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Article (refereed)

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Originally published in *Humanimalia* The publisher's version is available at:
<http://www.depauw.edu/humanimalia/>

You may cite this version as: Turner, Lynn, 2010. When Species Kiss: some recent correspondence between animots. *Humanimalia*, 2 (1). pp. 60-85.
[Article]: Goldsmiths Research Online.

Available at: <http://eprints.gold.ac.uk/3738/>

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Lynn Turner

When Species Kiss: some recent correspondence between animots

What is important to me is not the appearance, it is the passage. I like the word passage. *Pas sage* (ill-behaved, unwise). All the passwords all the passing and borderpass words, the words which cross the eyelid *on the interior* of their own body, are my magic *animots*, my animal-words.

—Cixous, 'Writing Blind' [1996] in *Stigmata: Escaping Texts*, 1998 (140)



Fig. 1. Carolee Schneemann, *Infinity Kisses I*, one from the series, image courtesy of the artist.

This paper considers the figure of the interspecies kiss in works by Donna Haraway, Hélène Cixous, and Carolee Schneemann in light of the impact on animal studies by Jacques Derrida. I elaborate key elements of Derrida's increasingly glossed essay "The Animal That Therefore I Am (More to Follow)" to show both their commonality with deconstruction more broadly and their conceptual importance in rethinking relations between humans and other animals in particular. These elements are not simply applied to Haraway, Cixous, and Schneemann but are interwoven with and developed by their works. I position the interspecies kiss, indeed the kiss in general, as performative. While "performativity" has become part of the lexicon of Visual Culture, often appearing simply in adjectival form, its more complex articulation in the work of Derrida is often overlooked. There the term, as part of his subtle displacement of signification, already impacts on what we thought was human property: rather than meaning residing in our organic, present possession, it becomes conditioned by a machinic, reactive repetition, the very quality that Descartes attempted to section off as the impoverished domain of the animal. Bringing organic and machinic into an enmeshed relation inevitably brings Haraway's figure of the cyborg to mind, while the

“doing” over “being” quality of the performative resonates with her emphasis on the relating of our encounters.¹

The Cartesian question that Derrida redirects — “but as for me, who am I [...]?” (“Animal” 418) — might seem to return us to the grounds of the performative speech act; however, Derrida insinuates a not necessarily linguistic activity into this question that again makes clear that performativity is not species specific.² Throughout “The Animal that Therefore I Am” Derrida plays on the first person present tense of “to be” — indistinguishable from “to follow” in French, thereby making Descartes think again. A deceptively simple “*Je suis*” performatively installs a non-priority and a non-presence in the would-be thinking subject. This transformation is intensified through the substitution of “The Animal” for “I think”: no more the quarantine of “I think therefore I am.” Temporal trouble results from knocking the present tense of my thought off-kilter through the implication that I am *after* something else — what? — the animal: it dispenses with linearity, distributes deferral, and dislodges origin. “Being” through the activity of following, the animal that therefore I am cannot be certain of its own terrain. Following as a hunter? A follower, not leader? As one that is always following after the animal, without overtaking the animal, and without pause.

While they encounter each others’ work unevenly — a relationship divergently traced by curiosity, science and who reads whom — there is a hospitality that emerges between the thinking of Haraway and Derrida independently of any deliberate mutual involvement. In contrast, the personal and the literary-philosophical friendship between Cixous and Derrida threads throughout their writing, explicitly and elliptically.³ Surviving him in time, Cixous is frequently read in light of Derrida’s work even as — as this paper finds — a feline Cixousian uncanny stalks “The Animal that Therefore I Am,” leaving tracks as yet unremarked. Moreover, however much Derrida may have shifted relations between what we call philosophy and what we call literature, his work is perhaps more readily digested as “argument.” Cixous’s thought turns on the poetic first, and this has long-involved animal figures — without subsuming animals under the decoration of “mere” figures. Observing “Animals are becoming more and more important in my books [...]” as early as 1996 (“Menagerie” 40), Cixous invokes the *animot* as early as 1976 (*La* 91).⁴ The temporal quandary of who I am following is presaged in Cixous when she touches the touch of “the cat whose cat I am” (“Menagerie” 44).⁵

It is unlikely that Schneemann is a reader of Derrida. However, she may well have encountered “French Philosophers” as compulsory reading at some juncture in Anglo-American art cultures of the 1980’s, following on from the lessons in ideology that she parodies with droll delight in her most well known performance work, *Interior Scroll* (1975). In that work, Schneemann famously pulled a scroll out of her vagina, unfurled it, and read aloud a script addressing the distaste with which a “structuralist film-maker” regards her work, detailing its “personal clutter,” “persistence of feelings,” and “hand-touch sensibility.”⁶ The “structuralist film-maker” stands for that assimilation of the unconscious to ideology prevalent in much theory of the 1970s. That version of Freud and Marx promoted an obligatory critical distance in the arts — along with a widespread ban on the body — that was supposed to disarm the apparatus that would otherwise continue to dupe unwitting spectators into desiring against their own interests. It also militated parricidically against any trace of authorship — or worse, autobiography — as another effect of ideology. Schneemann’s work does not enter this paper as a combatant on behalf of the real lives imagined to be ignored as they wander “outside-of-the-text,” nor as a sponsor of the conceit of authorship. Rather, in light of Derrida, Cixous, and Haraway, her work indicates a revised sense of the autobiographical, of the touch of the hand, even of what we call experience linking with performativity beyond the speech act and the ability to intend. These revised senses precisely impact on the powers assumed to be human.

While a much lengthier endeavor might bring Haraway, Cixous, and Schneemann together along additional lines, here the “autobiographical animals” at play in their work converge through the kiss. In *The Companion Species Manifesto*, Haraway writes of one of her dogs:

We have had forbidden conversation; we have had oral intercourse; we are bound in telling story upon story with nothing but the facts. We are training each other in acts of communication we barely understand. We are, constitutively, companion species. (2, italics original)

In an essay concerning the concept of the event, Cixous writes, “With a firm tread the cat climbs onto the woman’s lap, looks the woman in the eye with a clear and decided gaze and abruptly a kiss on the alarmed mouth” (“The Cat’s Arrival” 22). Schneemann, without consideration for finesse, frame, or focus made daily photographic portraits of her morning kiss with her cats, first Cluny and later Vesper, culminating in two large sequences: *Infinity Kisses I* (1981-1988) and *Infinity Kisses II* (1990-1998) — later made into a short film *Infinity Kisses — the Movie* (2008).

The kisses are not identical in all these instances, but they cannot be exhausted by a “Beauty and the Beast” allegory in which the kiss reveals the beast to have been a man all along. Rather, the kiss solicits an undecidability into the divisions between subjects and species once thought to be decisive.

*Kiss Me Honey Honey Kiss Me.*⁷ The image that drew my attention to the *Infinity Kisses* is the one shown out of sequence from what is a substantial body of images on Schneemann’s website (pictured above). In contrast to the sexuality by-pass affected by critics of the *Companion Species Manifesto*, Schneemann’s image falls most easily, rapidly, and ecstatically into one of a grand passion. The woman’s head is thrown backwards and reaches to one side in a gesture readily associated with female sexual pleasure (this is not an air kiss; this is not a peck on the cheek). She is in frame from the shoulders upwards, and since her shoulders are uncovered her nakedness is metonymically implied. Though the cat is smaller, of course, this frame is so organized that equal space is given to both beings. The cat at top right, the woman at bottom left. The cat, perched on a pile of boxes, reaches down to the woman. Their kiss is central: the even expanse of the woman’s upper chest and the glide of her neck swoop straight up to it. Breaking up the flow of the woman’s neck and the consistency of her skin, the black and white markings of the cat’s fur call a halt to the gaze. Though the woman’s eyes are so turned toward the cat that they cannot be seen, we can see the face of the cat, and the cat’s eyes are shut. It would be recognizable as a portrait of a kiss even if the title did not name kisses as such. Familiar romantic conventions are out in force; all but one. And this exception, this unfamiliar “familiar” is captivating.

Infinity Kisses is not a single image, nor a single idea work since the kiss constellates so much. Rather it is the name of at least two extended series, sometimes rearranged into other patterns, and a movie. *Infinity Kisses I* consists of a photogrid of 140 small 35 mm Xerachrome photographs, each printed twice (right to left and left to right, exacerbating the mirror-image effect), taken from 1981 until 1987, massed together, and mounted on linen. *Infinity Kisses II* comprises 24 self-shot 35 mm color photographs printed as laser images, each 96 x 120 inches, taken between 1990 and 1998. There are strong formal and formalizing elements in the presentation of the work, though the images arise out of the highly informal filming environment of keeping a camera ready at hand in anticipation of the morning kiss that Schneemann habitually received, first from Cluny and later Vesper. Both sets ended arbitrarily, not through an aesthetic decision to render closure

or because they work toward a known end, but due to the death of the cat (the artist saw Vesper as the reincarnation of Cluny) (*Imaging* 264).

Significant art-historical attention has been directed to Schneemann's work and its engagements with space, body, process, and ritual — albeit with the tendency to truncate more than 40 years of varied practice to a kind of “greatest hits” list consisting of the individual and group naked performance works, *Meat Joy* (1964), *Up To And Including Her Limits* (1973-76), *Interior Scroll*, and *Eye/Body* (1963), as well as the erotic film *Fuses* (1965), for which the artist filmed herself having sex with her then partner James Tenney, with her cat Kitsch as observer, staging the gaze.⁸ This hit list's conversation with feminist theory and art history converges around the question of the body, especially the female body, and agency, sexuality, power, and experience. The conversation turns into contestation around the same questions. Feminist art-historical analysis of the 1970s and 1980s that was invested in Lacanian psychoanalysis, as exemplified by the earlier work of Griselda Pollock, found it difficult to see any female body step free of the pernicious “male gaze,” to the extent that only signs for the feminine became legitimate. Any female bodies, whether in performance, film, or two-dimensional media, tended to be understood as the index of women who had given in to their own inevitable objectification, incapable of producing the requisite critical distance in the spectator. “Body art” seemed particularly culpable. 1990s' feminist art history, exemplified by Amelia Jones's book titled *Body Art* (1998), both challenged the ideological analysis of the problem of the “gaze” and appropriate responses to it, and opened performance work by both male and female artists (Schneemann included) to more nuanced analysis.⁹

Much less has been written, however, about Schneemann's works that foreground the feline (photographs, mixed media installations, and films — arguably including *Fuses*), the relative silence around which (in term of critical writing and exhibition profile) the artist is only too aware.¹⁰ *Split Decision*, a large and intelligently curated retrospective of Schneemann's work in Toronto and Buffalo, has intervened in this absence by organizing her work not according to the deadweight of chronology, but according to three themes: war, erotics and felines.¹¹

Rebecca Schneider is one of very few art historians to address the feline content of Schneemann's practice, naming the subjects of bestiality, criminality, and the everyday in relation to *Infinity Kisses*, the video installation *Vesper's Stampede to My Holy Mouth* (1992) and *Fuses*. For Schneider these works point to the limits, even irrelevance, of gender in light of bestiality, the expected transgression of which is held in check by the

quotidian tone of the work. Since Vesper's gender is "neither apparent nor important," Schneider sees sexuality fade gender from the frame, curiously allowing Schneemann to remain unmarked (49). Schneider links this "art-bestiality" to a multiplication of sexualities commensurate with Derrida's dream of future sexualities beyond negation and thus beyond opposition, ("Choreographies" 50). While this link is not unwarranted, it does run rough-shod over the range of conflicting work that the rather odd term "art-bestiality" might be taken to incorporate, as well as — in composing a book about the "explicit female body" in performance — effacing possible lines of enquiry opened by the question of the animal. In other words, it does not seriously consider the "questions of interspecies communication" that Schneemann herself acknowledges (*Imaging* 264).

In his encyclopaedic book on the representation of animals in contemporary art, *The Postmodern Animal*, Steve Baker glosses *Infinity Kisses*. Reliant on Schneider, he frames the work as the collapse of art into documentary through the weight of the domestic *mise-en-scène* (170). Baker's work does imply, however, an interesting dilemma: realism, ostensibly for the sake of the animal, seems to descend into sentimentality, but unfeeling postmodernity only removes the animal by other means — through the sign without allegiance that is allegory. Schneemann's work, I suggest, helps us understand that this division always breaches.

Now, does a kiss respond or react? "Does my cat really kiss me?"¹² Can we decide? In his recent investigation of the literary kiss, J. Hillis Miller swiftly asserts the metaphoric capacity of a kiss to substitute for speech (act) (724). I suggest that its metonymic function is equally important. If the lips are proximate to speech, then they serve, or at least attempt to serve, as the anchor tying the speech to its actor. Moreover it is metonymy that indicates the "touchiness" of the kiss.¹³

Curiously, in light of Derrida's extensive writings on the incalculable quality of the performative, Miller positions the kiss of which Derrida writes as one that does take effect, even when sent by the virtual means of telephone call, letter, and email (by writing, in other words, by the dangerous supplements that expose the absence at the heart of any postal system), in contrast to Kafka's mourning for written kisses, since these are inevitably destined to feed only ghosts and thus never to reach their "destinée" (731).

If a kiss kisses does it really do so because invisibly it airlessly seals in the singular affect as the intention of the kisser? Does the mark, the "x" really stand only for the

particular kiss it bodies forth, rather than standing for anything else? Does the “x” instead cross something out? Nay-saying the singularity of each kiss seems a little churlish. No one but a Judas would tear a kiss into some other non-kissing context, and his kiss was pretended anyway. In a debate with colleagues concerning the vicissitudes of the performative, one provided the example of “I love you,” questioning who would ever say such a phrase and not mean it. Yet there seems to be no better example of this splintered category. Don’t we say “I love you” romantically and hope that we mean it, or that the saying of it will make it true? Don’t we say “I love you” spontaneously and wonder, belatedly, if we really meant it? Say it guiltily in response to the demand for reciprocity? Say it habitually? Automatically? Use it accusingly: you *said* that you loved me! Repetition, the sense of convention invading intention, is once again at work, here dogging the human purchase on response. This repetition invites not just a roominess of meaning, a polysemia of the kiss, but an infinity kiss. In this sense it is the kiss that is modified by infinity, by an infinity of contexts. Beyond comprehension, since infinity cannot be presented, the kiss becomes sublime. Kiss of infinity: kiss without end.

Miller also ventures the question of morality, hence the possible immorality of a kiss — although, interestingly, this question only emerges indirectly through a citation used to demonstrate the sheer uncertainty of what this non-universal practice might concern. Prior to asking what it means to kiss in general, Joyce’s Stephen Dedalus asks whether it is right or wrong to kiss his mother (725). This morality, or even legality, is not first of all about consenting to kiss or be kissed, but rather its confining its proper usage to the inside edge of a law-bound social world. But since kissing is of the edges — edges that lose track of themselves — this confinement is going to be uneasy. Kissing, Miller further notes, “by no means differentiates human beings from animals, as philosophers used to believe [...]. Chimpanzees kiss, as do other animals” (728). Unsupported by any references, Miller assumes the empirical explanation that one can observe animals doing the same thing that humans do (kissing). He does not expand the sense of what might constitute this activity through recourse to the less empirically observable problem of the *performativity* of the kiss (his ostensible subject). Neither does he pursue the question, if kissing is common to at least some rather than just one animal, what happens in the inter-species kiss?

Changing the grounds of the “animal question” is required if anything more or less than a reactive argument regarding the essential quality of the kiss is to be produced. Taking on the near, though not totally, unified front of philosophy that denies language, and hence the ability to respond, to the animal, with an opposing, defensive, and reactive claim that “of course they have their own languages!” like French or Mandarin,

gets us nowhere. Derrida, Cixous, Haraway, and Schneemann turn the tables and question our certainty regarding our own clarity of communication; they transform the terms of the alleged privation of the animal with regard to language.

Art historical convention would concentrate upon marshalling adequate evidence for Schneemann's aesthetic process, influence, and development, culminating in the signature of the work. Schneemann is signatory, she takes credit for the work as artwork and she names —and defines— a body of photographs as *Infinity Kisses*. In this traditional view, every meaningful aspect of the work is decided in advance, and by the artist alone. But Schneemann opens herself to the risk of another signatory, naming herself *as a signed body*, as recipient of the repeated actions of Cluny and Vesper: "he ritualistically, ardently kisses me on the mouth" (*Imaging* 264). She has also referred to Kitsch as a camera, since her "steady focus enabled me to consider her regard as an aperture in motion" (qtd. "What does" 73).¹⁴ An important reversal of subject-centered maintenance of the signatory comes with deconstruction's insistence on counter-signature, that it is the other that signs, the other that offsets the would-be decisiveness of my decision, my signature, my mark, my kiss. Prior to returning to Schneemann, Haraway, and Cixous, the following sections elaborate the grounds by which it can also be argued that the cat signs, refining the question of what it is to be an "autobiographical animal," what it is to kiss — and what it is to *kithe*.

Kithe Me Honey Honey Kithe Me. Familiar in the albeit antiquated expression "kith and kin" signifying "friends and family," the *Oxford English Dictionary* also lists "kith" as meaning "information," specifically regarding rules of etiquette, rules concerning what is proper. Its strict separation from "kin" is unclear. Kinship could also be seen as governing — at least attempting to govern — the proper. Kith is also linked to the verb "to kithe." As a verb — a "doing" word — to kithe is to proclaim, to show, or to confess. How performative is that! Derrida's cat does not kiss him, at least he does not tell us whether she does. He struggles to keep the story of his cat on the most mundane level, in the effort to curb her figural conscription and to keep the discussion relatively simply focused on showing up the philosophical expectation that the animal can only react, rather than, as he finds to his "shame," respond. The burgeoning number of texts commenting on "The Animal that Therefore I am (More to Follow)," as well as Derrida's other text from the Cerisy proceedings, "And Say the Animal Responded?," largely fall into two categories. They either applaud the work of the philosopher, relieved that his contribution clarifies both the extent and the stakes of anthropomorphism as well as its flipside of an absolute divide between the human and

the animal, or they back-track these essays through the rest of Derrida's work to remind us of his consistent investigation of the "animal question." Haraway shares in the relief, but supplements Derrida's analyses both with alternative outcomes and a critical relation to what she takes to be the limits of his response to this cat, as well as its visual scenography (*When Species Meet* 19-27). On the other hand, since Haraway's priority is to write from the point "where species meet" as a place conflicted with naturalcultural, colonial, political narratives that incorporate the philosophical, rather than to start from a domain constitutively philosophical, she sometimes cuts short the range of Derrida's remarks. The ground may be muddied through following multiple tracks, but that range needs more detailed elaboration here, in order to develop the stakes for when species kiss.

A cluster of inabilities surround what is called, in a supremely performative gesture of naming, "the animal" (Derrida, "The Animal" 392). These inabilities collude in the expulsion of "the animal" from the terrain that calls itself that of "Man." This name-calling procedure also invokes the communicative relation of call and response, and from here the distinction, if there is one, between, response and reaction (382). Rarely is an inability reserved as proper to "Man," yet when it is, this inability or privation engineers the condition of his dominance. In Derrida's hands this last and exceptional inability will turn out to work quite differently, and this difference will mark a general condition.

The problem coalesces in particular, and in a particularly influential fashion, in the work of Heidegger. For him "the animal" has no hand, cannot name, cannot speak, has no relation to death, no relation to the "as such" of the world — in fact is "poor in world" —, and hence has no relation to *Dasein* — crucially contrasting with "Man's" access to all of the above. In order to signal the animal's substantial deprivation, the hand of "Man" must be, or rather does, something special. It will become clear, however, that this doing, if it relates to the performative, does so in a far from empirical sense (underlining the misrecognition of performative for performance). Firstly, the hand must be given a clean slate, cut off in kind from what Heidegger refers to as the "grasping organs" of beasts, and divorced from the kinship named by evolution. It is not that Man's hand does not grasp — the oddity, even monstrosity of its singular form is remarked by Derrida — but that his grasp conveys a specialized range that is raised to the general status of *techne*. Moreover, the work of the hand (*Handwerk*) is joined with what Heidegger calls "thinking." The handiwork of thinking thus becomes a signature of the human: in having no hand the animal does not think and cannot sign. Thinking of this handiwork as a signature gives a suggestion of the difference performed by the

human hand: this hand may grasp, as does the paw, but what it does significantly is give. This hand does not simply or empirically give, rather and above all it gives itself. Giving itself, giving the same, the hand auto-graphs. In so doing this hand transcends biology, and accesses the “as such” of things (the essence untouched by the paw or any other “prehensile organ”). Kithe me.

Rather than simply reacting to this division of labor by elevating the grasping paw, Derrida switches attention to the assumed qualitative separation of giving and taking: this is one element of what cannot be vouchsafed (“Heidegger’s Hand” 166-169). Likewise, the difference between the sign-making capacities of the animal and the linguistic abilities of Man — especially the ability to name, rather than be named — is raised to a higher plane through Heidegger’s assumption that the animal has no access to phenomenality as such and thus “does not unveil the being of being” through naming (Derrida qtd. Lawlor 50). Again, for Derrida, rather than reacting and claiming equal footing with regard to being for the animal, what must be questioned is the alleged phenomenal presence in the name of that which is named through showing up its distance as a consequence of the gesture of pointing. Kithe me. Rather than performing a kind of direct capture, pointing is a spacing that disseminates, it is a gesture that cannot gather the “as such” of that which is pointed out. This privation holds true for the gesture when performed by the hand, even — perhaps crucially — in a relation of autoaffection. The culmination of the animal’s privation of hand, language, naming, and access to the “as such” of being is Heidegger’s well-known determination that the “animal is poor in world.” This is in contrast both to the stone, which is “worldless,” and of course “Man,” who is “world-forming” (Heidegger qtd. Lawlor 51). In spite of any apparent comparison, Lawlor points out that this insistence on poverty of world should not be read as placing the animal and human on a sliding scale of relation to world. Rather, this is a difference “not of degree but of essence” (51). The “world-forming” capacity of Man again assumes access to the “as such” of beings. With such an access comes the capacity to question being as such. This ability to question one’s own being echoes the gesture of pointing involved in naming, here directed, autoaffectively, to oneself. Never pointing at themselves, never referring to their own being, animals for Heidegger do not die, they merely “perish” (53). But the implication, now that the difference between giving and taking, the ability of pointing to gather the world, and the presence of being as such in the name, is that Man too does not have access to death as such. If the gesture misleads and Man cannot access, cannot catch up with what — should he do so — would vanquish all possibility (death), then Man too suffers a privation similar to that of the animal. Consequently that common privation

muddies the grounds of their ostensible difference. Following this, and since for Heidegger “the possibility of death defines what most belongs to *Dasein*,” Derrida’s assertion that these questions shake the foundations of Heidegger’s entire ontology does not seem so dramatic (55).

These unsettling manoeuvres characteristic of deconstruction dismantle the anthropomorphic traps that both identity politics and the logic of “animal rights” fall into — that is, into defending animals on the basis of the privileges (whether laws or rights or concepts of identity) formerly accorded solely to “Man.” This is not dissimilar to the failures of a feminism of equality — a feminism that assumes that our task is solely to extend the existing range of rights formerly co-opted by men to newly enfranchised women, rather than the ambitions of a feminism of difference that would also examine the conditions and stakes of these rights together with the concept of subjectivity that they assume. Like the latter, deconstruction insists on changing the terms of the argument, such that the grounds of comparison themselves qualitatively change. Neither conceding to the tendency to police an absolute divide of difference between animal and human, nor collapsing all distinctions, all signatures, into absolute continuity or identity, Derrida rather refigures the relation between animals and humans as one of “staggered analogy” (77-79). With the stagger comes a spacing, ground not covered by the equivalence marshalled when *this* is corralled into being *like that*, loosening the assumed anchorage of one side of an analogy. Lawlor presents the staggered analogy as the notion of faults, or differences, without a fall — that is without a fall from grace, from an original, sinless, perfect, condition of presence. Rather, the staggered analogy is destinerrant.

When Species Kiss. Noting that Heidegger does not cite any source to shore up his doxa regarding the animal, Derrida pinpoints the discursive pattern to the two major missed encounters in representations of animals: that of the philosopher or the scientific observer of animals who nevertheless does not see animals as beings who look back, and that of the poets or prophets “who admit taking upon themselves the address of an animal that addresses them,” but claim to have found “no statutory representative” who acknowledges the address of an animal in a theoretical, philosophical, juridical, or civic mode (other than himself, faced by his cat) (“Animal” 383). Yet, what if not all “Western human workers with animals” have refused or ignored the respective gazes of animals, as Haraway asks (*When Species Meet* 21). Turning to (and therefore impacting on) a different archive than that of Derrida’s, Haraway calls on a range of less discursively regimented work from the sciences that adapt or abandon the flawed concept of the neutral observer. Bioanthropologist Barbara Smuts, for example, finds

that her observation of a baboon colony can only proceed when she gives up the attempt to be invisible — better put as hostile, and learns to adjust her behaviors to those of the baboons who certainly are taking note of her (24).

While Haraway appreciates the mundane quality of Derrida's encounter with his cat, his vigorous efforts to maintain the daily particularity of this cat and to hold at bay the allegorical lure that would dissolve her catness, as well as his recognition that the cat was responding and not only reacting to him, she yet finds a failure of curiosity in "The Animal That Therefore I Am." For Haraway, so much effort goes into addressing the pitfalls that philosophy has entrenched in the discourse of species that when it comes to this cat, if Derrida is curious about what her response might entail, he can find no way to write about it, and she vanishes from his text as surely as if she were a Cheshire Cat. This is one reason I turn to the heightened terrain of the interspecies kiss. The site of curiosity and the way in which it affects the subject in its grip is pressing, not least because Haraway has found herself, trained biologist and interdisciplinary critic of technoscience, in the thick of what might be popularly construed as fascism: the terrain of "pure-bred" dogs, and in particular playing a sport with — rather than simply maintaining the breed history (herding livestock) of — Australian Shepherds. Loving Cayenne as a companion animal and as an Australian Shepherd leads Haraway not simply to the presumed closed book of an aestheticization of the type, but to another involvement with gene politics. The macro-level leads her to the amateur practices of activist dog-breeders to quash in-breeding (since not everyone follows popular "sires" for their looks alone, regardless of genetic proximity to their mate) and work towards eliminating genetic disorders through open registries recording pedigree details in full. The micro-level generates the interspecies kiss.

Alternating between poetically attuned diaristic extracts from what she names as "Notes of a Sportswriter's Daughter" and a comparatively more straightforward theoretical address, Haraway's *Companion Species Manifesto* begins somewhat provocatively. The very first line tells us that "Ms Cayenne Pepper continues to colonize all [Haraway's] cells — a sure case of what the biologist Lynn Margulis calls symbiogenesis" (1). (Symbiogenesis refers to new ways of thinking about genetic transfers that do not necessarily involve linear sexual reproduction but rather notice the various exchanges, mergers, and recombinations of genetic material perpetrated by bacteria). Starting off on the other foot, it is Donna Haraway that is "colonized" by Cayenne Pepper, by the saliva from her "darter-tongue kisses" (1). It is the tongue of the other that signs, delivering the saliva that troubles the species of all kisses. This figure is

biological in the creative senses that new material feminisms, in Stacy Alaimo's phrase, are now bringing to attention. It displaces earlier fears that biology would only ever cut destiny to the whim of those in power. Indeed, the whole of Haraway's work may be understood as a demonstration that, while the biological may be a field riven by power, this field is not therefore forever anterior to culture or otherwise inaccessible. Her still paradigmatic early essay "'Gender' for a Marxist Dictionary" historicizes the political urgency of the relatively recent term "gender" to compensate for the "deficiencies" blamed on the immutable "sex differences" of girls, while opening second-wave feminism's foundational "sex/gender" divide to other differences masked by the genre of gender, as well as, crucially, refusing to give up theoretically on "sex" or "nature."

"Ms Cayenne Pepper" presents a flash of the irony familiar from the first lines of "A Cyborg Manifesto." That marital blank, "Ms," rather than the anachronistic "Miss" or "Mrs," might initiate the scent of the spectral terror of monstrous lesbian reproducibility. And if there is terror, it may only be compounded by the line by line realization that Cayenne is canine, and she is not transformed into a man by the humanizing virtue of the kiss. They have had "forbidden conversation"; they have had "oral intercourse" (2). The wet medium of Cayenne's rich saliva produces a figure of co-constitution and of reproduction exceeding both species as transfections pass — or communicate — through viral vectors. In so figuring unlicensed reproducibility and in so figuring co-constituting contact as random occurrence rather than appointed moment within the dialectical narrative foretold about the human subject, Haraway bypasses the necessity to surmount any dead fathers in the telos of the law. This is not the de-humanization of a sadistic pornographic standard, but the de-humanism of life.

Such a de-humanism should have taken hold after the three wounds inflicted on the "fantasy of human exceptionalism" named as such by Freud (*When Species Meet* 11) — namely, the Copernican wound that decentered the Earth and fundamentally opened the door to "a universe of inhumane, nonteleological times and spaces," the Darwinian wound that earthed "Man" as one amongst other animals rather than their anointed ruler or final outcome, and the Freudian wound itself, wielding the concept of the Unconscious to dislodge Reason from within (11). To these Haraway adds a fourth wound, the "cyborgian, which infolds organic and technological flesh and so melds that Great Divide as well" (11). These dissolves, however, do not amount to a new found pool of sameness, but a series of differences unanchored by origin or end in sets of shifting relations. These shifting relations need to be re-emphasized in light of Haraway's cited 60 percent of Americans currently doubting or outright rejecting that humans are descended from other animals.

Play, and all the incalculable risks it entails, surfaces theoretically when Haraway changes the register of the question Derrida uses to reset *our* relation to *them*, and to discontinue any further variation on the rhetorical theme of “can they do what we do?” — the line that Heidegger’s work entrenched. Citing Jeremy Bentham Derrida asks “can they suffer?” while Haraway asks “can they play?” (22). Yet “can they suffer?” does not simply replace something like “can they speak? (No? Oh well, let’s kill them).” Rather, it joins with Derrida’s reversal of the philosophical refrain of a privation, or lack of an ability, contrasting the proper possession of that ability as mark of the human. It works the ground of transforming privation into ability troubling the sovereignty of power (ability) — they *can* suffer. Thus the grounds of Derrida and Haraway do not quite square, but they should be read together, staggering, supplementing each other’s work, especially since play too might also trouble the sovereignty of power.

While Haraway’s “play” arises in the contexts of her agility work with her dogs, in which species must find a means of communication, and of the non-reproductive sexual play observed between dogs closing the *Companion Species Manifesto*, “play” in its more Derridean sense joins the scene at the point where Haraway’s interspecies contact zones are also figured as kin-making.

Pet Subjects. Haraway’s wider argument is at pains to extend “companion species” beyond the “companion animals” that we think we know under the name of “pets” (a name that arguably Oedipalizes the animals in its grasp). Yet the focus of this essay is limited to specific relations with domesticated animals, especially insofar as, with Haraway, these are not apprehended as “furry children” (*Companion* 11). Inevitably the (frequently hostile) discourse on pets has informed this research. Marc Shell’s important essay on “The Family Pet” raises particular questions, because it is forcefully directed against the way in which animals become figured as kin to those not their kind. For Shell, pet-lovers who name their love as one which encompasses all animals falls into a Christian ideology of one family in which all are brothers under God. The totalitarianism that the one family produces runs thus: if we are all brothers and show kindness to our brothers, woe betide anyone or anything that is not cast as a brother. The structural conundrum this universalism also produces is a newfound equivalence between incest and bestiality. Consequently the outcome is “either universal celibacy and starvation or bestiality/incest and cannibalism” (141). While Judaic particularism fares slightly better, in that it does not imagine “all men” as brothers, thus allowing for some non-brothers to nevertheless be human, and also renders differences between

animals through the laws on keeping kosher, Shell nevertheless finds it difficult to envision any new kin relation between those we call human and those we call animals. Persuasive as he is, Shell's implicit habituation to the grid-locked relations of structuralist anthropology means that he does not pause to consider if there is any performative contingency involved in the functioning of "family." Synchronic slices of current sets of relations (structuralism's remit) just cannot imagine what they (claim only to) describe unfolding in any other direction. For Shell, the addition of animals makes no operative difference for existing kinship structures. No supplement, they merely compound existing problems.

Haraway's post-structuralism of kinship assumes otherwise: if humans and other animals are drawn in to new kinds of kin relation, this does not necessarily revert to an Oedipal plan. Haraway refuses a kin relation that authorizes the pet as (like) a child, since she does not want to infantilize dogs and also because neither "children" nor brothers exhaust the term "kin" (11). Echoing his earlier work on the non-admission of the "sisters" to "friendship," philosophically conceived, Derrida asks, "what happens to the fraternity of brothers when an animal enters the scene" ("The Animal" 381). "[T]rying to live different tropes" in Haraway's book does not retreat into her own personal whims or freshly cleared ground to patrol, but it does assume that if there are kinship structures they do not exist in an everlasting present or repeat with the exactitude of an idealized machine. Rather, they risk a rewrite at every turn, and that means the possibility of new kin relations affecting all comers.

Shell ends "The Family Pet" by assigning that pet a structural function, a typically anthropomorphic one: "If there were no such beings as pets, we would breed them," he says, since pets tell us who we are (141). Yet there is an odd loophole: "sometimes we *really* cannot tell whether a being is essentially human or animal — say when we were children or when we shall become extraterrestrial explorers" (141). Perhaps the loophole is more than an exception: holding onto a difference between those who really cannot tell the difference and those who can tell perfectly well will not help Shell with the performativity drawn to attention by Derrida, Haraway, Cixous, and Schneemann.

Catoptrics



Fig.2 Carolee Schneemann, *Infinity Kisses II*, one from the series, image courtesy of the artist

Along with the disappearance of Derrida’s cat from “The Animal that Therefore I am” — a disappearance hovering between a failure of curiosity and an ethical refusal — Haraway also finds the repetition of a philosophical trope trapping Derrida in a scene dominated by its visuality, and punctuated by his naked body. He is naked before his cat. Naked and ashamed. Yet with Haraway’s acknowledged Catholicism and the emphasis on the sins of the flesh, following Derrida’s visual emphasis she loses track of its equivocality. On the one hand, she’s right — this is about Jacques and not his cat, about whom we learn very little — but the way it is about Jacques makes a difference. Derrida’s phrasing is odd. He writes:

I often ask myself, just to see, *who I am* — and who I am (following) at the moment when, caught naked, in silence, by the gaze of an animal, for example the eyes of a cat. (“The Animal” 372, italics in original)

Prompted by the eyes of a cat, this gaze is like a kiss, if a kiss is as open as this paper suggests. This “just to see” may seek, but cannot seize. Its curiosity is not calculative. Just a few lines later Derrida repeats the phrase, repeats it twice more and in those instances it turns back toward him, mirroring the first time, now identified with the cat looking at him “just to see” (373, italics original). Later in the essay it is echoed in the scene of Biblical naming. There God lets man (without woman) name “in order to see” what happens. This God has both an “infinite right of inspection,” and also the “finitude of a god who doesn’t know what is going to happen to him with language” (418). Derrida too does not know what is going to happen when he looks “just to see” into the eyes of this cat, and in so doing asks after himself. Derrida’s being is troubled, not confirmed by this other.

Who am I? Such an autobiographical question would point the self out, point for point “in the present [...] and in his totally naked truth” (418). This indexical emphasis makes a metonymy for the hand, and the hand recalls its signature place in Heidegger. Yet for Derrida the incapacity for the human to point to being as such speaks to the vicissitudes of writing. Not only can we not decide between giving and taking, but all such gestures necessarily space, and that minimal distance opens onto the possibility of difference not identity. This condition repeats whether we send, sign, or seal by hand, by word, by lips, or by gaze.

Derrida does not look in order to cancel the other by seeing only his own re-confirmed reflection (“pointing” straight back to him). Rather, the response of the other always surprises. For where autobiography habitually imports a mirror to figure its reflective function and to lead back automatically, autoaffectively, to the signing self, “The Animal that Therefore I am (following)” sees itself in the eyes of a cat. It is habitually through the reflected other that the subject is staged for itself as such, misrecognition of that subject’s capacities is part of the allure. What if the other is wholly other, and not a brother in advance? What if this other is a cat? Jacques Lacan once opened limited access to the mirror for the animal — as a visual reflection, but without speculative insight. There the recognition of the animal’s own image did not forecast the ability to say “I” as it did for the human infant (“The Mirror Stage”). Neither could animals take each other’s images for their own. But seeing himself in the eyes of a cat, signed by this other, Jacques Derrida becomes an autobiographical animal, and he is not alone.

Supplementing the gaze of the non-human other, it is the interruption in and of the kiss that is underlined in Cixous. She does not see it coming, even though her eyes are open and the cat’s determination is flagged by its “clear and decided gaze” (“The Cat’s Arrival” 21). For that matter she does not see the cat coming, either: “in the meantime the cat arrived” (21). Pure event, and as such astonishing. Not “in the beginning,” though this is her first line, rather “*in the meantime* the cat arrived.” Arriving without an article, as the chapter of her novel *Messie* (1996), “*Arrivée du chat*” stresses arrival even over the cat, in a sense that slightly dissipates in its more recent English translation as a discrete essay called “The Cat’s Arrival.” Even so, published in a special issue of the journal *parallax* on “animal beings,” this essay has been interjected into a field rippling with the after-effects of Derrida’s work on animals, but which has not (yet) kept pace with that of Cixous. Perhaps this will change with the publication of *The Portable Cixous*, a collection of her writings that explicitly names “The Animal” as a core theme in her work, and one not limited to cats or domesticated animals (Segarra). But Cixous’s ceaseless breaching of genre disorients the difference between autobiography (that

should only ever lead back to the self) and magical realism (that should only escape the perceived realism of the self). Thus the challenge of her prose and her preference for embedding “argument” within poetic phrasing and neologism may continue to fox those readers hoping to find a program or a method (of course, these are not easily found in Derrida either!).

Cixous’s cat does not make an appearance only to subsequently fade from view, or atrophy in allegory. But the stress is on the surprise of the encounter: she writes “I’d also never have imagined [...] That the Event would be a cat” (16). Her surprise at this unforeseen, and thus eventful, remarkable encounter foreshadows that of Derrida: both of them rendered not at home in their own homes, both caught on the unhomely, uncanny, backfoot. In Cixous, since arrival is a feminine noun in French, this force of arrival is stressed as feminine, while the cat of the title is in the generic that is masculine form until the first line of the essay, when “la chatte” is specified (had the French used “arriver” as a verb — *Le chat est arrivé* or *La chatte est arrivée* — it would have both emphasized the cat and had agreement of the gender across noun and verb).

A similar sense of arrival arriving prior to any assignation is used by Derrida in his ambiguously wrought term *l’arrivant* — forgetting, he tells us in a footnote, that Cixous had made use of “*arrivant*” in her novel *La* (1976) and the next year produced a play based on that book called *L’Arrivante* (Derrida *Aporias* 86, n.14). On the one hand, this footnote frustratingly contributes to the play of precedence between Derrida and Cixous, whose works echo each other so much anyway, not least in the context of deconstruction’s troubling of precedence itself — who am I following?¹⁵ The door and the shore (“*la rive*”) marking the arrival of the *arrivant* — repeating throughout Cixous’s text — redouble this problem, as Derrida remarks: “this border will always keep one from discriminating among the figures of the *arrivant*, the dead, and the *revenant* (the ghost, he, she, or that which returns)” (*Aporias* 35). On the other hand, it is also fraught in the general context of work by women, so rarely cast as eventfully paradigmatic rather than machinically derivative — and, in dating from the mid-1970’s, *L’Arrivante*, like *La Jeune Née*, marks a time when it was most pressing to challenge alleged sexual neutrality.¹⁶ The one who arrives should be unmarked because unforeseen, a neutral if not neuter arrival. Elsewhere Derrida himself reminds us how often the neutral masks the masculine: here he remains content with the *arrivant*.

Cixous writes through the literary liberty of free indirect style enabling rapid shifts between first and third person voices, dissolving easy identification or solidity of

“character,” and frequently provoking the question “who speaks?” Thus in her text, both “she” and “I” are surprised by the arrival of the cat. The question is intensified, given the shift in context, the grafting of *Arrivée du chat* from an ambiguously fictional and ambiguously autobiographical book onto a journal context in which we expect the first person singular to be the vehicle for the author’s voice, to sign for the author. Provoking “who speaks?” or “who signs?” usually skews the machinations required for rendering and retaining the human subject as central. Here it enables Cixous to pose and repose all the clichés of anthropomorphism without simply falling into enunciating them herself. She lets fly the distance of the literary while at the same time appropriating autobiographical authority, saying that she had never thought that a cat would show up, not “in one of my stories” (“The Cat’s Arrival” 21). Remarkable in this way, Cixous’s “stories” become her autobiography, and events exceed her control. Not simply a personal quandary, events exceed human control as they let both animals and machines rush in.

In Cixous the cat can speak — but in order to demonstrate projection, to reveal the error of “exaggerating” love (32). In Cixous the ruse that the cat is really an allegory of the displaced human partner is voiced to try and ward off the animal’s difference and the possibility that the cat is a rival (as Anglophone readers will hear). When comings and goings have already circumvented his post, that displaced partner — his improper name a literary quotation — is reduced to attempting to reinstall proper boundaries. He grasps pointlessly at the functioning of doors, hence laws, and who should remain before them, as a limitless amount of women and fantastic beasts traverse this open house, a hippopotamus highlighting the hyperbole (32).¹⁷ Meanwhile the woman comes to offer unconditional hospitality to the others to whom she is hostage, in spite of Emmanuel Levinas, for whom the animal has no face and hence no relation to the ethical.¹⁸

“You’re thanking me!?” the woman asks, on the cat’s return (“The Cat’s Arrival” 22). Startled by her affirmative kiss, given in disregard of the woman’s initial inhospitable shock at their proximity, the woman “asked herself who could have taught the animal this way of thinking” (22). So close together in the text, “thanking” can easily be misread as “thinking.” As Cary Wolfe notes, they are etymologically entwined (“Exposures” 8). No gratuitous slippage, the move implicates Cixous in the same critical relation to Heidegger’s “Handwerk” that Derrida more explicitly poses. The gift, for which one gives thanks, was supposed to sign for the human. In this kiss, it is truly hard to decide between giving and taking, and thus between species.

A mirror crops up in *“Arrivée du chat,”* again as the device that points back to the signing subject. Pre-figuring Derrida’s scene, it is an uncomfortable return: it is a technological supplement of shame. The mirror moreover is personified—or “animalified”: the mirror “squawks” like a parrot, it is “perched” on her shoulder, it will not shut up, it is repetitious: “Naked naked naked see you see you see you,” exacerbated in the phonetically close French: “Nus nus nus vus vus vus” (“The Cat’s Arrival” 33; *Messie* 79). Cixous is naked before a Cartesian-Lacanian animal-machine — the mirror that parrots the Christian history of technology inscribing nudity as a shame. This parroting mirror that shows will always show you up, land upon the fault. A moment later the mirror derides her in terms that redress her nakedness as a type of clothing, “a get-up”: “look at that get-up it isn’t pretty” (“The Cat’s Arrival” 33). “In her totally naked truth?” The mirror affronts her. The mirror installs modesty. Its plural derision is also addressed to the cat (“vous êtes nus”), but sits on the shoulder of the woman recalling her to its specular economy that always sees the same thing. No insult from the woman’s exasperated human family quite manages this. *“Arrivée du chat”* specifically links the shame effect with the technology of the mirror. The mirror is charged with splitting the pair of them into the self-conscious one that knows and must overcome her shameful nakedness — or proximity to animality — and the one that does not. The story of shame is thus linked to the original sin of speculative dialectics that spurs the human to produce both clothing and the veil of consciousness as a technology that sublates the animal. What if dialectics offers an incomplete history of technology? Derrida argues as much while Cixous rhetorically implies it.

The Cat’s Pyjamas. For Schneemann, every morning the camera was there “just to see,” without determination over the image. She had it there, ready to hand, by the bed, ready to turn towards her cats as well as toward herself. Schneemann is in the photographs, she signs: Quickly read, and without the insight of the theoretical work drawn upon in this essay, *Infinity Kisses* would be legible as autobiographical work as it is traditionally and simply identified — as an index of “my own,” and legible within an artist’s work known for its investment in the personal, in experience, in a “hand-touch sensibility.” But does that hand point back to the signing subject, and point her out, point for point in her naked truth? ‘Nudity perhaps remains untenable,’ remarks Derrida, his own desire for “naked words” voiced within an essay bracketed by quotations (“The Animal” 418). It cannot be held in the hand, gathered in a moment of presence. Schneemann’s nudity precedes her: “nudity” clothes the performance works more readily associated with her name as a form of signature. She is always partly concealed, as are her cats, and this is not a violence that could be avoided according to a

more ethical representational strategy. Despite Derrida's caution, he warns readers that we not be able to decide for certain whether his story was true or fictional, since the telling and the reading of that story will always redraw its contours. Texts of whatever context cannot police their own borders.

If the mirroring function within Schneemann's works was perhaps less clear in the first version of *Infinity Kisses*, where the smaller images were abutted against each other and mounted as one totemic grid, in the subsequent versions of much larger prints the effect is magnified. Glazed, they reflect viewers as well as other prints. In Schneemann, the trope of the mirror is no trap of the same: the eye of the camera is a frequent trope for the I of a directing subject, but here each blink of the shutter releases an other image—image after image of—what? As Cixous writes: "Woman with cat? Or Woman belonging to cat? Or Cats? Or Woman? Or Women? Or the foreigner?" ("The Cat's Arrival" 22). Who mirrors whom? *Infinity Kisses* is not reducible to the too available and pitying cliché of older women clinging to the company of cats, here we must take account of a mirror of technical reproducibility, a mirror that iterates—a point reiterated by the various articulations of these photographs, re-cited in different contexts when Schneemann uses her own work as a found object. In so doing she emphasizes their range beyond realism. Their eyes are shut in most images; even when they are open, the inability to predict frame or point of focus renders the visual field contingent. Schneemann's experiments in framing—horizontally or vertically, and variations on printing the images in pairs as loose similarities or as precise doubles—makes use of photography's propensity towards infinite reversals between positives and negatives, and allows no gaze to resolve a hierarchy ordering who follows whom. *Infinity Kisses* names the work, emphasizing the performative kisses without consolidating their content or contracting their context. The kiss brings to attention the entanglement of response and reaction without dissolving those who kiss into a pool of sameness: kissing is of the edges, of contingency not continuity. Performativity in general is neither a power of the human nor the proper of the human. The kiss, thought as performative, finds it difficult to specify who is following whom.

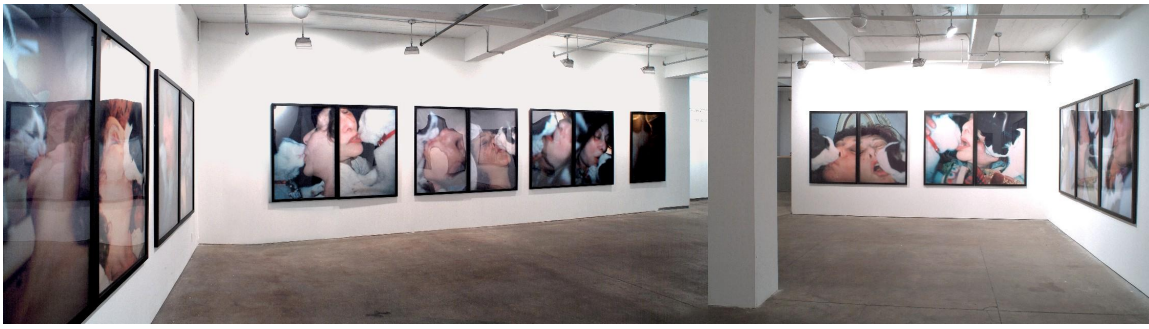


Fig 3. Carolee Schneemann, *Infinity Kisses II*, 1990-98, 2004 print edition as shown in *Remains To Be Seen*, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY, 2007. Image courtesy Galerie Lallouz.

This paper benefited from the support of the AHRC (Research Leave Scheme, 2007-8). Various aspects have been presented as papers (in Vaxjö University, Sweden, York St John University, Bristol University, and Goldsmiths, UK). A short extract has been published in *The Issues in Contemporary Culture & Aesthetics*, 2-3, 2009, pp. 12-21. I thank the editors and the anonymous reviewers from *Humanimalia* for their careful revision suggestions.

Notes

1. Haraway's contemporary and colleague at UCSC, Karen Barad, has explicitly named performativity as "posthuman" see her "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter" in *Signs*, 28:3 (2003): 801-831.
2. Derrida, "The Animal" (418). This unattributed citation from Descartes is the final sentence of Derrida's essay, modified only by the addition of "following."
3. Directly addressed in, for example, Cixous's *Portrait*, and Derrida's *H.C For Life*.
4. Steve Baker first mentioned Cixous's early use of the term "animot" to me.
5. The English translation "Menagerie" appears with an epigraph from Derrida's text *Che cos'è la poesia?* (1988) in which poetry is likened to a hedgehog. Cixous's text also appears — without that epigraph, as "De La Ménagerie à la Philosophie," the chapter succeeding "Arrivée du Chat" in her novel *Messie*.

6. *Interior Scroll*, first performed in 1975, subsequently performed on numerous occasions in various venues, sometimes incorporating group elements sometimes remaining the individual performance of Schneemann herself. *Interior Scroll* is also widely exhibited as photographic documentation - in vertical series that suggest both a strip of film and a scroll — including the text that Schneemann recited.

7. “Kiss Me Honey Honey Kiss Me” was a popular song written by Albon Timothy and Michael Julien, first recorded by Shirley Bassey in 1959.

8. *Eye/Body*, 1963; *Meat Joy*, 1964; *Interior Scroll*, 1975; *Up To And Including Her Limits*, 1976. First dates given: all performances performed on numerous occasions in various venues, sometimes incorporating group elements sometimes remaining the individual performance of the artist. *Fuses*, 18 min, color, silent 16mm film, 1965. *Meat Joy* now warrants a whole other engagement with the use of animal meat as metaphor.

9. It should be noted that Jones takes little account of the development of Pollock’s extensive work beyond her 1987 book *Vision & Difference*.

10. Conversation with the artist, March 2008.

11. *Split Decision* comprised two simultaneous shows: *Breaking Borders*, Museum of Contemporary Canadian Art, Toronto, 2007 and *Remains To Be Seen*, CEPA Gallery, Buffalo, NY, 2007.

12. This question is asked, and answered in variously sentimental and sanctimoniously anti-anthropomorphic ways with regard to dogs on this website:

<http://ask.metafilter.com/28246/Is-my-dog-kissing-me>
accessed 23/11/2007.

13. Luce Irigaray famously works metaphor and metonymy together to address both a positive symbolisation of the feminine through labial multiplicity (in excess of, rather than opposition to, phallic unicity and the logic of the same) and to link this symbolisation to a new political, poetic and symbolic speech and “speech” by women most notably. See her “When Our Lips Speak Together.”

14. Baker’s subsequent and more sympathetic account of Schneemann doesn’t remark on the technological tropes that facilitate Schneemann’s remark (in favour of a more art

historical reportage of the artist's account). I try to address this in the last section of this paper.

15. For a useful — though highly modest — discussion of these overlapping themes in their work, see Cixous, "Jacques Derrida as a Proteus Unbound."

16. *La Jeune Née* is usually translated as *The Newly Born Woman* though only the feminine not the species is strictly specified.

17. The persistence of doors and their surprising traversal inevitably suggests — and revises — Kafka's well known formulation of the condition of the law. Unlike the "man from the country" the cat passes the door and thus retouches the law. See Kafka, *The Trial*, Sue Golding first drew my attention to the air of Kafka marked by Cixous's door.

18. Numerous writers have commented on the glimmer of recognition offered by "Bobby the Dog" to the dehumanized prisoners in the camps only for Lévinas to erase an ethical maxim from his barks since the animal is "too stupid, trop bête" to be able to universalize this relation. See, for example, John Llewelyn qtd. Wolfe, *Zoontologies* 17.

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