyberbodies/Cyberpunk:Cultures of Technological Embodiment*, Mike Featherstone and Roger Burrows eds. London: Sage, 1995, p.228

[81] Anne Balsamo, *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, London and Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, p.144

[82] Anne Balsamo, ibid. p.233

[83] Anne Balsamo, ibid. p.140

[84] Donna Haraway, *Simians. Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Women*, London: Free Association Books, 1991, p.163

[85] Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the End of the Century,* London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1996, p.256

Notes to Chapter Five

Representation and the Sight of Power

[1] Valie Export, "Valie Export", an interview with Andrea Juno, *Angry Women*, Andrea Juno and V. Vale, eds. San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1991, p.187

[2] Valie Export, ibid. p.189

[3] Jean Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, translated by Iain Hamilton Grant, introduced by Mike Gane, London Thousand Oaks New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 1995, p.77

[4] Jean Baudrillard, ibid. p.51

[5] Jean Baudrillard, ibid. p.73

[6] Jean Baudrillard, ibid. p.73

[7] Jean Baudrillard, ibid. p.73

[8] Jean Baudrillard, ibid. p.74

[9] Jean Baudrillard, ibid. p.74

[10] Jean Baudrillard, ibid. p.75

[11] Jean Baudrillard, ibid. p.79

[12] John Frow, "Economies of Value", *Cultural Studies and Cultural Value,* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, p.144

[13] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* , London: Routledge, 1993, p.207

[14] Judith Butler, ibid. p.217

[15] Susanne Kappler, *The Pornography of Representation,* Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986, p.8

[16] Susanne Kappler, ibid. p.9. The information provided in brackets is my explanation of Kappeler's previous text.

[17] See Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic,* where Dolan explores the different approaches to representation made by liberal feminists, radical feminists and materialist feminists. Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic,* Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1991, p.11

[18] Jill Dolan, ibid. pp.13-14

[19] Jill Dolan, ibid. p.14

[20] Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, "Questions and Answers", *Making Violence Sexy: Feminist Views on Pornography*, Diana E. H. Russell ed. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993, p.96

[21] Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, ibid. p.79

[22] Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, ibid. p.79

[23] Andrea Dworkin, *Pornography: Men Possessing Women*, London: The Women's Press Ltd, 1981, p.224

[24] Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, "Questions and Answers", *Making Violence Sexy: Feminist Views on Pornography*, Diana E. H. Russell ed. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993, p.79

[25] Andrea Dworkin and Catharine MacKinnon, *Pornography and Sexual Violence: Evidence of the Links,* London: Everywoman Ltd. 1988, p.13. This text is a transcript of a public hearing on the relationship between pornography and sexual violence against women organised by Dworkin and MacKinnon. The hearing took place at Minneapolis City Council, December 12th - 13th , 1983, and attempted to define pornography as discrimination against women in order to legislate agianst pornography as a violation of women's civil rights. This attempt was unsuccessful.

[26] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech. A Politics of the Performative*, London: Routledge, 1997, p.21

[27] See note twenty-five of this chapter

[28] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech, A Politics of the Performative*, London: Routledge, 1997, p.83

[29] Judith Butler, ibid. p.75

[30] Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked. The Politics of Performance,* London and New York: Routledge, 1996, p.10

[31] Peggy Phelan, ibid. p.27

[32] Peggy Phelan, ibid. p.6

[33] Peggy Phelan, ibid. p.1

[34] Peggy Phelan, ibid. p.6

[35] Valie Export, "Valie Export", an interview with Andrea Juno, *Angry Women*, Andrea Juno and V. Vale, eds. San Francisco: Re/Search Publications, 1991, p.188

[36] Valie Export, p.188

[37] Valie Export, p.188

Notes to Chapter Six

Negotiating the Mark of Gender

[1] Kate Bornstein, "Transsexual Lesbian Playwrigth Tells All!", written as a talk for the Out/Write 1990 conference of lesbian and gay writers, in San Francisco, and published in *Gender Outlaw: On Men, Women and the Rest of Us*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, pp.144-145

[2] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York, Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1994, p.54

[3] Rosi Braidotti, ibid. p.54

[4] Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, London: The Athlone Press, 1984, p.16

[5] Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects. Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York, Chichester: Columbia University Press, 1994, p.114

[6] Arthur and Marilouise Kroker, "The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies" *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies*, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. London: Macmillan Press, 1993, p.18

[7] In her book *My Gender Workbook*, Bornstein cites an email she received from a biological male who had a clear picture of his identity as a woman, but who experienced "a very non-existent image of myself as the biological male that I was born". Signed "Sometimes Angie V Sometimes not", this transgendered person is referencing Bornstein's point about default gender as male made in Gender Outlaw. This quote, Kate Bornstein, *My Gender Workbook: How to become a real man, a real woman, the real you, or something else entirely*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p110

[8] Kate Bornstein, *My Gender Workbook: How to become a real man, a real woman, the real you, or something else entirely*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, contents page

[9] Kate Bornstein, ibid. p.65

[10] See Shannon Bell's interview with Kate Bornstein. Shannon Bell, "Kate Bornstein: A Transgender, Transexual Postmodern Tiresias", *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies*, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. London: Macmillan Press, 1993, p.111

[11] Kate Bornstein, *My Gender Workbook: How to become a real man, a real woman, the real you, or something else entirely*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p.92

[12] Shannon Bell, "Kate Bornstein: A Transgender, Transexual Postmodern Tiresias", *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies*, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. London: Macmillan Press, 1993, pp.104-120

[13] Shannon Bell, ibid. pp.109

[14] Shannon Bell, ibid. pp.115

[15] Riki Wilchins quoted in Kate Borstein, *My Gender Workbook: How to become a real man, a real woman, the real you, or something else entirely*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p.65

[16] Kate Bornstein, ibid. p.1

[17] Kate Bornstein, ibid. p.131

[18] Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth*, London: Vintage, 1991, p.9

[19] Naomi Wolf, ibid. p.10. In the chapter entitled "The Beauty Myth" Wolf draws an intriguing parallel between old and new forms of social control over the "affluent, educated, liberated women of the First World", as a backlash against women's new control over their own lives, indicating that the barriers of control remain the same even though they are now expressed differently. Cosmetic surgerys, she argues, are developed to "re-exert old forms of medical control of women" just as women started to politicise their health and bodies. Naomi Wolf, ibid. p.11

[20] Naomi Wolf, ibid. p.14

[21] Naomi Wolf, ibid. p.14

[22] Naomi Wolf, ibid. p.28

[23] Naomi Wolf, ibid. p.219

[24] Naomi Wolf, ibid. p.220

[25] Naomi Wolf, ibid. p.221

[26] Anne Balsamo, "On the Cutting Edge", *Technologies of the Gendered Body: Reading Cyborg Women*, London And Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, pp.56-79, pp.56-57

[27] Anne Balsamo, ibid. p.78

[28] Anne Balsamo, ibid. p.78

[29] Kathryn Pauly Morgan, "Women and the Knife: Cosmetic Surgery and the colonization of Women's Bodies", *Hypatia*, Special Issue, v.6, n.3, Fall 1991, pp.25-53, p.32

[30] Kathryn Pauly Morgan, ibid. p.34

[31] Kathryn Pauly Morgan, ibid. p.34

[32] Kathryn Pauly Morgan, ibid. p.36

[33] Kathryn Pauly Morgan, ibid. p.42

[34] Orlan, transcribed in *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...* Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 1996

[35] Barbara Rose cited in Mark Dery, *Escape Velocity: Cyberculture at the end of the Century*, London: Hodder And Stoughton, 1996, p.240

[36] Mark Dery, ibid. p.240.

[37] From Orlan's conference paper given before exhibitions. Transcribed in *Orlan. Ceci est mon corps... Ceci est mon logiciel... This is my body... This is my software*, Duncan McCorqoudale ed. London: Black Dog, 1996, p.91

[38] Barbara Rose, "Is it Art? Orlan and the Transgressive Act", *Art in America*, v.81, n.2 February 1993, pp.83-87 and p.125, p.86

[39] Laura Cottingham, "Orlan", *Frieze International Art Magazine*, v. 14, 1994, p.60

[40] See Laura Cottingham, ibid. p.60. Cottingham is not alone in her opinion, Annie Griffin, "Facial Figurations", *New Statesman and Society*, 12th April 1996, p.30, also finds Orlan's work problematic: "I am impressed. She has eaten a large lunch and her lipstick is still impeccable".

[41] See Jill O'Bryan, "Saint Orlan Faces Reincarnation", *Art Journal*, v.56, n.4. 1997, pp.50-56, p.52

[42] Kathy Davis, "'My Body is My Art': Cosmetic Surgery as Feminist Utopia?", *Embodied Practices. Feminist Perspectives on the Body*, Kathy Davis ed. London: SAGE Publications, 1997 p.176

[43] Kathy Davis, ibid. p.170

[44] Kathy Davis, ibid. p.176

[45] Kathy Davis, ibid. p.179

[46] Sue-Ellen Case, *The Domain Matrix. Performing Lesbian at the End of Print Culture*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1996, p.117

[47] Alluquere Roseanne Stone, *The War of Desire and Technology at the Close of the Mechanical Age*, Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1995, cited in Sue-Ellen Case, ibid. p.119

[48] Sue-Ellen Case, ibid. p.120

[49] Sue-Ellen Case, ibid. p.120

[50] Alluquere Roseanne Stone, "Speaking of the Medium: Marshall McLuhan Interviews Alluquere Roseanne Stone", *This is my body... This is my software*, Duncan McCorquodale, London: Black Dog, 1996, p.47

[51] Alluquere Roseanne Stone, ibid. p.50

[52] Orlan in Waxman, "Art by the Slice: France's Orlan Performs in the Surgical Theatre", *The Washington Post*, 2 May 1993, p.288, cited in Philip Auslander, *From Acting to Performance*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997, p.134

[53] Philip Auslander, *From Acting to Performance*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997, p.134

[54] Philip Auslander, ibid. p.135

[55] Philip Auslander, ibid. p.135

[56] An essay on Kate Bornstein by Shannon Bell, "Kate Bornstein: A Transgender, Transexual Postmodern Tiresias", *The Last Sex: Feminism and Outlaw Bodies*, Arthur and Marilouise Kroker eds. London: Macmillan Press, 1993, p.109

[57] Carey Lovelace has written an interesting article, "Orlan. Offensive Acts", *Performing Arts Journal*, v.17, n.49, 1995, pp.13-25, which explores the history of Orlan's art work as well as her contemporary medium of cosmetic surgery. In it Lovelace explores the connection between Orlan's work and the history of art, linking her work with Duchamp, Warhol, Hermann Nitsch, Gina Pane, Chris Burden,

Bob Flanagan and Cindy Sherman, amongst others. Similarly, Sarah Wilson compares Orlan's work to that of Gina Pane in "L'histoire d'O, Sacred and Profane", *Orlan This is my body... This is my software...*, Duncan McCorquodale ed. London: Black Dog, 1996

[58] See Orlan 'Conference', *This is my body... This is my software*, Duncan McCorquodale, London: Black Dog, 1996.1996, p.88

[59] See Leigh George, 'Orlan: Omnipresence', *Art Papers*, v.18, pt.5, 1994, p.53

[60] See Parveen Adams, "Operation Orlan", *This is my body... This is my software*, Duncan McCorquodale, London: Black Dog, 1996.1996, p.59

[61] Gabrielle Griffin, an unpublished paper on Orlan and Bobby Baker presented at The University of Edinburgh, 1997

[62] Jill O'Bryan, "Saint Orlan Faces Reincarnation", *Art Journal*, v.56, n.4, 1997, pp.50-56, p.54

[63] Jill O'Bryan, ibid. p.52

[64] Jill O'Bryan, ibid. p.56

[65] Carey Lovelace, "Orlan: Offensive Acts", *Performing Arts Journal*, v.17, n.49, 1995, pp. 13-25, p.23

[66] Sarah Wilson, "L'histoire d'O, Sacred and Profane", *This is my body... This is my software*, Duncan McCorquodale, London: Black Dog, 1996, p.11. Wilson's citation of Orlan's speech is part of an undated, unpaginated typescript, entitled "Ceci est mon Corps... Ceci est mon Logiciel... Sainte Orlan benit les nouvelle techologies".

[67] Jean-Jacques Lebel, "On The Neccessity of Violation", *Happenings and Other Acts,* Mariellen R. Sanford ed. London and New York: Routledge, 1995, p.279

[68] Parveen Adams, "Operation Orlan", *This is my body... This is my software*, Duncan McCorquodale, London: Black Dog, 1996.1996, p.58

[69] Nicola Griffith, "Review of Fools", from the *New York Review of Science Fiction*, n.55, March, 1993, cited at http://www.wmin.ac.uk/%7Efowlerc/fools_review_nyrsf.html

[70] Pat Cadigan, *Fools*, London: Harper Collins, 1994 p.71

[71] Pat Cadigan, ibid. p.103

[72] Pat Cadigan, ibid. p.73

Notes to Chapter Seven

Performing Right on the Mark

[1] Karen Finley, "I was not expected to be talented" from *We Keep Our Victims Ready*, in *The Constant State of Desire*, *Shock Treatment*, San Francisco: City Lights, 1990, p.107

[2] Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*, California: Cleis Press, 1998, p.166

[3] Elin Diamond, "Brechtian Theory / Feminist Theory. Toward a Gestic Feminist Criticism", *A Sourcebook of Feminist Theatre and Performance. On and Beyond the Stage,* Carol Martin ed. London: Routledge, 1996, p. 121

[4] Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'*, London: Routledge, 1993, p.203

[5] Elin Diamond, "Brechtian Theory / Feminist Theory. Toward a Gestic Feminist Criticism", *A Sourcebook of Feminist Theatre and Performance. On and Beyond the Stage,* Carol Martin ed. London: Routledge, 1996, p.125

[6] Refer to Chapter One, 'Feminism and Postmodernism'. John Berger has made an interesting analysis of this point in *Ways of Seeing*: "men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of women in herself is male: the surveyed female.

Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision : a sight", Berger, John, *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin, 1972, p.47

[7] Gillian Rose, "As if the Mirrors Had Bled. Masculine Dwelling, Masculinist Theory and Feminist Masquerade", *Bodyspace*, Nancy Duncan ed. London: Routledge, 1996, p.73

[8] C. Carr, "Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts: The Taboo Art of Karen Finley", *Acting Out: Feminist Performances*, Lynda Hart and Peggy Phelan eds. Michigan: University Of Michigan Press, 1993, p.141

[9] Karen Finley, from an interview with Richard Schechner, "Karen Finley: A Constant State of Becoming", *The Drama Review*, v.32, pt.1, 1988, pp.152-158, p.157

[10] C. Carr, "Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts: The Taboo Art of Karen Finley", *Acting Out: Feminist Performances*, Lynda Hart and Peggy Phelan eds. Michigan: University Of Michigan Press, 1993, p.143

[11] Karen Finley, *Shock Treatment*, San Francisco: City Lights, 1990, p.111

[12] Karen Finley, ibid, p.105

[13] C. Carr, "Unspeakable Practices, Unnatural Acts: The Taboo Art of Karen Finley", *Acting Out: Feminist Performances*, Lynda Hart and Peggy Phelan eds. Michigan: University Of Michigan Press, 1993, p.142

[14] Karen Finley, An interview by Richard Schechner, "Karen Finley: A Constant State of Becoming", *The Drama Review*, v.32, pt.1, 1988, pp.152-158, p.154

[15] See Schechner, ibid. pp.152-158

[16] David Frankel, "Karen Finley", *Art Forum*, December, 1997, p.113

[17] David Frankel, ibid. p.113

[18] Lynda Hart, "Motherhood According to Karen Finley", *A Sourcebook of Feminist Theatre and Performance On and Beyond the Stage*, Carol Martin ed. London: Routledge, 1996, p.111

[19] Lynda Hart, ibid. pp.110-111

[20] Lynda Hart, ibid. p.111

[21] Lynda Hart, ibid. p.113

[22] Lynda Hart, ibid. p.113

[23] Catherine Schuler, "Spectator Response and Comprehension; the Problem of Karen Finley's Constant State of Desire", *The Drama Review*, v.34, pt.1, 1990, pp.131-145 p.134

[24] C. Carr, ibid. p.149

[25] C. Carr, ibid. p.150

[26] C. Carr, ibid. p.150

[27] Karen Finley, an interview by Richard Schechner, "Karen Finley: A Constant State of Becoming", *The Drama Review*, v.32, pt.1, 1988, pp.152-158, p.152

[28] Richard Schechner, ibid. p.153

[29] C. Carr, ""Telling the Awfullest Truth": An Interview with Karen Finley", *Acting Out: Feminist Performances*, Lynda Hart and Peggy Phelan eds. Michigan: University Of Michigan Press, 1993, p.154

[30] Catherine Schuler, "Spectator Response and Comprehension; the Problem of Karen Finley's Constant State of Desire", *The Drama Review*, v.34, pt.1, 1990, pp.131-145, p.132

[31] Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator as Critic*, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1991, p.66-67

[32] Catherine Schuler, "Spectator Response and Comprehension; the Problem of Karen Finley's Constant State of Desire", *The Drama Review*, v.34, pt.1, 1990, pp.131-145, p.132

[33] Catherine Schuler, ibid. p.132

[34] Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" *Visual and Other Pleasures*, London: Macmillan, 1989, pp.14-28, p.19

[35] Mulvey, ibid. pp.21-22

[36] Mulvey, ibid. p.22

[37] John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin, 1972, p.46.

[38] Berger, ibid. p.46

[39] Berger, ibid. p.47

[40] E. Deidre Pribram, "Introduction" to *Female Spectators*, E. Deidre Pribram ed. London: Verso, 1988, pp.1-2

[41] Shelagh Young, "Feminism and the Politics of Power: Whose Gaze is it Anyway", in *The Female Gaze*, Lorraine Gamman and Margaret Marshment eds. London: Womens Press, 1988, p.175

[42] Shelagh Young, ibid. p.184

[43] Annie Sprinkle, "Some of My Performances in Retrospect", *Art Journal*, v.56, n.4, 1997, pp.68-70, p.68

[44] Annie Sprinkle, ibid. p.69

[45] Annie Sprinkle, ibid. p.70

[46] Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*, California: Cleis Press, 1998, p.28

[47] Geraldine Harris, *Staging Femininities. Performance and Performativity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, p.42

[48] Elinor Fuchs, "Staging the Obscene Body", cited in Geraldine Harris, ibid. p.149

[49] Geraldine Harris, ibid. p.160

[50] Geraldine Harris, ibid. p.148

[51] Annie Sprinkle, *Post-Porn Modernist*, California: Cleis Press, 1998, p.165

[52] Geraldine Harris, *Staging Femininities. Performance and Performativity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, p.42

[53] Annie Sprinkle, ibid. p.166

[54] Annie Sprinkle, ibid. p.166

[55] Linda Williams, "Provoking Agent: The Pornography and Performance Art of Annie Sprinkle", *Provoking Agents. Gender and Agency in Theory and Practice*, Judith Keegan Gardiner ed. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995, p.307

[56] Linda Williams, ibid. p.304

[57] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, p. 59

[58] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.79

[59] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.45

[60] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p. 16.

[61] Ann E. Reuman, "Wild Tongues Can't Be Tamed", *Violence, Silence, and Anger: Women's Writing as Transgression*, Deirdre Lashgari ed. Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1995, p.309

[62] Ann E. Reuman, ibid. p.309

[63] Ann E. Reuman, ibid. p.311

[64] Ann E. Reuman, ibid. p.310

[65] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.42

[66] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. pp.26-27

[67] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.27

[68] Ann E. Reuman, ibid. p.315. Reuman writes how in *Borderlands* Anzaldúa rewrites myths in feminist form to reintegrate aspects of her identity.

[69] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, p.35

[70] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.36

[71] Anna Louise Keating, *Women Reading Women Writing/ Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996, p.77

[72] Sidonie Smith argues that Anzaldúa's reading of the Coatlicue enables her to rewrite Cortes's conquering of the Aztecs firmly taking blame away from "La Chingada's (Malinche's) culpability". Smith writes: "Once the Coatlicue 'state,' in both senses of the word, had been undermined and superseded by a hierarchical/dualistic state, defeat by colonizing armies followed inevitably. This cultural reorganization accounted for colonization, not a discrete moment of a woman's treachery. Adding greater complexity to the cultural history of her peoples, integrating an analysis of the oppressions of gender to those of class and race, the narrator multiplies the sources of colonization". Sidonie Smith, *Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body: Womens Autobiographical Practises in the twentieth Century*, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993, pp.172-173

[73] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, p.51

[74] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.46

[75] Gloria Anzaldúa, ibid. p.51

[76] Anzaldúa "To(o) Queer the Writer", p.252-253, cited in Anna Louise Keating, *Women Reading Women Writing/ Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996, p.63

[77] Anna Louise Keating, *Women Reading Women Writing/ Self-Invention in Paula Gunn Allen, Gloria Anzaldúa and Audre Lorde*, Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996, p.122

[7878787878] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1987, p.22

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