ONTOTERROREM; OR,
POWER, ONTOLOGICAL-TERROR & PROTESTATION:

(RE)CONCEPTUALIZING LANGUAGE, THOUGHT & THE BODY AS STRUCTURES OF POSSIBILITY

by

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ABSTRACT

"*Ontoterrorem*; or, Power, Ontological-Terror & Protestation" attempts a (re)conceptualization of Language, Thought & the Body as structures of possibility. While I feel it is utterly impossible to 'definitively' frame the 'narratives' of each of those terms, these concepts are nevertheless critical components of philosophical ideas & 'poietic' expressions. Poiesis is distinct from 'poetics;' poiesis is rooted in the *acts of creation* that result from 'poetic' explorations & expressions. As such, in any analysis &/or reading of existence, it becomes crucial—if not inevitable—to explore Language, Thought & Body as they have extended across various & often radically distinct 'poietic' expressions. In the language & consequent thought of Deleuze & Guattari, it can be said that my dissertation attempts a 'noology'—a 'line of flight' that incises the history of representation of the 'images of thought' being explored in Language, Thought & the Body. It is, in a sense, impossible to encapsulate these concepts in such a way as to 'define' them—to give them specific, pre-determined 'forms' & static signification & 'sense.' This work attempts precisely the opposite; it strives to identify the inherently transient & dynamic nature of each of these concepts, as well as the consequent possibilities that emerge from their *structural* relationships with one another. It is my contention that Language, Thought & the Body cannot truly be thought of, examined or explored in absentia of the others; rather, they must be considered with regards to the possibilities of 'Becoming' that emerge once they are conceptualized anew as (what I call) structures of differentiation.

Of course, it is impossible to do so in an 'absolute' or (in a sense) transcendent fashion. For this reason, my intention is to present a *possibility* of conceptualizing these notions. As they are not attempts at 'definitive' statements, they avoid the sedimentation & 'framing' of the possibilities contained within the creative 'forms' themselves, as well as the aforementioned

concepts of which they 'speak.' Without doing so, I fear that my work—indeed any

exploration—may inevitably descend into the very same *inherent* oppression at the hands of

'form' & 'stasis' that this work so feverishly acts-against. How can one consider & navigate

these *poietic*-possibilities, without first abandoning the very vessels that carried them into the

contentious spaces that bellowed for *uprising* against Language, Thought & the Body? It is these

spaces & bellows of *uprising* that are explored in the work.

I argue that rather than literally objectify these concepts, we instead think of & through

them as *constructs* possessive of constitutive elements—& explore the zones created within such

structures. These are zones of possibilities, for within their spaces there is perpetual

differentiation between, through & against these constitutive elements. Their differentiation &

thus their possible-existentiality as both concept & actualized-'thing' occurs on the level of the

rhizome—as constellations & amalgamations of connections & nodes, thus avoiding 'linear,'

'directionalized' or pre-determined pathways. As a result, Language, Thought & the Body are

reconceptualized & represented as the structural-differentiations between, through & against

'poiesis' & ontology. The zone(s) created from such symbiotic-constructs are termed

'ontopoiesis' & the 'ontocorporeal' in my work. Language, Thought & the Body, therefore, are

explored in this dissertation through readings of the expressions of 'ontopoiesis' & the

'ontocorporeal,' as well as the 'narratives' they both constitute, & are constituted by.

In such an analysis of these concepts, there is inevitably a confrontation with 'Order;' or

as these 'interiorizations' & limitations are applied to our species writ large, in the 'form' of the

State. As the primary method of 'State' perpetuation & predomination manifests through *power*,

my work concludes with an exploration into the 'objectifying' or 'limiting' restrictions on & of

possible 'ontopoietic' & 'ontocorporeal' expressions through impositions of *power*. Notably,

Language, Thought & the Body *affect* & are *effected by* each of these conceptual permutations & their consequent expressions. Ultimately, I argue that the protestation to & resistance towards such *effigial* impositions is what I name *ontoterrorem*. It is a dark-energy that infects—as if a virus to a Host—the sites of power & the 'solidifying' & limiting symptoms of its oppressive presence. It is in the dynamic entities of 'shadows,' 'doubles' & *duende* that this protestational energy manifests & flows—three concepts from the writing of Antonin Artaud & Federico García Lorca that are explored in my work, & that speak towards an 'ontopoiesis' that consumes & immolates stasis & 'forms.' Thus the transient-'forms' embodied by this possibility of protestation are not 'Revolutions' (which are permanent & fixed), but rather *uprisings*.

PREFACE

The Gaze of the Dark-Phoenix; or, (Re)born Uprisings

"One of the reasons for the asphyxiating atmosphere in which we live
without possible escape or remedy—and in which we all share, even the
most revolutionary among us—is our respect for what has been written,
formulated, or painted, what has been given form, as if all expression were
not at last exhausted, were not at a point where things must break apart
if they are to start anew and begin fresh."
—Antonin Artaud (*The Theater and Its Double*, 74)

"The tradition that hereby gains dominance makes what it 'transmits' so
little accessible that initially and for the most part it covers it over instead.
What has been handed down it hands over to obviousness; it bars access
to those original 'wellsprings' out of which the traditional categories and
concepts were in part genuinely drawn. The tradition even makes us forget
such a provenance altogether. Indeed, it makes us wholly incapable of even
understanding that such a return is necessary."
—Martin Heidegger (*Being and Time*, 19)

"Since Divine is dead, the poet may sing her, may tell her legend, the Saga,
the annals of Divine. The Divine Saga should be danced, mimed, with
subtle directions. Since it is impossible to make a ballet of it, I am forced
to use words that are weighed down with precise ideas, but I shall try to
lighten them with expressions that are trivial, empty, hollow, and invisible."
—Jean Genet (*Our Lady of the Flowers*, 80)

"All writing is pigshit."
—Antonin Artaud

This works attempts an exploration of Language, Thought & the Body, & their

relation to our particular modes of existence. While I feel it is utterly impossible to

'definitively' frame the 'narratives' of each of those terms, these fundamental concepts

nevertheless are (& have perhaps always been) critical components of philosophical ideas

& 'poietic' expressions. Poiesis is distinct from 'poetics;' poiesis is rooted in the *acts of*

creation that result from 'poetic' explorations & expressions. 'Poietics' is predicated,

therefore, on an examination of the literal 'creations' manifest-from 'creative' literary

productions. As such, in any analysis &/or reading of existence, it becomes crucial—if not inevitable—to explore Language, Thought & Body as they have extended across various & often radically distinct 'poietic' expressions. In the language & consequent thought of Deleuze & Guattari, it can be said that my dissertation attempts a 'noology'— a 'line of flight' that incises the history of representation of the 'images of thought' being explored in the aforementioned terms & concepts. It is, in a sense, impossible to encapsulate these concepts in such a way as to 'define' them—to give them specific, pre-determined 'forms' & static signification & 'sense.' This work attempts precisely the opposite; it strives to identify the inherently transient & dynamic nature of each of these concepts, as well as the consequent possibilities that emerge from their *structural* relationships with one another. It is my contention that Language, Thought & the Body cannot truly be thought of, examined or explored in absentia of the others; rather, they must be considered with regards to the possibilities of 'Becoming' that emerge once they are conceptualized anew as (what I call) structures of differentiation.

Of course, it is impossible to do so in an 'absolute' or (in a sense) transcendent fashion. For this reason, my intention is to present a *possibility* of conceptualizing these notions—an extricated poietic strand woven into the 'Flesh' of these ideas over time & medium. As they are not attempts at 'definitive' statements, they avoid the sedimentation & 'framing' of the possibilities contained within the creative 'forms' themselves, as well as the aforementioned concepts of which they 'speak.' Without doing so, I fear that my work—indeed any exploration—may inevitably descend into the very same *inherent* oppression at the hands of 'form' & 'stasis' that this work so feverishly acts-against. How can one consider & navigate these *poietic*-possibilities, without first abandoning the

very vessels that carried them into the contentious spaces that bellowed for *uprising* against Language, Thought & the Body? It is these spaces & bellows of *uprising* that are explored in the work.

In some ways this is problematic, daunting terrain; there is always the haunting specter of stasis in the language 'embodied' for the discussion & exploration I am undertaking. It is, as I have previously maintained, a functional impossibility to discuss Language, Thought &/or the Body as 'transcendent' &/or static 'things' or 'objects.' I argue in the work that rather than literally objectify these (& indeed perhaps *any/all*) concepts, we instead think of & through them as *constructs* possessive of constitutive elements—& explore the zones created within such *structures*. These are zones of possibilities, for within their spaces there is perpetual differentiation between, through & against these constitutive elements. Their differentiation—& thus their possible-existentiality as both concept & actualized-'thing'—occurs on the level of the rhizome; which is to say, occurs as constellations & amalgamations of connections & nodes, thus avoiding 'linear,' 'directionalized' or pre-determined pathways. As a result, Language, Thought & the Body are reconceptualized & represented as the structural-differentiations between, through & against 'poiesis' & ontology. The zone(s) created from such symbiotic-constructs are termed 'ontopoiesis' & the 'ontocorporeal' in my work. Since they are born from conceptual-structures (& not static, interiorized 'objects' or 'forms'), they avoid (I hope) the sedimentations of thought & words of which Genet & Artaud speak in the opening quotes. Language, Thought & the Body, therefore, are explored in this dissertation through readings of the expressions of 'ontopoiesis' & the 'ontocorporeal,' as well as the 'narratives' they both constitute, & are constituted by.

In such an analysis of these concepts, there is inevitably a confrontation with 'Order,' which can be thought of as the 'frames' of a 'narrative,' or in Artaudian thought, as it pertains to the Body, 'organs' & the 'organism'—or as these 'interiorizations' & limitations are applied to our species writ large, in the 'form' of the State. As the primary method of 'State' perpetuation & predomination figures itself in the form of *power*, my work concludes with an exploration into the 'objectifying' or 'limiting' restrictions on & of possible 'ontopoietic' & 'ontocorporeal' expressions through impositions of *power*. Notably, Language, Thought & the Body *affect* & are *effected by* each of these conceptual permutations & their consequent expressions. Ultimately, I argue that the protestation to & resistance towards such *effigial* impositions is what I name *ontoterrorem*. It is a dark-energy that infects—as if a virus to a Host—the sites of power & the 'solidifying' & limiting symptoms of its oppressive presence. It is in the dynamic entities of 'shadows,' 'doubles' & *duende* that this protestational energy manifests & flows—three concepts from the writing of Antonin Artaud & Federico García Lorca that are explored in my work, & that speak towards an 'ontopoiesis' that consumes & immolates stasis & 'forms.' Thus the transient-'forms' embodied by this possibility of protestation are not 'Revolutions' (which are permanent & fixed), but rather *uprisings*.

The writers, artists & thinkers explored in this work are fundamental & critical; & yet often times notably disparate & distinct from one another; one (perhaps) could even proclaim that they are 'incommunicable' &/or 'unrelated' to one another. I contend, however, that there is a powerful strand that emerges from their art once explored through a certain lens, a particular sentiment & poietic caress. One can begin to perceive the *structural* relationships that Language, Thought & the Body exist & manifest-from, &

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in so doing, identify—in their collective 'ontopoietic' expressions & 'ontocorporeal' configurations—a profound reconceptualization of these notions, away from 'forms' & towards 'rhizomes' of 'possibilities.' This is not to say that these writers 'share' exact 'goals' or desires with & from their respective artistic productions, but rather that their creations—precisely *as* constellations & amalgamations of possibility—transcend 'simplistic' reductions of these concepts. I want to move the zones of consideration circling these works from notions of roots, to ones of rhizomes—from clearly designated & defined 'forms,' to dynamic, flowing 'shadows' upon the walls of consciousness that (in so-many ways) normatively designate' & define 'our' species.

Let us return, then, to Antonin Artaud & his concept of the *shadow*. For Artaud, 'Life' & existence is littered with an overwhelming abundance of 'forms' of 'things,' as opposed to *things themselves*; in this way his fixation shares a common desire with the *duende* which Lorca speaks about & exhibits in his own work—a 'dark energy' that desires & demands not 'forms' but rather the *'marrow of forms.'* The *shadow*, in Artaud's oeuvre, is *more real* than the 'form' from which it projects against & from. The 'form' is 'normatively' identified as the totality of what 'some'-'thing' is; Artaud, however, inverts this conceptual energy, imbuing the *shadow* with the *possibilities* hidden, in a sense, by the rigidity of a static 'form-in-space.' It is not the object against which light is differentiating that is the totalizing 'datum' of a 'thing' or 'object;' rather, it is the 'form' that is *obfuscating* the *perception* of the possibilities that are manifest-from & suddenly illuminated by the *shadows* dynamically flickering upon a surface. These are the *shadows* that identify & illustrate the notion of a zone of possibilities & structure of differentiation that burns within the embers of the writers explored within

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this work. These ontopoietic embers are what unite the vast 'Open' of this work—

temporary camps dotting a Maghrebian desert of Language, Thought & the Body.

When I speak of structure—particularly 'structures of differentiation'—I am

referring to a conceptualization of existential-'identity' explored by many thinkers &

writers, but perhaps (for the auspices of this work) most explicitly & effectively by

Ernesto Laclau. He locates the germination of 'identity' within 'systems of

differences'—a contention summated by the formulation: 'difference = identity.' What

this necessitates & requires, I believe, is a consequent exploration into the very *structural*

formulation of 'difference' itself—a journey that finds itself traversing the spaces of

'difference' on a 'molecular'-scale, such that the quest becomes fixated upon locating the

manner in which 'difference' *differentiates*. As a result, this work explores not

'difference' itself (in a Deleuzean sense, per se, or in the manner of Laclau), but rather

specifically in the *differentiation of difference* itself, such that the *structures* underlying

so-many expressions of 'difference' are fleshed-out & incised by the very possibilities

that emerge from these perpetual acts of 'differentiation.' The structures of

'differentiation'—of which 'difference' itself is the progeny—is the space from which

'ontopoiesis' & the 'ontocorporeal' germinate. The *differentiation of difference*, then, is

the structure that makes-possible all forms of 'identity' & expression on a conceptually-

molecular level, notably through these notions of Language, Thought & the Body.

A note with regards to my specific language & typographical variations is

important, for they both inform & are informed by one another. In other words, there is

no separation—as my dissertation argues—between Language, Thought & Body. An

examination into these ideas, particularly when implemented by the very effigial-'forms'

of which the work itself confronts, critiques & problematizes—i.e. 'words'—necessitates

an *ontopoietic* self-consciousness in the 'representation' of the 'Thought' at work. As

such, my use of the ampersand is one particular manifestation of *uprising* within the very

'narrative' of my text—a (I would argue) necessary inscription & linguistic-

'ontocorporeality' of the ideas & thoughts brought to words in the work. It is an echo—a

shadow & double—of the specific concepts I am discussing throughout the text; notably

the concept of ontopoiesis. I believe it functions, within my work, as a poietic incision or

trace, marking the act of writing as always-already within its own representational-'sign.'

It is itself an 'ontopoietic' moment incising the text by representing the 'lacunae'

between the corresponding, constitutive elements it is joining (e.g. 'x' AND 'y'). As

such, the representation of a common 'glyph' as symbol creates a 'zone' through, against

& within which both the linguistic content & symbol 'can-be' or 'can-become.' Thus the

ampersand, for the auspices of my work, functions as both artifact of Language &

linguistic-corporeality. In addition, it is the explicit evolutionary history of the

symbiotic-combination of the 'e' & 't'—a figure that explicitly 'marks' the 'ontopoiesis'

of ligatures. In this sense, it is not dissimilar to the thought informing my use of

parentheses—the implementation & incision in(to) the text through ()—'within' or

with(in) 'representation'/(re)presentation. In such ontopoietic afflictions, the constitutive

elements or components of the linguistic 'unity' are explicitly summoned by-means of its

poietic-aesthetic—an incantation of the etymological ghosts of the 'word' in the 'form' of

some *uncanny* 'double.'

 For example, the word 'into' cannot be 'represented' as such while still

maintaining the explicit & necessary implications & presuppositions that dwell upon it—

the specters of its ancestry as well as the signifying-fluid that is haunted by non-visible (*unvisible*) energy. 'Into'—as the 'sign' of the concept it encapsulates—is an effigial-'form.' As such, I 'represent' it as: in(to). By means of its *uncanniness*, in(to) necessitates pause, creates a kind of infection in the reader's eye & 'thought' that harkens back to its birth & unconceals an aspect of its constitutive elements. It forces, in short, the effigy to become-immolated & release its own shadow(s) & double(s) in(to) the Body(s) of those Witness to it. It is inside the Body, as an incising, & simultaneously towards it—a movement, a journey, an inherent nomadism with(in) the 'word' & the consequent actions it signals, embodies & makes-possible. This nomadism is 'with' the word; etymologically 'with' only designates the concept 'along-' or 'along-side' in Middle English—its 'Old' ancestor embodying the sense of opposition, an *against* of some kind. The aesthetic isolation of 'with' alongside its already-embodied '(in)' therefore works according to a double-energy. Nomadism is 'along-side' the word, yes, but simultaneously against it—even as it burrows 'in(to)' it, *inside* of it. At once, then, it is a conceptual zone & explicit (albeit now temporary) sedimentation—with(in) its (re)presentation there manifests its tense oppositional & infecting connotations. Likewise, to (re)present is not only to 'symbolize' or 'give form to'—as with 'represent'—but rather a double whose shadow(s) & ghosts haunt its linguistic-Body. It is rooted in its 'presenting'—in its *presentation*—as an object or gift to (be)hold & Witness. It is the 'doubling' or (re)application of this heralding—a summoning-*again* of the *spectacle* of the primordial 'presentations.' As '(re)presentation' is often coupled in my work with '(re)conceptualization,' it is ontopoietically fitting, then, that the

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'(re)presentation' is itself a (re)conceptualization, & '(re)conceptualization' itself, a (re)presentation.

Undoubtedly the language of this work is *uncanny*. Its intention is to afflict the work with the very same *ontoterrorem* & *uprisings* of which it 'speaks' & writes-of. For my words to be littered with hyphens, or captured & (re)fragmented through the usage of () '' or & etc. is, in a sense, to immerse the reader (with or without their consent) in(to) a 'World' of Language; a *possible-expression* whose dark-energy forces or compels the reader to dwell with(in) the haunted Body(s) of its Thought—zone(s) afflicted by the *Plague* of the *Dark-Phoenix*.

CHAPTER ONE

Ontological Differentiations; or, Fragments of an Origin

> "[t]o work out the question of being means to make a being—one who questions—transparent in its being. Asking this question, as a mode of *being* of a being, is itself essentially determined by what is asked about in it—being."
> —Martin Heidegger (*Being and Time*, 6)

> "Da-sein always understand itself in terms of its existence, in terms of its possibility to be itself or not to be itself. Da-sein has either chosen these possibilities itself, stumbled upon them, or in each instance already grown up in them. Existence is decided only by each Da-sein itself in the manner of seizing upon or neglecting such possibilities. We come to terms with the question of existence always only through existence itself. We shall call *this* kind of understanding of itself *existentiell* understanding."
> —Martin Heidegger (*Being and Time*, 10)

> "And what then was wrested from phenomena by the highest exertion of thought, albeit in fragments and first beginnings, has long since been trivialized."
> —Martin Heidegger (*Being and Time*, 2)

…it is a curious phenomena that ontology—as a field of organized thought—began & exists only in fragments…

It is no exaggeration to state that in contemporary thought, ontology—the study of 'Being'/'Becoming'—has been overwhelmingly influenced by the figure of Martin Heidegger. From his status as the philosopher who explicitly (re)turned attention to the field, to his enduring presence as the conceptual space within, through & against which current thought dwells (whether explicitly, consciously or otherwise), his notion of Being-in-the-World & Being-in-Time remains a pillar in ontology. As such, it is crucial to explore Heidegger's concepts through various perspectival possibilities. An analysis of Da-ein from the perspectives of the *flux[1] of*

differentiation[2], *corporeality*[3] & *speciality*[4] will consequently provide a *noological*[5] 'line of flight'[6] across the conceptual-space(s) of ontology &, by proxy, the very ways in which our species 'exists-in-the-world.' For the auspices of this conceptual journey, 'speciality' will be conducted through Giorgio Agamben as well as Humberto Maturana & Francisco Varela, 'corporeality' through Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 'flux' through Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari &, ultimately, 'differentiation' is my own reading which manifests from Ernesto Laclau's thoughts on signification & the formation of signifiers. Before this 'line of flight' can begin, however, we must spend a moment to identify certain key elements in Heidegger's ontological structure(s).

Da-sein; or, 'There-Being' in Being

Heidegger begins <u>Being and Time</u> by identifying "a Battle of Giants concerning Being" within the work of Plato & Aristotle—an "avid research" that (until Heidegger's own taking-over of the mantle) marked the moment that ontology "ceased to be heard *as a thematic question of actual investigation*" (Heidegger, *B&T*, 2). It was at that moment in philosophical thought—or rather, we should say, in Heidegger's particular reading & conceptualization of the 'History of Western Philosophy'—that *ontology* once again became the focus, that the 'question of Being' (re)posited itself once-more within the hierarchy of 'thought' amongst the 'Giants.' Perhaps, instead, these shards of first beginnings—this primordial fragmentation—*says-something* with regards to ontology; indeed, perhaps is-itself the *poiesis of ontology*. For such a possibility to be explored, however, we must first both take a moment(s) to (re)present Heidegger's philosophical examination into Being/Da-sein, & identify/give-voice to the poietic utterances within such conceptual structures & spaces.

Being and Time essentially opens situating ontology within the formulation of 'the question of Being,' or rather the frame of what will become a thorough investigation into Da-sein. For Heidegger, any question consists of 3 parts: (1) that which is asked about, (2) that which is interrogated, (3) that which is to be discovered; in Being and Time that which is asked about is 'Being,' that which is interrogated, 'Da-sein' & that which is to be discovered is the 'nature of Being.' Thus, the investigation into Being as such is located in the conceptualization of Da-sein—oriented towards an investigation into the site for the disclosure of Being—which acknowledges both the ontic (i.e. physical 'things') & ontological manifestations of 'Being.'

Da-sein, for Heidegger, most often refers to that Being whose manner of Being is existence; occasionally, it refers to not the Being, but rather the *manner of Being*, & in fact Da-sein ultimately refers to precisely that—the manner of Being. Da-sein means, specifically, 'there-being' where Being is in question; ontically, this would refer to beings or entities, which Heidegger believes is predominantly/normatively the focus of our investigations, whereas ontologically the concern is not with entities as such, but rather with *Being*. Since ontic studies are, for Heidegger, predicated on an ontological understanding, ontology itself presupposes the ontic & is thus the more 'primordial' conceptualization. Ultimately, Da-sein is ontically (as well as ontologically) distinctive because it is a Being that questions its own Being—is a Being concerned with ontology, concerned always already with the possibility of *not* 'Being,' or rather, with the possibility to reject its own possibilities. In short, "Da-sein always understands itself in terms of its existence, in terms of its possibility to be itself, or not be itself" (Heidegger, *B&T*, 12). Central to Da-sein, then, is the concept of the 'human;' that is, the conceptualization of a 'Human' which first requires a differentiation (collectively) of human & not-human. That is not to necessarily say 'animal' on the most basic level of group-differentiation, but rather simply

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not-human, or, not-itself, i.e. 'Human.' For Heidegger, this differentiation appears to lie primarily (in terms of the 'existentiell') in the perceived *intentionality* of the human. It would perhaps be more apt to say that it is within the perceived *lack* of 'intentionality'—however defined—in that which has 'historically' been conceptualized as 'not-human.' Da-sein is ontological because in its manner of Being, Being is always a question for it; we live this mode of Being, intentionally, while lacking an ontological and/or analytic 'understanding' of it.

Let us consider, then, what the structure of Da-sein presupposes & implies (poietically) & how such presuppositions & implications themselves manifest within the Heideggerian project, specifically with regards to the poietic qualities of the philosophy-proper. It is clear that Da-sein has a philosophical formulation (in terms of its structure) as well as a poietic one; we will focus first upon the philosophical presuppositions & implications involved before burrowing into the poietic content manifest in such a conceptuo-linguistic (re)presentation. As previously noted, 'Da-sein' is, for Heidegger, the site upon which 'Being' is disclosed to 'Being;' it is a differentiated-space of 'disclosure' itself undertaking so-many differentiations. In other words, Da-sein is, at once, the manner in which Being 'is' & the space in which Being manifests—it is the 'there-being' of 'Being' where 'Being' is a *possibility*. This 'there-being' is notably significant because it situates ontology & Heideggerian 'Being' as not only a conceptual space of possibilities (a notion that will be explored later in this chapter with regards to its ontological & poietic significance), but also as a 'structure' that perpetually engages in acts of signification & differentiation. It is thus crucial to explore precisely *how* signification &, consequently, differentiation itself 'exists' or '*Is*' ('*Is-there*') in any given moment or moment(s).

Rhizomes; or, The Differentiation of Difference

For me, a prime question to ask at this moment is: "How does signification occur?" In

Emancipation(s), Ernesto Laclau begins by identifying that "language (and by extension, all

signifying systems) is a system of differences [and that] if the differences did not constitute a

system, no signification at all would be possible" (Laclau, *Emancipations*, 37). That is to say,

"each element of the system has an identity only so far as it is different from others: difference =

identity," however:

> all these differences are equivalent to each other inasmuch as all of them
> belong to this side of the frontier of exclusion. But, in that case, the identity
> of each element is constitutively split: on the one hand, each difference
> expresses itself as difference; on the other hand, each of them cancels itself as
> such by entering into a relation of equivalence with all the other differences of
> the system. And, given that there is only a system as long as there is radical
> exclusion, this split or ambivalence is constitutive of all systemic identity.
> (Laclau, *Emancipations*, 38)

The following point by Laclau, however, is perhaps the most crucial: "if the systematicity

[sic] of the system is a direct result of the exclusionary limit, it is only that exclusion that

grounds the system as such" (Laclau, *Emancipations*, 38). If this is, in fact, an accurate

philosophical/theoretical reading of the act of signification—or rather, the formation of

signification (as such)—then what are both the implications and ramifications, ontologically, of

such a process?

If, indeed, signification is itself the manifestation of a (particular, specific) system of

differences—& thus *differentiation* itself, as a concept & a reality—then what would it mean to

ask what some-*thing* Is? What would it mean to ask *what* & *how* some entity '*Is'/'Is-there*' in

the moment(s) of '*existentiell*' & '*existential*' signification & differentiation? What I would like

to make explicitly clear is that I am not necessarily or solely meaning 'entity' in the

Heideggerian sense of Da-sein, but rather, simply, as some-*thing*, some specific object, concept,

articulation, etc.—in short, some-piece-of-signification in all its possible manifestations.

Let us call this some-*thing* 'x' & let it, for the sake of this analysis, represent 'every'

'some-*thing.*' As Laclau notes, signifiers (signification itself) are/is created by the identification

of differentiation, & the consequent system that is formed when this series of differentiation(s)

links together. One, in fact, could identify this 'system of differentiation'—or rather, the space

created by such a system, the caesura marked & made-manifest by the formation of a system of

differentiation that circles around some-*thing*—as being the space into which signifying fluid

flows, as well as the 'skin' upon which all 'experiences' are marked, recorded & inscribed.

As such, to ask what the some-*thing* ('x') is, would be to in fact inquire about the very

system of differentiation that created (or should I say 'allowed for,' 'formed' or 'opened'?) the

some-*thing* 'x' in the first place. It could be conceptualized as the following:

'x' will be represented as (x→) & is the system of differentiation consisting of 'x' (both itself/its

own some-*thing*) & every some-*thing* (henceforth represented by the symbol: ∑) that is not 'x'

(≠x)

or in other words, represented as such:

x→x∑(≠x)

The singular unit is therefore complicated, extended, infused, & dependent now (structurally,

inherently) on two, on a binary system. However, if we continue to explore the stem of

signification, we see that what appeared to be:

x→x∑(≠x)

actually requires yet another extension, for (≠x) itself is, in fact:

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$(\neq x) \rightarrow (\neq x)\sum\neq(\neq x)$

In other words, not-'x' is both 'itself' (not-'x') & every some-*thing(s)* that are not itself (not- not-'x'). Thus, if 'x' is the system of differentiation consisting of both itself ('x') & the summation of all some-*thing(s)* not-'x' ($\neq x$), then ($\neq x$) itself—all that which is not-'x'—must also be structured as the system of differentiation consisting of both ($\neq x$), & everything else.

The binary to ($\neq x$) is, therefore, full of binaries itself, whose relationships are not simply binaries, but in fact rhizomes—marked by their rhizomatic structure—for the further down the stem of signification one goes, the higher the number of times the line must, as if in a retrograde, fold or link back into & onto itself in order to continue the linking of systems of differentiations, & thus removing any notion of a central locus from the process of signification.

Therefore, 'not-x' becomes, for example, 'a,' 'b,' 'c,' 'd,' 'e'….ad infinitum, while the $\neq(\neq x)$ requires a negation of each of these entities which themselves constitute 'not-x.' This act of constitution (that is, the differentiation of the constitutive entities/elements of 'not-x') extends until each constitutive entity itself must, in the act of differentiation, return once again to 'x,' or, the entity originally in question. In other words, for the $\neq(\neq x)$ (the 'everything else') to exist it must differentiate between itself— ($\neq x$)—& everything that is not itself, & thus back to 'x,' & with 'x' (as with 'a,' 'b,' 'c,' etc.) the summation of that which is not-itself—a$\sum(\neq a)$, b$\sum(\neq b)$, c$\sum(\neq c)$, etc.; all this before extending, once again, back to x$\sum(\neq x)$, and thus to the original system of differentiation itself. In other words, it is precisely this last moment, the return to the x$\sum(\neq x)$, to this perceived 'originary' binary, that signals a paradox. If this chain is merely the extension of the signification chain of not only 'x' (broadly) but also ($\neq x$) (specifically, as it is the 2nd-level or 2nd-tier that has already been extended)—if, then, in the structure of 'x' itself (or rather, inherent, structurally, in systems of differentiation) some-*thing* can only be defined by its

actually-already-being-defined—then we find ourselves in a paradox. After all, how can some-*thing Be*—how can some-*thing* form in an ontological fashion—when both the structure & system of differentiation, & the very notion & conceptualization of *differentiation* itself, are paradoxical? Is the formation of signifiers therefore even theoretically possible?

If in the process of signification—that is, the establishment of a system of differences & *differentiation*—the some-*thing* must first define itself in order to define itself (as has been illustrated earlier), & is an accurate analysis of the process (as I believe it to be), then the formation of some-*things* is a paradox, & thus theoretically impossible. Yet we have signification at all times—which is to say, we engage in acts of differentiation constantly (one would be tempted to say ceaselessly). We[7] are always already differentiating between so many some-*things*, so many conscious, subconscious, unconscious, intellectual, emotional, corporeal, chemical, etc. some-*things*, in every facet of our existentiality, both ontically & ontologically. If we did not, existence itself (ontically & ontologically) would be impossible. In other words, differentiation—the ability to differentiate some-*things* from other some-*things*—*must* occur in order to exist (& consequently, to Be). If, however, the theoretical formation of systems of differentiation (that is to say, differentiation itself) is a paradox, then how can differentiation to us (as well as for every other some-*thing*) even be possible?

As I see it, the process of formation for systems of differentiation (& thus signification itself) is structurally paradoxical because of stasis—that is to say the conceptual & epistemological insistence on the stasis of the differentiation we record as corporeal & '*speciel*' entities ('speciel' as in 'relating to a specific species'). Let us consider, for a moment(s), the notion of time & temporality (& consequently, 'historicality' & 'historicity') in <u>Being and Time</u>. Heidegger's conceptualization of 'time' is crucial to his analysis into Being; 'time' is (re)thought

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& (re)conceptualized, not as a 'what,' or a container, or a presence. Indeed, Da-sein is not *in* time, but is itself *temporal*, happens in the continued unfolding of temporality, finds its Being *as temporality*. According to Heidegger, by means of its temporality, Da-sein has a 'historicality,' which is to say the ability to be historical, to have history; we are not *in* history, per se (we meaning Da-sein), rather we are ourselves temporal & thus possessive of an ontological history. Moreover, Da-sein finds its Being *as* temporality, & its consequent historicality means that Da-sein can bring up its own past as something which needs to be questioned & examined, (re)opened & complicated, as opposed to the self-evident manner in which 'tradition' presents the past. For Heidegger, the past is something brought up & repeated in order to open up the future, not as something which drags behind us, & in this act of (re)opening there is a sort of de-struction, a de-structing of 'traditional' ontological conceptualization(s).   Heidegger maintains that Da-sein has a historicality & thus an ontological history—a history of examining that-which-concerns Being, or, Being itself—& it is precisely this conceptualization of 'Being' that is static. Within the dynamic structure he proposes, there is a presupposition of an 'actual' (& consequently) *constant*, *static* Da-sein; or rather, the stasis of the structure of Being itself, from & against which the differentiation of the past (conceptualized as an ontological past) can occur in the first place. The ontological manifestations (read: its ontological histories) are for Heidegger, merely the historicality of the *question* of Being—a question that, as noted, presupposes an answer, a conclusive, static state of Being.

Perhaps it is because of the overwhelming nature & presence of temporality, of temporal placement, of perpetually being-in-time that we strive, '*specielly*,' for an extension beyond our own perceived finitude. Perhaps it is within this angst of our finitude that we insist upon overcoming our perceived speciel limitations & downfalls through perpetual attempts at radical

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rootedness, & a yearning for 'immortality,' or a perhaps more apt term: *untemporalization*—to Be-*untime*. Irregardless, it is this insistence of *untemporalizing* these unceasingly recorded & always present-at-hand differentiations—of (re)conceptualizing them through *untime*—that creates the seemingly paradoxical condition. More specifically, it is the insistence on viewing differentiation as static, which is to say, as constant, absolute, & unchanging that creates the illusion of the aforementioned 'paradox.' In actuality, the paradox disappears, essentially, if & when the dynamic flow & phoenixity of differentiation itself is identified; by letting-be the perpetually *Becoming* essence of differentiation, the rootedness shifts from one of tempero-staticity to tempero-flux; that is, the rootedness is no longer tied epistemologically to a static conceptualization of differentiation, but to one in which differentiation itself is rooted in the moment-at-hand, is always itself in flux, & never statically *Is*, but is rather always *Becoming*. Thus, the paradox is avoided in this epistemological conceptualization of the structure of differentiation. This 'zone of differentiation' is an ouroboros—essentially self-consumptive, elementally & perpetually self-sacrificial—& the space(s) or zone(s) unconcealed-&-opened by the 'head' & 'tail' of this mythopoietic & alchemical symbol (its constitutive elements) ceaselessly interact & differentiate against, through & with(in) one another. Differentiation is always already *Other* than what it was in the passed moment-in-time; its temporality removing all possibility of a static existentiality. The process of signification, therefore, does not require the some-*thing* to first define itself before defining itself, because in the very first act of 'defining itself,' the 'originary' differentiation has already been lost (to the passed moment-in-time), & each subsequent differentiation will be, necessarily, *different*. The systems of differentiation, then, are constantly built & destroyed—born, sacrificed, & (re)born—& thus signification itself

is never a static some-*thing* & Being (a Being-*thing*), rather an always in-flux in-time *Becoming-thing*.

Of course, if the *Becoming-thing*, & by extension, *Becoming* (Being) itself, finds its home in the perpetual flux of differentiation, then Heidegger's conceptualization of this static Being is a paradoxical impossibility. The phoenixity of the *Becoming-thing*, & consequently *Becoming*, Being, Da-sein, etc. makes necessary the (re)conceptualization of 'existence' & ontological manifestations; not as merely Da-sein's concern with Being, but rather as *Being* itself, which is in actuality not a *Being* at all, but a perpetual *Becoming*—necessarily so—due to the nature of differentiation itself. If, then, Being (as such) is an impossibility (a static structure of Being, of Da-sein, is both paradoxical & ultimately limiting from a conceptual perspective) it can only be referred to as a *Becoming*, *as Becoming*, for it is within the perpetual act of differentiation that 'Being' can even momentarily sediment. Of course, such a sedimentation is always already a breaking-apart, a de-struction, the perpetual form from which a future state is constantly (re)formed. If, then, Being (as such) is an impossibility, is it not then also (necessarily) so that what Heidegger presupposes is merely the history of our concern with Being, is in actuality the history of *Becoming* itself. In other words, ontological history—existence (both ontically & ontologically)—is not Da-sein's quest into its own Being, but the perpetual (re)conceptualizations & (re)constructions of *Being* itself, or rather, the *phoenixity* of *Becoming*. An actual ontological investigation, then, would require a (re)conceptualization of both differentiation & that which has been historically perceived as 'existence'—a (re)conceptualization which in fact identifies the structural symbiosis of & between & within differentiation, 'existence' & *Becoming*—the perpetual, necessary phoenixity of *all*. *Becoming* itself, then, is simultaneously the phoenixity of differentiation & the consequent manifestations

of such differentiations that define(s) existence. Ontological investigation—the exploration of *Becoming*—requires nothing short of perpetual analyses of the history of existence (ours & others', equally).

As such, my conceptualization of differentiation seemingly conflicts with Heidegger's formulation of temporality, specifically his claim that temporality is not merely a "pure succession of nows, without beginning and without end, in which the ecstatic character of primordial temporality is levelled [sic] down" (Heidegger, *B&T*, 329). If, as Heidegger claims, temporality—that is, primordial temporality—is not merely a succession of 'nows' because such a conceptualization & in fact existence of temporality (as such) fails to identify & take into consideration both the 'history' & 'future' of Da-sein, then what of my own conceptualization of the *Becoming-thing*? In what way does the *Becoming-thing* respond to the concerns Heidegger puts forth? In reality, I do not believe that the two are mutually exclusive conceptualizations (though this in no way implies my complete agreement with Heideggerian thought); rather, what I am saying is that *Becoming* is always immersed in what Heidegger calls 'primordial temporality,' & yet still always already *first* functioning and structured (& thus immersed) in the *Becoming-thing*—in that radical flux of differentiation. What Heidegger fails to identify in his exploration into Da-sein's nature is the truly primordial system of differentiation which itself serves as the basis through & from which, Da-sein can 'Be' (*Become*). Indeed, Da-sein (the *Becoming-thing*) must, due to the structure (essence/nature) of differentiation, be in a state of perpetual flux, *necessarily*, for even in Da-sein's temporalization, there is *first* the process of differentiation—the ability to & more importantly, the *necessity* of *differentiating* between Heidegger's various fields of temporality. Without differentiation it would be impossible for Da-sein to even engage in the act of 'Being,' let alone designate temporal space or unconceal Da-

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sein's own finitude. Indeed, the notion of finitude in & of itself can only occur within some system of differentiation—as some-*thing*—that roots its structure and nature in the *Becoming-thing*, & thus perpetual, dynamic phoenixity.

As I see it, systems of differentiation are primary in every process of *Being* or *Becoming*—are fundamental to any process of existence for any species, however defined. Irregardless of manner of *Being* (*Becoming*), differentiation—which is to already say systems of differentiation, or rather, those processes intrinsic to the act of differentiation itself—informs the nature, essence & structure of the *Becoming-thing*. Of course, it is not merely the *Becoming-thing* that is informed by the structure of differentiation, but also by extension *Becoming* (i.e. *Being*, Da-sein, etc.). This is not to say that Heidegger's analysis & exploration into the nature & structure of Da-sein (*Becoming*) is necessarily inaccurate, nor his views of Da-sein's temporality, or constant temporal presence, rather it (re)conceptualizes Heidegger's ontological quest (at least in Being and Time) first in the radical flux of differentiation. In other words, all ontological entities, Da-sein or other, must first find their home within the *Becoming-thing* of differentiation; all signification—all systems of differentiation—must, necessarily, be in a constant state of (re)birth, lest it cease to exist whatsoever, lost, as it were, in a paradox.

Ontopoiesis; or, Zones of Differentiation

Through this system of differentiation, we have explored the structuro-philosophical aspect(s) of the concept of Da-sein. There is, however, also (as aforementioned) a *poietic* context through which to engage, dwell & consider—I call this manifestation of differentiation *ontopoietics*, & the conceptual space unconcealed-&-opened from it, *ontopoiesis*. As noted in the preface to this work, 'ontopoietics' can be understood from a conceptual standpoint as essentially

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binary in structure. These constitutive elements are the ontological & the poietic. Both

components actively & ceaselessly inform-&-affect the other, even as each is always-already,

inherently in a process of 'reacting'-to & informing the other. From a functional perspective, this

'movement' against, through & with(in) the two constitutive elements constructs conceptual

space(s), or zone(s) of differentiation between the ontological datum informing the poietic

expression, & that expression itself. In turn, that 'expression itself'—once dwelling with(in) the

'zone of differentiation—engages in a process of informing-&-affecting the ontology from which

it consciously & unconsciously germinates through. From this perspective, one can

conceptualize the poietic expression existing *as* the ontology—as ontology-manifest. In other

words, both/either of the two constitutive elements exist through their differentiation with(in)-&-

from the other. As previously identified, this particular process of dwelling with(in) a/the zone of

differentiation is indicative of the nature not only of 'Difference,' but of the very act-&-process of

Differentiation itself. It is because of this that, as stated in the preface, "it becomes-always-

already necessary to view any object, subject, thing of any kind, as not at all some *statico-

transcendent interiorizing-agent,* but rather as the zone(s) whose very presence is the progeny of

what-some-thing-'*is*' i.e. a possibility, & its symbiote-other, the infinite-totality of *other-

possibilities*, in other words, that-which-some-thing-is-*not*." What is most crucial to again

emphasize is that *any* constitutive element—any 'some-thing' & any contextual field comprised

of what 'some-thing-is-not'—only-ever exists with(in) the zone(s) created from any system of

differentiation.

As such, if we examine the term Da-sein from this ontopoietic perspective—

fundamentally considering the zone(s) of differentiation born-in the symbiotic union of the

ontological content of the term & its poietic-manifestation &/or (re)presentation—we unconceal

the poiesis at work. It is not merely the 'strangeness' of the word Da-sein in German, but indeed

also *why & how* this 'strangeness' functions & exists. Heidegger's poietic expression produces a

degree of oddness; it is distinctly *uncanny*. Whereas the word 'dasein' means 'existence,' there is

no definitive corollary once the hyphen is introduced, once it divides the term thus forming a

zone of differentiation with(in) it. Before considering some of the possibilities born-in this

caesura, it is necessary to identify some other related words in German. 'Sein' is 'Being,'

however it is also the verb 'to be,' whereas 'being' (as a condition, i.e. 'he is being difficult') is

'Seient' & 'beings' (i.e. entities), 'Seienble;' Da-sein, on the other hand, if literally translated

means 'there-being' or 'there-to-be.' What could such a term signify? Or perhaps more apt,

what is unconcealed in the formation of the zone of differentiation marked by the caesura of the

hyphen? From the perspective of *poiesis*, it is incumbent to explore what is *created* in the

expression of the term. The functional inversion of 'there' & 'being'/'to be' is curious, first, in

the virtual reversal of significatory 'flow' in the word. It is not the traditionally conceived

'being-there' as in 'residing or occupying a space,' but rather the inverse, 'there-being.' In the

former, the presuppositional element is the 'being' while the 'there' exists as a space with(in)-

which 'being' dwells; the 'being' is the primordial aspect of the term in this formulation, & thus

'being-there' focuses upon active & objective presence in a location. In the latter, however, it is

the *zone of dwelling* that prefigures the 'being'—that space preempts both the ontic &

conditional notions of 'being.' As such, Da-sein refers primarily & primordially to the *space* of

existence. In other words, 'there-being' &/or 'there-to-be' (Da-sein) fundamentally speaks *not* to

'existing' nor even to the 'state of existence'—the active-objectivity 'to be' 'some-thing' in

'some-there'—but rather to the zone(s) with(in)-which the 'to be' *can-be*. Heidegger's

expression (re)conceptually *creates* 'meaning' in 'Being' through its (re)positing or (re)direction

of the flow of differentiation, & thus functions precisely as a 'de-struction.' By means of this act

of de-struction not only does Da-sein functionally refer to a zone of differentiation, but in fact *is*

one. It is a word that refers to the space or zone with(in)-which Being 'can-be' while

simultaneously functioning—both as a linguistic symbol & conceptual-apparatus—by-way of the

relationship & rhizomatic interplay amongst-&-between its constitutive elements, by-way of

being a zone of differentiation.

Yet there is a third level still in the way in which Da-sein functions ontopoietically, &

that is in the zone of differentiation created with(in) the afore discussed ontological content

informing-&-acting in the term, & the poiesis of the expression-itself. The ontological content

does not simply 'create' Heidegger's poietic expression, nor does the de-structed term 'inform'

the ontological datum involved in Da-sein. It is both, symbiotically, & thus, in fact, neither.

Both constitutive elements, so to speak, are perpetually mediated against, through & with(in) the

other. Thus the poietic expression 'Da-sein' is informed-by-&-informs the presuppositional

ontology that, in turn, is informed-by-&-informs the formation of the term itself, such that either

& both can only-ever exist *with(in)* the zone(s) of differentiation created in the conceptual

'symbiote-body' of the word.

"I Am My Body;" or, Ontocorporeality

While ontopoiesis is, specifically, the dwelling of space(s) created with(in) ontology &

poiesis (the creative-act of expression), so-many other zone(s) of differentiation exist as well,

according to the constitutive elements of the 'symbiote-body(s).' Ontocorporeality thus resides

in the zone(s) born-in the 'body(s)' of the ontological & corporeal/physiological condition(s) of

existence. An exploration of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's radical phenomenological project illustrates precisely this notion of ontocorporeality.

Merleau-Ponty's <u>Phenomenology of Perception</u> is a significant not only in the field of phenomenology itself, but as well as in ontological thought overall. It begins by defining phenomenology as "the study of essences" (e.g. perception, consciousness), however also as a "philosophy which puts essences back into existence," thus moving away from an "understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their 'facticity'" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, vii). In this sense, Merleau-Ponty conceptualizes his work as a study of the primal experiences of the human—the world, "always already there" as an "inalienable presence," the signification of our experiences with this perceived "outside," & both the presuppositions & implications involved in such thought. As a result, the "responsible philosopher" for Merleau-Ponty must hold that "*phenomenology can be practiced [sic] and identified as a manner or style of thinking, that it existed as a movement before arriving at complete awareness of itself as a philosophy*" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, viii)—a point whose own presuppositions & implications identify, I believe, a curious, potentially intellectually-emancipatory conceptualization of not only phenomenology, but indeed *all* philosophy (most notably ontology), i.e. that *all* philosophy already prefigures itself in a conceptual space, & that *ontology itself* can be viewed as both the school of philosophy (proper), but *also first* as a manner or style not of *thinking* per se, but rather of 'speciel' *existence* (that is, any individual "species").[8]

Merleau-Ponty roots his argument first in the identification of "traditional" philosophical conceptualization or presentations of the mind-body duality &, consequently, of the perceptions & consciousness that stands to follow from such a notion. Particularly troubling to Merleau-Ponty is Cartesian dualism & the dichotomous nature attributed to the mind-body, between the

consciousness of the individual & their corporeal vessels. In response, he proposes a

conceptualization of the human phenomenological experience away from Descartes' *cogito* &

towards this notion of the "body-subject." As a result, he locates the "essence" of the world in

an existential (as opposed to purely abstract or conceptual) sense; the world is not merely an

extension of our own thought or mind—the manifestation of a *thinking-thing*—but actual,

physical space(s) or zone(s) with(in)-which the object of our body-subject navigates, & upon

which perceptions are enacted & consequently inscribed.

For Merleau-Ponty, there is an intricate inter-twining between consciousness, the world

& the human body—it exists, in a sense, as a conceptual symbiote-body. Both rationalism &

empiricism are lacking, he argues, because they fail to identify the ways in which both inform &

act-upon the other—physically & conceptually. Perception is not wholly the extension of our

consciousness of thought, but neither is it merely the functioning of various sensory organs.

Such a notion fails to identify the position of the conscious-"I" itself with(in) each observatory

act, & the subsequent synthesis of the organ-apparatus as a whole. In formulating such an

argument, Merleau-Ponty also critiques the simple dualism of subject-object, of a constituting

agent (a subject) or thing (object), instead positing that the body-subject is always already both,

& in that shared relationship the subject-object—the seer & seen—simultaneously impact &

condition one another. Furthermore, an identification & exploration of precisely this relationship

between the thing & its surroundings (in essence, the "Being," in-the-World) unconceals for

Merleau-Ponty, the primordial ontological experience—the implication of which is, in a sense,

the conceptualization of ontology as symbiotic, of Being-as-symbiote.

It is particularly significant, then, that Merleau-Ponty identified the gap between

perception & our consequent conceptualizations of perception. He argues that we do not

passively perceive or observe some-thing or some-action, but rather each observatory act is simultaneously an active reading-of that perception—a construction of signification of the data our body-subject interacts with. As such, there begins to disintegrate strict dichotomies of subject-object, replaced by the conceptualization of perception & observation as simultaneously (& perhaps paradoxically) acts of being *constituted-by & constituting*.

This is further complicated by the notion of the "phenomenological reduction" & the process by which an object in our field of perception transforms into our thought or consciousness of that perceived object. In this manner, there is a dual-constitution that can be thought about spatially—the inside of the body-subject, the outside of the world & the interplay, inter-dependence & inter-existence of these concepts, such that the world is wholly inside the body-subject, & conversely the body-subject is always already wholly outside of itself in-the-world. Objects in our perception do not merely reference our memories or personal history with said objects, but are also reduced & (re)constituted as part of the entirety of the world which we understand (pre)consciously—a pre-reflective cogito. As such, the interaction between the outer- & inner-space of the body-subject (particularly in relation to consciousness) becomes, in a sense, subordinated to the more primal synthesis of these spaces, & objects we perceive simultaneously constitute themselves before us & are constituted *as* an object *by* us. Thus, Merleau-Ponty's conceptualization of the phenomenological reduction is not predicated on the notion of the "world-as-meaning" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, xi), but rather (as Husserl's assistant Eugen Fink formulated it), a "wonder" in the face of the world. In other words, the phenomenological reduction "slackens the intentional threads which attach us to the world and thus brings them to our notice," as a result acting solely as "consciousness of the world because it reveals that the world is strange and paradoxical" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, xv). The subject, then

does not "make use" of our relation to the world so that it becomes "immanent" in it, but is rather "filled with wonder" at our relation with the world, & because of this the subject is conceptualized as "a process of transcendence towards the world" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, xv). This in turn disrupts our absorption in the world, instead making our ties to it, in a sense, visible to us (& conversely, situates our body as present & seen-*by*-the-world).

The result is a conceptualization of the body-subject that, on the one hand, observes & perceives & constructs meaning & habits out of these perceptions, while on the other, the body-subject exists outside of our own consciousness of it, as a vehicle that is of the world even while it constitutes consciousness of that same world. In other words, connected & linked with the world in primordial ways that (necessarily) evade our personal understanding of precisely how—a some-thing in perception that is not of my own constitution, but rather is in a sense always-already constituted *as such*. Therefore, we do not construct the "objects" of our perceptions consciously (that is to say as an act of our consciousness), instead our body-subject *lets-be* the constitution of the thing before us, or more specifically, the thing constitutes *itself* to us (pre)consciously—thus conceptualizing the body-subject & the world as an open space with(in), against & through which both constitute the other, a notion of a reciprocal openness to (what can, in a sense, be understood as) a constituted existentiality.

This concept manifests in Merleau-Ponty to illustrate that ultimately the body-subject is always-already engaging in a quest for a primordial equilibrium with the world—an equilibrium which we already (bodily) "understand" through what Merleau-Ponty calls 'habituality.' However it is crucial to specify that he does not view understanding 'habituality' as a normalized notion of knowledge nor as an involuntary bodily action, but rather views understanding as a primordial 'knowledge in the hands' which is 'forthcoming' only when one is engaging-through

the body-subject itself. Furthermore, this 'understanding' is not to be understood in the traditional sense, but instead as an experience of equilibrium with the world through the body-subject—to experience the harmony between what we 'aim at' & what is 'given' with our body serving as the 'anchorage of the world.'

Since the body-subject is always at least partially unknown to itself, no experience can ever be fully grasped by the consciousness. As a result, Merleau-Ponty identifies the possibility for significance in a particular physical, lived experience even when the individual themselves may not be fully cognizant, or completely think-through or contemplate the meaningfulness of the experience itself. Such a concept, then, once again roots the body-subject at the center of perception & action, as opposed to in the cogito or consciousness of the individual. Furthermore, recalling Merleau-Ponty's notion of a dual-constitution between object-subject, the world does not exist merely as a spectacle to observe, but rather as a radical matrix of possibilities—the result being a conceptual transformation of the individual body-subject from an 'I-think' or 'I-know,' to an 'I-can.'

Merleau-Ponty's conceptualization of the body-subject in terms of its motility is also particularly important to identify, for through his conceptualization of the pre-reflective cogito, one cannot discern the inner-space of the body-subject before its expression, i.e. thought is not established within the closed interior-space of the body in absentia of or before the embodiment of the action itself. The implication in such a theory is that the inner feelings of the individual are not some special, closed-off & interiorized space of consciousness—'inner realities' that are unobservable to all save the one experiencing them—but rather 'types of behavior' or 'styles of conduct' that are visible externally, that manifest in the public lives of the individual (a fact evident by the variations in the same 'emotion' across cultural lines).

Since it is through our body that we 'center our existence," the 'anonymity' of our body

consequently serves to always make total equilibrium an impossibility, & thus our bodies

provide us both 'freedom' & 'servitude.' This point is especially significant for any change in

the conceptualization of the body itself in turn inherently impacts conceptualizations of freedom

(particularly in relation to power & emancipatory theories). In other words, by rooting both

freedom & servitude with(in) the body—inherent & internal to its own corporeality because of

the impossibility of 'knowing' one's own body—discussions of power & emancipation *must* at

least speak to the significance & ramifications of not only an anonymous body, but *also* &

(perhaps more importantly) any consequent (re)conceptualization of the body-subject proper.

Humanimalism; or, The Becoming-*Other* of Body-Subject(s)

We have considered the ontologically significant construct of Da-sein through an

exploration of differentiation & corporeality, & we must now examine the manner(s) in which

the perpetually-differentiating *Becoming*-body-subject is impacted-by-&-impacts our *speciel*

existentiality. What is the significance of our 'being-human' from the perspective of Da-sein?

Where is the placement of 'Humanism' with(in) some-dominant conceptualizations of ontology?

What is the 'difference' between being a 'Human' & being a member of our 'species,' & more

importantly, *how* are they differentiated against, through & with(in) one another? Moving-

through various themes in Giorgio Agamben's The Open will work-towards unconcealing so-

many possibilities-of-answers to precisely these questions, & thus opening a space through-

which Humberto Maturana & Francisco Varela's biological conceptualizations can be identified

& explored.

The Open is an extremely provocative, often challenging & overall significant work with(in) the field of ontology (& consequently, as noted in the previous section, emancipatory-theory). It focuses on the conceptual & biological relationship between 'the human' & 'the animal,' in the process critiquing various humanist conceptualizations as well as certain 'dominant' ontological arguments currently circulating.

The text begins with Agamben's reading of a series of miniatures contained in the last two pages of the third codex of a 13th century Hebrew Bible in the Ambrosian Library of Milan. The scene that in particular interests Agamben is the "last in every sense, since it concludes the codex as well as the history of humanity" (Agamben, *Open*, 1). It is focused around the image(s) of the "messianic banquet of the righteous on the last day" (an image "perfectly familiar to the rabbinic tradition") however altered due to one further set of details—the miniaturist has "represented the righteous not with human faces, but with unmistakably animal heads" (Agamben, *Open*, 2). The result is, in a sense, the implicit (re)conceptualization of the end of human history—as Agamben notes, "[i]t is not impossible, therefore, that in attributing an animal head to the remnant of Israel, the artist of the manuscript [...] intended to suggest that on the last day, the relations between animals and men will take on a new form, and that man himself will be reconciled with his animal nature" (Agamben, *Open*, 3).

Agamben then discusses Kojève's readings of Hegel, notably that if "history is nothing but the patient dialectical work of negation, and man both the subject and the stakes in this negating action, then the completion of history necessarily entails the end of man, and the face of the wise man who, on the threshold of time, contemplates this end with satisfaction necessarily fades, as in the miniature in the Ambrosian, into an animal snout" (Agamben, *Open*, 7). In response to this, Bataille points to the concept of a "negativity with no use"—or, in its actual

manifestation, "the open wound that is [his] life"—a notion of a negativity that "somehow survives the end of history" (Agamben, *Open*, 7), the only remaining "remnant" of human negativity preserved. This disagreement concerns the "rest" that survives the end of human history—identified by Kojève as "art, love, play, etc., etc.," but also including "laughter, ecstasy, luxury"—things which Bataille could not accept ceasing to be "superhuman, negative, and sacred, in order simply to be given back to animal praxis" (Agamben, *Open*, 6).

This problem of "man's becoming animal," Agamben notes, is returned to by Kojève in 1968 where he first acknowledges that if we are to accept the end of the history of man "properly so called," it is indeed problematic to expect that "all the rest" remain indefinitely. As a result, Kojève conceptualizes human "art, love, play, etc." to necessarily return to this notion of a "natural" state—one in which our architecture would be like the bee's nest, our art like the spider's web, music the songs of frogs & cicadas, etc.—but in which there is *also*, as Agamben identifies, "the disappearance of human language, and its substitution by mimetic or sonic signals comparable to the language of bees" (Agamben, *Open*, 9-10). In exploring the theoretical (& in fact ontological) implications of this posthistorical figure of the human, Agamben claims that "in Kojève's reading of Hegel, man is not a biologically defined species, nor is he a substance given once and for all; he is, rather, a field of dialectical tensions always already cut by internal caesurae that every time separate—at least virtually—'anthropophorous' animality & the humanity which takes bodily form in it" (Agamben, *Open*, 12). The concept of Man historically depends upon this tension—can only conceptually form to the extent that it "transcends and transforms the anthropophorous animal which supports him, and only because, through the action of negation, he is capable of mastering and, eventually, destroying his own animality" (Agamben, *Open*, 12). To this Agamben attributes an inherent question: "what

becomes of the animality of man in posthistory?"—to which he proposes that "[p]erhaps the body of the anthropophorous animal (the body of the slave) is the unresolved remnant that idealism leaves as an inheritance to thought, and the aporias of the philosophy of our time coincide with the aporias of this body that is irreducibly drawn and divided between animality and humanity" (Agamben, *Open*, 12).

If this is the case, then, Agamben argues over the necessity of (re)posing or, in reality, (re)conceptualizing the question or notion of man & consequently "humanism." He notes that while in "our culture, man has always been thought of as the articulation and conjunction of a body and a soul, of a living thing and a *logos*, of a natural (or animal) element and a supernatural or social or divine element," what is ultimately required is to "learn instead to think of man as what results from the incongruity of these two elements, and investigate not the metaphysical mystery of conjunction, but rather the practical and political mystery of separation" (Agamben, *Open*, 16). Or, perhaps more succinctly put, 'What is man, if he is always the zone(s)—&, at the same time, the result—of ceaseless differentiations & caesurae?' In this way, the primary ontological question becomes an exploration of this gap connecting the conceptual spaces of animality & humanity.

Reading Linnaeus, the "founder of modern scientific taxonomy," Agamben evolves the argument that, essentially, the human being exists specifically through its own self-identification: "*man is the animal that must recognize itself as human to be human*" (Agamben, *Open*, 26). As a result, *homo sapiens* is "neither a clearly defined species nor a substance;" rather, it is a "machine or device for producing the recognition of the human" (Agamben, *Open*, 26). This "anthropological machine" is furthermore an "optical machine constructed of a series of mirrors in which man, looking at himself, sees his own image already deformed in the features of an

ape" (Agamben, *Open*, 26-7). This is a crucial step, for it (re)roots Agamben's conceptualization

of our species' dominant ontological form (i.e. the establishment of the concept of the human) as

first an observatory action of negation—a self-identification in which one must "recognize

himself in a non-man in order to be human" (Agamben, *Open*, 27).

Agamben identifies two separate variants of the machine—the ancient & the modern—

both necessarily functioning by "means of an exclusion (which is also always already a

capturing) & an inclusion (which is also always already an exclusion). In this anthropological

machine, Agamben further theorizes, there is produced a "kind of state of exception, a zone of

indeterminacy in which the outside is nothing but the exclusion of an inside and the inside is in

turn only the inclusion of an outside" (Agamben, *Open*, 37). In the modern variant, this machine

functions explicitly by "excluding as not (yet) human an already human being from itself, that is,

by animalizing the human, by isolating the nonhuman within the human" (Agamben, *Open*, 37).

The result, while at the onset a seemingly "innocuous paleontological find" is the monstrously

oppressive possibility, just a few decades of research later, of the conceptualization of "the Jew,

that is, the non-man produced within the man, or the *néomort* and the overcomatose person, that

is, the animal separated within the human body itself" (Agamben, *Open*, 37). The machine of

earlier times, Agamben notes, "works in an exactly symmetrical way," such that:

> [i]f, in the machine of the moderns, the outside is produced through the exclusion of an
> inside and the inhuman produced by animalizing the human, here the inside is obtained
> through the inclusion of an outside, and the non-man is produced by the humanization of
> the animal: the man-ape, the *enfant sauvage* or *Homo ferus*, but also and above all the
> slave, the barbarian, and the foreigner, as figures of an animal in human form. (Agamben,
> *Open*, 37)

The zones of indifference (or of differentiation) at the center of the human/animal is, like "every

space of exception [...] in truth, perfectly empty, and the truly human being who should occur

there is only the place of a ceaselessly updated decision in which the caesurae and their rearticulation are always dislocated and displaced anew" (Agamben, *Open*, 38). This is crucial, for what Agamben identifies within this zone is this concept of *bare life*—"neither an animal life nor a human life, but only a life that is separated and excluded from itself" (Agamben, *Open*, 38). As such, Agamben sees the true exploration *not* as between the two machines, in search of the "better or more effective" or, moreso, the "less lethal and bloody," but rather at the form and function of the machine itself—in order, in an emancipatory act, to "stop them."

Agamben's work then moves towards an analysis of Heidegger's readings concerning this division, particularly the ontological ramifications that arise from the presuppositions & implications of his conceptualization of the animal. It begins first, however, with a discussion of the works of Jakob von Uexküll, "today considered one of the greatest zoologists of the twentieth century and among the founders of ecology" (Agamben, *Open*, 39)—specifically his (re)conceptualization of the animal environment, in the process abandoning "every anthropocentric perspective in the life sciences and the radical dehumanization of the image of nature" (Agamben, *Open*, 39). This is a crucial step, as it directly noted as an influence on both Heidegger & Deleuze, who according to Agamben "sought to think the animal in an absolutely nonanthropomorphic way" (Agamben, *Open*, 39-40).

Uexküll conceptualized the world *not* as a single space, but rather as a virtually infinite variety of perceptual worlds—uncommunicating, reciprocally exclusive, but also "equally perfect and linked together as if in a gigantic musical score" (Agamben, *Open*, 40). As a result, what is created is a concept of the "*Umgebung*" which is "the objective space in which we see a living being moving" (Agamben, *Open*, 40)—essentially the World—*with(in)-which* each species, in a sense, has its own unique perceptual[9] experiences. Consequently, these experiences

manifest such that each species occupies its *own* world—"the *Umwelt*, the environment-world that is constituted" by species-specific "carriers of significance." As a result, each species exists in-&-through its own particular time[10] & space. These worlds can also vary according to our own specific points of view—"[t]here does not exist a forest as an objectively fixed environment: there exists a forest-for-the-park-ranger, a forest-for-the-hunter, a forest-for-the-botanist, a forest-for-the-wayfarer, a forest-for-the-nature-lover, a forest-for-the-carpenter, a finally a fable forest in which Little Red Riding Hood loses her way" (Agamben, *Open*, 41). Furthermore, every environment is a "closed unity in itself," & each is constituted by a series of "carriers of significance"—not "objectively and factically isolated," but rather "two elements in a single musical score" (Agamben, *Open*, 41). The example used is of the fly & the spider—both existing in their own, closed, environments—& yet perfectly in-tune functionally. He also posits that "no animal can enter into relation with an object as such" (Agamben, *Open*, 42), & as a result the spider is blind to the world of the fly, & the fly to the spider's web as they can only enter into relations with their *own* carriers of significance. Lastly, the animal exists captivated by its environment—the tick *is* the relationship it shares with its surroundings—1) the odor of the butyric acid contained in the sweat of all mammals; 2) the temperature of thirty-seven degrees corresponding to that of the blood of mammals; 3) the typology of skin characteristic of mammals—this is its world, & the tick "lives only in it and for it" (Agamben, *Open*, 46-7).

From this, the work moves to Heidegger & his reading of animals. Essentially, Heidegger explores a notion of "profound boredom" & its relation to animals and their environment, & the human's with their world—"the stone is worldless [*welthos*]; the animal is poor in world [*weltarm*]; man is world-forming [*weltbildend*]" (Agamben, *Open*, 51)— (re)naming & (re)conceptualizing Uexküll's "carriers of significance" as "disinhibitors," & an

"*Umwelt*" as a "disinhibiting ring." For Heidegger, the "animal is closed in the circle of its disinhibitors just as, according to Uexküll, it is closed in the few elements that define its perceptual world" (Agamben, *Open*, 51). The animal can only come upon that which "affects" it—starting its "being-capable"—"everything else is *a priori* unable to penetrate" the animal's disinhibiting ring. As a result, the "mode of being proper to the animal, which defines its relation with the disinhibitor, is captivation"—such that, to the extent that the animal is "essentially captivated and wholly absorbed in its own disinhibitors, the animal cannot truly act (*handeln*) or comport itself (*sich verhalten*) in relation to it: it can only behave (*sich benehmen*)" (Agamben, *Open*, 52). The example used is the bee; so captivated by the honey it is being fed, it fails to even note the absence of its own abdomen; it is "simply taken" by the food—& in this "drivenness" there is excluded the possibility of any "recognition of any being-present-at-hand [*Vorhandensein*]" (Agamben, *Open*, 53). Essentially, Agamben claims that Heidegger's view concerning the "ontological status of the animal environment can at this point be defined: it is *offen* (open) but not *offenbar* (disconcealed; lit., openable)" (Agamben, *Open*, 55). For animals, beings are "open but not accessible"—"open in an inaccessibility and an opacity"—& as a result poor in the world, though not worldless. The lark can fly to the sun—bask in its glory, in a way a stone or airplane cannot—however even then, Heidegger claims, the lark is not open-to it *as* it, is not in "the open" of being.

To this, Agamben identifies the "paradoxical ontological status of the animal environment" in Heidegger's work. "The animal is at once open and not open," Agamben explains, "or, better, it is neither one nor the other: it is *open in a nondisconcealment* that, on the one hand, captivates and dislocates it in its disinhibitor with unmatched vehemence, and, on the other, does not in any way disconceal as a being that thing that holds it so taken and absorbed"

(Agamben, *Open*, 59). The 'poverty in world' of the animal in turn ensures "a passage between the animal environment and the open," & from this perspective the essence of the animal as captivation, it serves for Heidegger as a "suitable background against which the essence of humanity can now be set off'" (Agamben, *Open*, 61). Despite there being an "abyss" between them that cannot be bridged "by any mediation whatsoever," Heidegger, as quoted by Agamben, notes that "captivation, as precisely the essence of animality, apparently finds itself in the closest proximity to what we identified as a characteristic element of profound boredom" (Agamben, *Open*, 62). Agamben reads this as evidence that, for Heidegger, "the understanding of the human world is possible only through the experience of the 'closest proximity'—even if deceptive—to this *exposure without disconcealment*" (Agamben, *Open*, 62). However, most important is what Agamben follows in noting:

> Perhaps it is not the case that being and the human world have been presupposed in order then to reach the animal by means of subtraction—that is, by a 'destructive observation'; perhaps the contrary is also, and even more, true, that is, that the openness of the human world (insofar as it is also and primarily an openness to the essential conflict between disconcealment and concealment) can be achieved only by means of an operation enacted upon the not-open of the animal world. And the place of this operation—in which human openness in a world and animal openness toward its disinhibitor seem for a moment to meet—is boredom. (Agamben, *Open*, 62)

There are two characteristics, or "structural moments" that, according to Heidegger, define the essence of boredom: 1) being-left-empty, abandonment in emptiness; 2) being-held-in-suspense. In the first, "things are not simply 'carried away from us or annihilated'; they are there but 'they have nothing to offer us [...] because *we are riveted and delivered over to what bores us*" (Agamben, *Open*, 64); in the second, it is to "leave fallow," inactive & uncultivated—but so that it may be planted the following year (Agamben, *Open*, 66). In this suspension, then, in the midst of the profound boredom, there is unconcealed the full presence of Da-sein. Or, more succinctly

(as Agamben notes), the "open and the free-of-being do not name something radically other with respect to the neither-open-nor-closed of the animal environment: they are the appearing of an undisconcealed as such, the suspension and capture of the lark-not-seeing-the-open" (Agamben, *Open*, 68). This is particularly significant because it roots this ontological moment in the human's observing of a non-revelation, looking into the open but seeing only the closing, the not-seeing of the animal. In short, "Dasein is simply an animal that has learned to become bored; it has awakened *from* its own captivation *to* its own captivation," & the human is nothing more than the "awakening of the living being to its own-being captivated, this anxious and resolute opening to a non-open" (Agamben, *Open*, 70).

Agamben eventually directs this ontological exploration towards the ramifications of the creation of our anthropological machine, & in so doing identifies ontology, "or first philosophy" as "not an innocuous academic discipline, but *in every sense the fundamental operation in which anthropogenesis, the becoming human of the living being, is realized*" (Agamben, *Open*, 79, my italics); a point all the more significant since the open "is nothing but a grasping of the animal not-open," & in the suspension of our animality there opens a "free and empty" zone "in which life is captured and a-ban-doned [*ab-bandonata*[in a zone of exception" (Agamben, *Open*, 79). & since the conflict governing all conflicts, according to Agamben, is the formation of this anthropological machine & the operations preceding it, then "in its origin Western politics is also biopolitics" (Agamben, *Open*, 80). Furthermore, if for Heidegger's ontology the "supreme category" is letting-be, & the observation of the animal's undisconcealedness, Agamben asks "In what way can man let the animal, upon whose suspension the world is held open, be" (Agamben, *Open*, 90)? To render inoperative the anthropological machine is not to seek "more effective or more authentic" articulations of this machine, but rather "to show the central emptiness, the

hiatus that—within man—separates man and animal, and to risk ourselves in this emptiness: the suspension of the suspension" (Agamben, *Open*, 92). Finally, Agamben returns to the miniatures in the Ambrosian, noting that they "do not represent a new declension of the man-animal relation so much as a figure of the 'great ignorance' which lets both of them be outside of being, saved precisely in their being unsavable [sic]" (Agamben, *Open*, 92).

Let us now move the philosophical exploration of our *becoming-species*—or more specifically, the act of our becoming-*'humanimal'*—towards a biologically-rooted journey of our speciel constitution(s). The Tree of Knowledge: The Biological Roots of Human Understanding by Humberto Maturana & Francisco Varela explores a particular (re)conceptualized-reading of 'understanding' & 'life.' They posit that 'life,' at its essence, is a series of 'autopoietic organizations' or 'unities' on both 'internal' & 'external' levels—biologically 'in our cells' & environmentally 'in-the-World.' Their "alternative view of the biological roots of understanding" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 11) is inexorably entwined with this notion of *autopoiesis*; Maturana & Varela's "proposition is that living beings are characterized in that, literally, they are continually self-producing," indicating "this process" by calling "the organization that defines them an *autopoietic organization*" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 43). Furthermore, they explore the "phenomenon of cognition by considering the universal nature of 'doing' in cognition - this bringing forth of a world" as the "problem and starting point" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 28) of their journey & since "all cognition brings forth a world," their "starting point will necessarily be the operational effectiveness of living beings in their domain of existence" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 29). As noted in the preface, a key point in their work is that this requires cognition to be an "effective action, an action that will enable a living being to continue its existence in a definite environment as it brings forth its world" (Maturana &

Varela, *Tree*, 29-30). Cognition-as-action, then, when conceptualized as a biological

characteristic &/or evolutionary trait of 'living-beings' in-turn presupposes an ontopoietic

construct—the internal/autopoietic predication of external/environmental datum &/or

phenomena.

It must be stressed that for Maturana & Varela everything they say is underlined by a

"constant awareness that the phenomenon of knowing cannot be taken as though there were

'facts' or objects out there that we grasp and store in our head" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 25),

but that the "experience of anything out there is validated in a special way by the human

structure, which makes possible 'the thing' that arises in the description" (Maturana & Varela,

Tree, 25-6). As a result, the "connection between action and experience" & the distinct

"inseparability between a particular way of being and how the world appears to us, tells us that

every act of knowing brings forth a world" & that *"all doing is knowing, and all knowing is*

doing" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 26). 'Living-existence,' then, is the summoning-forth of an

internalized-external contextual space—a world, an environment—the ancestor-&-progeny of

which is autopoietic organization. It is precisely this *(bio)ontopoiesis* that informs the notion of

speciel ontology.

Speciel Ontology; or, (Bio)Ontopoietic-Becoming(s)

Maturana & Varela's concept of 'autopoiesis' is rooted even-in(to) the fabric(s) of our

very planetary primordiality; whilst discussing the history of Earth, its organic molecules & their

respective formation(s), they identify that "the potential diversification and plasticity in the

family of organic molecules has made possible the formation of networks of molecular reactions

that produce the same types of molecules that they embody" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 39).

This occurs simultaneously-with these same molecules "set[ting] the boundaries of the space in which they are formed" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 40). As previously noted, "living beings" for Maturana & Varela are (essentially/'essence-tially') "molecular networks and interactions that produce themselves and specify their own limits" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 40). This radical burrowing-in(to) biologically-constructed contextual spaces, such that each 'living being' simultaneously constitutes-&-is-constituted-by the 'environmental' zone(s) of differentiation with(in)-which they reside. This is not unlike Deleuze & Guattari's Artaud-influenced conceptualization of 'bodies without organs' & its impact upon what they refer to as the 'socius' or 'social machine.' "The prime function incumbent upon the socius has always been to codify the flows of desire, to inscribe them, to record them, to see that no flow exists that is not properly dammed up, channeled, regulated" (Deleuze & Guattari, *A-O*, 33), they write, & more specifically, "the socius as a full body forms a surface where all production is recorded, whereupon the entire process appears to emanate from this recording surface" (Deleuze & Guattari, *A-O*, 10). Indeed, this strikes at the very heart of the concept of 'machines,' as Deleuze & Guattari view them; in other words, the production—or rather the act of production via machines—is always already production *&* recording *&* consuming—it is, in short, a circuitous process that is totalizing: "incorporating recording and consumption within production itself, thus making them the productions of one and the same process" (Deleuze & Guattari, *A-O*, 4).

The internally coherent & (re)active socius body or social machine—as 'organism,' in that each part, each organ, operates 'perfectly' or 'properly' both as individual entity, but more importantly, as *part* of a unified *whole*—as functionality—is opposed, essentially, by the 'body without organs.' That is, the body-as-organism "suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all" (Deleuze & Guattari, *A-O*,

8), & the "body without organs" counters this directionalized, controlled, compartamentalized flow by being its antithesis, i.e. 'nonproductive'—'belonging to the realm of antiproduction'—consisting of perpetual-differentiation &/or deterritorialized zones (as opposed to fixed units or boundaries) through which the flow(s) of energy traverse(s). This is crucial when taken to its ontological extent, because it identifies a body-in-flux that, when read through an infusion of Merleau-Ponty's previously explored notions of the 'body-subject,' creates a truly radical terrain upon which the body-itself is so-many *becoming-bodies*, shifting & mutating, destroyed & regenerated according to the infinite progression of differentiations inscribed upon it. Thus, we find ourselves (re)turning to Maturana & Varela's conceptualization of a *Becoming-in-space* from which our speciel corporeality & expressions (& consequent ontological constructs) may *processually* differentiate themselves.

Whereas I identify this structure of living's predication on 'differentiation,' in Maturana & Varela's terminology this notion is referred to as 'distinctions.' Nevertheless, they are compatible concepts & flow with(in)-&-through one another. They identify that the "act of indicating any being, object, thing or unity involves making an *act of distinction* which distinguishes what has been indicated as separate from its background," & therefore our collective "refer[ence] to anything explicitly or implicitly" is a "specifying" of "a *criterion of distinction*, which indicates what we are talking about and specifies its properties as being, unity, or object" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 40). Maturana & Varela explain a "*unity* (entity, object)" as being "brought forth by an act of distinction" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 40). What's more & "[c]onversely, each time we refer to a unity in our descriptions, we are implying the operation of distinction that defines it and makes it possible" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 40). As identified in the preface, on the cellular level, this involves the 'binary' of 'Dynamics (metabolism)' &

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'Boundary (membrane),' structured similarly to ontopoiesis in that each constitutive-factor does not 'produce' or 'unconceal' static objects or behaviors, but rather the structure itself opens space(s) within-&-through which the possibilities of either can-Become/are-Becoming. "On the one hand, we see a network of dynamic transformations that produces its own components and that is essential for a boundary," they explain, "on the other hand, we see a boundary that is essential for the operation of the network of transformations which produced it as a unity" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 46). It is this concept in Maturana & Varela—in which the manifestation of ontological content is on a bio-cellular level[11]—that I call *(bio)ontopoiesis*.

Perhaps the most profound example of this concept's exploration is found not in 'philosophical' or 'biological' texts, but rather in the prose of J.G. Ballard. It is fitting that his work, on *ontopoietic* levels, speaks so profoundly to this notion of *(bio)ontopoiesis*; the poietic expression's energy collapsing back into itself, like a *retrogradal-flow*—the work's ontopoiesis a *becoming-shadow* of the (bio)ontopoietic datum informing the 'narrative.' A crucial point to consider when moving-through this 'project' of which I speak is that the 'boundary' & environmental-landscape of Maturana & Varela's work (re)posits itself in Ballard's poietic-universe as 'technology.' Whereas every species must, inherently, find itself existing in so-many zone(s) of differentiation—creating perpetual line(s) of flight amongst the rhizomatic shards of possibilities—*homo sapien* (at least from the dominant/'normative' perspective) finds its 'post-Humanism' history (& indeed even further back) always-already engaged-in & a product-of its technological expressions. These in-turn construct a *technospace* through which our species finds itself differentiating against, through & with(in); an 'environmental-contextual space' marked by its identity as a constitutive element in the (bio)ontopoietic configuration(s) of our species' ontological-existentiality.

Ballard's Crash & The Atrocity Exhibition identify precisely this, (re)conceptualizing technology's oblique position in our biological & ontological constructs & manifestations. It is accomplished through a rigorous & unflinching *unconcealment* of the problematic presuppositions & implications contained within the (meta)narrative of technology. The result is an exhilarating ontopoietic exploration of the human body in relation to technology (& by extension, our *speciel ontology*). By (re)constructing technology's 'narrative' (a/its potential-'History') through the creation & unconcealment of a multitude of *possibilities*, Ballard succeeds in (re)conceptualizing both *what* technology *is* (what it *can be*), & *how* it contributes to our ontological existentiality. This philosophical expression is primarily made possible by Ballard's unconcealing of *possible* speciel action(s) & expression(s)—the conceptual existence of so-many ontological expressions. Thus, in Crash what we are presented with (vis-à-vis the *character* of Ballard) is a world in which there is a synthesis of, perhaps in terms of their noteworthy position within the ontological construct, our species' two most dominant ontological expressions—our 'normative' conceptualization(s) of sex & violence. In the case of Crash, they are explored through 'technology,' ostensibly represented by the automobile, "the greatest of all American icons" (Ballard, *Atrocity*, 23, commentary). The automobile's function in the novel is difficult (if even possible) to comfortably determine; on many levels, it is clear that it signifies our species' dominant/normative conceptualization of technology, whereas at other times it exists more abstractly, as a quasi-character born (perhaps) from Ballard's earlier The Atrocity Exhibition. It is in *that* text that Ballard presents—as Maturana & Varela do—a (re)conceptualization of our species expressions[12] as an aspect of our biological evolution.

Through the character(s) of Travis/Talbot/Traven/etc. The Atrocity Exhibition presents a (re)conceptualization of our ontology not as a field of thought in 'School(s) of Philosophy,' but

rather as zone(s) of (bio)ontopoietic differentiations between our *biology* & our *Becoming-in-time-&-space*. The dynamic intertextuality of both of these 'narratives'—informing-&-informed-by one other as they themselves radically & perpetually change & (re)form—results in the dissolution of rigid, static & interiorized division(s) between the corporeal & the conceptual, but rather our existence itself is presented as so-many biological text(s), perpetually destroying & (re)constituting itself within an increasingly 'technological' 'world.'

Our bodies, then (as the character Ballard exclaims in <u>Crash</u>), are ceaselessly evolving, biologically, *in* a human-constructed environment:

> [l]ooking closely at this silent terrain, I realized that the entire zone which defined the landscape of my life was now bounded by a continuous artificial horizon, formed by the raised parapets and embankments of the motorways and their access roads and interchanges. These encircled the vehicles below like the walls of a crater several miles in diameter. (Ballard, *Crash*, 53)

The question then becomes *how* this technoscape—one predominantly & increasingly *dominated* (in terms of space & perspective) by our *own speciel action(s) & expression(s)*—affects & forces (re)conceptualizations of the body. This process, it should be noted, perpetually (re)enters back into itself because of the body's consequent *affect* upon the environment; if the body is contextualized within a specific (always shifting/changing) world, then so too is the world dependent upon the bodies navigating it. As Maturana & Varela explicitly note, this occurs on macro levels, such as conceptualizations of a global biosphere, as well as micro, individual levels specific to perhaps only a single species. In essence, the biosphere (& indeed the entire universe) is 'essence-tially' the manifestations of infinite differentiation(s)—the perpetual culmination of the *always-now* of this process. Each & every species ('unity') is merely this culmination of differentiation(s)—existing in a specific, relative 'world' & yet each contributing to the establishment of the entire structure.[13] The *homo sapien* world, then (as previously discussed in

the thought(s) of Jakob von Uexküll), is both its own & shared, as the tick's world is unknown & inherently concealed to us, & yet also simultaneously *part* of the entire biosphere (& universe) which we inhabit. The acts of differentiation are dependent upon our corporeal limitations (what we literally can & cannot experience), our recordings of sensory data (however defined), the manner in which these recordings are processed, the consequent conceptualizations of space & world that are created (in every species, conscious or otherwise), & the ontological expressions resulting from these collective inscription(s) & (re)recording(s) of this data.

Thus our speciel conceptualizations of the body in Ballard's work (as a 'vessel'-navigating-space & in terms of its ontocorporeality) must be identified before a proper exploration of the environment is possible, & indeed we find that the character of 'Ballard' constantly marks the texts through his observations of the body (both his own & others'). His uneasiness navigating 'normative' conceptualizations of the body, it could be said, rests in the strict divisions presupposed by our species' 'dominant' notions of 'mind' & 'body'—or perhaps more appropriate, between the *physical* & the *conceptual*. One such example of this textual marking is found early in the novel, shortly after Ballard's car accident:

> A young, blond-haired doctor with a callous face examined the wounds on my chest. The skin was broken around the lower edge of the sternum, where the horn boss had been driven upwards by the collapsing engine compartment. A semi-circular bruise marked my chest, a marbled rainbow running from one nipple to the other. During the next week this rainbow moved through a sequence of tone changes like the colour spectrum of automobile varnishes. As I looked down at myself I realized that the precise make and model-year of my car could have been reconstructed by an automobile engineer from the pattern of my wounds. The layout of the instrument panel, like the profile of the steering wheel bruised into my chest, was inset on my knees and shinbones. The impact of the second collision between my body and the interior compartment of the car was defined in these wounds, like the contours of a woman's body remembered in the responding pressure of one's own skin for a few hours after a sexual act. (Ballard, *Crash*, 28)

This passage clearly functions from multiple perspectives, however one significant reading

revolves around the manner in which (the character) Ballard's observations presuppose a

hybridization of the body—a technological hybridization—resulting in the conceptual birth of

what I call an *ontological cyborg*. While it is true that Ballard's body itself is not *physically*

(re)constituted with techno-apparatuses (& thus not 'officially' a 'cyborg'), it is *equally* accurate

to say that his physical composition has been (re)formed by the *power* that technology enacted

upon & against it—by the 'force' of techno-energy acting against, through & with(in) the

ontocorporeality of our body-subject(s). Therefore Ballard's body has had a quasi-cybernetic

(re)birth, responding & changing according to the 'flows of power' around it—his surrounding

technological environment *acting* on him, & the body's consequent *recording(s)* &

(*re)recording(s)* of lived-experiences.

   Of course, technology is not merely the metal gears of an industrial society, nor the

advancements made with computers, cameras, televisions, satellites, etc. (i.e. electronics & the

like). Such a conceptualization of technology functions as a concealing, oppressive narrative.

Actual technology consists of the aforementioned, but *also* exists in those nebulous, conceptual

spaces—occupying the *virtual* terrains of a species. "As I moved in the evening traffic along

Western Avenue," Ballard explains to the reader(s) of the text:

> I thought of being killed within this huge accumulation of fictions, finding my body
> marked with the imprint of a hundred television crime serials, the signature of forgotten
> dramas which, years after being shelved in a network shake-up, would leave their last
> credit-lines in my skin. (Ballard, *Crash*, 60)

Ballard-the-character's body is marked, as it were, by both the physical matter of technology *&*

the conceptual exertion of force surrounding him; he exists, as with any ontological

manifestation (in fact *any ontology at all*), with(in) an environment—a technoscape— &

necessarily-reacts to his contextual-placement. In other words, *differentiation* (the primordial

seed of existence itself) *must* affect the ontology of *any* species, & therefore the occupation of

any-&-all space—physical, conceptual, or otherwise—*inherently* informs & alters all consequent

acts of differentiation.

Ballard continues in his observation of this world, or rather, the world's consequent

impact upon his *own* ontological existence:

> The silence continued. Here and there a driver shifted behind the steering wheel, trapped
> uncomfortably in the hot sunlight, and I had the sudden impression that the world had
> stopped. The wounds on my knees and chest were beacons tuned to a series of beckoning
> transmitters, carrying the signals, unknown to myself, which would unlock this immense
> stasis and free these drivers for the real destinations set for their vehicles, the paradises of
> the electric highway. (Ballard, *Crash*, 53)

Here the notion of stasis is introduced; ostensibly as a *physical* stasis within *space*, yes, but *also*

an *ontological* stasis. Also rooted-with(in) this passage, however, are the corresponding

ontocorporeal implications contained in such an existence—encapsulated, as it were, in a cage of

our own speciel expressions:

> The memory of this extraordinary silence remained vivid in my mind as Catherine drove
> me to my office at Sheperton. Along Western Avenue the traffic sped and swerved from
> one jam to the next. Overhead, the engines of the airlines taking off from London Airport
> wearied the sky. My glimpse of an unmoving world, of the thousands of drivers sitting
> passively in their cars on the motorway embankments along the horizon, seemed to be a
> unique vision of this machine landscape, an invitation to explore the viaducts of our
> minds. (Ballard, *Crash*, 53)

Thus Ballard's body—or rather the (re)conceptualization of his own body—begins to explicitly

interact with the artificial environment (technoscape) to which it is a part; it is here, then, that we

return to The Atrocity Exhibition & the text's (re)conceptualization of the human entity, as well

as the body's position with(in) the formation of our environmental 'world(s).'

The Atrocity Exhibition, thematically speaking, revolves around the character of Travis

& his obsession with starting World War III—"though not, of course, in the usual sense of the

term" (Ballard, *Atrocity*, 12). Rather, as Dr. Nathan explains to Travis' wife, Catherine Austin, this war will revolve around the images bombarded upon us by our environment—a conflict confined to our own minds, those vast conceptual landscapes. While readings of this novel often circulate around the manner in which *media*-images (i.e. mass media) infiltrate Travis' mind (& by extension, society writ large), this is far too easy & simplifying. What is normatively identified as 'media' is, in actuality, a *far more* complicated & abstract entity & concept; its existence is both nebulous & shifting, perpetually occupying *new & different* public space(s). Since the concept of 'mass media' normatively depends on the medium's ability to reach vast audiences, a myth has been perpetrated—one emphasizing the necessity for simplicity, both of the data itself, as well as the discussions revolving around it. 'Mass media' may perhaps necessarily limit itself to the oppressive, concealing force of over-simplification (in all facets of existence), however *media* itself is by no means confined by these terms. If we conceptualize media as something *more* than merely the arbitrary conglomeration of a handful of corporations that in turn control specific fields of the distribution of information, we are suddenly presented with an exhilaratingly vast amount of data at our disposal—the totality of all our species' forms & modes of communication. The conceptualization of media in The Atrocity Exhibition revolves around the latter, as *all* the information exposed-to-&-recorded by Travis is an *affliction*—not 'mass media' alone. In other words, the 'media' *in its totality* is *all* the space occupied by our socio-speciel expressions—empty, public spaces temporarily hijacked & (re)formed *as* media via the externalized application(s) of power. Of course, this is not to say that all our speciel expressions function *as-media*, but rather that *any* of them *can* be temporarily usurped & implemented *through* this medium, broadcast(ed)-back outwards to the masses (i.e. 'society' itself). In short, what I am maintaining is that the concept of 'media' in The Atrocity

Exhibition should not (& in fact *cannot*) be identified merely by what is normatively referred to as 'mass media;' rather, the images afflicting Travis are *speciel* expressions that are *mediating-through* these avenues. Thus the *content* of these images becomes secondary to the *medium* through which they are transmitted—taken over & utilized *by* the power-mongers of a given society. It is not dissimilar to political theories focusing on systemic positions as opposed to specific politicians—the 'problem' with(in)-which one dwells & explores is more symptomatic of the *system* than of the individual 'unity(s)' comprising it. The latter is merely the *necessary* expression of the former—functional cogs (co)existing as singular 'entity(s).'

A fascinating notion in <u>The Atrocity Exhibition</u> is Travis' analysis of his affliction—one revolving around the seeming *necessity* of the specific, *particular* evolutionary history of his environmental-contextual technoscape. By this I mean that in the novel the system is conceptualized as an organic extension of our speciel-biology, i.e. the landscape in which we live & the systems created against, through & with(in) them are the (bio)ontopoietic expression(s) of our species. Dr. Nathan identifies this in two separate passages early in the text, contemplating the presuppositions & implications of Travis' philosophical explorations:

> Dr. Nathan passed the illustration across his desk to Margaret Travis. 'Marey's Chronograms are multiple-exposure photographs in which the element of time is visible—the walking human figure, for example, represented as a series of dune-like lumps [...] Your husband's brilliant feat was to reverse the process. Using a series of photographs of the most commonplace objects—this office, let us say, a panorama of New York skyscrapers, the naked body of a woman, the face of a catatonic patient—he treated them as if they already were chronograms and *extracted* the element of time [...] The results were extraordinary. A very different world was revealed. The familiar surroundings of our lives, even our smallest gestures, were seen to have totally altered meanings.' (Ballard, *Atrocity*, 12)

Identified in this passage is the active ontopoietic (re)conceptualization of our speciel expressions; the constitutive element(s) of 'ontology' & 'poiesis' placed in a zone of

differentiation with(in)-which *other-possibilities* of our speciel-existentiality manifest(s), root(s) & dwell(s). This is a particularly relevant moment to (re)call Maturana & Varela's specific conceptualization of biological dynamism & attempt a possible-identification of potential implications in their work within the reading(s) I am formulating. They declare that "[t]he formation of a unity always determines a number of phenomena associated with the features that define it" & thus "each class of unities specifies a particular phenomenology" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 51). This is a crucial concept to note. From a conceptual perspective, it leads directly to their declaration that "autopoietic unities specify biological phenomenology as the phenomenology proper of those unities with features distinct from physical phenomenology" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 51). In other words, "the phenomena they generate in functioning as autopoietic unities depend on their organization and the way this organization comes about, and not on the physical nature of their components (which only determine their space of existence)" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 51). Thus, the specific act(s) or zone(s) of differentiation that momentarily-sediment(s) into an 'organization' is always-already *also* the product of so-many manifest-'unities'—the result of which is the perspectival-existentiality of ontological & ontic identity. It is therefore significant that when Travis' wife questions in The Atrocity Exhibition whether her husband was "a doctor, or a patient?" Dr. Nathan's response with regards to his (Travis') (bio)ontopoietic identity revolves not around the 'socially'-manifest-&-sedimented binary of 'doctor'/'patient' (the 'sein' of *Da-sein*), but rather in the contextual 'world' ('Da-') against, through & with(in)-which either-&-both dwell. Dr. Nathan exclaims:

> Mrs. Travis, I'm not sure if the question is valid any longer. These matters involve a relativity of a very different kind. What we are concerned with now are the implications—in particular, the complex of ideas and events represented by World War III. Not the political and military possibility, but the inner identify of such a notion. *For us*, perhaps, World War III is now little more than a sinister pop art display, but for your husband it has become an expression of the failure of his own psyche to accept the fact of

its own consciousness, and of his revolt against the present continuum of time and space. (Ballard, *Atrocity*, 12)

It is not only that a particular *contextuo-technoscape* is the primordial 'zone-of-differentiation' functioning as that space *born-from-&-birthing* the *becoming-body-subect(s)*, but that each 'zone' clearly-&-explicitly informs-&-is-informed-by the 'consequent' speciel-conceptualization(s) of both their-own & *other* constitution(s). Thus, the assertion that "Dr. Austin may disagree, but it seems to me that his intention is to start World War III, though not, of course, in the usual sense of the term" is significant, for it precedes, informs-&-is-informed-by his declarative revelation that the most significant portion of this new war is that the "blitzkriegs will be fought out on the *spinal battlefields, in terms of the postures we assume, of our traumas mimetized in the angle of a wall or balcony*" (Ballard, *Atrocity*, 12, my italics). This is fascinating because we are presented with a complete (re)conceptualization of precisely *what* this environment we (co)exist-in *is*—the (bio)ontopoietic expressions of a species.[14]

If left here, the presuppositions and implications of such a concept are significant; however Dr. Nathan's exposition continues shortly after this previous passage, almost conceptually (re)born as he himself recounts it:

> "This reluctance to accept the fact of his own consciousness," Dr. Nathan wrote, "may reflect certain positional difficulties in the immediate context of time and space. The right-angle spiral of a stairwell may remind him of similar biases within the chemistry of the biological kingdom. This can be carried to remarkable lengths—for example, the jutting balconies of the Hilton Hotel have become identified with the lost gill-slits of the dying film actress, Elizabeth Taylor. Much of Travis' thought concerns what he terms 'the lost symmetry of the blastosphere'—the primitive precursor of the embryo that is the last structure to preserve perfect symmetry in all planes. It occurred to Travis that our own bodies may conceal the rudiments of a symmetry not only about the vertical axis but also the horizontal. One recalls Goethe's notion that the skull is formed of modified vertebrae--similarly, the bones of the pelvis may constitute the remains of a lost sacral skull [...] it seems that Travis' extreme sensitivity to the volumes and geometry of the world around him, and their immediate translation into psychological terms, may reflect a

belated attempt to return to a symmetrical world, one that will recapture the perfect symmetry of the blastosphere, and the acceptance of the 'Mythology of the Amniotic Return.' In his mind World War III represents *the final self-destruction and imbalance of an asymmetric world, the last suicidal spasm of the dextro-rotatory helix, DNA. The human organism is an atrocity exhibition at which he is an unwilling spectator...*" (Ballard, *Atrocity*, 13-4, my italics)

Let us consider, then, Maturana & Varela's identification of 'ontogeny' as "the history of structural change in a unity without loss of organization in that unity" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 74). They note that "ongoing structural change occurs in the unity from moment to moment, either as a change triggered by interactions coming from the environment"—it dwells against, through & with(in)—"*or as a result of* its internal dynamics" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 74, my italics). Since every "ontogeny occurs within an environment," every autopoietic unity in-turn exists with(in) perpetual-&-reciprocal 'perturbations' whose presence does not "specify or direct them" to certain changes or affects, but rather "only *triggers* structural changes" in the unity (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 75).

Furthermore, perpetual mutual-perturbations that do not disintegrate the autopoietic unity & its 'containing environment' result in what they term *structural coupling*, & in-turn leads to potential establishments of "metacellular or *second-order unity*" which in turn, inherently possess a "structural coupling and ontogeny adequate to its structure as a composite unity"— simply put, these metacellular unities will have a "macroscopic ontogeny, and not a microscopic one like that of its cells" (Maturana & Varela, *Tree*, 78-9). Indeed, it is ironic that while Travis' (re)conceptualization(s) of the (bio)ontopoietic expressions surrounding him are radically-dynamic & function to *unconceal* his consequent answers to these questions—those temporary static-plateaus upon which the next act of unconcealment, the next (re)birth, takes root-&-dwells—the deductions themselves are only secondary & function as the vessel(s) of ontological-

thought. The validity of any speciel expression (if we must use such a word as 'validity') is located not in some arbitrary, 'absolute' & 'eternal' set of aesthetic or ethical values, but rather in each expressions' ability to *unconceal* various aspects of our speciel condition, as well as its contribution to our 'sound' ontological evolution. Therefore it becomes almost irrelevant to assign some piece of work, some concept, some philosophico-musing a 'rating' due to a particular history of aesthetic principles, all the while avoiding & neglecting the implications & presuppositions of each expression itself. Contained there, in the lacunae of each speciel expression—be they art, literature & language, architecture, governmental structures, economic systems, & so on—are the *unconcealment(s)* of so-many ontological *realities & possibilities*. Through our collective readings of the virtually infinite expressions of our species we both conceal & unconceal the various possibilities & realities of our lived-existence, in all its manifestations. Crash & The Atrocity Exhibition likewise (un)conceal critical aspects of our species' ontological expressions, however they do so through *philosophical* as opposed to *thematic* methods, i.e. through the (re)conceptualization of technology, technoscape(s) & their relative perspectival-position(s) with(in) our ontological constructs; Ballard's choices revolve around the actual *philosophical (re)conceptualizations* of what is viewed as 'normative' with(in) our speciel *ontology(s)*.

These poietic-works function on multiple levels, exploring gaps & dark-matter that mark(s) our speciel (bio)ontopoietic-narratives. Ballard's texts are not only the philosophical (re)conceptualization(s) of fundamental aspects of our speciel development-&-existentiality, but indeed the themes themselves. The literal 'story' told in both Crash & The Atrocity Exhibition are radical challenges to 'normative' narratives that develop against, through & with(in) abstract & 'underground' (theoretical) community(s). If we are to follow Maturana & Varela's line of

thought, then, we find ourselves (eventually) immersed in-&-by Language, & as a result of this dwelling-with(in) we are (as ontogenic & ontological 'unities') subjected to its particular 'perturbations.' As previously noted, they do not 'direct' our collective & individual behaviors, but rather 'triggers' in us[15] actions or changes that are proper to our biological & thus ontological structures. Our particular 'distinctions' or act(s)/zone(s) of differentiation, then—be they cellular or 'behavioral'—are rhizomatic-possibilities with(in) our particular structure of existence, & any change in otherwise 'normative' environmental space inherently impacts our consequent autopoietic & (bio)ontopoietic constitution(s). Furthermore, the language specifically used in Ballard's novels—the *matter-itself* of these works—function(s) as an act of protestation against *sedimented-power* which has manifested in the form of various (meta)narratives.[16] Ballard succeeds, then, in unconcealing various dominant aspects of our speciel existentiality—concepts that have an integral relationship with-&-with(in) our collective ontological evolution. This is accomplished not only vis-à-vis the philosophical extrapolations contained against, through & with(in) his texts, but also in the stories themselves—in the fiction born-from-&-out-of a series of so-many 'authorial decisions' that culminate in an *abstract-&-tangible* act of protestation against the sedimentary, static nature of power-mongering. It is precisely this notion that my work's attention & focus now *ontopoietically* & *ontopolitically* turn(s)-toward(s).

CHAPTER ONE NOTES

[1] 'This is predominantly conceptualized in the Deleuzean sense of a dynamic 'flow' of 'Becoming-'possibilities.

[2] By 'differentiation' I am referring to the systemic process of differentiation by which signification of any kind exists.

[3] The physiological realities of our existence as/through so-many 'bodies'…

[4] This neologism does not refer to anthropocentrism, nor is it the construct of 'Humanism,' but rather, specifically, it is the act &/or process by which we are 'always-already-included-in-a-species.'

[5] From a Deleuzean perspective, noology involves studying images of thought, their genealogies & progeny; as a result, I am proposing a-possible 'noology of ontology'—an exploration of the evolution of these 'images of thought' through various significant thinkers/concepts.

[6] From Deleuze & Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus: "Multiplicities are defined by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight or deterritorialization according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Plateaus*, 9).

[7] I am using 'we' here to mean 'we-the-species' in the broadest sense of species—one could say, a grouping of entities that share DNA or RNA sequences; or, perhaps, a grouping of quarks & leptons, or other larger atomic particles, existing symbiotically in/as some entity, etc…

[8] This will be specifically explored later in the chapter.

[9] & from a Merleau-Pontian perspective previously explored, its own *specielly*-unique corporeal experiences

[10] Not only time, but indeed temporality as well.

[11] It should be noted that Maturana & Varela extend this bio-cellular notion to complex living beings & even social systems.

[12] By 'expression' I am including any speciel construct existing in the public sphere—i.e. language, architecture, art, poetry, philosophy, government, fashion, technology, etc.—in *all* their possible-manifestations.

[13] In this sense it is not unlike cells in a human body, sub-atomic particles in elements, & so on.

[14] *Interspliced*, of course, with all other species & *their* proper-expression(s) as well.

[15] As first-order/cellular, second-order/metacellular & third-order/'social' unities…

[16] For example, the 'novel' as both structure-&-form, the 'normative' notions of story construction, plot conventions, ideas of thematic resolution, 'normative' presentations of imagery, metaphors, etc.

CHAPTER TWO

Haunted-Becoming(s); or, A Becoming-Haunted

Ontopoiesis, ontocorporeality & speciel ontology are not 'new concepts' per se. They are, instead, structural (re)articulations & consequent conceptualizations of the constitutive components at work in each term. Thus 'ontopoiesis,' for example, is not some novel (re)conceptualization of either ontology or poiesis; rather, the term is an articulation of *both* 'ontology' & 'poiesis' from a *structural* perspective, with regards to the symbiotic mediations against, with(in) & through which *either* can & may *existentielly* differentiate. As noted in the 1st chapter, this structure in-turn creates a zone of differentiation & it is precisely within this zone of ontopoietic differentiation(s) that the 2nd chapter dwells. There is perhaps no more fundamental figure to traverse such terrain with than Antonin Artaud, whose various & varied *ontopoietic* differentiations & *expression(s)* manifest as spectral strands wrapping & weaving around & through(out) so-many zones of differentiation(s)—*Haunted-Becoming(s)*, or a *Becoming-Haunted*.

The project with which Artaud is most commonly associated & discussed is The Theater of Cruelty. In such works—more apt would be spectacles—there is the production of shadows & doubles; dark forces haunting the figures that dwell amongst & upon the stage as characters before an audience. Such apparitional presence—a perpetual plague upon the Spectacle of Theater—transforms the zone(s) of the stage into *Becoming-Haunted* spaces of possibilities; & each effigial-form in-turn manifests as *Haunted-Becoming(s)* plagued by the spectral-energy threatening, striving & yearning to consume them in a swirl of differentiation—effigies trapped with(in) the Phoenix's flame(s).

This structural relationship of *haunting & Becoming*, & their differentiation(s) against, with(in) & through one another, creates the zone wherein either & both manifest as possibilities. These Haunted-Becoming(s) therefore are also a space of Becoming-Haunted, & Artaud's entire oeuvre (particularly his Theater of Cruelty) is simultaneously the manifestation of so-many 'Haunted-Becomings'—temporary & effigial form(s)—& the 'Haunted' zone(s) of Differentiation from, against & through-which these 'Becoming(s)' are made possible. Through the utilization & consequent (re)conceptualization(s) of both 'ritual' & archetypal 'Forms'-of-characters, Artaud's poietic expressions establish & project new ritualistic milieus & archetypes that exist & function as 'temporary' sedimentations within perpetual differentiation. It is specifically this zone of differentiation-in-perpetuity within-which Artaud's Theater of Cruelty dwells—a space that simultaneously serves as the opening-for effigial-form(s) to manifest, as well as the opening-from & against which possible-Becoming(s) differentiate.

In the Theater of Cruelty, 'ritual' (as both construct & device) is essentially the (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of 'primordial' sacrificial rites, utilized & implemented towards the burning of the spectators'/spectatorial *effigies*. In addition to an examination of The Theater of Cruelty, however, I would like to propose a related concept— what I call the *Phoenix of Cruelty*. It is derived from Artaud's Theater of Cruelty notions, but incorporative of his other written works, philosophical concepts & lived-life's performativity (the construction of his body into a literal zone of ontopoietic & ontocorporeal differentiation). By introducing this concept, I wish to illustrate the manner in which Artaud's Phoenix of Cruelty functions as a perpetual destruction of

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'form(s)' to the lived-body (ontocorporeality) & Language (ontopoiesis) via the 'Body-without-Organs' & his 'magickal drawings'/'incantations.' This, too, is heavily dependent upon what could be called Artaudian Rites, & as such it is critical to begin this examination with an exploration of 'ritual' & precisely how 'rites' are undertaken in Artaud's project, before identifying precisely what is referred to in the concept of the Phoenix of Cruelty.

Phoenix of Cruelty; or, Shadows, Doubles & *Duende*

> "Never before, when it is life itself that is in question, has there been so much talk of civilization and culture."
> —Antonin Artaud (*The Theater and Its Double*, 15)

Antonin Artaud's The Theater and Its Double begins with this declaration of the ills of European society. At a time when 'human existence' was in question, the *Language* through which Europe expressed itself, & more importantly the conceptual space through which it *thought* & consequently constructed reality, was one centered on notions of civilization & culture. Artaud condemned contemporary art, especially the theater, for its utter artificiality, & complacent bourgeois repose. How, then, would humanity succeed in her war to reclaim life? How, then, would she peel off the layers of deadened flesh from bone, when all was fought through words & talk? As Artaud saw it, the reclamation of ritual in art would release us from the confinement of forms & words, & transform the theater into the weapon through which to conquer our malaise.

The dilemma for Artaud, therefore, rests on the notion of Language. He states, "if confusion is the sign of the times, I see at the root of this confusion a rupture between things and words, between things and the ideas and signs that are their representation"

(Artaud, *Double*, 7). Language has usurped the "thing," & has attempted to set quantifiable limitations on the *essence* of being, which for Artaud is inherently beyond measure.

Artaud's assertion that "every real effigy has a shadow which is its double," is an attack on any system that demystifies language by denying its primordial, metaphysical aspects—that is to say, the reduction of "Language" into a strict Saussurian &/or semiotic system. Every real effigy, real sign, has a shadow which serves as the double, & gives 'life' to the thing. Indeed, "art must falter and fail from the moment the sculptor believes he has liberated the kind of shadow whose very existence will destroy his repose" (Artaud, *Double*, 12). This art exists as pure effigy; to deny the existence of its shadow is to destroy its cathartic potential.

Lorca describes a similar poietico-philosophical conceptualization of the shadow-double, defined as the *duende*, in his essay "Play and Theory of the *Duende*." The piece refers to a famous artistic "genius" known as "The Girl with the Combs," Andalusian singer Pastora Pavón. Lorca describes a night in a little tavern in Cádiz, wherein Pavón:

> played with her voice of shadow, of beaten tin, her moss-covered voice, braiding it into her hair or soaking it in wine or letting it wander away to the farthest, darkest bramble patches. No use. Nothing. The audience remained silent […] When Pastora Pavón finished singing there was total silence, until a tiny man […] sarcastically murmured "*Viva* Paris!" As if to say: "Here we care nothing about ability, technique, skill. Here we are after something else." As though crazy, torn like a medieval mourner, the "Girl with the Combs" leaped to her feet, tossed off a big glass of burning liquor, and began to sing with a scorched throat: without voice, without breath of color, but with *duende*. She was able to kill the scaffolding of the song and leave way for a furious, enslaving *duende*, friend of sand winds, who made the listeners rip their clothes with the same rhythm as do the blacks of the Antilles when, in the "lucumí" rite, they huddle in heaps before the statue of Santa Bárbara […] The "Girl with the Combs" had to tear her voice because she knew she had an exquisite audience, one which demanded not forms

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but the marrow of forms […] She had to rob herself of skill and security, send away her muse and become helpless, that her *duende* might come and deign to fight her hand-to-hand. And how she sang! Her voice was no longer playing. It was a jet of blood worthy of her pain and her sincerity [...] (Lorca, *Duende*, 52-53, my italics).

This 'marrow of form' which itself constitutes 'essence' can only be expressed if one destroys the *rigidity & technicalities of form(s)*, & releases the *duende* from its structural confinements. The effigy of art, in all its manifestations, must be cast into a flame in order to release the *duende*. Lorca's conception mirrors that of Artaud & the shadow-double; all exist, essentially, as permutations/possibilities of one another.

These notions of a shadow-double & *duende*, however, did not emerge from a vacuum of similar thought. There is a distinct, rich history surrounding the terminology, as well as the artistic application of both the 'shadow'-'double' & the '*duende*,' in Artaud & in Lorca's work. Indeed, the *duende* of Lorcan art & theory has roots within Spanish culture herself, as well as deep within Gypsy folklore & mythology. In Lorca's "Play and Theory of the *Duende*," he acknowledges early on the great *cantaores* in Flamenco, Manuel Torre, whom he quotes as saying to another singer, "You have a voice, you have the styles, but you will never triumph, because you do not have *duende*" (Lorca, *Duende*, 48). Torre was also quoted by Lorca as saying, "What you must search for, and find, is the black torso of the Pharoah *[sic]* " (Lorca, *Duende*, 97); a Gypsy himself, Torre felt his roots were Egyptian in origin. Fundamentally, therefore, the *duende* has deep roots in a *Spanish* cultural tradition, which may or may not have influenced or been influenced by the *Gypsy* notion of the *duende*—a notion that Torre himself felt was Egyptian, & therefore 'ancient' in its history.

If we are to consider & analyze these notions through a particular *poietic* (& not strictly 'psychological') reading of the Jungian theories of archetypes, however, it becomes possible to read the seemingly distinct notion(s) of the Spanish *duende* & Artaudian *shadow-double* with(in) a collective psyche & evolutionary history of the *poietic-unconscious*—specifically the archetype of the shadow. I believe that Artaud's work (particularly the shadow-double) & Lorca's discussion & utilization of *duende* can be more fully understood & appreciated through a discussion of Jung's Shadow. It is critical, then, to identify precisely *what* (or rather, *how*) the Jungian Shadow is being/becoming-conceptualized in this work as a-possible conceptual comparator & interrogative lens of the poietico-philosophical undertaking. The Shadow will not be explored with relation to the overtly psychological terrain upon & from which it was produced, but rather with poietico-philosophical considerations. It is my contention that this Shadow-figure functions within the aforementioned projects in (at least) two distinct manners. The first is in line with Jung's articulation of the Shadow as it figures into a notion of collective speciel 'unconscious,' & the import of such concepts upon the 'character(s)' of-&-at work—both literal characters (forms) within the 'narrative,' as well as the more general poietic spectral-ambience haunting each 'text' (theater, performativity/singing, poetry, fiction, etc.). The second is predicated upon the 'ritualistic' *haunting* of the Shadow-character(s) by both Artaud's shadow-double & Lorca's *duende*, & the consequent (re)conceptualization(s) of each archetypal-'form.' With this in mind, we proceed to a discussion of these *poietical*-reactions.

Writing in the late 1910s, Jung's theories certainly would have been accessible to a young Artaud, as well as, presumably, to Lorca. If, however, we are to truly place any

significance in Jungian archetypes (poietically or otherwise), Lorca & Artaud's *literal*

familiarity with the texts is not particularly important. According to Jung himself, the

collective unconscious consists of numerous archetypes—the four *primary* being the

Persona, the Anima/Animus, the Shadow & the Self. For the auspices of this paper, the

poietic reading will be limited to the concept of *the Shadow* & its relevance to a set of

particular (& conceptually related) speciel differentiations.

Jung proposed that the collective unconscious of human experience has, through

"endless repetition […] engraved these experiences into our psychic constitution" (as

quoted by Hall & Nordby, *Primer Jungian*, 42). Since "archetypes are universal [and]

everyone inherits the same basic archetypal images," the shadow & *duende* of both

Artaudian & Lorcan poetics exist, in essence, as manifestations of this primary archetype.

Indeed, a close reading of either Artaud or Lorca's poetics reveals a distinct similarity

with the Jungian Shadow. The Lorcan *duende* is "a power, not a work […] is a struggle,

not a thought […] it is not a question of ability, but of true, living style, of blood, of the

most ancient culture [and] of spontaneous creation" (Lorca, *Duende*, 49). Its arrival &

incorporation "always means a radical change in forms […] brings old planes unknown

feelings of freshness, with the quality of something newly created, like a miracle, and it

produces an almost religious enthusiasm" (Lorca, *Duende*, 53). Artaud's shadow, like

Lorca's *duende*, comments on the very nature of both art & life. In Artaud's poetics, 'art'

& all 'things'—all differentiations—inevitably 'evolve' *in-&-through-time* into

sedimentations, thus becoming the 'effigies' he so violently denounces. To remove the

shadow from the effigy of art would reduce 'art' to a series of empty words—image,

signifier, form, etc.—which holds no breadth, no depth & no *ontological-essence of*

Becoming. This effigy would exist without double—exist as technical merit, as structure alone, as form without shadow—& would inherently destroy not only itself, but its 'power' as dynamic, transformative *weapon(s) of possibilities*.

This language essentially echoes the importance of the Shadow archetype, which "contains more of a man's basic animal nature than any other archetype does." Indeed, due to its "extremely deep roots in evolutionary history, it is probably the most powerful and potentially the most dangerous of all that is best and worst in man" (Hall & Nordby, *Primer Jungian*, 48). It is difficult to clearly delineate the power from the danger. If a person wishes to "become an integral member of the community, it is necessary to tame his animal spirits contained in the shadow." This is "accomplished by suppressing manifestations of the shadow" (Jung, *Man Symbols*, 49), yet while his:

> nature may become civilized […] he does so at the expense of decreasing the motive power for spontaneity, creativity, strong emotions, and deep insights. He cuts himself off from the wisdom of his instinctual nature, a wisdom that may be more profound than any learning or culture can provide. A shadowless life tends to become shallow and spiritless. (Jung, *Man Symbols*, 49)

What Jung identifies, therefore, is the necessity for our species to poietically navigate this narrow space between: (1) the useful acknowledgement of the power of the shadow archetype, & (2) the incorporation of *elements* of the Shadow archetype into life. More specifically, the shadow must be mastered & assimilated, while never suppressed or neglected. As M.-L. von Franz explains:

> whether the shadow becomes our friend or enemy depends largely upon ourselves […] the shadow becomes hostile only when he is ignored or misunderstood […] it would be relatively easy if one could integrate the shadow into the conscious personality just by attempting to be honest and to use one's insight. But, unfortunately, such an attempt does not always work. There is such a passionate drive within the shadowy part of oneself that reason may not prevail against it. (Jung, *Man Symbols*, 172)

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This fear of the power of the Shadow has led to its being relatively historically neglected. While a historical trajectory of this archetype leads us to Freud & his notions of the id, such a discussion is not particularly relevant for this work. Rather, I wish to focus upon Jung, Lorca & Artaud, who manifested these notions into distinct theories, both of the collective poietico-psyche(s) & of the creative processes in life & art—of the ontopoiesis & perhaps even ontocorporeality of our speciel ontologies.

For Freud, it was crucial to acknowledge the existence of the id in order to successfully control the dangerous potential it created for the individual. Jung, on the other hand, felt it imperative to first forget about the individual, identify the notion of the collective unconscious & the consequent archetypes that have been created. In the case of the Shadow archetype, the goal was to identify the danger of its power-potentiality, then assimilate it into one's life. Lorca, perhaps drawing from the Spanish/Gypsy manifestation of the Shadow, demanded that the *duende* be released in art, & allowed to ravage & destroy *form*. Contrary to Jung, Lorca felt that the *duende*/shadow archetype was most effective when fully free, as opposed to regulated.

Although Freud, Jung & Lorca all identified & incorporated some notion of a Shadow archetype in their work—whether the id, Shadow or *duende* is ultimately inconsequential—Artaud & his shadow-double insisted on nothing less than the complete destruction of all effigies. While Freud identified the id, & Jung wished to assimilate elements of the Shadow archetype in life, the insistence by Lorca & Artaud on an unfiltered *duende* or shadow, & the consequent destruction-in-&-of-form that would result, makes the connection between Lorca's *duende* & Artaud's theories the preeminent lens through which to conceptualize & study the Artaudian shadow-double. Indeed, the

ontopoietic death of all effigies, in both art *&* life, releases the shadows of the world, &

allows us to return to primordial realms of thought, creation, differentiation & existence

itself. The destruction of form due to the embrace of the *duende*, & the release of all

shadows vis-à-vis the burning of all effigies, in-turn opens zones of differentiation

with(in), through & against-which ontopoietic possibilities may manifest.

Artaud's word choice of 'effigy' is fascinating; it inherently reinforces the

ritualistic element of his art. Every effigy must be sacrificed, consumed & reduced to ash

in order to release the shadow-double that exists within all art & indeed all

differentiations, & serves as the essence & ultimate 'power' of all things. Theater,

Artaud argued, was the artistic medium through which ritual would be reclaimed &

reincorporated into society. Through this ritualistic theater, the 'marrow' of art, & life,

would be released in ontopoietic shadow(s) that dwell in these newly constituted zones of

differentiation—haunted, haunting-specters that terrify & terrorize any sedimentary-form

encountered.

In The Birth of Tragedy, Nietzsche theorizes that theater began as an extension of

ritual, providing the spectators with an invaluable catharsis. He uses Dionysus to

represent ritual in theater, particularly early Greek tragedy, in his theoretical examination

of the evolution of drama. "Not only does the bond between man and man come to be

forged once more by the magic of Dionysiac rite," Nietzsche argues, "but nature itself,

long alienated or subjugated, rises again to celebrate the reconciliation with her prodigal

son, man" (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 23). It is precisely this point which Artaud

emphasizes when he proclaims, "if our life lacks brimstone, i.e., a constant magic, it is

because we choose to observe our acts and lose ourselves in considerations of their

imagined form instead of being impelled by their force" (Artaud, *Double*, 8). Artaud

implores us to ontologically break free of the shackles imposed by the representation(s)

of action(s) & the totalizing, oppressive hold of *sediment(s)*. Not only does he demand

our acceptance, but in fact requires our ushering the *(de)struction* of form(s) through an

embrace of the ontopoietic & ontocorporeal ancestry of 'Theater' & primordial Ritual.

This is a terrifying, *phoenictic* flame that extends to & immolates even the very

archetypes & ancient rites that constitute the Spectacle itself—a fire that

(re)conceptualizes & (re)presents the poietic & corporeal elements of 'primordial'

sacrificial rites, as a means of annihilating the Spectatorial-Witness & its always-already

immediate effigial sedimentation.

Thus, when Nietzsche warns us that "every culture that has lost myth has lost, by

the same token, its natural healthy creativity. Only a horizon ringed about with myths

can unify a culture" (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 136), Artaud responds by identifying

theater as the antidote, exclaiming:

> like all magic cultures expressed by appropriate hieroglyphs, the true theater has
> its shadows too, and, of all languages and all arts, the theater is the only one left
> whose shadows have shattered their limitations. From the beginning, one might
> say its shadows did not tolerate limitations […] for the theater as for culture, it
> remains a question of naming and directing shadows: and the theater, not confined
> to a fixed language and form, not only destroys false shadows but prepares the
> way for a new generation of shadows, around which assembles the true spectacle
> of life. (Artaud, *Double*, 12)

For these false shadows to be destroyed it could not be just any theater—only Artaud's

Theater of Cruelty. In order to "prepare the way" for this "new generation of shadows" it

needed to be more than theater; it needed to be (re)claimed, (re)invented & ritualized

myth which would (re)introduce the spectator into the spectacle of drama & the temporary, dynamic assemblage(s) risen from precisely such rites.

The abolition of the rigid stage/spectator division prevalent in early 20th century European drama, therefore, was absolutely necessary. Nietzsche acknowledges that "audience and chorus were never fundamentally set over against each other: all was one grand chorus of dancing, singing satyrs, and of those who let themselves be represented by them" (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 54). Furthermore, whereas:

> we had supposed all along that the spectator, whoever he might be, would always have to remain conscious of the fact that he had before him a work of art, not empiric reality […] the tragic chorus of the Greeks is constrained to view the characters enacted on the stage as veritably existing. (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 48)

This distinction is crucial; the limiting, damaging & rigid division between stage & audience—between 'active participant' & 'spectator-witness'—facilitated, perhaps created, the gradual elimination of true ritual from theater. It is not the existence of spectator *as chorus* that desecrates the union of dramatic rites, rather the separation of the spectator from the theater proper. As Nietzsche observes, "we now realize that the stage with its action was originally conceived as pure vision and that the only reality was the chorus, who created that vision out of itself and proclaimed it through the medium of dance, music, and spoken word" (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 57).

It is precisely this gash & resulting lacunae that Artaud strives to ameliorate in order to achieve radical, dynamic catharsis. In the book <u>Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty</u>, Albert Bermel notes that:

> Artaud's notion of catharsis exceeds Aristotle's in that he wished to take theatre back to an earlier phase, a time when the members of the audience really were

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involved in the ceremony and had even more at stake than did the passionate but essentially passive playgoers of Aristotle's time. (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 34)

The catharsis desired by Artaud exceeds the notions that Nietzsche discusses; it is not merely a product of observation, but one's actual, physiological & corporeal interaction & integration with the theater. The importance & power of ritual exists not with the observation of ritual, but rather *with(in), through & against* the *participation* of these rites. The play, therefore, transforms from an observed, passive form of entertainment, into an actualized & dynamic ritual within-which the audience (pre-dating the Aristotelian spectators who served as chorus) were actual performers & elemental constituents of the assemblage of ceremony.

It is crucial to differentiate these two notions of ritualistic reclamation. In the Nietzschean sense, Western theater—in fact Western art as a whole—suffered in its gradual exodus from myth & ritual, citing the "connection between the disappearance of the Dionysiac spirit and the spectacular, yet hitherto unexplained, degeneration of the Greek species" (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 119). Indeed, "only the Greeks can teach us what such a sudden, miraculous birth of tragedy means to the heart and soul of a nation" (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 125). Nonetheless, Artaud's expectations of the theater surpass even Nietzsche's optimistic assertions. Whereas Nietzsche hypothesized that Dionysian art would exalt the spirit of a people, Artaud's Theater of Cruelty would destroy "our petrified idea of the theater" which "is connected with our petrified idea of a culture without shadows, where, no matter which way it turns, our *espirit* encounters only emptiness, though space is full" (Artaud, *Double*, 12). Artaud's theater would not exalt a national identity (indeed, it could conceivably if not inevitably *destroy* the very effigies of both 'nationalism' *&* 'identity'), but rather the very individuals that attended—or more

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aptly, ceremonially *participated-in*—the drama before them. Since the theater alone

could accomplish these goals, it had a crucial "obligation: its every performance must, by

virtue of its cleansing and purifying, transfigure those audiences;" the audience "must be,

and feel, remade" (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 11).

This Artaudian goal, though certainly grandiose, is not beyond possibility. As

Tom F. Driver states in his book <u>Liberating Rites: Understanding the Transformative</u>

<u>Power of Ritual</u>, "groping in the face of danger has much to do with rituals […] it is

precisely when we do not know in our conscious minds what we ought to do that the

ritualizing impulse, laid down for us in structures older than consciousness, is brought

into play" (Driver, *Liberating Rites*, 50). It is precisely when a culture loses its ritual,

when the rites of a people have been subjugated, transformed & reduced to mere

symbols, staid forms & effigies that we, "confronted with challenges that baffle and

frighten us" that:

> we have to rehearse in the dark, so to speak, without a script. We have then to
> improvise on the basis of gut feelings, following primal motivations. Whereas
> received rituals guide practitioners along known paths, *ritualizings[1] [sic]* create
> pathways in response to new moral obligations. (Driver, *Liberating Rites*, 50)

The value of ritual extends beyond providing a framework through which an individual

can respond to new, unexpected challenges. While visiting Papua New Guinea, Driver

observed the Enga society, stating that although it was, like most others, "very sexist,"

with roles for men and women "rigidly prescribed […] its sexism, like its warfare, was

more moderate than our own, being channeled by ritual." Furthermore, "this […]

moderation was maintained not only by being abstractly stated but even more by

ritualization *[sic]* " (Driver, *Liberating Rites*, 36). This moderation extended to their

fighting, for ritual "indicated to members of the culture the appropriate forms for their

fighting and their revenge to take" (Driver, *Liberating Rites*, 36). Driver is sure to

acknowledge, however, that warfare in our "modern societies" are certainly not devoid of

ritual; the distinction lies in the manner in which combat itself is conducted. Driver states

that:

> where warfare is ritualized, the combatants do everything possible to make
> themselves visible to one another. They display themselves vauntingly. They
> conduct the battle as much by self-advertisement as by their techniques of killing
> […] the whole event is personalized, just as we find it in the epic traditions of
> Greece, India, and many other lands, where the idea is not simply to win but to
> win with honor. We deal here with a cardinal principle of ritual: To ritualize is to
> make oneself present. It is to find a way of strongly presenting oneself, and by
> doing so to invoke the presence of that god, or person, or force whom it is
> necessary to confront. It is this, and not regimentation, which makes ritual often
> so scary. Warfare in the twentieth century turns its back on all this […] here we
> are far from ritual. We are in an ethos in which the ends are thought to justify the
> means, whereas in ritual the means and the ends are inseparable. (Driver,
> *Liberating Rites*, 37)

Whereas Driver views ritual as a *moderating* force due to the prescribed rules of

behavior, Artaud implements it as a "tribal communion, a cleansing ritual that magically

induces peace of mind" (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 23). Despite this discrepancy,

Artaud's feelings echo those of Driver, when he challenges the reader, stating:

> I defy any spectator to whom such violent scenes will have transferred their
> blood, who will have felt in himself the transit of a superior action, who will have
> seen the extraordinary and essential movements of his thought illuminated in
> extraordinary deeds—the violence and blood having been placed at the service of
> the violence of the thought—I defy that spectator to give himself up, once outside
> the theater, to ideas of war, riot, and blatant murder. (Artaud, *Double*, 82)

In the work(s) of Artaud, violence is not simply an aestheticization of terror nor merely

carno-corporeal performativity, but rather (& profoundly) the *aestheticization of carno-*

corporeality & the *performativity of terror*. The violence is (re)conceptualized &

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(re)presented as a progression of hyper-logical acts of destruction (or *unstruction*)

towards form(s), directed towards the dynamic immolation of Language & consequent

release of Thought's spectral ancestry & progeny. This in-turn transforms the stage into

zones of differentiation wherein the Body is summoned, then incised & inscribed as

charnel-flesh dwelling in a becoming-haunted space of shadows, doubles & *duende*.

In order to succeed as ontological 'catharsis,' therefore, the elemental

participation of the spectator in the Theater of Cruelty is predicated upon ontopoietic &

ontocorporeal sacrificial rites—*spectatorial sacrifices*; or, *sacrificial-witnessing*. For

Artaud, this requires the theater's becoming-plague, explaining:

> [l]ike the plague, the theater is a formidable call to the forces that impel the mind
> by example to the source of its conflicts […] if the essential theater is like the
> plague, it is not because it is contagious, but because like the plague it is the
> revelation, the bringing forth, the exteriorization of a depth of latent cruelty by
> means of which all the perverse possibilities of the mind, whether of an individual
> or a people, are localized. Like the plague the theater is the time of evil, the
> triumph of dark powers that are nourished by a power even more profound until
> extinction. In the theater as in the plague there is a kind of strange sun, a light of
> abnormal intensity by which it seems that the difficult and even the impossible
> suddenly become our normal element […] we can now say that all true freedom is
> dark […] and that is why all the great Myths are dark, so that one cannot
> imagine, save in an atmosphere of carnage, torture, and bloodshed, all the
> magnificent Fables which recount to the multitudes the first sexual division and
> the first carnage of essences that appeared in creation. The theater, like the
> plague, is in the image of this carnage and this essential separation. It releases
> conflicts, disengages powers, liberates possibilities, and if these possibilities and
> these powers are dark, it is the fault not of the plague nor of the theater, but of
> life. (Artaud, *Double*, 30-31)

Artaud wished to infuse society with this experience of ontopoietic carnage, thus making

them, through the possibilities of the theater, become-witness to *the plague*.

In his essay "The Theater of Cruelty (Second Manifesto)," he presents the reader

with what he wished to become the first plague & "spectacle of the Theater of Cruelty" to

be set-upon the witnesses, which he titles "The Conquest of Mexico" (Artaud, *Double*, 126).   The essay presents two things. The first is a description of what the play would attempt to accomplish—the ontological datum informing his project. The other, a brief but powerful & complex 4-5 page outline of the play itself—a distinct poietic manifestation of his ontological concepts, functioning as future-ancestral kernels of the Theater of Cruelty's ontopoietic possibilities. Indeed, *The Conquest of Mexico* perfectly exemplifies & embodies Artaud's attempt to recount the Fables of "carnage, torture, and bloodshed" through the medium of theater.

Act One is sub-titled "Warning Signs." This opening provides the spectator with a contextual placement within an ancient civilization on the brink of disaster, disappearance & the *unstruction* of their particular speciel ontology(s). Artaud envision the work opening with a grand:

> tableau of Mexico in anticipation, with its cities, its countrysides, its caves of troglodytes, its Mayan ruins […] everything trembles and groans, like a shop-window in a hurricane. A landscape which senses the coming storm; objects, music, stuffs, lost dresses, shadows of wild horses pass through the air like distant meteors, like lightning on the horizon brimming with mirages as the wind pitches wildly along the ground in a lightning prophecying *[sic]* torrential, violent storms […] For Cortez, a *mise en scene* of sea and tiny battered ships, and Cortez and his men larger than the ships and firm as rocks. (Artaud, *Double*, 128-9)

The opening is significant for it illustrates Artaud's attempt to release the conflicts, powers & possibilities of life. It presents the spectator with a magnificent land, while foreshadowing its ultimate destruction by the invading forces of Cortez. Indeed, the physical representation of the Spaniards as "larger than the ships" creates a daunting & jarring aesthetic for the audience. In Artaud's world, these men are larger than life, for their carnage & the coming bloodshed will shatter all spectatorial expectations.

Artaud continues with Act Two, sub-titled "Confessions." In it, the explorer

Cortez views Mexico in complete silence until, "suddenly, on a single sharp and piercing

note, heads crown the walls" & "Montezuma advances all alone toward Cortez" (Artaud,

Double, 129). This second act particularly stands out because it is by far the shortest of

the four that Artaud provides. In addition, whereas the other three scenes combine

striking physical actions & movements coupled with discordant sound, Act Two

essentially only utilizes the auditory as a sensory assault: an auditory silence that

becomes juxtaposed with one single, sharp note & then, in an instant, accompanied by a

"muffled rumbling." The significance of Act Two, I believe, lies primarily in its textual

placement. Act One contains "trembles" & "groans," but then mass physical movements,

ending with the imposing Spaniards. Act Two, on the other hand, essentially subverts the

textual progression of Act One, & establishes a base through which Acts Three & Four

become even more violating & predatory on the senses & expectations of the audience.

It is apropos, then, that Act Three is sub-titled "Convulsions." Following the

relative tranquility established in Act Two, the third segment of the play does indeed

exist, physically & textually, as 'convulsions'—a series of abnormally violent &

involuntary disturbances. These 'convulsions' become fully realized by the extent to

which the carnage, torture & bloodshed are violently presented; not violent only in a

performative & representative manner, but more importantly violent through the *lens* in

which Artaud's Fable is told. The method & medium through which this "dark Myth" is

given must be a revolt against previous form & previous theater, & as a result Act Three

contains "at every level of the country, revolt [and] at every level of Montezuma's

consciousness, revolt" (Artaud, *Double*, 129). Furthermore, in the Act:

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> Montezuma cuts the living space, rips it open like the sex of a woman in order to cause the invisible to spring forth. The stage wall is stuffed unevenly with heads, throats; cracked, oddly broken melodies, and responses to these melodies, appear like stumps […] The Zodiac, which formerly roared with all its beasts in the head of Montezuma, turns into a group of human passions made incarnate by the learned heads of the official spokesmen […] as the rebellion breaks out, the stage space is gorged with a brawling mosaic where sometimes men, sometimes compact troops tightly pressed together, limb to limb, clash frenetically. Space is stuffed with whirling gestures, horrible faces, dying eyes, clenched fists, manes, breastplates, and from all levels of the scene fall limbs, breastplates, heads, stomachs like a hailstorm bombarding the earth with supernatural explosions. (Artaud, *Double*, 130)

The physical division of *space* & *form* that is violent on every level & which includes the actual language of the text-body—its very linguistic-corporeality—echoes the necessity & urgency that Artaud places on the recounting of the "great dark Myths" through theater, as well as his methods through which this must be accomplished.

Act Four, sub-titled "Abdication," is the last of the piece. The emphasis Artaud places on an "abdication"—following the "convulsions" of Act Three—is extremely significant because the play ends, both physically & textually, relinquishing both *control* & *form*. In Act Four, the previous convulsions of terror transfigure themselves into a complete degeneration & *abdication* of societal law, physics & even human-form itself. Artaud's play ends with an assault on the audience on a number of levels. First, "lights and sounds produce an impression of dissolving, unraveling, spreading, and squashing— like watery fruits splashing on the ground" (Artaud, *Double*, 131). By fusing the auditory & the visual, Artaud establishes a new base through which the violent carnage, torture & bloodshed of the Myth will proceed. Directly following this sensory fusion, "strange couples appear, Spaniard with Indian, horribly enlarged, swollen and black, swaying back

and forth like carts about to overturn" (Artaud, *Double*, 130). By creating what appears to be the physical degeneration of the offspring of rape, Artaud both *ontopoietically* & *ontocorporeally* presents the destruction & abdication of 'established' form, or the *unstruction* of form(s).

The progression of Act Four simultaneously echoes the thematic elements of *The Conquest of Mexico* as text, & Artaud's theories of theater-as-plague. The work ends as follows:

> Treasons go unpunished, shapes swarm about, never exceeding a certain height in the air. This unrest and the threat of a revolt on the part of the conquered will be expressed in ten thousand ways. And in this collapse and disintegration of the brutal force which has worn itself out (having nothing more to devour) will be delineated the first inkling of a passionate romance. Weapons abandoned, emotions of lust now make their appearance. Not the dramatic passions of so many battles, but calculated feelings, a plot cleverly hatched, in which, for the first time in the spectacle, a woman's head will be manifested […] a religious exhalation bends men's heads, fearful sounds seem to bray out, clear as the capricious flourishes of the sea upon a vast expanse of sand, of a cliff slashed by rocks. These are the funeral rites of Montezuma […] And like a tidal wave, like the sharp burst of a storm, like the whipping of rain on the sea, the revolt which carries off the whole crowd in groups, with the body of the dead Montezuma tossed on their heads like a ship. And the sharp spasms of the battle, the foam of heads on the cornered Spaniards who are squashed like blood against the ramparts that are turning green again. (Artaud, *Double*, 131-2)

The conclusion of Act Four of *The Conquest of Mexico* illustrates Artaud's attempt to fuse an auditory & visual assault on the audience, resulting in an encompassing flame of ontopoietic energy that ceaselessly immolates all ontocorporeal sentimentalities of form & stasis, as well as their ancestors & progeny. Such a project would fully utilize the powers of the theater-as-plague—a spectacle that, as Artaud identified in "The Theater and the Plague," "releases conflicts, disengages powers, [and] liberates possibilities" (Artaud, *Double*, 31).

This correlation between plague & theater marks a decidedly anti-Aristotelian notion; "rather than concurring that theatre is a healthy diversion to be described by such adjectives as 'pleasant, entertaining, enjoyable,' he insists—and is the first writer to do so—that it is, like the plague, a social necessity" (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 11). In order to achieve the results of the plague, the theater would first have to capture all the essential elements of mankind's early ritualistic ceremonies. Furthermore, in order to combat the degeneration of Western European culture, Artaud felt that the experience would have to communicate with the spectator on a metaphysical plane. The language of the theater would not be the 'petrified' empty vessel of words in their strict Saussurian (semiotic) sense, but rather a *metalanguage* communicating with the individual on various ontocorporeal levels vis-à-vis an overwhelming attack on all sensory levels. As a result, the experience of the theater in its totality would restore life to the individual through a cathartic exorcism of their 'false' doubles, the casting of their effigies into the flames, the reclamation of their true *espirit* & the release of the shadow, double & *duende*.

Nietzsche states that the "genesis of tragedy cannot be explained by saying that things happen, after all, just as tragically in real life. Art is not an imitation of nature but its metaphysical supplement, raised up beside it in order to overcome it" (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 142). Indeed, Artaud affirms this notion, stating his belief "that there are living forces in what is called poetry and that the image of a crime presented in the requisite theatrical conditions is something infinitely more terrible for the spirit than that same crime when actually committed" (Artaud, *Double*, 85). The theater would necessarily inflict a punishment on the spectator, "however it would be a beneficial punishment […] at the end the spectator would feel relieved, as if awakening from a

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nightmare, the evil and terror cleansed away" (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 14). Artaud attempts to specifically identify what he means by his utilization of the word 'cruelty,' reflexively denouncing the immediate association of 'blood' with 'cruelty,' proclaiming that the:

> 'theater of cruelty' means a theater difficult and cruel for myself first of all. And, on the level of performance, it is not the cruelty we can exercise upon each other by hacking at each other's bodies, carving up our personal anatomies, or, like Assyrian emperors, sending parcels of human ears, noses, or neatly detached nostrils through the mail, but the much more terrible and necessary cruelty which things can exercise against us. We are not free. And the sky can still fall on our heads. And the theater has been created to teach us that first of all. Either we will be capable of returning by present-day means to this superior idea of poetry and poetry-through-theater which underlies the Myths told by the great ancient tragedians […] or else we might as well abandon ourselves now, without protest, and recognize that we are no longer good for anything but disorder, famine, blood, war, and epidemics. (Artaud, *Double*, 80)

Despite this explanation, the use of the word 'cruelty' does *not* become clear. It is crucial, therefore, to examine Artaud's use & application of the word, & the various ways in which it is differentiated & becomes-manifest in his ontopoietic expressions. As he acknowledges, "everything that acts is a cruelty" (Artaud, *Double*, 85); it is around this concept of cruelty—"something that *acts*"—that the Theater of Cruelty revolves. Indeed, the ambiguity, difficulty & fluidity of the notion of 'cruelty' within Artaud's oeuvre are essential to the theories themselves, as well as to their actualization & success; the ability to 'clearly' identify (& by proxy 'control' or 'manage' on some level) the possible-manifestations of Artaud's 'cruelty' within his project, is ultimately very damaging & limiting.

Within this context, therefore, it is the rigidity of *language & form* that is so cruel, not simply physical, social &/or political actions. This is why Artaud so emphatically demands that the theater embrace the aforementioned "superior idea of poetry and poetry-through-theater." Such a theater would combat the inherently limiting & reductive nature of language systems by opening up, so to speak, the virtually infinite possibilities of new word-image associations, phonetic progressions & levels of communication(s).

This 'poetry-through-theater,' however, does not solely open up new & powerful possibilities for the spectator; it can also act as a form of cruelty *upon them*. The extreme difficulty in decoding Artaud's work, as well as the ambiguity surrounding his concepts of 'cruelty' & 'the double,' can create an atmosphere that is invasive, unsettling & ultimately 'cruel' to a spectator & witness attempting to gain a firm understanding of the material. This is a fascinating element of Artaud's work. The cruelty he feels acted *upon* & inscribed *into* him—& the consequent suffering he undergoes because of it—extends outside of the formal text, & radically manifests into the very ontological space(s) that provide context for the world & reality he dwells with(in). This movement is crucial for the success of Artaud's theater. In *his* theater, he is not alone in his suffering; we *all* must suffer—in individual *ways*, perhaps, but nonetheless *united* in suffering—with the ultimate goal of a catharsis through performative ritual. The audience is forced to suffer with him if the Theater of Cruelty is to succeed as an ontopoietic immolation of forms— all must be witness to the spectacle of the effigy, & the overwhelming violence-of-form(s) that incise, inscribe & limit his ontocorporeal possibilities.

This transference of suffering would occur through spectacle. In "The Theater of Cruelty (First Manifesto)" Artaud declares that:

every spectacle will contain a physical and objective element, perceptible to all. Cries, groans, apparitions, surprises, theatricalities of all kinds, magic beauty of costumes taken from certain models; resplendent lighting, incantational beauty of voices, the charms of harmony, rare notes of music, colors of objects, physical rhythm of movements whose crescendo and decrescendo will accord exactly with the pulsation of movements familiar to everyone, concrete appearances of new and surprising objects, masks, effigies yards high, sudden changes of light, the physical action of light which arouses sensations of heat and cold, etc. (Artaud, *Double*, 93)

The creation of spectacle would enthrall the audience in a sense of wonderment, of awe, of fear. The theater would assault all the senses—all perceptions—with the goal of creating an atmosphere akin to a ritualistic ceremony. Through this metaphysical communication with the spectator, Artaud would succeed in contextualizing the play in a world of ritual. The actor would not 'play the part,' but rather *perform* it; the spectacle often revolved around the mythical. As Bermel notes:

> myths commonly deal with conduct that is forbidden by such social constraints as norms, conventions and the law. Naming the forbidden, in prose or poetry, is a way of attempting to exorcise it, of admitting its temptations in order to release and dispel them. Enacting the forbidden in drama or social rites invokes the same desire to admit and dispel, except that is it more cleansing because actors, and to some extent spectators, simulate it, reproduce it, and in both senses of the term, play it out. (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 26)

How then, one could argue, does a Senecan play, an exorbitantly bloody rendition of *Titus Andronicus* or *King Lear*, or the Renaissance Tragedy of Blood—all of which portray & enact these taboo and 'forbidden' myths—differ from Artaud's Theater of Cruelty? In fact, they differ on various levels.

Seneca created extremely taboo & violent material. Artaud wrote to his friend Jean Paulhan that Senecan "tragedies provided the finest 'written example of what is meant by cruelty in the theatre' " (as quoted by Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 35). They were,

however, precisely what Artaud noted: *written*. Their performance did not incorporate

the profundity of Artaudian spectacle, nor the metaphysical onslaught of the senses; they

were created as internal works, or 'closet dramas,' which were not necessarily meant to

be staged for the society to which he belonged. Furthermore, despite the incorporation of

"earthquakes, storms, floods, [and] tidal waves" (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 35), their

implementation in the plays signaled the complete implication of all nature in the evil

acts of an individual. This is a significant distinction from the Theater of Cruelty, whose

goal was to create, above all, an atmosphere of ritualistic fervor on par with what

Nietzsche describes as "Dionysiac revelry."

A profoundly bloody & violent *King Lear*, as well as the Renaissance Tragedy of

Blood—while similar in a number of ways—ultimately both differ from Artaudian

theater in one fundamental manner. Whereas Edmund & Iago attempt to provide the

reader with an explanation for their actions, Artaud's characters offer none. Even a

declaration akin to "I do these things because I am evil" goes significantly beyond what

is offered in the Theater of Cruelty. Artaud's characters, essentially, are what they are &

offer no insight into their actions. To provide an explanation of the characters

domesticates them on some level; such an infusion would ultimately weaken the Theater

of Cruelty.

Artaud felt, therefore, that amongst his contemporaries, he alone sought to

recapture the power of ritual & myth, & (re)introduce them into European drama in a

(re)conceptualized, (re)presented fashion. The specificity of the Theater of Cruelty can

be clearly traced through an examination of Artaud's surviving plays. In *Paul the Birds,*

or The Place of Love we see an early example of the cruelty & violence which Artaud

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seeks, when the character Uccello is seen "ripping out […] his tongue, rendering himself speechless, and symbolically impotent, reducing his ideas to pure thoughts that cannot be uttered" (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 52). Not only is the violence illustrated in this scene, but also the desire to reclaim one's Thoughts (& thus Mind), & the ultimate incapability of such a goal.

In *The Spurt of Blood* & *The Cenci*, Artaud utilizes dialogue & language *not* in the common, Western, 20th Century manner—as a means to individualize the characters & progress plot—but as a phonetic tool & weapon. Artaud refuted the notion of a conventional dialogue & its "conversational and argumentative tone." Instead, he wished to implement dialogue that was "explosive in sound, equivocal in meaning, and unnatural in its delivery—that is, as theatrical as the physical activities—and he often specifies these requirements" (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 54). An example of this Artaudian notion of dialogue is the opening of *The Spurt of Blood*:

> THE YOUNG MAN.   I love you and life is wonderful.
> THE GIRL, *with a tremor of intensity in her voice*.   You love me and life is wonderful.
> THE YOUNG MAN, *in a lower tone*.   I love you and life is wonderful.
> THE GIRL, *in an even lower tone than his*.   You love me and life is wonderful.
> THE YOUNG MAN, *suddenly turning away*.   I love you. *(A silence.)* Come here where I can see you.
> THE GIRL, *same business, moves so that she is facing him*.   There.
> THE YOUNG MAN, *in an excited, high-pitched voice*.   I love you, I am tall, I am clear, I am full, I am dense.
> THE GIRL, *in the same high-pitched voice*.   We love each other.
> THE YOUNG MAN.   We are intense. Oh, what a well-made world. (Artaud, *Double*, 72)

The first four & a half lines of the play are, in a sense, merely an echoing of the first; "The Young Man" affirms "I love you and life is wonderful," & "The Girl" essentially

repeats the line with the only variance in intensity, tone, & subject—"I love you"

becomes "You love me," etc. The spectator, therefore, is presented with a dialogue that

is highly unnatural, irregular & even potentially unnerving & jarring. The repetition of

the opening line, with only slight *structural* yet significant *phonetic* variation, not only

communicates with the audience on more primal levels—communication through tone &

intensity of sound occurring beyond & before strict language systems—but supports

Artaud's assessment that dialogue itself can, & indeed should, operate on multiple levels,

not merely character building & plot progression. Furthermore, the emphasis on the

auditory delivery of the dialogue, as opposed to solely the literal lines, brings the

spectacle of the stage closer to Artaud's conceptual desire of a 'poetry-through-theater.'

Another essential element of the Theater of Cruelty as stated by Artaud is the

desire to make the theater "the equal of life—not an individual life, that individual aspect

of life in which CHARACTERS triumph, but the sort of liberated life which sweeps

away human individuality and in which man is only a reflection" (Artaud, *Double*, 116).

The creation of 'characters' for the stage removes the element of myth & ritual, &

inhibits the "true purpose of the theater" which is:

> to create Myths, to express life in its immense, universal aspect, and from that life
> to extract images in which we find pleasure in discovering ourselves […] may it
> free *us*, in a Myth in which we have sacrificed our little human individuality, like
> Personages out of the Past, with powers rediscovered in the Past. (Artaud, *Double*,
> 116)

This very concept is explored in *The Spurt of Blood*, where the characters of the play are

not individual 'characters,' but rather (in a fundamental sense) (re)conceptualized

archetypes that represent fundamental aspects of our speciel ontology(s). The characters

are stripped, essentially undergoing an exorcism on stage; the play ends with an insight

into the frailties of the human condition, through its depiction of misogyny, religious

bigotry, sexual perversions & the inherent cruelty with(in) life.

In the unfinished play *There Is No More Firmament*, all of Artaud's notions

appear to coalesce into the most complete example of Theater of Cruelty. In this

particular play, perhaps more so than any other, spectacle is presented in grandiose

fashion. As a result, ritual is most clearly present, & the possibility of ontological

catharsis for the spectator most clearly plausible. The 'catastrophes' present in *There Is*

No More Firmament, are:

> treated at greater length […] in language and images that remind one of some
> passages in 'The Theatre and the Plague' […] instead of individualized characters
> we find crowds, groups and choruses. The few people alluded to separately in the
> text have generic titles, not names […] Movement III ousts the middle-class
> world of the street and replaces it with the underworld: beggars, convicts, whores,
> cutthroats and pimps. The revolutionary song, counterpointed by the strains of
> the 'Internationale,' brings on stage the underworld's most sick and deformed
> denizens, 'oozing on as if breathed up out of the lower depths,' with their yellow
> and green, magnified, corpse-like faces […] [in] Movement IV the stage itself
> fills up with scientists and scholars who have the faces of bureaucrats. Some of
> them try to climb up to the Inventor's platform to question him. He descends
> (becomes accessible) and mimes replies which the other scientists criticize aloud
> […] the voices take on animal qualities: they sound like whistles, caws, baying,
> even the 'puffing of hippopotami in a cave' […] he is about to send out a signal
> […] when the curtain falls, a noise of air wells up, together with 'violent
> percussions,' and the light turns cold. (Bermel, *Theatre Cruelty*, 60-61)

At this point, the play ends—unfinished. In many ways, this is the most fitting

conclusion.

As perhaps the most encompassing of the principles of Theater of Cruelty, it is

fascinating that the play ends pre-conclusion, or *unconclusion*—a fragment of a work,

itself a piece of Artaud's exquisite-corpse of creativity. Ultimately, Artaud's Theater of

Cruelty was a societal failure; like the Alfred Jarry Theater of 1927-1929, it was not

received favorably by the public. Artaud's last venture in theater was *The Cenci* in 1935

that, despite the utilization of all his theoretical & ontopoietic approaches to theater,

garnered little public appeal.

   Although Artaud's Theater of Cruelty had not been officially identified by

European consciousness until the publication of <u>The Theater and Its Double</u>, its first

breath came long before. Much as *Celestial Backgammon* (1923), *The Umbilicus of*

Limbo (1925), *Nerve Scales* (1925) & the unsuccessful Alfred Jarry Theater (1927-1929)

existed as fragmentary contributions to the eventual, specific 'Theater of Cruelty' as

prescribed in <u>The Theater and Its Double</u>, so too does the late-period of Artaud's work.

In fact, it was in this last period that the true manifestation of Artaud's magnum-opus—

the Theater of Cruelty—burned to dust beneath that 'strange sun of abnormal intensity,'

only to rise out of its own ash (re)born, brilliant & blazing. This *Phoenix of Cruelty*

became Artaud's shadow—more real, more true & complete than anything the theater

had provided him. It was this Phoenix of Cruelty whose blaze cast a brilliant shadow

alongside Antonin Artaud as he was to complete the last stage of his life. It was this

bright shadow—this reverberating double & *duende*—that allowed Artaud, when dared

by Nietzsche "to lead the life of a tragic man" so that "you will be redeemed" (Nietzsche,

Birth Tragedy, 124), to scream back:

> There is no need to seek anywhere except in these black ritual dances
> the origin of all the eczemas,
> all the shingles,
> all the tuberculoses,
> all the epidemics,
> all the plagues
> whose cauterization
> modern medicine,
> increasingly baffled,

proves quite unable to achieve.

My sensibility has been forced to descend,
for ten years,
the steps of the most monstrous sarcophagi,
of the yet unoperated world of the dead
and of the living who have chosen
(and at the point where we are, it's through vice),
who have chosen to live dead.

But I will quite simply have avoided being sick
and with me
a whole world which is everything that I know.

          o pedana
          na komev

          tau dedana
          tau komev

          na dedanu
          na komev
          tau komev
          na come

          copsi tra
          ka figa arounda

          ka lakeou
          to cobra

          cobra ja
          ja futsa mata

          OF THE serpent isn't any of
          IT NA

Because you have allowed the organisms to put out their tongues
the organism's tongues should have been
cut off

at the exit of the body's tunnels.

There is plague,
cholera,
black smallpox,
only because the dance
and consequently the theater
have not yet begun to exist.

What doctor of the rationed bodies of present misery has ever sought to
really examine a cholera?

By listening to the breathing or the pulse of a patient,
by lending an ear, facing the concentration camps of these rationed bodies of
      misery,
to the beating of feet, of trunks and sex organs
of the immense and repressed field
of certain terrible microbes
which are
other human bodies.

Where are they?
At ground level or in the depths
of certain tombs
in historically if not geographically
unsuspected places.

> **ko embach**
> **tu ur ja bella**
> **ur ja bella**
>
> **kou embach**

There, the living make appointments
with the dead
and certain paintings of *danses macabres*
have no other origin.

It is these upheavals
where the meeting of two extraordinary worlds is unceasingly depicted

that we owe the painting of the Middle Ages,
as moreover all paintings,
all history,
and I will even say
all geography.

The earth is depicted and described
under the action of a terrible dance
to which all its fruits have not yet been
epidemically bestowed.

<div align="right">(Artaud, Watchfiends, 317-20)</div>

The above poem voices the powerful shadow, double & *duende* that Artaud embraced. While it pre-dates his death & consequent (re)birth as the pariah-shaman, it nevertheless marks what may be the apex of the *written* Phoenix of Cruelty.

An analysis of the poem uncovers this terrifying shadow, & illustrates the manner in which it performs a necessary cruelty on both Artaud the poet & the reader of the text. As Artaud proposed early in his project, the creation of art *was & is* itself a violent act that unleashes the suppressed shadow, double & *duende* within the effigy of his own life. The poem certainly echoes the pain & suffering of Artaud the individual, but it also exercises a distinct cruelty on the reader in a number of ways, through multiple ontopoietic methods. The text does not create a clear, consistent set of symbols or metaphors, nor does it provide an established time & place. There are distinct transfers in location, epochs of human history, narrative voice & a myriad of biological & mythological references.

Perhaps most fundamentally 'cruel' to the reader, however, are the sudden diversions from clear prose poetry, into what has been labeled by various Artaud scholars as 'gibberish' &/or 'nonsense' language. Most analyses of this 'invented language' uncover little of the experimentation in etymological structure that some critics feel the

Russian Futurist Velimir Khlebnikov exercised. Indeed, in Marjorie Perloff's 21st

Century Modernism: The "New" Poetics, she declares that "*zaum* poetry in Khlebnikov's

[…] lexicon was based less on 'non-sense' onomatopoeia than on elaborate etymology"

(Perloff, *21st Century*, 125). With certain rare exceptions, Artaud's invented diction, &

his textual abandonment(s) of 'clear language,' are a combination of two significant

things: first, the manifestation of the 'beyonsense' or 'transrational' poetry that

Khlebnikov introduced; & second, an act of cruelty against the reader. This movement is

cruel to the reader primarily because of the destruction & *unstruction* of understanding

created by the 'gibberish.' In essence, the created language of Artaud operates, &

succeeds, on two fundamental levels—an evocation of the shamanic shadow-double that

had begun to ravage the effigy that was Antonin Artaud, & the ultimate act of cruelty

against any reader who dared engage the text with the intention of clearly deciphering—

& therefore controlling—the *magick² of language*.

It was with this shadow-double, that Artaud began his process of transformation

into a shaman. Clayton Eshleman claims that "while Artaud cannot be called a shaman,

there is a shamanic resemblance binding his life and work" (Artaud, *Watchfiends*, 37). If,

as Eshleman states, Artaud "cannot" be called a shaman, then he is, without question, an

ontological-shaman. He is in the vein of the Nietzschean metaphysical poet, however

(re)born with a bright, blazing double to recapture life. Artaud's experiences, as

Eshleman correctly observes, follow that of a shaman:

> In the ritual pathways of shamanism, transformation takes precedence. This does
> not mean, of course, that no order is to be found in shamanic rituals. It means
> instead that the order in them is of a kind that can become infused with Spirit […]
> a shamanic ritual is the opening of a window, the casting of a net, the hurling of a
> cry into the night. It involves risk-taking […] for the shaman, the 'call' is crucial
> […] [and] typically […] comes after an illness, which is accompanied by a period

of severe emotional distress, a breakdown. During this episode, it is said in many cultures that the soul of the shaman takes leave of the body. It journeys to the spirit world, where it is taught many mysteries, of which perhaps the most important is the revelation that these sufferings in body and soul are the sign of the shamanic vocation: The shaman is a wounded healer. (Driver, *Liberating Rites*, 72)

Indeed, Artaud was the wounded healer—forever battling his own physical illnesses, his own physiological & psychological drug addictions, & the mental torments which plagued, ravaged & desecrated his ontocorporeal *espirit*. His beloved Theater of Cruelty had developed into an effigy, & what was once the very shadow of all theater had become a stale, empty vessel. Not only had his beloved Theater of Cruelty petrified, but he—Antonin Artaud himself—had become a rotted corpse, a festering effigy. It was then that he persevered, like an ontological shaman journeying into the 'spirit world;' it was then that the flames consuming both him & his theater gave birth to its own progeny & ancestry—the Phoenix of Cruelty.

Whereas Artaud is often dismissed as mad when scholars note that he spoke in tongues on the streets, & struck his iron-tipped cane into the ground while spitting all around him (Eshleman), Artaud's actions signified what Driver refers to as the "theatricality of shamanic performance" (Driver, *Liberating Rites*, 73). When the Theater of Cruelty failed to destroy the division between stage & spectator, between participant & observer, Artaud brought ritual directly into society *without* medium (save his own body). His existence, therefore, became unfiltered Theater of Cruelty, & the rebirth he experienced following his release from the Rodez Asylum[3] marks the transfiguration of Artaud as physical being, into Artaud as ontopoietic & ontocorporeal canvas—a radical, dynamic union of physical entity & reborn Phoenix-double. Such as "the shaman

performs for effect because the shaman understands himself or herself to be an agent of transformative power" (Driver, *Liberating Rites*, 73), so did Artaud through his *personification-of*—rather, his *existence-as*—living plague, living shaman, living ritual. As wounded-healer, therefore, Artaud's ultimate service was as a metaphysical, ontological shaman; transforming his surroundings, destroying the boundary between stage & spectator, &—for anyone that dare live their life *as* Theater of Cruelty, *as* Phoenix of Cruelty—providing the bridge between the ontocorporeal & its own shadow(s), double(s) & *duende*. Observing the fear within a culture to reclaim the transformative power of ritual, Nietzsche laments, "it is easily understood why such a feeble culture hates a strong art: it is afraid of being destroyed by it" (Nietzsche, *Birth Tragedy*, 122-3). Antonin Artaud *consumed* it, taking all the effigies surrounding him (foremost among them his own), sacrificing them to Fire, & releasing the Phoenix of Cruelty—& with it, all the shadow(s), double(s) & *duende* required to destroy all effigies before it, & in so doing providing a powerful catharsis for all those wishing to embrace it.

CHAPTER TWO NOTES

[1] It should be noted that these specific notions of interiorized, static thought are indebted-to &
rhizomatically-branching-from Artaud's own discussion of conceptual thought, as well as Deleuze &
Guattari's specific conceptualizations on the matter, framed partially & notably through a discussion of
Artaud, in Nomadology: The War Machine.

[2] I use the term 'magick' in the sense utilized by Aleister Crowley, differentiating the occult & 'ritual
magic' from illusion/'stage magic.'

[3] Artaud returned from his time spent with the Tarahumaras Native Americans in November, 1937.
Following a temporarily successful detoxification treatment in April, and the termination of his brief
engagement to Cécile Schramme, Artaud returned to Paris. He began to speak in tongues, and wield a cane
which supposedly belonged to St. Patrick. He had a "metal tip welded to the cane's end, so that it would
emit sparks as it struck the sidewalk" (Artaud, *Watchfiends*, 17). According to Artaud, it had "200 million
fibers in it, and [was] encrusted with magic signs, representing moral forces" (Artaud, *Watchfiends*, 17).
His behavior led Anaïs Nin to note, "Antonin Artaud passes by. He is waving his magic […] cane and
shouting" (Artaud, *Watchfiends*, 18). He left Paris for Dublin, Ireland in August with the mission to "wake
the Irish up by making them recognize the Cane of St. Patrick" (Artaud, *Watchfiends*, 18). Out of money,
Artaud went to the Jesuit College seeking refuge, but was refused. As Eshleman notes, "a few days later he
was for vagrancy and put in Mountjoy Prison for a week. When the French Ambassador's representative
asked him his name, he declared that he was Antonéo Arlaud or Arlanopoulos, born in Smyrna in 1904.
Deported to France as an 'undesirable,' he attacked ship workmen who came into his cabin (he apparently
freaked out when he saw their monkey-wrenches), and was put into a strait jacket. When the boat docked
at Le Havre, he was taken to the General Hospital. It was September 30th […] " (Artaud, *Watchfiends*, 18-
19). Thus began Artaud's nearly nine-year period in mental asylums.

Cruel, the Phoenix-Song; or, The Dark-Sound of the Shaman's Breath Turns

The 'Phoenix of Cruelty' that defined & exemplified Artaud's last creation(s) &

expression(s) did & does not end with him. *All* work(s)—*all ontopoietic*

differentiation(s)—illuminate & speak towards the remarkable power of this creative-

entity; only recognition & knowledge-of such protestation(s) of form(s) differentiate

them. Before exploring the ontocorporeal implications & manifestations of the

aforementioned concepts, let us dwell for a moment with(in) the ontopoietic energy of the

work(s) in Lorca's oeuvre that are explicitly identified as 'poetry.' As the poietic project

of Lorca is predicated upon a distinctly 'linguistic' invocation & intermeshing of-&-with

duende, Language is the space of haunted-becoming(s) upon whose ground the warriors

of the bloody-confrontation(s) traverse. Of such primordial ontopoietic rites, the only

traces of the constitutive 'form(s)' engaged in the battle are spectral, & absent but for

incisions marking their dwelling with(in) moments-of-time, like inscriptions upon the

skin. In the case of Antonin Artaud, such marks signal radical transitions into hyper-

logical extensions of violence & cruelty, exercised foremost upon the stale effigies of

archetypes & rituals, & thus (re)conceptualizing & (re)presenting its own constitutive

elements into dynamic & new Rites & Archetypes—the shadows & doubles of rhizomes

& possibilities, of both ancestry & progeny. For Lorca, however, the *duende* functions

distinctly, haunting like dark-flames, before immolating the effigies that give it

sedimentary 'life' & 'form.' The words in Lorca's poietic expressions escape their

current & static conceptual residency, & hark their ancestral shadows while heralding the

births of their doubles. The result leaves linguistic-bodies ravaged & devoured, with only

ghostly-inscriptions acting as the memory of the sacrifice(s)-in-fire. Let us take a

moment to explore some examples of precisely this *dark-phoenix* in the work of Lorca.

   The short compilation titled <u>In Search of Duende</u>, edited & compiled by

prominent Lorca translator Christopher Maurer (no relation), is a selection of the poet's

works pertinent to the aforementioned & powerful Spanish poietic dark-energy—that

which the Andalusians termed *duende*—so oft-referenced in Lorca's writings. In his

introduction to the texts, Maurer identifies four major aspects of Lorca's *duende*:

"irrationality, earthiness, a heightened awareness of death, and a dash of the

diabolical"—a dark (often called 'demonic') spirit that thrusts the poet "face-to-face with

death," and through this encounter and consequent "hand-to-hand combat" (Lorca's

words), brings into creation, literally births, transformative artistic moments. I say

moments, because they are events—not merely works on a page. A work is—in this

sense—interiorized, static & representational alone. It is empty form, in contrast to what

Lorca seeks—the very "marrow of form" that springs forth from the rhizomatic fissures

& ruptures that mark the symbiotic death-grip between poet & *dark-phoenix*. These are

conceptual moments suddenly unconcealed & open to not only the artist, but into the very

breath & blood of those reading & engaging the works—those living-in-&-through the

language-of-duende. This is essentially expressed in 'Play and Theory of the Duende'

through a quote from the great Flamenco artist of Andalusia, Manuel Torre: "All that has

black sounds has duende," to which Lorca adds, "these 'black sounds' are the mystery,

the roots fastened in the mire that we all know and all ignore, the fertile silt that gives us

the very substance of art […] the duende […] is a power, not a work. It is a struggle, not

a thought" (Lorca, *Duende*, 49).

My reading of this short collection & by extension what I believe to be the overarching energy of & over Lorca's poietic expression, will focus on his specific ontopoietic & structural conceptualizations of the *duende*, & the ontological presuppositions, implications & ramifications of such a concept. This concept, then, identifies the *duende* as a power & not a work; in a sense this is to say *processual* & not merely 'transcendent' as such. Lorca's writing both informs & is informed-by *duende*; his poietic expressions situate & roots themselves in this dark-energy of *duende* while, simultaneously, existing *as* the manifestation of words, of so-many sentences, of Language.

A common reading of Lorca's poetic works (& I think the consequent simplifications actively shaping the notion of *duende*) focuses primarily if not exclusively on 'the poetry of his language;' the 'beauty' of his word choices, the lushness of the images, the tones of his work (often an impactful lamentation), the distinct national character & voice functioning in the texts & the manner in which all the aforementioned inform the passionate dualism acted out in his texts—that of 'Love' & 'Death.' While these are valid readings—informed & accurate analyses of the general frame, *or 'form,'* of his artistic project(s)—I propose in contrast to read the *poietic-energy* of his Language. This distinction has everything to do with 'form(s),' specifically their interiorization, rigidity & ultimate stasis, & the consequent impact on our ontocorporeality & speciel ontologies.

Lorca's own discussion of *duende* in 'Play and Theory of the Duende' explicitly identifies the power of *duende* in consuming 'form(s),' in exploding-through the constraining interiorizations of any work, any thought, any moment of stasis.[1] For Lorca,

the "duende's arrival always means a radical change in forms," explaining that such a

processual-power in-turn "brings to old planes unknown feelings of freshness, with *the*

quality of something newly created, like a miracle, and it produces an almost religious

enthusiasm" (Lorca, *Duende*, 53, my italics). This specific idea is crucial. It is not

literally nor merely a new 'Form' (as such), but rather the summoning of a known-'form'

(an 'old plane') that the *duende* attacks, savagely battles, until both artist & creation are

left radically-*other*.[2] The *duende*, then, is a processual power that summons, as if by

magick, the forms of our world—those conceptual images in-&-of so-many words—

which in turn find themselves left pierced & punctured, spilling & spewing forth their

interiorized 'meaning,' simultaneously infusing themselves with an infinite amount of

potential signifying-matter, all those *possibilities*.

   In the dominant translations of Lorca into English[3] there emerges an undeniable

quest (on behalf of the translator) to push forth—perhaps even *create-into* the work—the

narrative significance of Lorca's work. By this I mean, specifically, to explicitly infuse

the poems with their narrative implications; to flush-them-forth in such a manner that the

work *is* its narrative, or rather, *is-through-narrative*.[4] In other words, in the normative &

dominant translations of Lorca, the Language of the work itself—its very DNA—is

explicitly subordinated to the narrative-vehicle, such that the unstated poietic specters are

chained to & contained as if *ghost(s)-of-story*, as opposed to radical *shadow(s)-of-*

Language.

   This is, I think, remarkably clear when read through Lorca's seminal poem,

'*Llanto por Ignacio Sánchez Mejías*' ('Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías'). Written to

his friend & bullfighter Mejías following his goring & consequent death two days later of

gangrene, the poem captures the spirit of *duende* & the radical violence of its edifying-eradication on-&-of 'form(s)'—perhaps most notably towards the illusory & staid concepts of the transcendence of 'life' as well as the permanence of 'death.' It is notably accomplished through a beautiful, tragic & in many ways 'timeless' narrative.

The translations focus exclusively, I think, on one (or both) of two things: (1) the implication of specific Spanish &/or bullfighting 'images' or 'scenes' contained *with(in)* Lorca's language (as if codified); & (2) the striking & original images he linguistically constructs (*uvas de niebla*, 'grapes of fog' or 'misty grapes,' for example). Furthermore, the translations in-turn root themselves with(in) a strict dichotomy that is I think incorrectly & consequently inscribed into his poietic-bodies—that of 'Love' & 'Death,' & the manner in which one finds 'life' with(in) this tension. On the contrary, I feel that Lorca's work *explicitly* rejects a simple binary between 'Love' & 'Death,' instead focusing on the ontopoietic structure that defines & makes-possible both of their differentiations & possibilities. In other words, not the paradigmatic binary, but rather the processual-existentiality born from these perpetual acts of differentiation—from the symbiotic-structure of the two, such that a distinction between them is simultaneously utterly *unpossible* & absolute.

As a result, Lorca's (re)presentation & ontopoietic exploration of 'Love' & 'Death' is not at all an oscillating binary of these two transcendent conceptual pillars, but rather the *act-of-oscillation* & processual existentiality of both, in-&-through each other. Lorca's project, then, is to summon the *duende* forth in the forms of these pillars, & to infuse them to the point of oversaturation & overconsumption until there is no longer form, but the 'marrow of form.'

The language in his work, therefore, functions akin to this process—it presents meter, rhythm, pace, tone, etc. but does so as a magickal summoning, a sacrifice to the earthly power of the *duende*. In turn, the *duende* consumes the forms of this language—takes the familiar, be it narratively or linguistically, & obliterates it—such that what is 'hinted at' in the Spanish is not at all *hinting-at*, but a sacrificial presentation of edifice (or, in Artaudian language, it is the *effigy of signs*). In translation, then, it subverts Lorca's project to take these moments of language-deviation & present them as subtle implications to be flushed out & clumsily illuminated—that is a *false-light* whose overwhelming glare conceals all differentiation(s).

If his work is to exist at all in any truly *Lorcian* 'form,' it is absolutely critical that his Language exist to the reader as *familiar*, but nothing more. It must be summoned before them, & destroyed—a visual sacrifice of both stasis & transcendental-familiarity. His unique images & linguistic combinations, then, are not codes to be 'unpacked' & 'explained.' Such reductions of complexity do not unconceal the dark-energy of Lorca's ontopoietic expressions, but rather render their actual force—the transformative processual-power of the *duende*— radically concealed from whomever engages the text. What must be done in translation[5] of Lorca, then, is to identify those multiple, often dynamically recombinant moments of temporary-familiarity—the old planes so comfortably traversed—& allow *duende* to ravage them with its infinite differentiating-energy, releasing the shadow(s) & double(s) of the 'Phoenix of Cruelty' that perpetually haunt & dwell so-many zone(s) of possibility.

It is with grave lamentation(s) that we identify & rest with sedimentation(s)—with normative socio-political & poietic form(s), & the totalizing-force of sedimentary-

pauses. *All is Flux*; yet, with ceaseless-repetition, we find ourselves traversing the terrain of what-has-been, & not *what-is-becoming*. It is imperative, therefore, to identify & reside with(in) the space(s) of possibilities, & not of static-form(s). This 'Phoenix of Cruelty' knows no bounds, respects no borders or lines of demarcation between that-which-is & that-which-can-be. It is wasteful—in the most profound ontopoietic sense—to permeate in such spaces. Rather, we must be mindful & zealous with the power-potentiality of possibilities—with & with(in) the pure, unmitigated *possibilities* of shadows, of doubles & *duende*; searching, ever-more, for those moments of rupture, those glimpses of ontopoietic-lacunae that delineate the countless poietic-bodies that are incised & inscribed by ceaseless differentiation. These bodies—ontopoietic, ontocorporeal & other—mark & limit the grasp of our speciel ontologies. It is these bodies that likewise hold the power-potentiality to transcend these limitations & effigies. This tension-of-energy permeates all works-of-art & likewise demands the vigilant attention of an avant-garde sentinel; a watchman *before-the-guard*—a diligent witness-to-&-of the force(s) *in-anticipation-of* the battle-to-come, from both poietic & political perspectives.

What is demanded, therefore, is an exploration & (re)conceptualization of the physiological-realm—from the bodily-form(s) of existence that 'are,' to bodies-without-organs that live, permeate & manifest *in-&-as* zone(s) of differentiation. The canvas of the text, then, is transcended & in the process an entirely new space is becoming-open to the ontopoietic potentiality(s) of Artaud's oeuvre. It is precisely this 'Phoenix of Cruelty' that necessitates a totalizing *unstruction* of presuppositions & predications of 'form' & corresponding 'functionality' of the corporeal—static vessel(s)-of-senses to dynamic

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zone(s)-of-possibility(s). The body thus becomes-transformed from a vehicle to an energy—from an entity-for-affect, to a space-of-effect.

Indeed, such an energy exists & manifests in countless works of art; perhaps none more definitive as & exemplary than Federico García Lorca's (re)conceptualizations of flamenco. If we recall the earlier moments of this chapter, we find an explicit reference to precisely such shadows, doubles & *duende* that mark Artaud's ultimate project. His discussion with regards to the *duende* clearly does not end with his own remarks; this dark-force manifests in many works, in various permutations & with often varied 'outcomes.' Few, however, significantly envelop themselves as deeply & profoundly with(in) the ontopoietic & *ontocorporeal* realms as Lorca & his exploration of *cante jondo* ('deep song') & flamenco.

We find ourselves here dwelling for a moment in Antonin Artaud's Phoenix. The overwhelming flame(s) of dark, dynamic & blazing force—whose intense heat consumes & obliterates any effigies that control, limit & delineate *possibilities*—serve(s) as example(s) of the body's manifestations into-&-as the remarkably apropos space(s) of flamenco & its corresponding dark-matter whose energy haunts the shadow(s) of existentiality. It is this 'Theater of Cruelty'—radically inverted in(to) & towards the individual-body(s) as 'Phoenix of Cruelty'—that likewise relies upon these aforementioned (re)conceptualized & (re)presented Artaudian rituals & archetypes that, in-turn, destroy our own ontopoietic & consequently ontocorporeal effigies.

Let us consider, then, *cante jondo*—perhaps the most untampered, 'primordial,' 'archetypal' & ritualistic form of Andalusian art, & the ancestor of flamenco. Of the *cante jondo*, Lorca purports that:

its historical and artistic transcendence […] almost certainly suggests immortal things, the tavern, the late-night orgy, the dance floors of flamenco cafés, ridiculous whining—in short, all that is "typically Spanish"!—and we must guard against this for the sake of Andalusia, our millennial spirit, and each of our own hearts. (Lorca, *Duende*, 1)

Further, Lorca maintains that the difference between 'deep song' & flamenco is that the "origins of the former must be sought in the primitive musical systems of India, in the very first manifestations of song, while flamenco, a mere consequence of deep song, did not acquire its definitive form until the eighteenth century" (Lorca, *Duende*, 3). What's more, "[d]eep song is imbued with the mysterious color of primordial ages" whereas "flamenco is relatively modern song whose emotional interest pales before that of deep song" & that "[l]ocal color versus spiritual color" is the "profound difference" (Lorca, *Duende*, 3). We see here, then, that Lorca's reading of the *cante jondo* is saturated with the primordial, the archetypal & ritualistic; it breathes the smoke born-from the shadows, doubles & *duende* that brilliantly immolate the effigies of musical & artistic 'form(s).'

Lorca continues:

> Like the primitive Indian musical systems, deep song is a stammer, a wavering emission of the voice, a marvelous buccal *[sic]* undulation that smashes the resonant cells of our tempered scale, eludes the cold, rigid staves of modern music, and makes the tightly closed flowers of the semi-tones blossom into a thousand petals […] Flamenco does not proceed by undulation but by leaps. Its rhythm is as sure as that of our own music, and it was born centuries after Guido of Arezzo had named the notes […] *Deep song is akin to the trilling of birds, the crowing of the rooster, and the natural music of forest and fountain.* (Lorca, *Duende*, 3, my italics)

It is absolutely critical to note at this time that Lorca's notion of the *cante jondo* exalts its ancestors & progeny while simultaneously radically (re)conceptualizing those very same constitutive elements of the art 'form.' It is notably 'ancient' & primordial; its

summoning heralds the ritualistic invocation of aural-archetypes, while it harks the fundamental differentiations of our speciel expressions. The "trilling(s) of birds, the crowing of the rooster, and the natural music of forest and fountain" invoke the dynamic flux of *cante jondo* & identify the inherent *possibilities* contained with(in) this 'deep song'—potential-differentiations that echo the very ontopoietic & ontocorporeal roots of our speciel ontologies & the contextual zone(s) of differentiation that provide the space(s) through, against & with(in)-which existentiality can-become. These 'zone(s)' are rhizomatic in their structure; birds & roosters marking the speciel differentiations dwelling in the meta-systemic forest(s) & fountain(s)—so-many possibilities of connection, of splicing & recombinant pathways. These dark-forces incise the body— both of the *cantaores*, & of the spectatorial-witnesses to the performance & spectacle of the magickal-rite(s)—& in the process leaving behind a wrathful *unstruction* of 'form(s)' in heaps of ash & smoke, smoldering & billowing, waiting to be (re)born before the wake of the *duende*.

While it may indeed be 'accurate' to note the primordial aspects of *cante jondo*, it is likewise 'true' (& imperative to identify) that *each-performance*—each speech-act & utterance—marks a profound *possibility-of-the-rite*. Let us take, by means of example, a performance by both 'Camarón de la Isla' (José Monje Cruz; born 1950, died 1992) & 'El Turronero' (Manuel Mancheno Peña; born 1947, died 2006) in which they exhibit distinct manifestations of *cante jondo*. The performances were recorded (fittingly) on a small & cheap portable tape-recorder, in a tavern, during a spontaneous 'jam session' of sorts (an expression of revelry common amongst Gypsy communities, particularly in that time period). The song performed by Camarón de la Isla is titled 'No Siento en el Mundo

Mas' & El Turronero's is named 'Los Siete Sabios de Grecia'—they are examples of *bulerias gitanas*, a form derived directly & immediately from *cante jondo* & in many ways—particularly & notably for the auspices of this paper, in the aural speech-act—akin to its ancestor. This form already marks the first (re)conceptualization from the 'ancient' & primordial 'form' of *cante jondo*. More significant, however, are the *performances* themselves. In addition to being sung in the specific accent & dialect of Andalusia—& (generally) furthered by the correspondingly distinct accent & 'dialect' of 'Castilian' Spanish with(in) the Gypsy communities—the *performance* in-&-of-itself incises the aural-body(s) of the *cantaore(s)* & the ontocorporeality of those becoming-witness to the spectacle of the performance. Each song begins with the strumming of the flamenco guitar; it sets & marks the general ambience & aural-space of-&-from which the performance manifests. Within seconds of these (similar yet different) soundspaces establishing the *ontoaural zone(s) of differentiation* for the performances, the crisp, resounding clapping indicative of 'flamenco' emerges. It is as if the flamenco guitar, in its deep lamentation(s), summoned the more *physiologically-based* & *corporeally-base* percussive-clapping. In these initial moments of interaction, there is created profound & powerful aural-zone(s) of differentiation that in-turn provide the space(s) for ontocorporeal manifestations to-become. The percussion is furthered by the 'drummer(s)' (in general, this usually consists of one, occasionally two or as many as three)—they do not use drum sets, but rather essentially empty boxes turned to the side, upon which they sit & strike in percussive & rhythmic aural-addendums to the clapping. These basic elements (for the most part[6]) form the sonic-template against, through & with(in) which the expression unfolds, & the voice manifests as 'Phoenix of Cruelty.'

The 'voice(s)' of & in the *cante jondo*, *bulerias gitanas* & other similar flamenco sub-sects is a two-fold structure. One is the 'dominant'/primary element—the singing of the *cantaores*. The other is more nebulous, more spontaneous & explodes from the very first moment(s) of witnessing the *duende*—it is the chants & cries of the spectatorial masses bursting forth from their bodies, intertwining themselves with(in), against & through the 'song-proper.' This structure of the 'voice' in the spectacle of *cante jondo* is fascinating, dynamic & absolutely crucial for the incantation of the *duende* & its consequent role in the construction of a Phoenix of Cruelty. Let us examine the *cantaores* role & position in the performativity of this rite, before identifying the power & force of the witness.

From the initial explosion of voice from the *cantaores*, *cante jondo* is infused with a dark, dynamic energy that serves as the ontopoietic kernel of the expression—a seed germinating in & from the fertile terrain of the contextual 'instrumental' music & ambient-soundspace(s). This spectacle is no mere 'song' but rather the primordial ritual for the invocation of shadow(s), double(s) & *duende*—an incantation calling-forth effigies, devouring them & releasing the *marrow of form(s)* that haunt & dwell the Body's ontopoietic & ontocorporeal zone(s) of possibility. The voice of the 'deep song'—first manifest in the breath & uttered through the mouths of the *cantaores*—summons Language & the form(s) of its constitutive elements, only to consume & reduce them into ash. These immolations of word-effigies hold the key to the ontopoietic power-potentiality of this speciel expression, connecting *cante jondo* & *duende* to the Artaudian Phoenix of Cruelty through the (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of primordial ritualistic fervor. Each spoken-word invoked by *cantaores*—dwelling in the

breath before becoming-turned through the mouth & body towards the spectatorial audio-visual gaze—is magickally invoked in order to be sacrificed. Each word summoned in the spectacle is beheld before their spectators in momentary-suspension, differentiating in-&-through the manifest-breath(turns) of the performer. The auditory result is an exhilarating exploration of the possibilities of each utterance—words are beheld, butchered & carnally-(re)assembled, often with only spectral traces of the 'form(s)' for which they are commonly known. As smoke swimming across surfaces & dancing through the air, the *duende* cloaks the becoming-haunted spaces of each word; the voice of *cante jondo* is like the spectral memory(s) of primordial Language, summoning their ancestral effigies only to reduce them to ash, releasing their shadows to shimmer in the glow of the campfire-spectacle. To say that the performed-words are 'unknown' or 'indistinguishable' would be to damagingly simplify & reduce their grace & power. They are, rather, fundamental (re)conceptualizations & (re)presentations of the 'ritual of thought'—trapped within the rigid sedimentation of 'form'—whose marrow flows forth, like torrents of blood from the frothing-mouth of Pastora Pavón & any other poietic-warrior willing to wage war with & against the dark-energy of the all-consuming *duende*. In the torn vocal chords & becoming-charnel flesh of the performing-body there lies, ruminating & smoldering with a frightening intensity, the fetal Phoenix—cruel, brilliant & indifferent towards any speciel presuppositions or demands of ontological stasis & sedimentation.

This confrontation with the *duende* in-turn destroys the *cantaores*—their voice, energy & power audibly draining from the becoming-Phoenix of their Body(s), escaping their lips like the ghosts of Thought & possibilities. These are the moments in which the

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'secondary' voice(s)—both of the spectators & 'other'-musicians with(in) the performance—activate & infuse the soundspace(s) with the energy of breath(s), while summoning the *cantaores* back from the brink of oblivion with(in) the bright flame of their own effigies. It is a wonder to behold. The ear trembles in the wake of these epic confrontations; each uttered-word but a floating possibility quaking in the air—a wandering ghost dwelling as memory & manifestation of its own possibilities. Like shadows breathing upon the surfaces they are cast upon, each momentary sedimentation is but a possibility of the wondrous multiplicity of the principle-object beheld. *Cantaores* lamenting their own immolation(s) are not the true figures witnessed in the grand ritual, but rather the flickering & dancing specters of their own 'form(s)' cast upon the tavern walls from the glowing dark-intensity of Fire. These shadows of the 'objects' beheld, forming so-many doubles & projected from the wounds of the incised & inscribed Body(s) locked in ontopoietic & ontocorporeal war with the *duende*, are the released energies of possibilities trapped & locked with(in) their own effigies. The cries of '*¡Olé!*' bursting forth from the spectatorial-body(s) & the spontaneous clapping are incantatory invocations in their own right—resurrecting the *shaman(s)-of-song* that are sacrificing themselves in exchange for a primordial encounter with the '*unstructive*'-possibilities of our speciel ontologies.

This Is the Law of the Plague; or, A Bleeding Out

> "The term poetry, applied to the least degraded and least intellectualized forms of the expression of a state of loss, can be considered synonymous with expenditure; it in fact signifies, in the most precise way, creation by means of loss. Its meaning is therefore close to that of sacrifice."
> —Georges Bataille, "The Notion of Expenditure"

With the *duende* & its dark-power(s) of differentiation & immolation in mind, let us consider the ontocorporeal implications contained in such a force as it pertains to the performative, the spectacle & indeed even the Body itself. What we are dealing with, in dynamic ways, is the *corporealization* of the poietic; dark-energy yearning & striving to burst free from 'form(s),' released through *self*-sacrifice. The Body, then, is a becoming-haunted space unto which & into whom the written text is inscribed, made physical & malleable, destroyed, & (re)born, manifest in the physiological moment(s) of the *utterance*. This in turn opens zone(s) of possibility with regards to the (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of creation—notably through the terrifying cruelty & *unstruction* of the 'form(s)' of both 'Language' & 'Thought' that signify *poietic-birth*.

An analysis of a text with(in)-which the ontopoietic content is distinctly & radically mediated through the Body *ontocorporeally* is thus required in order to more clearly witness the ramifications of a poietic that destroys permanence, disrupts 'origin' & *creates* through the blazing intensity of Fire & voice. Diamanda Galás, a performance artist & classically trained opera singer with a 4-octave range who practices 'shriek-opera,' serves as an excellent figure of the oral avant-garde community. In this sense, one could say that her praxis is always-already & inherently informed by the spoken, & thus her vocal experimentations with Language—&, by extension, both linguistics & signification—are remarkably useful for this project.

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The piece I will explore is called 'This Is the Law of the Plague,' & it essentially consists of Galás' quasi reverse-transcription of portions of: (1) the Book of Leviticus, & (2) Psalms 22. Through an analysis of her (re)conceptualization & (re)presentational *reading-&-breathing* of these word-'form(s)'—in addition to the manner in which she disrupts, (re)structures & (re)contextualizes the 'original' written texts[7]—it becomes clear that signification is never at rest in Language &/or Thought, but rather always in the *process-of-realization*, in the *act-of-Becoming*. As such, our poietic speciel expression(s) themselves can never be at rest, but must constantly immolate themselves in order to create, in order to *become-creation(s)*.

Here is the literal, most basic transcription of the Galás piece, completely devoid of any particular reading method. In other words, the manner in which it would exist in 'normal' typography & spelling, essentially echoing their representations within the Bible:

This Is the Law of the Plague

When any man hath an issue out of his flesh,
because of his issue he is unclean.

Every bed whereon he lieth is unclean,
And everything whereon he sitteth, unclean.

And whosoever toucheth his bed shall be unclean,
And he that sitteth upon where he sat shall be unclean.

And he that touches the flesh of the unclean becomes unclean,
And he that be spat on by him unclean becomes unclean.

Strong bulls of Bashan to beset me round.
They gape upon me with their mouths as a ravening and a roaring lion.
But thou, our Lord, shall laugh at them.
Thou shalt bring them down into the pit of destruction.

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If we were to read this text, as presented above, the ontopoietic signification would be radically different than the piece that Galás recorded & produced. Absent line breaks, pauses, silence, delineations in textual continuity (in terms of the original), emphases, etc. the result is a radical divergence from the actual performative-spectacle. What causes this schism, & perhaps more importantly, *why* does it?

Before we approach these questions, however, let us first see what the presence of Galás' speaking pauses, represented by line breaks, introduces to the experience of reading the performance.

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with their mouths
as a ravening and a roaring lion.
But thou, our Lord, shall laugh at them.
Thou shalt bring them down
into the pit
of destruction.

Already, the signification has changed. It has been altered. It becomes somewhat clearer that the meaning of these words are not fixed, & indeed the utterance of them can, in fact, alter or shape the signification imbued within the text. Of course, this is merely typographically speaking. My own physical reading of both renditions of this text is significantly different as well, introducing yet another strain of signification-distortion, or perhaps the more operative term would be *signification-infusion*.

Indeed, the text resonates in a different manner. What was originally (or rather, what *could-have-been* originally) a lesson, or a teaching, or a reminder, becomes somewhat more of a warning, perhaps the inklings of a threat. What was originally a soft, somewhat passive but knowing voice has become slightly more foreboding, more intense. The pauses in space, in time, in utterance, causes not only cognitive changes (each pause forces a reflection, places an implicit emphasis on the preceding & following words, etc.) but also *physiological* reactions—the kernel(s) of ontocorporeality. Each pause provides us with a moment of non-action, of rest, of a breath. Silence manifests itself into the body, both mentally & physically. Each pause acts as a zone of possibility & differentiation (temporary though they may be), & within each exploratory moment there germinates the process-of-signification. Thus, already we see the importance not of typography per se (though the case can certainly be made), but rather & more specifically

of the necessity of a typographical reflection & (re)presentation of the performative, of the spoken.

It is important at this time to note something which is often part of oral performances (& Galás' is no exception), but which is absent from the two previous transcriptions—the non-vocal, by which I mean 'that which is not the voice of the main speaker.' The non-vocal thus includes instruments (i.e. shamanic beating of a drum), & minor/lesser (in terms of quantity, not quality or importance) voices (be they human or otherwise). Indeed, Diamanda Galás' piece includes both drum strikes & low quasi-Gregorian chants. The typographical representation of the non-vocal is, for what I believe are obvious reasons, therefore remarkably difficult to determine. Aside from literal musical transcriptions of the non-vocal, there is a multitude of ways in which to introduce these strains of the performative-spectacle in(to) the written page. Of course, each method has both positive elements & limitations, however the same questions apply regardless of how one proceeds. For instance, to what extent does the simultaneous layering of oral signifiers & the consequent 'blurring' or 'fuzzying' of 'clear' meaning manifest itself & carry-over typographically (which is to say in the act of reading a text)? Or, does one place importance on the temporal spacing of each non-vocal moment (i.e. the progression of time in each drum strike, or the duration in time of each singular 'chant'), or the sound of the non-vocal? Does one attempt to fuse the two together? Is it even possible? Can the non-vocal even be transcribed? Should it? These questions lie at the forefront of not only translation & transcription projects, but indeed the ontopoietic & ontocorporeal themselves.

My responses to these questions will be illustrated momentarily vis-à-vis my transcription of Galás' performance. First, however, it is important to discuss one last topic of interest pertaining to the oral & performative-spectacle—improvisation. To what extent is the performance rooted in permanence? To what extent is each performative moment recordable at all, or rather, *should it even be?* Indeed, it is improvisation that perhaps most clearly separates the oral tradition from its written, rooted offspring, & any transcription of it thus requires, implicitly, the caging-in, the harnessing, the control, the dominance over the performative, over the temporal. It is to imprison smoke—to corporealize the ephemeral & manifest the metaphysical—& as such, one must be always aware of the ramifications of this act of permanence.

As a result, each performance & moment of the performative-spectacle must be recorded not as "*The*" transcription of the text, but rather as '*A*' transcription of '*A*' single, solitary moment of differentiation—the poem as a haunted-becoming, & a becoming-haunted zone of possibilities. The poem-as-ontopoietic-entity. Thus, appropriation of the performative-spectacle can be tempered & perhaps even countered, though never fully avoided, for within each act of recording lies this inherent act of domination over that which evades *rootedness* & permanence.

Provided below is a reading key for my particular transcription of 'This Is the Law of the Plague,' performed by Diamanda Galás followed by the text itself:

****

●   This symbol denotes a pause in reading of approximately 2 seconds.

CAPS   Words in cap are clearly louder than the general tone of the speaker, & are therefore delineated as such.

bold   Words in bold represent an overall louder general tone than found elsewhere in the text.

ea—n   When an elongated dash is in-between two letters, the sound immediately. preceding the dash is carried an extra 2-3 seconds, before the following letter is pronounced.

nnn   When a letter is repeated more than once, the particular sound is to be carried out approximately one second per letter.

Note Words that overlap represent simultaneous sound

This Is the Law of the Plague

thhuuummm!

●
●
●

thhuuummm!

●
●
●

thhuuummm!

●
●
●

thhuuummm!

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•

•

•

thhuuummm! thumm thumm thumm thumm thhuuummm!   thhumm
thhumm   thumm thumm thumm thhuuummm!   thhumm thumm
thhuuummm!
beyyy lao—eh'um

•

thhuuummm!
beyyy lao—eh'um

•

•

*thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
eh'um   *thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
WHE—NNN!
ANYYY   MA—N hath an issue out of *his* flesh
eh'um

•

*thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
because of his issue
he is
un clea—n.
*thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
eh'um

•

*thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
EVERY BED whereof he lieth is un clea—n,
eh'um
*thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
eh'um

and everything whereon he sitteth
*thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
UN CLEAN.
eh'um

•

*thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
eh'um
*thhuuumm!*beyyy lao—
And who soever toucheth his bed shall be un clea—n.
eh'um

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*thhuuumm*Beyyy lao—
        eh'um

And, he that sitteth whereon he sat *thhuuumm*Beyyy lao—
shall be un·clea—n. *thhuuumm*Beyyy lao—   eh'um
        eh'um

                                                        •

                        *thhuuumm*Beyyy lao—
And he that touches the flesh of the unclean becomes unclea—n, *thhuuumm*Beyyy lao—
And HEEE˙ that be SPAT ON by him un clea—n *Thhuuumm*Beyyy laeh'um   eh'um
BECO—MES UNNN˙ CLEA—N! *thhuuumm*Beyyy lao—
        *thhuuumm*Beyyy lao—   eh'um
        eh'um

AAAAAAAAHHH·YHA·YHA·yhauyhauyhayhuayhayha-uh-uh-yha-yha-yha- *thhuuumm!*
thhuuumm! **yha-yhayhayhayha-uh-uh-uh yhua-uh-uh-yhuayhauyhauhuhyhuayhauh yha-**
yhayhayha!!! *thhuuumm!*
AAAAAAAAAHHH UYHYHA-uyhayhauyhayhya-auyha-yha-uuhya-yhayha- *thhuuumm!*
thhuuumm! **yha-yha yhauy yhau yhayhauyhayha hauyha-yheeeeeeeeeeeaaaaaaaaeeeeeaaaaae**
yheeeeeeeaaaaaaaaaaaeeeeeeaaaaaAAHHH!!!
                                        thhuuumm!

                                                        •

Strong bulls
of Bae-shan
to beset-me rounnd *thhuuumm!*
they gape upon *meh*
with their mouths *thhuuumm!*
as a ravening, and a roaring lion *thhuuumm!*

        thhuuumm!
But thou, our Lord, shall laugh at them

        thhuuumm!   •

Thou shalt br—ing them down *thhuuumm!*
into the pit
of de-struction. *thhuuumm!*

****

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I believe it is clear & evident that this transcription mutates & transforms the bones of the text in significant ways, while releasing the marrow of ontopoietic expressions & creation. Clearly, Diamanda Galás' performance of the text itself carries signification; which is to say that in the breath & voice—in the very act of speaking these words—there is an ontocorporeal infusion in(to) the text that was-&-would otherwise not *become*. It is also true that her performance, her utterance, forces a (re)inscription in(to) & upon the bloody surface of charnel-flesh, already immolated & imbued by the *duende* with cruel ornamentation(s) of shadow(s) & double(s).

The ontocorporeal-text is no longer serving as a gentle lesson, or as a teaching, or even as a minor threat—all of which are certainly possible-readings of the first two transcriptions. Rather, through the mediation of Diamanda Galás the text is a becoming-haunted space serving as dire warning & menacing threat from (one could argue) God itself—in essence 'Hegemony.' In other words, Diamanda Galás introduces herself to the audience not as 'Diamanda Galás: singer, song-writer & performance artist' who is merely 'reading' a fixed text; but rather, as literal-'Avatar.' Indeed, this role of 'Avatar' is two-fold for Galás. On the one hand, she is the avatar of the written text—of the Bible—to her audience; on the other, within the moment(s) of performative-spectacle she is serving, quite literally, as the 'Avatar of God' & the 'Avatar of Hegemony.' It is through her Body's ontocorporeal battle with shadow(s), double(s) & *duende* that, in effect, God's words are heard & experienced, & power is traversed, navigated & exchanged. This double-gesture places Galás at the locus of signification. Her body serves as the site of significatory-infusion—the space of-&-for temporary

sedimentation(s)-of-meaning—before passing through her & continuing in(to) all the possible manifestations of its *process-of-becoming*.

My specific transcription also takes into account the splitting of the two primary texts—Leviticus & Psalms—which Galás herself clearly marks through her non-'linguistic' material, i.e. the *primal-scream*. It is at that distinct moment that not only the 'origins' of the text are delineated, but in fact also the tone, vocal & non-vocal interactions, voice, etc. In other words, there is a rupture in the text—a lacunae marked not by void & emptiness, but rather by an *infusion* of breath, voice & sound that is non-specific in its 'signification,' & yet *signifies* nevertheless. It is at-&-with(in) this moment that Galás is most conscious of her own interjection & presence in the *becoming* of the work & spectacle.

This 'primal-scream' marks the text & incises itself unto the soundscape of the piece as well as in(to) the Body(s)of both performer & reader, both *cantaores* & *Witnesses*—& its presence serves as a reminder of so-many sacrifices. Indeed, such could be said for the whole performance. From her first moment of textual embodiment—"WHE—NNN!"— Galás is simultaneously providing a decree for the listener, is self-consciously marking her own presence into a Biblical & ancient literary tradition, & is manipulating, exchanging, & brokering power.

> "The poem intends another, needs this other, needs an opposite. It goes toward it, bespeaks it. For the poem, everything and everybody is a figure of this other towards which it is heading."
> –Paul Celan, "The Meridian"

It is also an *atemwende*—Celan's breathturn—a pushing out, a rushing forth; extending, exhaling & dissipating until the breath & the world—the ontocorporeal & that which rests outside of the body—are intertwined in(to) symbiosis & the resulting zone(s)

of differentiation & perception born from such *structural-recombinance*. It is at that moment—the moment of the pure-exhale—that the breath is gone, & must circle back *into* itself, like an ontopoietic retrograde never resting in its *turning-of-breath*. It is, thus, both a void & saturation of signification—the *turning-of-breath* that is constantly in motion, outward & in(to) enclosing, closed & *becoming-open*. Always all…& none.

> "Is it on such paths that poems take us when we think of them? And are these paths only detours, detours from you to you? But they are, among how many others, the paths on which language becomes voice."
> —Paul Celan, "The Meridian"

The primal scream, therefore, serves as the pivotal moment of pure excess, of pure expenditure & of constructive, creative, radiant loss. Its status as both a profound & cruel void distinct of signification—& paradoxically an overflowing excess of signifying matter—places it at the center of the sacrificial poietic. Textual origins are disrupted—turned into effigies & burned to ash—while power-relations are radically attacked & forced to (re)conceptualize hegemonic imposition in relation to a source of resistance that is not counter-hegemonic (not a counter-force) but is rather a self-directed & internalized-immolation. It is this act of self-sacrifice that strives for emancipation; not from a force of outward, counter-resistance, but rather through a relationship with power that is internally directed. In this sense, power is not reversed. It is consumed. It is an internalization of power that locates resistance inside of the body, burning & destroying the site of signification, before bursting forth from the radiance of the exquisite void—a poietics of perpetual *ontophoenixity*.

Ontocorporeal-Perception; or, Hybridized Bodies & Spaces in Flux

> "I am my body."
> –Maurice Merleau-Ponty (*Phenomenology of Perception*, 202)

> "Inside and outside are inseparable. The world is
> wholly inside and I am wholly outside myself."
> –Maurice Merleau-Ponty (*Phenomenology of Perception*, 474)

The ontophoenixity of shadow(s), double(s) & *duende* that we have explored this chapter, & the consequent ontocorporeal implications of-&-in Language, leads us to an exploration of 'perception.' Before *speciel ontology* can be properly conceptualized, it is imperative to implement *ontopoietically-infused* readings of some indicative expressions of the ontocorporeal & its role in our *speciel-perceptivity*. That is to ask: What is perception? Which is to ask, how do we perceive? How do we observe & record what we experience? How do we construct memory from *ontological* perspectives, & not merely with biological & ontic considerations?

If we are to follow a strict Cartesian intellectualism or rationalism, we must first presuppose a fundamental binary—the mind/body split. The mind is the self or the subject, whereas the body is merely a vessel through which we interact with our surroundings, or perhaps more accurately, an object or resource or tool which our transcendent-mind orders to perform various functions on its behalf. Consequently, our interactions with the world & our acts of ontopoietic differentiation(s) & 'meaning-making' are, one could say, 'the immanent property of the reflecting mind.'

If, however, we instead choose to theorize through an empiricist's lens, we presuppose that perception is merely the result of the functional connections of individuals organs–i.e. perception being the matrix of physical interactions of various

organs, operating in chorus with one another & transferring sensory data.

What I propose, however, is to situate our notion of perception in the philosophical discourse of aforementioned Maurice Merleau-Ponty. As he notes in Phenomenology of Perception, "empiricism cannot see that we need to know what we are looking for, otherwise we would not be looking for it, and intellectualism fails to see that we need to be ignorant of what we are looking for, or equally again we should not be searching" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, 28). The fundamental flaw of this binary establishment is that one is reduced to either a constituting thing, i.e. a subject, or a thing, i.e. an object. Although Merleau-Ponty does not want to deny the possibility of a cognitive relationship between a subject & object as such, he *does* dismiss the notion that there is a detached consciousness that observes the world. Instead, it is crucial in his philosophy that the fundamental ontological dualism of immanence & transcendence—subject/object, seer/seen, mind/body, inside/outside—condition each other; they are relationally constituted, interacting with one another as opposed to being separate & existing within their own impenetrable spheres, so to speak. Crucial in his philosophy is the place of the lived & existential body, which he argued was central in the aforementioned dualistic relationships.

As Merleau-Ponty identifies, the conceptualization of the body as merely an 'object' is pivotal in the creation of the notion of an objective world which exists "out there" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, 27); to problematize this conception of the body is to consequently problematize the idea of an outside world that is completely distinguishable from the thinking subject. Indeed, we are our bodies, & our lived experiences of this body—our interactions with the world through our corporeality & lived-flesh—denies the

detachment of subject from object, mind from body, etc. (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, xii). The

use of the mind—the mental—is inseparable from the bodily, physical nature, & the

perceiving mind is an incarnated body—both thinking & perceiving. As such, Merleau-

Ponty refers to the individual not as the body, but rather as the body-*subject*.

This conception of the body (re)constructs perception; since it is through the body

that we have access to the world, perception thus involves the perceiving subject *in* a

situation, as opposed to a spectator hypothetically existing *outside* of a situation. There is

therefore a reflexive inter-connectivity between action & perception, & in the words of

Merleau-Ponty "every perceptual habit is still a motor habit" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, 153).

The presupposition that perception is first a passive act of 'seeing,' followed by a

consequent biological interpretation is, for Merleau-Ponty, false, for the body-subject

conforms neither to the ontological presence *as* a thing, nor *as* a consciousness.

Perception can neither be fully characterized in the classical, reflexive sense, nor is it a

third person process where we achieve access to some pure object.

As such, perception is not merely a passive sensory action, but rather a '*creative

receptivity*'—which is to say that what we literally see is not solely the objective world,

but is conditioned by (& perhaps condi*tions*) a myriad of factors that ensure the

reciprocity between 'perceiving subject' & 'object perceived.' Each exists only vis-à-vis

their symbiotic-relationship(s) with the other, & the resulting zone(s) of possibilities

derived from their structure(s)-of-differentiation. Thus we reach the aforementioned

quote by Merleau-Ponty, "inside and outside are inseparable. The world is wholly inside

and I am wholly outside myself" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, 474). Due to the inseparability of

the inner & the outer, any study of the perceived ends up revealing the *subject* perceiving;

we are simultaneously part of the world, & coextensive with it—constitu*ting* as well as

constitu*ted.* In short, our bodies must be seen *ontocorporeally,* as our means of

communication with the world.

If indeed our bodies *are* our means of communication, then they must *also* be the

surface upon which all previous perceptions—& consequently memory—become-

inscribed. Let us examine the film 'Solaris' by Andrei Tarkovsky, a creative expression

that explores numerous ontopoietically & ontocorporeally involved notions, and thus

operates similarly to a philosophical text. The premise of the film is, briefly, as follows:

a Russian cosmonaut (Kris) goes to a space station outside of the planet Solaris with the

instruction of giving a psychological profile to the members of the station (who have

been experiencing 'strange things'). Upon reaching them, he learns that they have been

visited by (what are called in the film) 'Guests;' essentially beings created by Solaris

from the crew members' memories—one of which is his (Kris') wife who had died from

suicide many years earlier. What is notably fascinating about the text is Tarkovsky's

(re)conceptualization of memory & its place in our speciel ontology(s). The 'Guests' are

not literally the individuals who died—which is to say the actual, physical, humans who

lived & interacted with the Cosmonauts—rather they are the culmination of all the

memories each crew member has, manifest in recombinant flux. Kris' wife, Khari, is the

manifestation of all the memories, all the perceptions that he has had of her–she is a

depressed woman, because he *remembers* her that way, & she attempts to kill herself

precisely because he cannot conceive of her *absent* of these dark desires. They are,

essentially, the physical embodiment of all the perceptions that the 'originary' body-

subject had with the 'other,' & as such they are confined by the limitations in the host's

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memory; as Khari says to Kris at one point, "I have no secrets." Indeed, it would be impossible, as her "secrets" would, by definition, be unknown to Kris.

The ontological construction & corporeal (re)presentation of the 'Guests,' therefore, is wholly dependent upon the inscriptions on the physical bodies of the crew members; in other words, the body-subjects record or inscribe each originary perception upon the body, & therefore all future perceptions must *also* be mediated through these original recordings—each new inscription is in constant relation to-&-with all previous inscriptions in a brilliant rhizomatic explosion of nodal points & possibilities. I say that the perceptions, & consequently memory, is inscribed *unto* the body, however it could equally be conceptualized & discussed through a Merleau-Pontian discourse, i.e. each perception is mediated through the body, & thus the body's memory of each originary & subsequent interaction informs & is informed by the memory of the originary experience *through* the zone(s) of possibility & differentiation that is the becoming-'Body.' I believe that both of these discourses claim, essentially, the same thing: past perceptions are recorded in-&-on the body, & these originary inscribed-recordings are in constant, dynamic interaction with all ancestral perceptions & their progeny.

If we are to accept the ontocorporeal notion that perception is inscribed & therefore recorded onto the body, we must then acknowledge that such a premise is dependent *also* on the ability for the individual to *experience* & thus be *able* to record the experience. It is precisely this presupposition that is problematized, *unstructed* & ultimately discarded in the films of Alejandro Jodorowsky.

There are, as I see it, four primary manifestations of the body in Jodorowsky's texts: 1) the body that operates within the text, however without immediate &/or clear

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impact to its surroundings; 2) the body that is damaged, & thus unable to operate 'properly'/'normatively' within its surroundings; 3) the body that is partly mutilated, & therefore dependent on its appropriation of a 'full' body in order to temporarily achieve completeness; & 4) the hybridization of two bodies that are both mutilated & 'incomplete,' which then come together to form a pseudo-complete-body, or 'hybrid-body.' Such are the four notions that will be explored as they pertain to these ontopoietic & ontocorporeal (re)conceptualizations of perception, the inscription of memory & consequently, the possibilities of our speciel ontology(s).

The first manner in which the Body exists as 'different' (or perhaps it would be more apt to say as 'ontocorporeal-Difference') & therefore problematic to the 'normative' space-of-perception is perhaps the least represented in Jodorowsky's films— the body that appears complete, yet whose actions fail to reliably or dependably create an immediate impact to its surroundings. The perfect example of this manifestation is in Jodorowsky's 1971 film 'El Topo,' where the title character is engaged in a duel with one of the mystical 'masters.' It is an extremely brief moment (in terms of actual elapsed time from the perspective of the spectator), & could very well be missed or neglected in most analyses of the text; nonetheless I find it absolutely crucial in terms of Jodorowsky's (re)conceptualization of the body.

Let me explain the scene simply & emphasize what pertains to this critique: the gunslinger, a.k.a. El Topo, takes a step, & there is silence for 3 or 4 seconds, perhaps, before we hear the footstep fall. One could say, of course, that it is merely a stylized affect, used to enhance the sense of mysticism prevalent throughout—this is a valid reading, & I am in no way dismissing it. What I *am* doing, however, is revealing this

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reading as cursory & ultimately incomplete. The delay in the sound is extremely important for it creates a schism between the physical; in other words, whereas El Topo clearly moves, physically, & has dominion over his own body, the *act* of the step—as we, the readers of the text, are shown—is delayed. The step does not create an immediate *affect* to his surroundings, & yet it *does*.

How do we navigate this seeming paradox? In one sense, the gunslinger has clearly physically moved, & thus occupied *new* physical space—i.e. he has clearly affected his environment. Yet at the *same* time, the *act* of movement in & of itself is fundamentally *without* affect if only because the sound of the step—the echo of the foot hitting the surface—is delayed. What takes place, then, during this pause? Does the body inscribe the step at the moment of its actual, 'physical' movement? Or does it instead rely upon the moment of aural-affirmation? Perhaps it is both, & neither; perhaps the step itself is only partially inscribed, the moment only fragmently experienced & therefore recorded, & must (re)inscribe the moment upon the completion of the physical act. Of course, such a process of perception-recording folds back unto itself, inscribing & (re)inscribing upon an unclear surface on the body, & thus fundamentally problematizing the recording process itself.

While such an examination could be philosophically debated in much greater depth, it is not relevant to this work; if the discussion at-hand is inherently & fundamentally predicated upon *possibilities*, the mere reading itself is self-affirming as an *ontopoietic differentiation*. Let us continue, then, to the second manifestation of the body as it pertains to Jodorowsky's cinematic texts, namely the body that is damaged & cannot, therefore, operate properly within its surroundings. The clearest example of such

a body is in the film 'Fando y Lis' (1967). The two title characters—Fando, a young

male, & Lis, a young woman—live in a surrealistic-space, & go on a journey to find the

mythical land of Tar. Lis, it appears, is paralyzed from the waist down, & is thus unable

to navigate her own terrain; she is dependent on Fando for movement, & he obliges by

placing her in a cart of sorts & dragging her around the world they inhabit. What is

problematic, I would argue, about such an arrangement is that Lis's body is not in direct

contact with the world around her, which is to say that her physical navigation is actually

an extension of Fando's acts. Of course, her actual perceptions are confined to her own

body, and they occur in real-time (i.e. one act is immediately recognized by her

surroundings), however her inability to traverse the terrain on her own accord, it seems,

problematizes the normative relations with the exterior world.

The cart serves as her de-facto legs, however in a fundamentally different manner

than would, say, a wheelchair, where the wheels are, literally, serving as (re)presentations

& substitutes for the legs, which are then under the command of the person & their body.

Such a relationship creates a hybridized body, of sorts, but one that is united & thus

(re)normalized as *one*-entity—namely the individual who is paralyzed, crippled, etc. In

'Fando y Lis,' however, her need & reliance on Fando to be the *energy* of the cart—to

serve as the controller of movement—(re)directs flows of power *out* from Lis & *into*

Fando. Not only is power (re)organized & (re)compartmentalized, but by extension the

cart does not & indeed *cannot* serve as an extension of Lis's body, for it is not in her

control. Whereas a wheelchair would serve as a quasi-body, (re)created in order for the

individual to reclaim his-&/or-her 'bodily-completeness,' Lis's cart serves as an

imprisonment, of sorts, & therefore her movements in the cinematic world must always

be identified under this paradigm. Inscription *cannot* occur normatively, for her bodily interaction with her surroundings are so fundamentally altered & controlled.

Although I believe that 'Fando y Lis' serves as the first moment of ontocorporeal body-alteration in Jodorowsky's texts—both chronologically (as it is his first feature film) & theoretically, as in my conceptualization of his oeuvre, it is merely the first step in his (re)conceptions & perceptions of the body & its interactions with the world—his 1989 film 'Santa Sangre' serves as the next ontopoietic progression. As a child, the main character, Fenix, witnesses his father engaging in sexual activity with another woman, & his mother (Concha) catching the man in the act. Upon seeing them, Concha throws a vile of acid on her husband's genitals, which prompts him to grab his two knives &, in a single swipe, cutting off her arms. The film then jumps many years into the future, where we see Fenix escaping from a mental institution at the behest of his mother, who suddenly & surreally appears after many years (he is now full grown) outside his cell's window & calls for him. She is armless. Fenix serves, literally, as the arms of his mother—when they perform in a vaudevillian act, or when she wishes, for example, to play the piano in their home. Essentially, Concha dictates when she will appropriate Fenix's arms—when she will claim them as her own, & substitute his wholeness for her own, albeit temporary, completion. Indeed, even the physiological (re)presentations of this union—Fenix standing directly behind her, his arms sliding through her clothing & emerging slightly displaced but nevertheless *of* her entity—dictate, in part, how we are to read this ontocorporeal coupling. She is certainly the dominant one—it is not a union of *bodies*, but rather the appropriation of *one*-body (which is complete) by *(an)other*-body (which is mutilated & 'lacking' in some sense).

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How, then, are we to conceptualize the process of *incising-perception &*
perceptive-inscription into the ontocorporeal-flesh of both constitutive elements of this
coupling? The physical acts of the arms are not, in any physiological &/or empirical
way, attached or connected to Concha's body, & therefore the process of inscription upon
the body is, in some fundamental way, incomplete. Yet nonetheless, when she summons
Fenix's arms, he is completely without (it appears) the ability to resist her commands—
his arms *are* hers, if only because he physically cannot (re)appropriate them for his own
'completeness,' his own act(s) of inscription. Conversely, are the acts undertaken by
Fenix's arms when in this possessed-corporeality in fact *his* to inscribe? In other words,
does *his* body possess the ability to fully inscribe & record the perceptions experienced
during this state? Or are they merely ambiguous & ghostly in some sense, dwelling
between possible degrees of perception—not devoid of recording, however not fully
inscribed either? Indeed, it would appear as if all, or none, of these are possible. Perhaps
the sole declaration that can be made is that Merleau-Ponty's notion of a unified,
complete body that interacts with its environment, & thus serves as the means through
which communication occurs, is fundamentally problematized in Jodorowsky's model.

Despite these three previous examples of the corporeal-mutilation of flesh &
'form,' the body is, I believe, most fundamentally & completely *unstructed* &
(re)constituted in his aforementioned film, 'El Topo.' There are two characters in the
film who work for one of the masters; the first is a man with a complete, functional upper
body, however he lacks legs—the other has a complete lower body, however possesses
no arms. Indeed, their 'form(s)' form a conceptually inversed-whole, however
Jodorowsky takes this to an even further level—he combines them, literally, to construct

momentary-possibilities of a new 'form,' a hybridized-body of dynamic potentiality that is inherently 'temporary' in duration.

What do I mean? In short, the man with no legs rests upon the back of the man with no arms, & therefore the two mutually serve one another—one is the legs for the other, & vice versa, the other is his arms. This union forms a singular, hybridized-body. Of course, the legs do not only belong to the 'Legless-Man' when he rides upon the back of his compatriot, however neither do they belong solely to the actual 'Armless-Man' *either*. When this union takes place, the arms & the legs exist in a conceptual space where they simultaneously exist as functional units of *both* individuals. While the actual ontocorporeal 'connection' can only be felt by the one(s) with the 'actual' appendages, the *perception(s)* themselves are experienced by *both* entities.[8]

To better explain this, let me provide an example from the text that illustrates precisely what I am referring to: there is a moment when the hybridized-body is climbing a ladder. The interaction with the physical-outside via the body is clear. What must be explored, however, is the manner in which the corporeal act is simultaneously & equally dependent on both the arms & the legs—which is to say that the physiological act of climbing the latter cannot occur without the hybridization of the body. Furthermore, without the context of the film, there is no clear reason for the hybrid-body to actually climb the ladder—it was clearly a conscious decision by Jodorowsky to include this momentary act. Nevertheless, the radical (re)conceptualization of the body, the manner in which it serves as the means & vehicle of communication with the world & the consequent processes of inscription & memory is significant for a number of reasons.

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In terms of the ontocorporeal construction of both of the individuals who are joined in this hybrid-body, there is an even deeper sense of ambiguity than in Merleau-Ponty's philosophy. For Merleau-Ponty, the body is a singular entity whose interaction is perhaps best explained in the following quote:

> if I touch my left hand with my right hand while it touches an object, the right hand object is not the right hand touching: the first is an intertwining of bones, muscles and flesh bearing down on a point in space, the second traverses space as a rocket in order to discover the exterior object in its place. (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, 105)

Or perhaps more clearly, "when I press my two hands together, it is not a matter of two sensations felt together as one perceives two objects placed side by side, but an ambiguous set-up in which both hands can alternate the roles of 'touching' and being 'touched'" (Merleau-Ponty, *PhP*, 106). This dichotomy is contained within the singular body, & both sensations, however ambiguous, are felt & perceived by the *one* individual—the *singular-entity*.

On the other hand, Jodorowsky's hybrid-body has no such distinctions; whereas the dichotomy between 'touching' & 'being touched' *with(in)* the singular-body is problematized in Merlea-Ponty's model, 'touching' & 'being touched' is radically immolated & (re)born fundamentally *Other* in Jodorowsky's ontocorporeal (re)conceptualizations. What, or perhaps more properly asked, *who* is doing the touching when the hybrid-body traverses the ladder? Certainly, the Armless-Man's legs are physically both 'touching' & 'being touched' by the corporeal-entity, as are the Legless-Man's arms; the difficulty & perhaps genius of this hybridization, however, is the manner in which the conceptuo-ontocorporeal experiences of the hybrid-body contribute to new & rhizomatic *speciel ontology(s)*. In this sense, the ontological construct(s) are not

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limited to the physiological perceptions of the 'actual' physical-body—though, without question, the perception(s) the Armless-Man feels with his own legs (for example) are different on a number of levels from the conceptual-perception(s) of 'legs' experienced by the Legless-Man. Rather, there are multiple levels of experience, interaction & perception in Jodorowsky's ontocorporeal model, each with various degrees of resonance &, consequently, processes of inscription & memory.

The 'new' terrain such ontocorporeal exploration(s)-of-perception find themselves traversing & dwelling with(in) is precisely this notion of 'phantom-appendages' that exist in conceptual realms & yet interact with corporeal perceptions of 'actual-appendages.' Neither the legs nor the arms are fully property of the originary-body once the two join into a hybridized-form. This is not to say, however, that the experiences felt vis-à-vis the appendages of the originary-individual are the same—indeed they are nothing if not fundamentally *different* & *other*. But it is precisely this ambiguous relationship between the conceptualized experience of (for example) the 'legs' of the Legless-Man & his actual-arms that creates a surface of inscription so problematic, & consequently exciting in its power-potentiality as a zone of differentiation & possibility. For if the body can no longer be seen as an 'actual' purely-physical entity, but rather as a hybridized & incomplete—or perhaps *uber-complete*, *over-complete*—processual differentiation-of-'form(s),' existing as much in *virtuality* as it does in *actuality*, then the *becoming-Body* is a dynamic zone of speciel-possibilities, inherently dwelling with(in) the shadow(s), through its haunted-double(s) & against the dark-energy of the *ontophoenixity of duende*.

CHAPTER THREE NOTES

[1] It should be noted that these specific notions of interiorized, static thought are indebted-to &
rhizomatically-branching-from Artaud's own discussion of conceptual thought, as well as Deleuze &
Guattari's specific conceptualizations on the matter, framed partially & notably through a discussion of
Artaud, in Nomadology: The War Machine.

[2] In this sense, it locates the birth of the *duende* in a similar conceptual womb as that of Deleuze's
'Different' & Spinoza-qua-Deleuze's notion of all things existing as 'modulation of the One,' which is to
say, all *of* the same, but *never-same*—the unending, perpetual phoenixity of existentiality itself.

[3] Notably Christopher Maurer, whose compilation also presumably contains the most respected Lorca
translators, at least from his perspective & presumable expertise on the subject.

[4] It is critical to note that I mean this differently than the manner in which all work is 'through-narrative'—
the ways in which all 'narrative' is as much a linguistic-medium for narrative expression, as it is the vehicle
through, against & with(in) which Language is explored, (re)conceptualized & (re)presented.

[5] Attached below is the poem, in Spanish, along with an example of a 'typical translation,' followed by my
own translation—the act of which, I believe, *unconceals* Lorca's poetic *duende*:

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LLANTO POR IGNACIO SÁNCHEZ MEJÍAS

1. *LA COGIDA Y LA MUERTE*

A las cinco de la tarde.
Eran las cinco en punto de la tarde.
Un niño trajo la blanca sábana
a las cinco de la tarde.
Una espuerta de cal ya prevenida
a las cinco de la tarde.
Lo demás era muerte y sólo muerte
a las cinco de la tarde.

El viento se llevó los algodones
a las cinco de la tarde.
Y el óxido sembró cristal y níquel
a las cinco de la tarde.
Ya luchan la paloma y el leopardo
a las cinco de la tarde.
Y un muslo con un asta desolada
a las cinco de la tarde.
Comenzaron los sones del bordón
a las cinco de la tarde.

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Las campanas de arsénico y el humo
a las cinco de la tarde.
En las esquinas grupos de silencio
a las cinco de la tarde.
¡Y el toro, solo corazón arriba!
a las cinco de la tarde.
Cuando el sudor de nieve fue llegando
a las cinco de la tarde,
cuando la plaza se cubrió de yodo
a las cinco de la tarde,
la muerte puso huevos en la herida
a las cinco de la tarde.
A las cinco de la tarde.
A las cinco en punto de la tarde.

Un ataúd con ruedas es la cama
a las cinco de la tarde.
Huesos y flautas suenan en su oído
a las cinco de la tarde.
El toro ya mugía por su frente
a las cinco de la tarde.
El cuarto se irisaba de agonía
a las cinco de la tarde.
A lo lejos ya viene la gangrena
a las cinco de la tarde.
Trompa de lirio por las verdes ingles
a las cinco de la tarde.
Las heridas quemaban como soles
a las cinco de la tarde,
y el gentío rompía las ventanas
a las cinco de la tarde.
A las cinco de la tarde.
¡Ay qué terribles cinco de la tarde!
¡Eran las cinco en todos los relojes!
¡Eran las cinco en sombra de la tarde!

2. *LA SANGRE DERRAMADA*

¡Que no quiero verla!

Dile a la luna que venga,
que no quiero ver la sangre
de Ignacio sobre la arena.

¡Que no quiero verla!

La luna de par en par,
caballo de nubes quietas,

y la plaza gris del sueño
con sauces en las barreras

¡Que no quiero verla¡
Que mi recuerdo se quema.
¡Avisad a los jazmines
con su blancura pequeña!

¡Que no quiero verla!

La vaca del viejo mundo
pasaba su triste lengua
sobre un hocico de sangres
derramadas en la arena,
y los toros de Guisando,
casi muerte y casi piedra,
mugieron como dos siglos
hartos de pisar la tierra.
No.
¡Que no quiero verla!

Por las gradas sube Ignacio
con toda su muerte a cuestas.
Buscaba el amanecer,
y el amanecer no era.
Busca su perfil seguro,
y el sueño lo desorienta.
Buscaba su hermoso cuerpo
y encontró su sangre abierta.
¡No me digáis que la vea!
No quiero sentir el chorro
cada vez con menos fuerza;
ese chorro que ilumina
los tendidos y se vuelca
sobre la pana y el cuero
de muchedumbre sedienta.
¡Quién me grita que me asome!
¡No me digáis que la vea!

No se cerraron sus ojos
cuando vio los cuernos cerca,
pero las madres terribles
levantaron la cabeza.
Y a través de las ganaderías,
hubo un aire de voces secretas
que gritaban a toros celestes,
mayorales de pálida niebla.
No hubo príncipe en Sevilla

que comparársele pueda,
ni espada como su espada,
ni corazón tan de veras.
Como un rio de leones
su maravillosa fuerza,
y como un torso de mármol
su dibujada prudencia.
Aire de Roma andaluza
le doraba la cabeza
donde su risa era un nardo
de sal y de inteligencia.
¡Qué gran torero en la plaza!
¡Qué gran serrano en la sierra!
¡Qué blando con las espigas!
¡Qué duro con las espuelas!
¡Qué tierno con el rocío!
¡Qué deslumbrante en la feria!
¡Qué tremendo con las últimas
banderillas de tiniebla!

Pero ya duerme sin fin.
Ya los musgos y la hierba
abren con dedos seguros
la flor de su calavera.
Y su sangre ya viene cantando:
cantando por marismas y praderas,
resbalando por cuernos ateridos
vacilando sin alma por la niebla,
tropezando con miles de pezuñas
como una larga, oscura, triste lengua,
para formar un charco de agonía
junto al Guadalquivir de las estrellas.
¡Oh blanco muro de España!
¡Oh negro toro de pena!
¡Oh sangre dura de Ignacio!
¡Oh ruiseñor de sus venas!
No.
¡Que no quiero verla!
Que no hay cáliz que la contenga,
que no hay golondrinas que se la beban,
no hay escarcha de luz que la enfríe,
no hay canto ni diluvio de azucenas,
no hay cristal que la cubra de plata.
No.

¡¡Yo no quiero verla!!

3. *CUERPO PRESENTE*

La piedra es una frente donde los sueños gimen
sin tener agua curva ni cipreses helados.
La piedra es una espalda para llevar al tiempo
con árboles de lágrimas y cintas y planetas.

Yo he visto lluvias grises correr hacia las olas
levantando sus tiernos brazos acribillados,
para no ser cazadas por la piedra tendida
que desata sus miembros sin empapar la sangre.

Porque la piedra coge simientes y nublados,
esqueletos de alondras y lobos de penumbra;
pero no da sonidos, ni cristales, ni fuego,
sino plazas y plazas y otras plazas sin muros.

Ya está sobre la piedra Ignacio el bien nacido.
Ya se acabó; ¿qué pasa? Contemplad su figura:
la muerte le ha cubierto de pálidos azufres
y le ha puesto cabeza de oscuro minotauro.

Ya se acabó. La lluvia penetra por su boca.
El aire como loco deja su pecho hundido,
y el Amor, empapado con lágrimas de nieve
se calienta en la cumbre de las ganaderías.

¿Qué dicen? Un silencio con hedores reposa.
Estamos con un cuerpo presente que se esfuma,
con una forma clara que tuvo ruiseñores
y la vemos llenarse de agujeros sin fondo.

¿Quién arruga el sudario? ¡No es verdad lo que dice!
Aquí no canta nadie, ni llora en el rincón,
ni pica las espuelas, ni espanta la serpiente:
aquí no quiero más que los ojos redondos
para ver ese cuerpo sin posible descanso.

Yo quiero ver aquí los hombres de voz dura.
Los que doman caballos y dominan los ríos;
los hombres que les suena el esqueleto y cantan
con una boca llena de sol y pedernales.

Aquí quiero yo verlos. Delante de la piedra.
Delante de este cuerpo con las riendas quebradas.
Yo quiero que me enseñen dónde está la salida
para este capitán atado por la muerte.

Yo quiero que me enseñen un llanto como un río
que tenga dulces nieblas y profundas orillas,
para llevar el cuerpo de Ignacio y que se pierda
sin escuchar el doble resuello de los toros.

Que se pierda en la plaza redonda de la luna
que finge cuando niña doliente res inmóvil;
que se pierda en la noche sin canto de los peces
y en la maleza blanca del humo congelado.

No quiero que le tapen la cara con pañuelos
para que se acostumbre con la muerte que lleva.
Vete, Ignacio: No sientas el caliente bramido.
Duerme, vuela, reposa: ¡También se muere el mar!

4. *ALMA AUSENTE*

No te conoce el toro ni la higuera,
ni caballos ni hormigas de tu casa.
No te conoce el niño ni la tarde
porque te has muerto para siempre.

No te conoce el lomo de la piedra,
ni el raso negro donde te destrozas.
No te conoce tu recuerdo mudo
porque te has muerto para siempre.

El otoño vendrá con caracolas,
uva de niebla y monjes agrupados,
pero nadie querrá mirar tus ojos
porque te has muerto para siempre.

Porque te has muerto para siempre,
como todos los muertos de la Tierra,
como todos los muertos que se olvidan
en un montón de perros apagados.

No te conoce nadie. No. Pero yo te canto.
Yo canto para luego tu perfil y tu gracia.
La madurez insigne de tu conocimiento.
Tu apetencia de muerte y el gusto de tu boca.
La tristeza que tuvo tu valiente alegría.

Tardará mucho tiempo en nacer, si es que nace,
un andaluz tan claro, tan rico de aventura.
Yo canto su elegancia con palabras que gimen
y recuerdo una brisa triste por los olivos.

'Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías' translated by Stephen Spender & J.L. Gili

1. Cogida and death

At five in the afternoon.
It was exactly five in the afternoon.
A boy brought the white sheet
at five in the afternoon.
A frail of lime ready prepared
at five in the afternoon.
The rest was death, and death alone.

The wind carried away the cottonwool
at five in the afternoon.
And the oxide scattered crystal and nickel
at five in the afternoon.
Now the dove and the leopard wrestle
at five in the afternoon.
And a thigh with a desolated horn
at five in the afternoon.
The bass-string struck up
at five in the afternoon.
Arsenic bells and smoke
at five in the afternoon.
Groups of silence in the corners
at five in the afternoon.
And the bull alone with a high heart!
At five in the afternoon.
When the sweat of snow was coming
at five in the afternoon,
when the bull ring was covered with iodine
at five in the afternoon.
Death laid eggs in the wound
at five in the afternoon.
At five in the afternoon.
At five o'clock in the afternoon.

A coffin on wheels is his bed
at five in the afternoon.
Bones and flutes resound in his ears
at five in the afternoon.
Now the bull was bellowing through his forehead
at five in the afternoon.
The room was iridescent with agony
at five in the afternoon.
In the distance the gangrene now comes

at five in the afternoon.
Horn of the lily through green groins
at five in the afternoon.
The wounds were burning like suns
at five in the afternoon.
At five in the afternoon.
Ah, that fatal five in the afternoon!
It was five by all the clocks!
It was five in the shade of the afternoon!

2. The Spilled Blood

I will not see it!

Tell the moon to come,
for I do not want to see the blood
of Ignacio on the sand.

I will not see it!

The moon wide open.
Horse of still clouds,
and the grey bull ring of dreams
with willows in the barreras.

I will not see it!

Let my memory kindle!
Warm the jasmines
of such minute whiteness!

I will not see it!

The cow of the ancient world
passed her sad tongue
over a snout of blood
spilled on the sand,
and the bulls of Guisando,
partly death and partly stone,
bellowed like two centuries
sated with threading the earth.
No.
I will not see it!

Ignacio goes up the tiers
with all his death on his shoulders.
He sought for the dawn
but the dawn was no more.

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He seeks for his confident profile
and the dream bewilders him
He sought for his beautiful body
and encountered his opened blood
Do not ask me to see it!
I do not want to hear it spurt
each time with less strength:
that spurt that illuminates
the tiers of seats, and spills
over the corderoy and the leather
of a thirsty multitude.
Who shouts that I should come near!
Do not ask me to see it!

His eyes did not close
when he saw the horns near,
but the terrible mothers
lifted their heads.
And across the ranches,
an air of secret voices rose,
shouting to celestial bulls,
herdsmen of pale mist.
There was no prince in Seville
who could compare to him,
nor sword like his sword
nor heart so true.
Like a river of lions
was his marvelous strength,
and like a marble torso
his firm drawn moderation.
The air of Andalusian Rome
gilded his head
where his smile was a spikenard
of wit and intelligence.
What a great torero in the ring!
What a good peasant in the sierra!
How gentle with the sheaves!
How hard with the spurs!
How tender with the dew!
How dazzling the fiesta!
How tremendous with the final
banderillas of darkness!

But now he sleeps without end.
Now the moss and the grass
open with sure fingers
the flower of his skull.
And now his blood comes out singing;

singing along marshes and meadows,
sliding on frozen horns,
faltering soulless in the mist
stumbling over a thousand hoofs
like a long, dark, sad tongue,
to form a pool of agony
close to the starry Guadalquivir.
Oh, white wall of Spain!
Oh, black bull of sorrow!
Oh, hard blood of Ignacio!
Oh, nightingale of his veins!
No.
I will not see it!
No chalice can contain it,
no swallows can drink it,
no frost of light can cool it,
nor song nor deluge of white lilies,
no glass can cover it with silver.
No.
I will not see it!

3. The Laid Out Body

Stone is a forehead where dreams grieve
without curving waters and frozen cypresses.
Stone is a shoulder on which to bear Time
with trees formed of tears and ribbons and planets.

I have seen grey showers move towards the waves
raising their tender riddle arms,
to avoid being caught by lying stone
which loosens their limbs without soaking their blood.

For stone gathers seed and clouds,
skeleton larks and wolves of penumbra:
but yields not sounds nor crystals nor fire,
only bull rings and bull rings and more bull rings without walls.

Now, Ignacio the well born lies on the stone.
All is finished. What is happening! Contemplate his face:
death has covered him with pale sulfur
and has place on him the head of dark minotaur.

All is finished. The rain penetrates his mouth.
The air, as if mad, leaves his sunken chest,
and Love, soaked through with tears of snow,
warms itself on the peak of the herd.

What are they saying? A stenching silence settles down.
We are here with a body laid out which fades away,
with a pure shape which had nightingales
and we see it being filled with depthless holes.

Who creases the shroud? What he says is not true!
Nobody sings here, nobody weeps in the corner,
nobody pricks the spurs, nor terrifies the serpent.
Here I want nothing else but the round eyes
to see his body without a chance of rest.

Here I want to see those men of hard voice.
Those that break horses and dominate rivers;
those men of sonorous skeleton who sing
with a mouth full of sun and flint.

Here I want to see them. Before the stone.
Before this body with broken reins.
I want to know from them the way out
for this captain stripped down by death.

I want them to show me a lament like a river
which will have sweet mists and deep shores,
to take the body of Ignacio where it looses itself
without hearing the double planting of the bulls.

Loses itself in the round bull ring of the moon
which feigns in its youth a sad quiet bull,
loses itself in the night without song of fishes
and in the white thicket of frozen smoke.

I don't want to cover his face with handkerchiefs
that he may get used to the death he carries.
Go, Ignacio, feel not the hot bellowing
Sleep, fly, rest: even the sea dies!

4. Absent Soul

The bull does not know you, nor the fig tree,
nor the horses, nor the ants in your own house.
The child and the afternoon do not know you
because you have dead forever.

The shoulder of the stone does not know you
nor the black silk, where you are shuttered.
Your silent memory does not know you
because you have died forever

The autumn will come with small white snails,
misty grapes and clustered hills,
but no one will look into your eyes
because you have died forever.

Because you have died for ever,
like all the dead of the earth,
like all the dead who are forgotten
in a heap of lifeless dogs.

Nobody knows you. No. But I sing of you.
For posterity I sing of your profile and grace.
Of the signal maturity of your understanding.
Of your appetite for death and the taste of its mouth.
Of the sadness of your once valiant gaiety.

It will be a long time, if ever, before there is born
an Andalusian so true, so rich in adventure.
I sing of his elegance with words that groan,
and I remember a sad breeze through the olive trees.

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Now, my translation. Note the moments where I differ from the other text, particularly in the presumptive leaps made by the other translation in the reconstruction of implicit narrative information—information explicitly *absent*, or in the *marginalia* of his actual language. Also, please note that the translation I provided is actually less narratively reconstituted than the version included by Maurer in his larger compilation of Lorca's work; I included the version contained in the specific collection, In Search of Duende

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"Lament for Ignacio Sánchez Mejías"
-Translated by Jamerson Maurer-

1. The Goring and Death

At five in the evening.
It was precisely five in the evening.
A boy brought the white sheet
at five in the evening.
A basket of lime already forewarning
at five in the evening.
The rest was death and death only
at five in the evening.

The wind took the cottons

at five in the evening.
And the oxide sowed glass and nickel
at five in the evening.
Already the dove and leopard wrestle
at five in the evening.
And a thigh with a desolate horn
at five in the evening.
The sounds of bass-string begin
at five in the evening.
The arsenic bells and the smoke
at five in the evening.
In the corners, groups of silence
at five in the evening,
And the bull alone with happy heart!
at five in the evening.
When the sweat of snow was arriving
at five in the evening,
when the bullring was showered in iodine
at five in the evening,
death laid eggs in the wound
at five in the evening.
At five in the evening.
At precisely five in the evening.

A coffin with wheels is the bed
at five in the evening.
Bones and flutes ring in your ear
at five in the evening.
The bull already bellowed through his forehead
at five in the evening.
The room iridesced with agony
at five in the evening.
In the distance, already the gangrene comes
at five in the evening.
Horn of lilies through the green groins
at five in the evening.
The wounds burned like suns
at five in the evening.
and the crowd broke the windows.
at five in the evening.
At five in the evening.
Oh, how terrible five in the evening!
It was five on all the clocks!
It was five in shadows of the evening!

No!I don't want to see it!

Tell the moon to come,
that I don't want to see the blood
of Ignacio over the sand.

No!I don't want to see it!

The wide-open moon.
horse of calm clouds,
and the gray bullring of the dream
with willows in the barriers.

No!I don't want to see it
Let my memory burn.
Warn the jasmines
with their miniscule whiteness!

No!I don't want to see it!

The cow of the ancient world
passed her sad tongue
over a snout spilling
blood upon the sand,
and the bulls of Guisando,
almost dead and almost stone,
bellowed like two centuries
overwhelmed with treading the earth.
No.
No!I don't want to see it!

Through the terraces Ignacio rises
with all his death upon his back.
He searched for daybreak,
and daybreak was not.
He seeks his safe silhouette,
and the dream disorients him.
He searched for his beautiful body
and he found his blood, open.
Do not tell me to see it!
I do not want to feel the spurt
each time with less force;
that spurt which illuminates
the spectators and overturns itself

unto the corduroy and the leatherhide
of a parched multitude.
Who screams at me to present myself?
Don't tell me to see it!

His eyes did not shut
when he saw the horns close-by,
but the awful mothers
lifted their heads.
And through the cattle-ranch
there permeated an air of secret voices
that screamed to celestial bulls,
overseers of pallid fog.
There was no prince in Sevilla
whom with him could compare,
nor sword like his sword
nor heart so very real.
Like a river of lions
your wondrous force,
and like a marble bust
your drawn prudence.
Air of Andalusian Roma
gilded the head
where your smile was a spikenard
of charm and of intelligence.
What a great bullfighter in the ring!
What a mountain within the range!
How gentle with the sheaf!
How harsh with the spurs!
How tender with the dew!
How dazzling at the festival!
How tremendous with the final
banderillas of darkness!

But already he sleeps without end.
Already the moss and the grass
open, with certain fingers,
the flower of his skull.
And his blood already comes, singing:
singing by marshes and meadows,
slipping by frozen horns,
flickering, soulless, through the mist,
trampled by thousands of hooves
like a long, dark, sad tongue,
in order to form a puddle of agony
near the Guadalquivir of the stars.

Oh!white mural of Spain!

Oh!black bull of sorrow!
Oh!strong blood of Ignacio!
Oh!nightingale of his veins!

No.
No!I don't want to see it!
There is no chalice that can contain it,
there are no barn-swallows that can drink it,
there's no frost of light that cools it,
there's no song nor deluge of *Madonna* lilies,
there's no glass that silvers it.
No.
I do not want to see it!

3. The body in repose

The stone is a forehead where dreams howl,
possessing neither curved water, nor frozen cypresses.
The stone is a back upon which to carry time
with trees of tears and ribbons and planets.

I have seen gray rains flow towards the waves
raising their tender, bombarded arms,
in order to not be captured by the spreading stone
that unties their members without absorbing the blood.

Because the stone seizes seeds and clouds,
skeletons of larks and twilight wolves;
however it gives off no sounds, nor crystals, nor fire,
but only bullrings and bullrings and other bullrings without walls.

Already upon the stone is Ignacio the well-born.
It's already finished. What things happen! Consider his form!
Death has covered him pallid sulfurs
and placed upon him dark minotaur's head.

It's already finished. The rain penetrates through your mouth.
Like mad, the air rushes from your sunken chest,
and Love, saturated with tears of snow,
heats itself at the pinnacles of the cattle-ranches.

What are they saying? A fetid silence lies buried.
We are before a body in repose that is disappearing,
with a clear form that possessed nightingales
and we see it fill itself with bottomless holes.

Who wrinkles the shroud? What you say is not true!
Here, nobody sings, nor cries in the corner,
nor pricks the spurs, nor even frightens away the serpent:
here I want nothing more than the round eyes
in order to see that body without possible rest.

Here I want to see men of strong-voice.
Those that break horses and master the rivers:
the men whose skeleton's resound, and who sing
with mouths full of sun and flint.

Here, I myself want to see them. Before the stone.
Before this body with its broken reins.
I want them to show me where the exit is
for this captain ensnared by death.

I want them to teach me a lament like a river
that has sweet mists and deep banks,
to carry the body of Ignacio, so that he may get lost
without hearing the double-snort of the bulls.

Go disappear in the round bullring of the moon
that pretends, when a young girl, to be an ailing, immobile bull;
that you go lose yourself in the songless night of the fish
and in the white thicket of frozen smoke.

I don't want his face covered with handkerchiefs,
so that he may become accustomed with the death he carries.
Go, Ignacio: don't perceive the hot bellowing.
Sleep, fly, rest: The sea also dies!

4. Absent Soul

The bull does not recognize you, nor the fig tree,
nor horses nor even the ants of your house.
The child does not know you, nor the evening
because you have died forever.

The spine of the stone does not recognize you,
nor the black satin within which you decompose.
Your own silenced memory does not know you
because you have died forever.

The Autumn will come with conches,
misty grapes and huddled mounts,
but no-one will want to look within your eyes

because you have died forever.

Because you have died forever,
like all the dead of the Earth,
like all the dead that are forgotten about
in a mound of exterminated dogs.

Nobody knows you. No. But I sing of you.
I sing, later on, of your silhouette and your grace.
The illustrious wisdom of your consciousness.
Your appetite for death and the taste of its mouth.
The sorrow possessed by your valiant happiness.

It will be a long time before there is born, *if ever* born,
an Andalusian so open, so rich in adventure.
I sing your elegance with language that bellows
and I remember a sad breeze through the olive trees.

<p align="center">***</p>

[6] There are obviously exceptions; perhaps the most notable being castanets, particularly in *siguiriyas*, the form Lorca identifies as most directly akin to 'true' *cante jondo*. Nevertheless, for the analysis undertaken in this work, it is functionally irrelevant as the castanet's presence serves only to more profoundly & explicitly illustrate what I am purporting. In other words, the castanet is effective in adding another layer of aural-differentiation within the soundspace(s) created, yet it is not critical to &/or for the reading in & of itself.

[7] It should be noted that these texts are often functionally viewed & read as existing in permanent, essentially 'Eternal' & 'Perfect' 'Form(s)' as they are portions of the Bible.

[8] In fact, from the perspective of the purely ontocorporeal, one could even argue that they constitute *three* entities—the third is the becoming-hybrid of their coupling.

CHAPTER FOUR

Ontopoietic Narrative(s); or, Speciel-Knowing

> This story may not always seem artificial, and in spite of me
> you may recognize in it the call of the blood: the reason is that
> within my night I shall have happened to strike my forehead at
> some door, freeing an anguished memory that had been haunting
> me since the world began. Forgive me for it. This book aims to
> be only a small fragment of my inner life.
> —Jean Genet (*Our Lady of the Flower*, 66)

A 'species' is—at its essence—a 'narrative' (be they biological, political, ontological, or other). If considering the concept 'narrative' from an ontopoietic perspective, we see that the etymological ancestry of the word eventually finds root in the term 'narration'—'a relating,' 'recounting' or 'narrating.' 'Narration' is from the Latin *narrationem* (the nominative of *narratio*), which itself derived from *narrare*—'to tell,' 'to relate,' 'to recount' & '*to explain*' (in its literal transcription, meaning 'to make acquainted with') &, ultimately manifesting from *gnarus*, '*knowing*.' As such, 'narrative' (in a profound sense) is the ontopoietic expression of a *knowledge* & a *knowing*, & must therefore become considered at the germinating-stage(s) of any 'species' or 'speciel differentiation.' The 'knowing' & consequent transmission-of such 'knowledge'—be they through genetic, linguistic, cultural, political, etc. 'form(s)'—is absolutely critical to the existentiality & ontology(s) of any-&-all *species*.

The 'story,' then, is as significant to the conceptualization of a 'species' & thus any 'speciel ontology,' as are the corresponding 'frames' established by each-&-any 'narrative' construct. The manner in which the ontopoietic & ontocorporeal independently differentiate against, with(in) & through their particular 'narrative(s)'

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results in the manifestation & consequent differentiation(s) of speciel ontology(s). It is

therefore critical to explore the notion of 'speciel ontology' from the perspective of

'narrative,' as read through the lenses of ontopoiesis, ontocorporeality & ultimately

'narrative speciel ontology' itself.

The ontopoietic is an effective method through which to explore & dwell with(in)

speciel ontology. There are, clearly, a multitude of perspectives, lenses & expressions of

this particular 'form' of ontopoiesis, & thus any analysis of this conceptual terrain is but a

possibility. For the auspices of this work, perhaps the most illuminative & dynamic text

through which to explore ontopoietic examples of speciel ontology is Jean Genet's <u>Our</u>

<u>Lady of the Flowers</u>. From this work, we will move towards Steve Tomasula's <u>VAS: An</u>

<u>Opera in Flatland</u>, which functions as a critical bridge from the ontopoietic to the

ontocorporeal (with regards to speciel ontology). In the former, Language serves as the

ontological breeding-ground upon which not only 'consciousness' but indeed our

perceptive-world & corporeality manifest; the latter moves from this 'ontopoietic-

corporeality' to distinct spaces of speciel ontology—each-&-every 'language' the

corresponding zone of possibility & differentiation within(in), through & against which

not only 'worlds' & 'bodies' are constructed but indeed *species* themselves & their

consequent ontology(s).

Jean Genet's <u>Our Lady of the Flowers</u> is a profound, beautiful & challenging

novel in its dynamic complexity.   Its ontopoietic energy serves as the progeny &

ancestry of the radical, vigorous becoming-narrative—a work whose very narrative-

structure & ontopoietic essence is one of flux. Genet-as-'narrator' & 'narrator'-as-Genet

indeed write of this:

What is involved for me who is making up this story? In reviewing my life, in tracing its course, I fill my cell with the pleasure of being what for want of a trifle I failed to be, recapturing, so that I may hurl myself into them as into dark pits, those moments when I strayed through the trap-ridden compartments of a subterranean sky. Slowly displacing volumes of fetid air, cutting threads from which hang bouquets of feelings, seeing the gypsy for whom I am looking emerge perhaps from some starry river, wet, with mossy hair, playing the fiddle, diabolically whisked away by the scarlet velvet portiere of a cabaret. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 80)

In this sense the 'narrative' can also be thought of as *utterly-fictive*, by which I mean the 'narrative' of the text is itself but (an)other-'narrative,' framed in-turn by its own fictive-existentiality. This fiction can also be understood & thought-through as possibilities—as splintering, rhizomatic possibilities extended infinitely into the conceptual space of the 'narrative':

Sometimes the cat-footed guard tosses me a hello through the grate. He talks to me and, without meaning to, tells me a good deal about my forger neighbors, about arsonists, counterfeiters, murderers, swaggering adolescents who roll of the floor screaming: "Mama, help!" He slams the grate shut and delivers me to a tête-à-tête with all those fine gentlemen whom he has just let slip in and who twist and squirm in the warmth of the sheets and the drowsiness of the morning to seek the end of the thread which will unravel the motives, the system of complicity, a whole fierce and subtle mechanism which, among other neat tricks, changed a few pink little girls into white corpses. I want to mingle them too, with their heads and legs, among my friends on the wall, and to compose with them this children's tale. And to refashion in my own way, and for the enchantment of my cell (I mean that thanks to her my cell will be enchanted), the story of Divine, whom I knew only slightly, the story of Our Lady of the Flowers, and, never fear, my own story. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 66-7)

The constitutive elements of the work, then, are becoming-'form(s)' that manifest with(in), through & against the contextual reality(s) forming the *outcast's* world of perception(s)—the prison cell:

In my cell, little by little, I shall have to give my thrills to the granite. I shall remain alone with it for a long time, and I shall make it live with my breath and

the smell of my farts, both the solemn and the mild ones. It will take me an entire book to draw her from her petrifaction and gradually impart my suffering to her, gradually deliver her from evil, and, holding her by the hand, lead her to saintliness. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 83)

The ontopoietic structure at work, then—both for the 'narrator' in his cell, & the imprisoned Genet—manifests in zone(s) of differentiation that are the progeny & ancestry of this structure. Both the ontocorporeal-Body & its prison-World are entangled in a rhizomatic orgy of Language & possibilities. It is from this ontopoietic carnal-revelry that speciel ontology is (re)born. As if to emphasize this empowering speciel (sub)text, the 'narrator' speaks of 'slang,' observing:

> The queens on high had their own special language. Slang was for men. It was the male tongue. Like the language of men among the Caribees, it became a secondary sexual attribute. It was like the colored plumage of male birds, like the multicolored garments which are the prerogative of the warriors of the tribe. It was a crest and spurs. Everyone could understand it, but the only ones who could speak it were the men who at birth received as a gift the gestures, the carriage of the hips, legs and arms, the eyes, the chest, with which one can speak of it. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 100)

As with the 'speciel-language' of 'slang,' the 'language' of this 'narrative'—as well as the Language of Genet's Our Lady of the Flowers—serves as the primordial becoming-matter *par excellence*. It is the culmination of so-many narrative-moments, differentiations & possibilities that are always-already becoming-*other* with(in) *this-particular* speciel expression.

As such, both the 'narrator' & Genet's ontopoietic framing of the 'narrative' results in chimeric production of identity, consciousness & indeed corporeality—"my mind continues to produce lovely chimeras," they inform us, despite the fact that "none of them has taken on flesh" (Genet, *Our Lady*, 132). This is the case whether through the

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narrative-character of 'narrator,' or the various possible-strains of existentiality with(in) each 'narrated' or '*narrativized*' photograph hanging on the prison walls. These image(s) that adorn the cell (that is their 'World'), & their consequent ontopoietic-corporeality are 'his' exemplars & the constitutive elements of the 'narrative' he is bringing-to-life:

> So, with the help of my unknown lovers, I am going to write a story. My heroes are they, pasted on the wall, they and I who am here, locked up. As you read on, the characters, and Divine too, and Culafroy, will fall from the wall onto my pages like dead leaves, to fertilize my tale. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 66)

I want to be clear, however, that by this I am not suggesting that identity, consciousness & corporeality *must* exist & manifest through Language, nor that Genet is necessarily suggesting such an ontologically absolute condition-&-structure. Rather, merely that such a possible speciel ontology is being expressed with(in) the text, in so-many threaded ways; perhaps even that such a *speciel expression*—precisely as *possibility-of-differentiation*—is indeed an empowering aspect of the existential & ontological condition of our species today. More-so, they are the 'contextual' *frame(s)* through which 'our' collective 'narrative(s)' manifest. These contextual-frames function akin to the 'World-of-Perception' for the 'Body'—which is to say the contextual-frames become the 'exteriority' against, through & with(in)-which each 'narrative' existentially-differentiate(s). Indeed, for the 'narrator' each cell *is* a 'World' & the corresponding *'frame(s)'* of-&-for possible speciel ontology(s), noting that "[p]rison is a kind of God, as barbaric as a god" (Genet, *Our Lady*, 93) & thus akin to Artaud's aforementioned notions of 'form(s)' imprisoning shadow(s) & double(s).

This is significant, for when we consider the actual narratives constructed in the text—as the 'stories' &/or 'narrative(s)' of each picture, each *expressed-possibility*—Genet (or should I say 'the narrator'?) is ontopoietically manifesting precisely this

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particular speciel expression in a distinctly & notably 'hyper-real' way. In other words, Genet-qua-'narrator' & 'narrator'-qua-Genet identify the particular 'frames' of the ontological structures, isolate their internal 'rationality'/'reason,' & conceptually explore them to their furthest possible extensions. The result is a monstrous, utterly transgressive series of debauched, compulsively sexual, extremely violent acts. What's more, these acts—in the conceptual terrain of the novel (as well as the narratives within-the-'narrative')—are not *internally-transgressive* or aberrant. Rather, they are the *necessary* manifest-expressions of such an order—& *necessarily-so*:

> if I have nailed him to my wall, it was because, as I see it, he had the sacred sign of the monster at the corner of his mouth or the angle of the eyelids. The flaw on the face or in the set gesture indicates to me that they may very possibly love me, for they love me only if they are monsters—and it may therefore be said that it is this stray himself who has chosen to be here. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 65)

This is because of their position as outsiders, or rather *outcasts* within the particular language-order (as such). These are the ghost-men & double(s) haunting the ontocorporeal edifices of our speciel ontology(s)—spectral hues of so-many colors & possibilities, violently piercing the gilded artifice of 'Order.'

    As this 'Order' is always-already a *logos-qua-Language*, these conceptual-existentialities of Shadow(s) are but the conflagration of interiorized words & 'form(s).' When discussing 'his' previous & temporary confinement in a Yugoslav prison—an imprisonment of inherent & perpetual flux, floating-body(s) from space-to-space—'he' notes that his interactions with a band of gypsy-prisoners infused 'him' with a "revelation." This passage is lengthy, but it is both critical & necessary if this specific 'Language' is to be ontopoietically explored with regards to 'speciel ontology':

It was at that moment that I understood the room. I realized—for a fraction of a second—its essence. It remained a room, through a prison of the world. I was, through my monstrous horror, exiled to the confines of the obscene (which is the off-scene of the world), facing the graceful pupils of the school of light-fingered theft. I saw clearly […] what that room and those men were, what role they were *playing*: it was a major role in the march of the world. This role was the origin of the world and at the origin of the world. It seemed to me suddenly, thanks to a kind of extraordinary lucidity, that I understood the system. The world dwindled, and its mystery too, as soon as I was cut from it. It was a truly supernatural moment, similar, in respect to this detachment from the human, to the one I experienced when Chief Warrant Officer Cesari, at the Cherche-Midi Prison, had to write a report on my sexual practices. He said to me, "That word" (he didn't dare utter the word "homosexual"), "is it written as two words?" And he pointed to it on the sheet with his forefinger extended…but not touching the word.

I was ravished. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 311-2)

They are outcasts because they are charnel-flesh, inscribed 'homosexual' or 'transsexual' or 'transgressor' or 'prisoner' *ad infinitum*—in short, they are in some-sense *other* & thus 'Enemy' in the Schmittian sense; they present a *corporeal* & *existentiell* threat. But this is not because of the word(s) themselves (as such), but rather due to the inherently static[1] & interiorized conceptual-framing that dwells, haunting such a creative act (the creation of *this-word*).

If it is through linguistic-existentiality & Language itself that they become outcast(s) & Enemy, then likewise the emancipatory-protestation must root itself with(in) the ontopoietic possibilities of Language & in the specificity of the particular *speciel* ontology that labels them as such. Genet's narrator then (& by extension, the narrative-characters of the 'narrator') find themselves in-&-as *processual-transgression*, each imbuing their existentiality *in-&-of-Language* with (an)*other* 'word' & of course, the 'form(s)' that accompany each.

Indeed, the protestational & emancipatory possibilities of the speciel-Language giving-life to these 'outcasts' extends beyond their ontocorporeal 'selves.' The very word(s) themselves possess an almost magickal *power* in their utterance, in their becoming brought to Breath, *witnessed & (be)held*. This fundamentally transgressive & transgressing process-of-violence manifests against, through & with(in) the hyper-logical 'Order(s)' that label, inscribe & (re)conceptually-corporealize these-&-their 'outcast(s). Ironically (tragically) the very 'Order(s)' themselves are predicated upon the presuppositional 'identification' & consequent opposition to the 'Other'—the same dark-matter & dark-energy that haunts the very birth(s) of 'Order(s),' like the shadows & doubles dwelling in the Fire(s) of their imprisonment. Their ontopoietic existence & consequent protestiational-potentiality as 'outcast' & 'Other'—an energy inscribed into their Body(s) by 'Order' itself—paradoxically serves as the *precise* reason *why-&-how* they pose the threat of an 'Enemy.'

This is identified clearly in the following extensive passage, involving the trial of 'Our Lady of the Flowers' for murder. He ('Our Lady') is found guilty, & when the judge presses, "questioning him: 'What do you have to say in your defense?'," 'Our Lady' dwells for a moment, before realizing that "[h]e had to be natural" & that to be "natural, at that moment, was to be theatrical, but his maladroitness saved him from ridicule and lopped off his head" (Genet, *Our Lady*, 298). The 'narrator' continues, noting:

> He was truly great. He said: "The old guy was washed up. He couldn't even get a hard-on."
> The last word did not pass his jaunty little lips. Nevertheless, the twelve old men, all together, very quickly put their hands over their ears to prevent the entry of the word that was as big as an organ, which, finding no other orifice, entered all stuff and hot into their gaping mouths. The virility of the twelve old

men and of the judge was flouted by the youngster's glorious immodesty. Everything was changed. Those who were Spanish dancers, with castanets on the fingers, became jurors again, the sensitive painter became a juror again, the old man of cloth became a juror again, so did the old grouch, so did the one who was pope and the one who was Vestris. You don't believe me? The audience heaved a sigh of rage. With his beautiful hands the judge made the gesture that tragic actresses make with their lovely arms. Three subtle shudders ruffled his red robe as if it were a theater curtain, as if there clung to the flap, at the calf, the desperate claws of a dying kitten, the muscles of whose paws had been contracted by three little death throes. He nervously ordered Our Lady to behave with decorum…
(Genet, *Our Lady*, 299)

Upon the utterance & breathturn of Our Lady's word(s), the space of 'Order' manifests into a becoming-haunted zone of transgressions that processually-differentiate against, with(in) & through the very 'Enemies' they necessarily birthed. They undergo a series of radical, dynamic transformations & their very 'World' is a haunted-becoming— becoming-haunted by the *duende* & dark-phoenix dwelling in the shadow(s). The power of the word(s) & corresponding speciel ontology are 'existentiell' threats, then, because of the protestational-possibilities of the *outcast's breathturn(s)*. This power is an *ontoterrorem*, for it moves in the breath, cast in the wind of the utterance, & causes literal ontological terror—its presence manifests in(to) & as a profound horror upon the 'Order(s)' of the particular speciel ontology(s), filling their bodies with fear & dread, reducing them to trembling & transforming ontopoietic & ontocorporeal transgressed-possibilities.

Therefore it is no surprise that there is specific reference to both the conceptual & literal ontopoietic *creation* of 'murderer' & 'murdered'—two particular, specific concepts that manifest *in-&-of-Language* at the moment of the violent act—likewise manifest as *inscribed-imprisonment(s)* & *prescribed-power(s)*:

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Already the murderer compels my respect. Not only because he has known a rare experience, but because he has suddenly set himself up as a god, on an altar, whether of shaky boards or azure air. I am speaking, to be sure, of the conscious, even cynical murderer, who dares take it upon himself to deal death without trying to refer his acts to some power of a given order, for the soldier who kills does not assume responsibility, nor does the lunatic, nor the jealous man, nor the one who knows he will be forgiven; but rather the man who is called an outcast, who, confronted only by himself, still hesitates to behold himself at the bottom of a pit into which, with his feet together, he has—curious prospector—hurled himself with a ludicrously bold leap. A lost man. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 130)

These are not only (as aforementioned) 'necessary' manifested-actions, but indeed gestures of emancipatory possibilities, in which the static, staid forms of 'before' become radically liberated from their shells & in-turn (re)conceptualized as specifically & distinctly *other*. In this sense, it matters very little that this new 'form' is conceptualized & (re)presented as 'negative' or 'transgressive'—the crucial aspect of such an ontopoietic moment is found instead in the zone(s) of radical possibilities with(in) the particular expression of speciel ontology at hand, & as constructed & manifest by the 'narrative.'

This discussion of power with regards to the linguistic-inscription of 'murderer' & 'murdered' in(to) the ontocorporeal-Body is further illustrated by the discussion of 'murder' as 'creative'-differentiation & *ontopoietic-expression*. The 'narrator' identifies the radical transformation undergone by a 'murderer,' in which the ghostly-viral ancestry-&-progeny of the 'murdered' enters into the very ontocorporeal & ontopoietic space(s) of the killer, transforming both of their body(s) & mind(s) into a symbiotic chimera & monstrous amalgamation of *self* & *possessed-other*:

it is that physical disgust of the first hour, of the murderer for the murdered, about which a number of men have spoken to me. It haunts you, doesn't it? The dead man is rigorous. Your dead man is inside you; mingled with your blood, he flows in your veins, oozes out through your pores, and your heart lives on him, as

cemetery flowers sprout from corpses…He emerges from you through your eyes, your ears, your mouth. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 129)

The killer is becoming-haunted & utterly infected by their victim(s)—viral-ghost(s) whose shadow(s) & double(s) immolate their host until its ontocorporeal-'form(s) are devoured, & the virus flows-forth, hemorrhaging, flowering-out of the murderer's 'form.' It is because of this, the 'narrator' assures us, that he wishes to kill a young, handsome boy—one who is forever becoming-companion, & whose radical ontopoietic & ontocorporeal manifestations *with(in)* the 'narrator's' body will likewise flower:

> I would like to kill a handsome blonde boy, so that, already united by the *verbal* link that joins the murderer and the murdered (each existing thanks to the other), I may be visited, during days and nights of hopeless melancholy, by a handsome ghost of which I would be the *haunted castle*. But may I be spared the horror of giving birth to a sixty-year-old corpse, or that of a woman, young or old. I am tired of satisfying my desire for murder stealthily by admiring the imperial pomp of sunsets. My eyes have bathed in them enough. Let's get to my hands. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 130, my italics)

Of course, it is not merely that the individual transforms into this *other*, but that such a move is inherently liberatory from the 'form(s)' & frame(s) shackling their possibilities—these words, this language, some set datum—& through this, the 'transgressor' or 'homosexual' ontopoietically embraces the *duende* & is a becoming-dark-phoenix, a (re)generating actuality, whose 'form' exists only as that-from-which *possibilities-of-differentiation* emerge.

The final critical point to note is the specificity of the ontopoietic expression—a wonderfully *flowery* & transgressive verse—& the speciel ontology(s) resulting from the Language-'slang(s)' of the text. They are dancing-glyphs of sound & image—at one turn an ontopoietic caress in-&-of Language; the next, a speciel exploration in(to) the slang of the 'underground' (both in a political & linguistic sense). The result is a legitimate

ontopoietic exploration into the conceptual power of the novel & indeed Language itself.

An excellent example of this notion (particularly when considering the aforementioned

points) is the manner in which Genet radically (re)conceptualizes & (re)presents not only

the 'narrative' strands of each 'character' of the 'narrator,' but even their resulting

manifestations in(to)-&-as their ontocorporeality (itself, perhaps paradoxically, nothing

but a *conceptual*-possibility) in-&-of Language. An example (of which there are an

abundance) lies in the 'character' of 'Divine' & in the becoming-woman of her identity—

such that, ultimately, the rhizomatic differentiations marking both concepts render static

'form(s)' of gender irrelevant & impossible:

> For, though she as a "woman," she thought as a "man." One might think that, in thus reverting spontaneously to her true nature, Divine was a male wearing make-up, disheveled with make-believe gestures; but this is not a case of the phenomenon of recourse to the mother tongue in times of stress. In order to think with precision, Divine must never formulate her thoughts aloud: "I'm just a foolish girl," but having felt this, she felt it no longer, and, in saying it, she no longer thought it. […] Her femininity was not *only* a masquerade. But as for thinking "woman" completely, her organs hindered her. To think is to perform an act. In order to act, you have to discard frivolity and set your idea on a solid base. So she was aided by the idea of solidity, which she associated with the idea of virility, and it was in grammar that she found it near at hand. For it, to define a state of mind that she felt, Divine dared used the feminine, she was unable to do so in defining an action which she performed. And all the "woman" judgments she made were, in reality, poetic conclusions. Hence, only then was Divine true. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 235)

In other words, the ontocorporeality of these characters is always-already merely

conceptual-matter, & is so precisely through *this*-language possibility, specifically *this*

speciel expression that Genet engages. Likewise, their ontocorporeal state finds itself

dynamically *becoming-other*—'man' to 'woman,' 'woman' to 'man,' 'she' becomes 'he,'

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as 'he' becomes 'her,' etc.—as their 'stories' & 'narrative(s)' exist in state(s) of literal, perpetual flux. Of this, we are merely notified:

> I shall speak to you about Divine, mixing masculine and feminine as my mood dictates, and if, in the course of the tale, I shall have to refer to a woman, I shall manage, I shall find an expedient, a good device, to avoid any confusion. (Genet, *Our Lady*, 81)

This all occurs, notably, *against*, or perhaps more aptly stated, *despite* or *in-absentia* of the 'power' they exercise over their own ontocorporeal & ontopoietic bodies & 'narrative(s).' It is as if Genet is alternately lamenting & boasting the powers of 'Language' with(in) our dominant speciel expressions & structures—oppressive, all-encompassing conceptual shackles, even as they provide liberatory-differentiations & emancipatory-possibilities. Indeed, perhaps & ironically, *because-of* this.

Ontocorporeal Narrative(s); or, Speciel-Becoming

Whereas Genet's Our Lady of the Flowers specifically explores speciel ontology from the ontopoietic perspective—that is, the speciel ontology is (re)born in explicitly *poietic* differentiations & expressions—Steve Tomasula's VAS: An Opera in Flatland serves as an apropos bridge towards speciel ontology(s) that differentiate in distinctly *ontocorporeal* 'narrative' space(s). The novel is an extremely challenging, radical work that breaks down various traditional literary boundaries & normative 'form(s).' The premise of the novel situates it as, in a sense, a manifestation-of &/or exploration-from Edwin A. Abbott's late 19th century novel Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions. Extremely early on in VAS, Tomasula quotes a portion of Abbott's text, specifically the section Tomasula identifies as "On the Nature of Flatland." It states:

Imagine a vast sheet of paper on which straight Lines, Triangles, Squares, Pentagons, Hexagons, and other figures move freely about, but without the power to rise above or sink below it, and you will then have a pretty correct notion of my country and countrymen. (Tomasula, *VAS*, 12)

The ontopoietic space occupied by the subjects of Flatland are therefore locked into it, or rather, are incapable or unable of traversing space *exterior* to their own; they are locked in(to) the *interiority* of their conceptual & literal world(s).

Furthermore, in a sense <u>VAS</u> functions as the (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of Abbott's complex metaphor—as if the speciel ontology manifest in Abbott's work was radically invaded & immolated by Tomasula before its ontopoietic (re)birth amongst Fire & shadow(s). <u>VAS</u> revolves around a family in Flatland: Square, his wife Circle, & their child Oval—through which Tomasula explores the ramifications & explodes the presumptions contained with(in) the original metaphor, in the process radically exploring our normative notions of Language & the Body, & their consequent incision(s) in(to) our ontopoietic & ontocorporeal speciel & 'existentiell' skin. The book itself echoes & contributes to this sense. Skin-colored pages, bloody stains littering their canvases, stitches coursing throughout the text (so-many literal & conceptual sutures) all contributing to the transformation of the work's materiality; conceptually & aesthetically morphing the material into a kind of hybrid physiological-'form'—an amalgamation of Language, Book & Body.

It is in this sense, I believe, that one could also read the fiction of J.G. Ballard (I am thinking specifically of <u>The Atrocity Exhibition</u>, but not excluding <u>Crash</u> whose 'narrative' explores such speciel ontology through ontopoietic more-so than distinctly ontocorporeal avenues), Maurice Merleau-Ponty's philosophical explorations of the Body & consciousness, & the works & concepts of Edmond Jabès in <u>The Book of Questions</u> as

dwelling & haunting with(in) & around VAS. As previously discussed in Chapter 1, The Atrocity Exhibition finds Ballard (re)conceptualizing & (re)presenting this-particular human-Body (in *this-specific* speciel ontology) as the necessary becoming-manifestation of those ontocorporeal constructs—the totality of which marks & frames the becoming-haunted space(s) in which our species exists—while simultaneously identifying the primacy of the Body with(in) any construct produced from it. This is of course a similar concept to Merleau-Ponty's entire project, & in many ways can be viewed as so-many explorations of the possibilities of a consciousness that exists with(in the body-proper (albeit outside of *Language*-itself). Jabès' inscription in(to) this concept of the ontocorporeality of 'narrative' & its position with(in) the construction of speciel ontology is significant because its ontocorporeality is markedly *ontopoietic* at its core. In other words, in-&-for Jabès, Language, Book & Body—& their primacy with(in) our consciousness—is responsible for our particular ontocorporeal-possibilities, & thus our speciel ontology(s). This is significant to explore, due notably to its particular relevance with regards to VAS & Tomasula's identification of the dependence upon Language of speciel-possibilities themselves. Before undertaking that journey, however, let us dwell in Jabès' 'World-of-the-Book.'

I suppose that it is important, first & foremost, to identify some of Jabès' biographical information because of its pertinence to his own work—not because of its relevance, per se, to the 'narrative' between Yukel & Sarah, or to assist in an auteur-type reading of some particular phrase or passage,[2] but rather as a lens through which to witness Jabès' ontopoietic & ontocorporeal explorations of our speciel ontology(s). His own history, then, as an expelled Jew, as (dis)located from his birth home, as an exile-

turned-nomad, etc. function in such a manner as to illuminate *a* valid *possible* reading of his poietic expressions. Or, more-so, as an identification of some-thing indisputably with(in) the text, if only as an 'unintended' point or concept burrowing & festering in the work that in-turn manifests in the reader's interior space(s)—in the conceptual explorations located with(in) the reader, absent of Jabès' intention (intended or otherwise).

It is precisely this notion of exile & (dis)location-in-perpetuity that permeates throughout The Book of Questions. The text itself is constructed through a series of questions & the consequent exploration(s) that occur in the process of their explication(s). In addition, Jabès constructs the book through the steady progression of theoretical Rabbinic notes—the collection of certain 'key' passages written (inscribed) in(to) the marginalia(s) by a seemingly countless number of Rabbis. The result is an exhilarating fragmentary assault on the ontopoietic conceptual space(s) of the human, of Language & even of God. In it, the human is essentially (re)conceptualized & (re)presented as the manifestation-of Language & the Word, & the spaces amongst-&-between them—with(in), against & through their 'form(s)'—as they populate the Desert of the Page. The Book, then, becomes the first & only home for the human—& consequently of 'God,' who (despite its particularity) (re)presents the arbiter of speciel ontology(s).

This is particularly relevant & illuminative because, for Jabès, the Book 'doubles' as human-embodiment—it is the manifestation of primordial ontocorporeality—& as such is the becoming-Body, literally, inscribed with-&-by the Words through which we understand consciousness & construct our existence & speciel ontology(s). It is through

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the perpetual interaction with 'words' themselves that the human's speciel ontology *can*

exist—can become-'existence'—& with it, 'God.' "You are the one who writes and the

one who is written," Jabès explains at his own Book's onset, before instructing his reader

to "[m]ark the first page of the book with a red marker. For, in the beginning, the wound

is invisible." Furthermore, for Jabès the story of the Book is "becoming aware of the

scream" (Jabès, *Questions I*, 16)—a scream which can be conceptualized as that which

exists in the primordial-matter of Language, as double(s) haunting the shadow(s) of the

duende. This is a critical point, because it is not simply the notion of a pre-reflective

cogito in the sense expressed in early Merleau-Ponty, for example, nor the scream of

Artaud, which manifests in such a way as to be 'pure signification'—a 'language' more

primal & ancient than Language, but 'Language' nevertheless. Rather, Jabès' scream is

in every-sense a concept that evades easy summation or interiorization.[3]

The Book of Questions revolves around the human's interaction against, through

& with(in) the Void or *Unstruction*.[4] Further, it explores the notion of 'God's' self-

inflicted martyrdom in(to) this 'Nothingness' of *Unstruction*—a sacrifice which in turn

lets-become speciel ontology(s) & the 'human' through, against & with(in) the Word &

Language. Perhaps paradoxically, however, 'God'—as the 'creator' ('author') of our

speciel 'narrative(s)'—experiences an existential-birth *in* the Word, in the Book &

'books' of 'Humans':

> If God is, it is because He is in the book. If sages, saints, and prophets exist, if
> scholars and poets, men and insects exist, it is because their names are found in
> the book. The world exists because the book does. For existing means growing
> with your name. (Jabès, *Questions I*, 31)

For Jabès, the 'name' is in a sense the first act of inscription upon the individual. This

first moment of the Word becoming-enacted & acted-upon the physiological-'human'—

the primordial breathturn & utterance against, with(in) & through the Body—is also, ultimately, a Book. Indeed, the metaphor that weaves together Book & Body, Words & Scars, Language & ontocorporeality is in actuality beyond-metaphor. It is a splicing of so-many concepts, until there is no *clear* or *total* differentiation between the two dichotomous pairings & constitutive elements—until what remains is the 'third-way,' that which is a remainder-to the original conceptual & ontopoietic configuration. "What difference is there," Jabès seems to be ontopoietically asking, "between a wrinkle or scar on the skin, & a word on a page—between the incisions(s) of time on the Body, & the inscription of ink on the Desert of the Book's blank-space (that infinite canvas)?"

      Although, as aforementioned, Jabès' exploration into the nature of the Word, the Book, 'human' speciel ontology(s) & 'God' depends upon the edifice of a dialectic that itself breathes with(in) the text, a much more radical ontopoietic & ontocorporeal strain of viral-thought exists.[5] It is here where Jabès' work is most exhilarating & significant; where (in)between the blank spaces of words—themselves scattered, or distributed like so-many nomadic tribes across the Deleuzean Desert of the Page—there is a fleeting, already-invisible ontological *becoming* of speciel differentiations & possibilities.[6] While this is merely a singular reading through which to approach each of the aforementioned writers & works—& therefore clearly an incomplete summation of their philosophies—I feel that there is a very strong connection nevertheless existent & vibrant with(in) their strands of ontopoietic & ontocorporeal possibilities, particularly when read in conjunction with Tomasula's novel.

      In returning, then, to <u>VAS</u>, what we are presented with is the amalgamation of all these aforementioned concepts. They are isolated (if only temporarily)—inscribed,

spliced & sutured—the result of which is a distinct speciel ontology. This is an ontology

that is always-already both Language & Body, social manifestation & DNA replicant-&-

replicator—& more significantly, the infinite-space(s) between, with(in) & against these

ultimately 'incomplete' conceptual binaries. Traversing this space, then, leads one on a

journey that ultimately exceeds or violates the boundaries of this interiorized space—

which is to say, forces one to move outside & beyond the conceptual ontopoietic &

ontocorporeal interiorization(s) that precede(s) any construction of 'human,' let alone any

notion of 'normalcy,' 'aberration' & 'outcast.' In <u>VAS</u> there becomes-inscribed a thread

concerning a vasectomy procedure for Square, in direct contrast with another intricate-

scar involving the various sterilization programs of our speciel ontology(s). As if to

bring radical attention to the multiplicity of 'like'-'Order(s),' Tomasula transcribes this

'narrative' with those of so-many States & their respective biopolitical inflections &

infections of speciel 'Order' that festered around the 'World' at the same time (& indeed

preceding) the Nazis' own ontocorporeal restrictions upon differentiation. This provides

yet another fascinating lens through which to engage Tomasula's text. It is in this sense

that <u>VAS</u> becomes-related to Agamben & his concepts of homo sacer, bare life & the

'state of exception.'

In <u>Homo Sacer</u>, Agamben identifies the manner in which the construction of the

political-body simultaneously provides for a notion of human rights (within a State

world-system) & for the potentiality of the homo sacer—the 'sacred human.' This

figure—stripped of State-identity & the 'rule of law,' & thus included in(to) the State-

system by means of its radical exclusion. It is through this *included-exclusion* that we

find ourselves living in bare life—that is, in the conceptual space between natural &

political life. Agamben uses this concept to (in a sense) explain the potentiality & in fact inherence of the concentration camp with(in) this ontocorporeal & ontopolitical (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of the 'human' in *this* speciel ontology.

It is the breath with(in) these specific notion(s) that are so pertinent to Tomasula's <u>VAS</u>. They explore & haunt the nexus between & through-which the various constructive & constitutive elements of the 'human' & its consequent speciel ontology(s) *become* those spaces with(in)-which dwell(s) DNA sequence(s), chromosome(s), primordial-matter that senses & bleeds Language & linguistic-Bodies, ontocorporeal possibilities & ontopoietic expressions, all our collective speciel *differentiation(s)*—all interlocking at various points, or at none; constantly, & not at all.

"What, then," Tomasula seems to ask, "is the human?"—a question whose answer, in many ways, is found in his discussion regarding the Human Genome Project, whose basis for *ethnic* & *racial* diversity was predicated upon samples from the world's *languages*. Each 'language' functioned (for the auspices of that project) as a distinct 'ethnic'/'racial' variant—possibilities of-&-for *ontocorporeal* 'form(s)' rooted deep in the primordial-matter of *ontopoietic* differentiation(s).   Each of these languages, Tomasula writes, is itself a separate sub-species with(in) the human category, repeatedly referencing the 125,000 variations of mollusk—categorizations that functionally interiorize conceptual space in(to) ideas of 'normal-groups.' In this sense, both the 'mollusk' & its distinct ontocorporeal possibilities are related to the 'human' & the position of ontopoiesis relative to the articulation(s) of 'our' speciel ontology(s).

The 'narrative' of Katherine Dunn's <u>Geek Love</u> further extends this journey of the nebula between, through & with(in)-which ontopoiesis & ontocorporeality dwell &

manifest. By exploring the speciel expressions & differentiation(s) born from such

zone(s) of possibility, <u>Geek Love</u> serves as a critically distinct analytic lens through

which to (re)conceptualize & (re)present the ontocorporeal. The main characters of the

novel are the Binewskis, a family that runs & operates the 'Binsewki's Fabulon'—a

traveling carnival replete with 'freaks,' 'geeks' (performers that bite the heads off of live

chickens) & entertainers of all variety & esotericism. The father of the family is Aloysius

(Al) & the mother is his once-upon-a-time 'Geek,' Lillian (Crystal Lil); together they

determine that the best manner through which to revive their floundering carnival would

be to *create* 'freaks'—their children:

> She lost her nerve but not her lust for sawdust and honky-tonk lights. It was this
> passion that made her an eager partner in Al's scheme. She was willing to chip in
> on any effort to renew public interest in the show. Then, too, the idea of inherited
> security was ingrained from her childhood. As she often said, "What greater gift
> could you offer your children than an inherent ability to earn a living just by being
> themselves?" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 7)

Through a series of experimentations involving "illicit and prescription drugs,

insecticides, and eventually radioisotopes," the pair's "creative collaboration" first

succeeded in the ontocorporeal manifestation of their "firstborn […] Arturo usually

known as Aqua Boy" whose "hands and feet were in the form of flippers that sprouted

directly from his torso without intervening arms or legs" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 7-8). Next,

Al & Crystal Lil had Electra & Iphigenia—"Siamese twins with perfect upper bodies

joined at the waist and sharing one set of hips and legs […] always beautiful, slim, and

huge-eyed" who "studied the piano and began performing piano duets at an early age" &

whose "compositions for four hands were thought by some to have revolutionized the

twelve-tone scale" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 8). The 'narrative' of the text is woven through

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the linguistic 'breathturns' of their fourth child, the 'narrator' Olympia (Oly). Despite

her father having "spared no expense in these experiments"—her "mother had been

liberally dosed with cocaine, amphetamines, and arsenic during her ovulation and

throughout her pregnancy"—her birth was viewed as "a disappointment" when she

"emerged with such commonplace deformities" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 8). Oly explains that

her "albinism" is the "regular pink-eyed variety" & her "hump, though pronounced, is not

remarkable in size or shape as humps go" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 8); & fitting, giving her role

as 'narrator' is her ultimate 'talent' with regards to the show. She states:

> [M]y parents noted that I had a strong voice and decided I might be an appropriate
> shill and talker for the business. A bald albino hunchback seemed the right
> enticement toward the esoteric talents of the rest of the family. The dwarfism,
> which was very apparent by my third birthday, came as a pleasant surprise to the
> patient pair and increased my value. (Geek Love, 8)

Their final child is Fortunato, whom they call Chick; "[d]espite the expensive radium

treatments incorporated in his design," Oly narrates to us, he "had a close call in being

born to apparent normalcy" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 8). His physical appearance as a 'norm'

belies the viral-power of 'freak' that festers internally as a profound telekinesis.

Al & Crystal Lil's children are the ontocorporeal manifestations of their collective

ontopoietic articulations. They represent the becoming-Body of their poietic-dream(s)—

poietic-Language expressed as & inscribed in(to) the Flesh & Body, as possibilities of

speciel 'form.' Al refers to his children as his "dreamlets" in the work's first line, rooting

its characters' ontocorporeal 'mutations' in(to) the ontopoietic at the 'narrative'-origin.

He "dreamed" his children, he explains, when experiencing a rose garden:

> "[T]here was a big rose garden with arbors and trellises and fountains. The paths
> were brick and wound in and out." He sat on a step leading from one terrace to
> another and stared listlessly at the experimental roses. "It was a test garden, and

the colors were…designed. Striped and layered. One color inside the petal and another color outside" […] The roses started him thinking, how the oddity of them was beautiful and how that oddity was contrived to give them value. "It just struck me—clear and complete all at once—no long figuring about it." He realized that children could be designed. "And I thought to myself, now *that* would be a rose garden worthy of a man's interest!" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 9-10)

Their bodies, then, are the becoming-corporeal expressions of Al & Crystal Lil's ontopoiesis. From the perspective of 'narrative' this is critical as it explicitly references these notions of speciel ontology that I have been exploring—each ontopoietic 'form' made-ontocorporeal directly constructing the 'World(s)' in which the speciel-expression differentiates with(in).

As with Tomasula's <u>VAS</u>, the particular 'form' of Language creates a consequent 'form' in speciel-corporeality. In this sense, it could be said that each Binewski 'dream'-child (re)presents a distinct speciel possibility—& with that speciel differentiation, a corresponding ontological expression. Let us recall for a moment the discussion regarding Ballard's <u>Crash</u> & <u>The Atrocity Exhibition</u>; the manner in which the ontocorporeal is seen as the dynamic manifestation(s) of so-many the ontopoietic expressions that themselves serve as the constitutive elements of-&-for the 'World.' Therefore it becomes imperative to note the conceptualization of the 'Fabulon' with(in) Dunn's <u>Geek Love</u>. If ontopoiesis impacts the ontocorporeal—which in-turn informs & is informed-by the resulting 'World(s)' that differentiate-from so-many bodies—the position & function of the traveling carnival & 'Host' of the Binewski's is critical to identify. Dunn, through her 'narrator' Oly, says of the 'World' they 'form(ed)':

The sky above Mollala was aching blue but I walked from Arty's tent to our van in the same air I'd sucked all my life. It was a Binewski blend of lube grease, dust, popcorn, and hot sugar. We made that air and we carried it with us. The Fabulon's light was the same in Arkansas as in Idaho—the patented electric dance

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step of the Binewskis. We made it. Like the mucoid nubbin that spins a shell called "oyster," we Binewskis wove a midway shelter called "carnival." (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 317)

Functionally, this is a 'temporary autonomous zone' with(in) whose space(s) there manifest(s) countless ontopoietic & ontocorporeal possibilities—it is a becoming-haunted lodge for the shadow(s), double(s) & *duende* of Language & Body to differentiate & perpetuate.

If, say, it is too much to directly link the 'freak(s)' of the 'Fabulon' with-&-to the ontocorporeal speciel differentiation(s) of <u>VAS</u>, then at the very least, it can be said with some certainty that their status as 'freak'—with(in) their 'narrative' space(s)—is akin to Genet's (re)conceptualization of the 'outcast' as emancipatory tour de force in <u>Our Lady of the Flowers</u>. The viral-power of *ontoterrorem* that their Body(s) serve as 'Host' to is transmitted amongst & through the 'World,' & the ontological 'order(s)' that they dwell with(in) & haunt. Arturo speaks to this, as (re)called by Oly, during a night in which they read 'horror' stories—'narrative(s)' intended & designed to elicit *poietic* dread on *corporeal* levels, reducing the particular ontological 'order(s)' of the species to convulsing-terror. In this lengthy passage, Oly says:

> It's funny, in a dingy way, that I make my little living by reading. I have to smile because I used to avoid reading. It scared me.
> It never bothered Arty. He read constantly—anything—but his favorites were ghost stories and horror tales.
> When we were still children I was the one who turned his pages. He'd lie in bed reading late when everyone was asleep. I lay beside him and held his hand and turned the pages and watched his eyes move on quick jerks down the print. Reading was never a quiet pastime for Arty. He rocked, grunted, muttered, and exclaimed. He was in one of his toilet phases at that time. "Sweet rosy-brown arsehole" was his expression of pleasure. "Shitsucker" was the pejorative.
> "Don't you get dreams?" I asked him. "Don't you get scared reading those at night? They're supposed to scare you."

"Hey, nit squat! These are written by norms to scare norms. And do you know what the monsters and demons and rancid spirits are? Us, that's what. You and me. We are the things that come to norms in nightmares. The thing that lurks in the bell tower and bites out the throats of the choirboys—that's you, Oly. And the thing in the closet that makes the babies scream in the dark before it sucks their last breath—that's me. And the rustling in the brush and the strange piping cries that chill the spine on a deserted road at twilight—that's the twins singing practice scales while they look for berries.

"Don't shake your head at me! These books teach me a lot. They don't scare me because they're about me. Turn the page." (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 46)

The *ontoterrorem* resulting from the Binewski children's literal ontocorporeality fundamentally haunts the ontological 'form(s)-of-'order(s)' of the 'World(s)' outside-of & beyond the interiorized-space(s) of the 'Fabulon.' As their traveling troupe (re)presents a (re)conceptualized terrain of speciel possibilities, so too does their presence, as *ontopoietically*-inscribed *ontocorporeality*, radically mark & limit the boundaries of each speciel ontology.   The 'outcasts' that populate <u>Our Lady of the Flowers</u>—in their ontopoietic striations of-&-upon the illusory smooth-space(s) of 'order'—are (re)born in Dunn's work as the *ontocorporeal* 'outcast(s)' of the 'freak.' The 'outcast'-Body(s) of the 'dreamt' Binewskis transgress the corporeal 'form(s)' of 'normativity' littering the pages of <u>Geek Love</u>, in the process virally-inscribing the *duende* of shadow(s) & double(s) that haunt(s) the ether of existentiality with a radical & dynamic edifying immolation of ontological stasis.

As if to emphasize this *ontoterrorem* (this infection of ontological 'order(s)'), Dunn's 'narrative' finds Artuto eventually taking control of the carnival, & forming a cult called 'Arturism.' These followers, called 'Arturans,' eventually undergo a series of amputations & ultimately a lobotomy—the goal of which is "Peace, Isolation, Purity" from their ontological-'World(s).' Whereas the main 'narrator' of the work is Oly, & as

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previously noted the text specifically begins in the recounted 'breathturns' of her father

Al, <u>Geek Love</u> also implements other 'narrative' devices, foremost among them the notes

of a character introduced later in the work, Norval Sanderson. The initial impetus for his

'joining' the 'Fabulon' is to report upon Arturo & his 'preachings;' as his Body becomes-

'infected' with the 'outcast'-virus, however, he finds himself increasingly drawn-towards

the cult's 'narrative' of the 'normal,' the 'outcast' & the Body.[7] Sanderson's notes—his

own personal ontopoietic 'narrative(s)'—identify 'Arturism' as follows:

> *ARTURISM: A quasi-religious cult making no representations of god or gods, and having nothing to say about life after death. The cult represents itself as offering earthly sanctuary from the aggravations of life. Small chalked graffiti, said to be the work of the Admitted, are found in many locations after the Binewski carnival has passed through. The phrase "Peace, Isolation, Purity" (or sometimes initials P.I.P.) seems to be the slogan. Many commercial posters distributed in advance of the show read, "Arturo knows, All Pain, All Shame, and the Remedy!"*
>
> *A fee, called a* dowry*, is required for entering the novice stage. The sum varies depending on the novice's resources but the minimum seems to be around $5,000. Novices are required to serve for at least three months and sometimes as long as a year as workers for the cult. Typists, bookkeepers, and organizers are given longer work periods than laborers. One of the most important tasks of the work period is serving & caring for cult members who have already had major portions of their limbs amputated.[8]*
>
> *The Admitted must furnish their own travel and living arrangements. All that is offered in return for the dowry is free access to Arturo the Aqua Man's shows, and the surgical amputations performed by the Arturan medical staff. Since the medical staff travels with the carnival, the Admitted must follow the carnival.* (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 227)

These amputations—the ontocorporeal manifestations of Arturo's ontopoietic

'narrative(s)' regarding the 'Freak'—are performed by a character called 'Doc P.'

Utilizing Chick's telekinesis to either desensitize or fully anesthetize the 'Admitted'

members, the systemic removal of 'Body' (re)presents one of the founding principles of

Arturism. Sanderson's notes speak-towards this 'principle' in a section he titles "Arturo

Establishes the Aristocracy of Conspicuous Absences and Superfluous Presences," &

which breathes-forth through Arturo's own Language:

> *Consider the bound feet of the Mandarin maiden…and the Manchu scholar who jams his hands into lacquered boxes so his fingernails grow like curling death. Even the Mexican welder sports one long polished nail on his smallest finger which declares to the world, "My life allows superfluity. I have this whole finger to spare, unnecessary to my labor and unscathed by it."* (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 221)

This 'aristocracy' of Thought & Body is one of the constitutive elements of Arturism,

intertwined with the previously mentioned tension of-&-between the 'normal' & the

'freak.' Arturo, in one of his discussions with Sanderson, is quoted saying "I get

glimpses of the horror of normalcy. Each of these innocents on the street is engulfed by a

terror of their own ordinariness. They would do anything to be unique" (Dunn, *Geek

Love*, 223). In another portion of Sanderson's notes, Arturo's exploration of this

(re)conceptualization of 'aberrance' with regards to the Body is more fully explicated:

> *"There are those whose own vulgar normality is so apparent and stultifying that they strive to escape it. They affect flamboyant behavior and claim originality according to the fashionable eccentricities of their time. They claim brains or talent or indifference to mores in desperate attempts to deny their own mediocrity. These are frequently artists and performers, adventurers and wide-life devotees.*
> *"Then there are those who feel their own strangeness and are terrified by it. They struggle towards normalcy. They suffer to exactly that degree that they are unable to appear normal to others, or to convince themselves that their aberration does not exist. These are true freaks, who appear, almost always, conventional and dull."* (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 281-2)

What is illuminated in Arturo's comment, then, is this specific ontocorporeal-inversion of

'normalcy' & *Otherness* vis-à-vis the radical & dynamic (re)conceptualization &

consequent (re)positing of *aberrance* with(in), against & through the 'Order(s)' of 'our'

speciel ontology(s). For Arturo (& by extension Arturism), the Body is neither simply

the extension or *corporealization* of particular strains of Thought, nor is it merely the

'vessel' through-which ontopoiesis manifests. Rather, the Body is (re)conceptualized as

the zone(s) of possibility & differentiation (re)born from-&-through the 'human' & the

rhizomatic interlocutions of Language & Flesh—the splicing of speciel ontology(s) &

(bio)ontopoietic expression(s).

It is critical to illustrate that this *ontoterrorem* is not at all an 'aberration,' but

rather the hyper-logical extension of particular speciel ontology(s). What Arturo

provides through the spectacle of the 'Fabulon,' his show & Arturism is the

(re)conceptualization of 'our' species' dominant ontological 'order(s).' This is

accomplished primarily through an identification of the 'order,' the *unconcealment* of

absent-presence & the consequent *ontopoietic* (re)presentation of *ontocorporeal*

possibilities taken to radically hyper-logical degrees. Sanderson identifies precisely this

in his notes referencing the criticism levied against the Arturan cult:

> *(Arturo in response to critics)*
> "*It's interesting that when these individuals choose—and it is their choice always—to endure voluntary amputations for their own personal benefit, society professes itself shocked and disapproving. Yet this same society respects the concept that any individual should risk total annihilation in war, subject to the judgment of any superior officer at all and for purposes ranging from a promotion for a lieutenant to higher profits for the bullet company. Hell, they don't just respect that idea, they flat expect it. And they'll shoot your ass if you don't go along with it.*" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 282)

Here Arturo (as a character in-&-of the 'narrative') clearly illustrates the inscriptions of

speciel ontology upon the Body, notably those incisions marked by their radical

absence—so-many black holes carved in(to) the Flesh. He dwells in these spaces like a

shadow & double, haunting—a dark-phoenix whose Fire summons, infects & immolates

all effigial-remnants of the artifice of 'Order.'

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As with viral-infection, the moment(s) of transmission are imperceptible yet its

dwelling with(in) the Body & perpetual replication consumes its host. The 'freak' or

'outcast' as Host, then, is critical to both Arturism, as well as the *ontoterrorem* prescribed

by Dunn's novel. Indeed, the *unperception* of this virus demands an investigation in(to)

its means & method of transmission—an inquiry that finds itself rooted in Arturo's

ontocorporeal-breathturn(s). 'Speech'—or rather, *sound*—is (re)presented in <u>Geek Love</u>

as possessing *matter*. The physical-datum of 'sound' itself—manifest in the breath(s) of

Arturo turned-towards & in(to) his Witnesses—functions as the kernel(s) of contagion.

The Language flows in(to) the ear, dwelling as it infects each ontocorporeal cell—

transforming the Body in(to) a becoming-haunted Host for viral-*ontoterrorem*. This

sound-matter is discussed by the character McGurk, a worker for the 'Fabulon':

> "Sound is physical […] Sound is a vibration. It carries through matter. When
> you hear, it's not just with your ears. A sound actually affects every cell of your
> body, making it vibrate and pass that vibration to all your other cells. That's why
> they say a sound is 'piercing' or a scream 'goes right through you.' It does. It
> actually does." (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 175)

As if grasping the possibilities of transmission (or, perhaps, already-infected himself),

McGurk further explains to Arturo:

> "I was thinking […] that you use your voice real well. I was thinking, what if
> your voice wasn't just coming at 'em from the air but was vibrating up from the
> soles of their feet and through their asses up their spines. I was thinking what it
> would be like if they *felt* what you had to say because the boards they were
> standing and sitting on were wired to carry that vibration of your voice." (Dunn,
> *Geek Love*, 175)

In this sense, Arturo's spectacles are incantations—magick rites whose invocation

summons viral-*ontoterrorem* to (be)hold, before unleashing & transmitting them upon &

in(to) the Witnesses. Recognizing this incantatory power, Sanderson states in his notes:

Arty is in tremendous form—his voice booming through your very bones:
    "I want you to be like I am! I want you to become what I am! I want you
to enjoy the fearlessness that I have! The love that I have! The courage that I
have! The all-encompassing mercy that I am!"
    The "yes" sighs up from the crowd like a night wind and I myself nearly
weep at being surrounded by pain. I become convinced, for an hour, that Arty is
not injuring them but is allowing them to acknowledge the pain in their lives in
order to escape from it. (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 190)

Before invading this notion of the 'virus' or 'hot agent' & examining the power of

ontoterrorem—specifically from the perspective(s) of protestational-possibilities—let us

dwell in the becoming-haunted 'narrative(s)' of speciel ontology as examined in the work

of Brian Evenson.

Violent Narrative(s); or, Speciel-Infection

Evenson's novels <u>Dark Property</u> & <u>The Open Curtain</u> are critical works to discuss

in order to identify the terrain with(in)-which the kernel(s) of *ontoterrorem* fester—

specifically the (re)conceptualization & utilization of violence throughout the texts as

they relate to the (re)presentation & consequent exploration of the 'Order(s)' of particular

speciel ontology(s). Violence is often (one could say normatively) presented as

aberration. This is not to say that each & every act of violence is, in & of itself,

conceptualized as 'aberrant.' Rather, that *normatively* speaking, acts of violence are

viewed, literally, as aberrations—as deviations from the standard conduct of the society

&, presumably, the 'rational,' 'reasonable' 'humans' that make up said speciel ontology.[9]

It is from this idea of 'rationality' & 'reason'—in short, of static 'Order'—that there is

often the concurrent notion of a 'human nature.' Specifically, of *the* 'human' nature,

which is to say first a conceptualization of some innate or natural state, & then

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consequently, its application to the 'human' species' normative state-of-Being. This has been discussed & problematized throughout this work, particularly with Tomasula's <u>VAS</u> & the notion of speciel ontology(s)—of the possibilities of speciel ontology, notably through ontopoiesis & ontocorporeality. Thus, what we are presented with is the concept of a society (often 'State') that is itself the 'rational' byproduct & manifestation of 'reasonable-peoples.'[10] As a result of this presumptive concept, any violence that occurs within this construct is, in a sense, inherently 'aberrant,' for it is going against our species' *nature*.

Obviously, it is not so simple of a construct. There are many clear examples made (normative to our society) that juxtapose 'reason' & 'nature,' placing them in contrast, or in some state of struggle. As such, the resulting behavior-model espoused is one of 'man' vs. 'animal;' or more to the point, of the apex of the *distinctly-human* (the concept of 'reason') in conflict with the apex of the *otherwise-natural* (the concept of 'instinct'). This is an interesting conceptual move, because it replaces the 'natural' or 'instinctual' inherence of 'reason' with yet another Humanist layer—essentially an *uber*-Humanism in which the entire evolutionary history of our species (somewhat paradoxically) is subordinated & subservient-to the 'uniquely' 'Human' constitutive elements of Language, Thought & 'Reason.' With(in) this paradigmatic dichotomy festers the conflict out of which is (re)born the 'Human Being'—the animal beyond-animal, a mythical beast at once a product of & yet *beyond* &/or *immune-to* its own historical acts of evolutionary differentiation, its own *speciel* existentiality & ontology.

What nevertheless remains, however, is the amalgamation of (let us say) 'State,' & its explicit rootedness in 'reason'-manifest. As a result, a violation of this presupposed

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static-'Order'—itself another alleged manifestation of the 'Rational-State'—is not only an inherent aberration of behavior, but also simultaneously established as *necessarily*-'wrong.' This notion is supported by the State's official status as the sole & legitimate executioner(s) of violence. Such is the case in both senses of the phrase. The State exercises violence upon any threats it perceives—*externally*, yes, but particularly & especially *internally*—while simultaneously eradicating the validity, legitimacy & viability of violence as an 'acceptable' action with(in) any juridical-'Order,' The sole exception, of course, is *itself*—as the Sovereign, with its privileged power of declaring 'states of exception.'[11]

It is from this space that we first enter in(to) the 'narrative' of Evenson's <u>Dark Property: An Affliction</u>, with(in) which the violence (re)conceptualized & (re)presented exists in a fundamentally different way—a work whose Language as well as ontopoietic structure(s) performs a radical *affliction* upon any particular reading of 'stasis' that is heaped upon or inscribed in(to) its linguistic-Flesh. As if saying "No! Here, in this world, there *is no stasis*!" Evenson fully-realizes—in fact *actualizes*—the imposed 'Order-of-stasis' to its fullest, farthest implication(s) & most monstrous manifestation(s). This 'actualization' is not only 'linguistic' or 'Language'-oriented, but in fact the hyper-real, hyper-logical extension of the 'dominant' expressed ontology of the species-in-question. In the case of Evenson's text, an ontocorporeal 'Order' (specifically) of *stasis*—perceived, imposed, or otherwise—& the hyper-logical *actualization* of this particular ontology with regards to its ontopoietic application.

What is particularly fascinating & critical about Evenson's novel (as it pertains to my work) is this distinct notion of violence not as aberration *at all*, but rather as the

inherent & *necessary* manifest-expression(s) of *this-particular* speciel ontology. This can occur, of course, with(in) the specific 'system' (some-system proper), but also & more significantly, through so-many of our particular ontological conceptualizations—most notably of 'permanence' & 'immortality' whose transcendent position(s) simultaneously function as a 'stasis' of the highest-'Order.'   These speciel expressions are traces—ghostly inscriptions of a particular set of ontological presuppositions. In order to more fully unconceal the actual significance (& signification) of their presumptive base(s), the implications & manifestations contained there(in) must be taken to their farthest, furthest possible extension—until the temporary form(s) interiorizing this speciel ontology are themselves immolated by the Fire of a brilliant dark-phoenix demanding the perpetuity of possibilities.

As Tomasula so convincingly suggests/states in <u>VAS</u>, internal speciel difference is (in essence) the (by)product of the specific ontopoietic expressions manifest ontocorporeally. It stands to 'reason,' then, that each Language & corresponding ontopoiesis, in-turn, possesses a specific & distinct *speciel-evolution* proper to itself, & particular to its *own* ontocorporeal differentiation(s) & manifestation (as such). This is why Tomasula laments:

> Tevfik Esenc…being the last speaker of Ubykh…*Tevfik Esenc and Ubykh both dying in 1992*…Within 90 years, another 3,000 languages are expected to be found nowhere but in museum display cases. Roscinda Nolasquez (age 92) and Cupeño (age 20,000) dying together in California in 1987. (Tomasula, *VAS*, 76-7, my italics)

It is here in such (re)conceptualizations & (re)presentations of Language in its multitude ceaselessly intersect & construct so-many focal points—autonomous nodes of opened, unconcealed space in(to) & from-which our *speciel ontology(s)* root. Evenson's novel,

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then, ceaselessly burrows in(to) the illusory 'transcendent' constitutive elements of our 'dominant' speciel ontology(s), & the actualization(s) of such revelations—viral-*ontoterrorem* infecting the Body(s) of such inhabitants.

Dark Property is essentially structured around two 'narratives.' Both involve quasi-nomadic figures—one a nameless woman, the other a ferocious, über-violent bounty hunter of sorts named Kline—& their (usually exclusive) habitual & monstrous encounters (most notably with a band of perverse cannibals led by the one called Honeybone), & followed by their respective journeys into a 'City of the Dead,' filled with (re)animated, stumbling corpses. In one particularly notable passage, Kline speaks with Eckels regarding first, the notion of property, & second, the nature of Truth (or more specifically, the nature of the *unconcealment-of* 'Truth'). Eckels begins, "softly" asking Kline "What have you done with the women?" (Evenson, *Dark Property*, 107). Presumably, though not explicitly, he 'knows' (or is referring to) Kline's status as an apparent bounty-hunter of females. This in turn sparks the following question & interaction:

> "Are they your women?" said Kline.
> "Do you murder them?"
> Kline pushed the man softly away. The man smoothed his shirt. He drew his face downward, near Kline's.
> "Women are not property," said the man.
> "All are property," said Kline.
>
> (Evenson, *Dark Property*, 109)

This interaction is followed by 'the man' asking Kline first *what* he believed, & then when no answer was given, *if* he believed, thus initiating this exchange:

> Kline shrugged his shoulders. "I will not respond."
> The man walked around the desk. He opened a drawer, removed a simple stylus, unadorned. He dipped the nub, inscribed words upon paper.

> "You would call yourself Godless?" the man said.
>
> "I would not," said Kline.

The man muttered, wrote further. Kline reached for the paper. The man shook his head, pushed Kline's hand away. He diverted the hand a second time, drew the paper close against his chest.

> "Shall we continue?" said the man. "Who owns you?"
>
> "Nobody," said Kline.

The man dipped the pen, shook a slabber of ink from it and across the desktop. He brought the pen toward the paper, raised it, looked up.

> *"You inscribe testimony against yourself," said the man.*
>
> *"You write, not I," said Kline.*
>
> "I write only what you give me," said the man. "I impart only your truth."
>
> *"Truth cannot be imparted," said Kline. "It must be inflicted."*
>
> (Evenson, *Dark Property*, 109, my italics)

In a sense, this captures the energy of Evenson's poetic project—a 'truth' absent of transcendence, rooted in the specific manifest-expressions of a possibility, of a particular speciel-*sentence*—one accessible only through the *affliction* of processually-inscribed inflictions.

Furthermore, Evenson in-turn repeatedly *inscribes* the text of these specific 'narratives' with so-many marks—each chapter prefaced by short German passages (predominantly Hegel, but also including Nietzsche, as well as Heidegger & the Biblical passage of Matthew Chapter 6, among others)—& whose ontopoietic energy explores 'stasis' & 'violence,' as well as their significance-qua-speciel expressions.[12] Indeed, in a moment reminiscent of the aforementioned concept of Celan's *breathturn*, the inscription upon the very first chapter entry reads (loosely), "It turns around and goes…" (Evenson, *Dark Property*, 5). Chapter V is prefaced with Nietzsche's "One has to pay dearly for immortality: one has to die several times while still alive" (Evenson, *Dark Property*, 103), a dark-energy & *duende* that haunts the entire text—&, I would argue, Evenson's ontopoietic project itself. In fact, if these inscriptions are separated from the Body of the

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text, what we are presented with is a fascinating chimeric poem[13] comprised of *fragments of a sentence*—the amalgamated-result serving as both the spectral-guide & shadow-preface to the 'narrative' itself.

We are presented with a significant text; sparse & minimal, brutal & terrifying—but in no way aberrant. Surely, many readers of the novel would shudder at such a proposition; "Certainly," they would collectively breathe, "the acts themselves are nowhere viewed as acceptable…let alone ethical, moral or reasonable." Nevertheless, I maintain that these violent acts are the hyper-real & *necessary* manifestations of particular speciel ontology predicated upon & with(in) the concepts of 'immortality' & 'permanence—the ontopoietic & ontocorporeal manifestation(s) of an implemented & executed 'transcendent' 'Stasis.' The aforementioned German passages serve as a map, albeit one that is ever-shifting & becoming-other. Indeed, the text begins with a quote—Matthew 6:23, "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" However, what Evenson immediately (re)moves from the 'frame(s)' of the text is remarkably significant; Matthew 6:22 reads "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light," and then the first half of 6:23—"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." Taken in totality, we are immediately presented with an incredible amount of information. We are Witness to the spectacle of the novel—the very ontopoietic ashes from which dark-phoenix *(up)rises*, transmitting a deep *ontoterrorem*:

> Matthew 6:22—The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.
> Matthew 6:23— But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

If one were to (I would argue) 'misread'—by which I mean simplify, reduce, literally

petrify—this quotation for its specific & particular religious content, let the following

Heidegger quote from 'Die Sprache' illuminate why such a contention is problematic:

> Der Satz…laßt uns über
> einen Abgrund schweben…

Translated:

> The sentence…let's us float
> over an Abyss…

This is fascinating on its own, however when the missing passage marked by the

ellipsis—"Sprache ist Sprache"—is (re)introduced in(to) the text, an incredible

ontopoietic moment is unconcealed:

> "The sentence: Language is Language, let's us float
> over an Abyss"

What are we to make of Evenson's framing of this quote? How can we conceptualize the

ontopoietic removal of the specificity of Heidegger's 'sentence'? Despite Heidegger

specifically identifying 'Language is Language' as being *the* affective sentence in the

passage, Evenson replaces it simply with '*the sentence*' that "let's us float over an

Abyss." It is not *Language*, then, that Evenson is identifying as that which gives us

'flight' (so to speak), so much as the *construction* of Language.

This could certainly remain the 'dominant' conceptualization of this introduction,

& one could likewise read the novel through such a lens—it would be an interesting,

valid & perhaps illuminating reading. I maintain, however, that something else is

ontopoietically at work here. If we take this (re)conceptualized-Heidegger not in

isolation, but rather in conjunction with its immediate base—the Matthew portion

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included, as well as that information left *concealed* by Evenson—we find that this empowering 'sentence' that traverses the Abyss is in fact rooted in a 'great darkness' burning with(in) the eye, & through it, the 'light of the body.' Thus, by removing Heidegger's specification of *the* sentence 'Language is Language,' Evenson's concealment functions as a radical (re)conceptualization of the sentence (in a quasi-<u>VAS</u>*ian* gesture) as *the* ontological datum supreme. The specificity in differentiating 'Language' from 'language*(s)*' (in their majestic multiplicity)—& the ontopoietic insistence of the latter's presence, & the former's absence—is perhaps the *definitive* constitutive element of the 'human & 'our' 'dominant' speciel ontology(s).[14] It is telling, then, that the transcendent 'Language' has been replaced by the processually-differentiating 'sentence,' i.e. not merely Language (abstractly, generally & interiorized), but *language(s)* in the processual sense, in the perpetual expressions & differentiations of a possibility (Language)—& in a semi-Deleuzean sense, the rejection of transcendence of any kind save the '*expression*.'

Whereas for Deleuze 'difference' is 'Difference' & thus distinct & virtually autonomous,[15] I prefer to focus on the *structure* of 'Difference' itself—what I have previously noted so-many *acts of differentiation*—each of which, in the Deleuzean sense, opens a 'plane of immanence' through-which any-thing(s) perpetually Become(s)-manifest. This does not place it as a transcendent negating-identity, but rather as *the* structure of this 'Difference.' Such a specification is crucial when we consider Evenson's (re)conceptualization of 'the sentence that traverses the Abyss,' itself the 'structure' of the becoming-open of consciousness. It unconceals *a*-possibility for speciel-expression, & consequently a glimpse into the ontological specifications of each

Becoming-Different (so to speak)—or, a 'great,' 'Dark' 'light of the body.' This is the seed of *ontoterrorum*—ontological terror in(to) the deepest ontocorporeal cells—an eradicating violence not of aberrance, but of *horrifying-inherence*.

This is not to say that Evenson is necessarily conceptualizing our species as violent—some banal notion of 'The Human Species' '*innate-nature*' as 'violent.' Such notions are ultimately arbitrary & static conceptual-interiorizations of possibilities. I would instead propose that Evenson is presenting *a-possible-language* of ontological horror, an infinite manifestation of *sentence(s)*—the radically-traversing speciel expressions of a monstrous ontological stasis. This tension manifests in <u>Dark Property</u> & <u>The Open Curtain</u> in quite different (though ultimately complementary) ways. In <u>Dark Property</u> this '*sentence*' exists only in the darkness itself, in absentia, as the specific expressions of *this-species*—one which explicitly seeks out permanence & transcendence at all costs. In these shadows & amongst the doubles, there becomes-(re)animated 'dead,' such that Death is virtually negated—or rather, *concealed*, & life becomes merely the necessary-expression of a particular ontological stasis.[16] This is notably the case through the text's seemingly-endless (re)introduction of the wandering 'Eckels'—each of which is a specified-permutation of singularly obsessed 'Being,' ceaselessly traversing the razed conceptual terrain of its 'world' & 'Order.' They are horrifying, hybridized-vultures, forever in search of new corpses—the chimeric offspring of *this*-ontology.

In <u>The Open Curtain</u>, however, Evenson explores a slightly different conceptual terrain. It is a becoming-haunted zone in which the violence committed, & the horror of *ontoterrorem*, is in a very real sense the *necessary* manifestation of *this*-sentence, of this *particular* permutation of so-many *sentence(s)*—the byways in(to) an overwhelming

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Darkness. The main character, Rudd, as well as Lael (or perhaps it would be more apropos to say Lael-qua-Rudd), exist *through* the specific 'language' of their speciel ontology(s) (in this case, Mormonism). This language, however, is not merely the oft-thought relatively banal conceptualization of an 'empty vessel' of communication, nor merely the summation or amalgamation of 'Mormon culture' as such, but rather *the* fundamental *existentiell*-material through which one's 'light' manifests. In other words, this is not merely the arbitrary specificity of some-language (though certainly, in part, it is precisely that); rather, it is *through* these 'narrative(s)' & *sentence(s)-of-language(s)* that a particular speciel ontology 'expresses' itself, & structures its own possibilities.

If, indeed, Dark Property roots itself in the hyper-real & hyper-logical space(s) of a particular speciel 'order,' then The Open Curtain locates ontological exploration *specifically* at the site of the *sentence(s)* of said-order—in the manifest-expressions of *a*-possible 'light of the body.' In other words, it is through the *sentence* that out of the so-many possibilities, *the particular* speciel 'lights' shine; or rather, are unconcealed through the processual-specificity of some-'language,' & notably away from 'just' some transcendent illusion of Language-proper. Evenson himself comments towards this in his Afterword, explaining, "Mormonism is a culture that nourished me as a person and as a writer growing up; without it I would not be who I am" (Evenson, *Open Curtain*, 223). When taken paratextually to the novel itself, it resonates quite distinctly. Rudd has already (perhaps always-already) radically-manifested himself with(in) his-language, this-culture, these-'*sentences*'—as well as their *power-potentiality* with(in) his own ontopoietic & ontocorporeal existentiality. It is not merely the specific culture, but as Evenson goes on to express, the language-datum *itself*—the processual structure at work

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in this-particular ontological 'light of the body.' Continuing at the conclusion of the

aforementioned quote, he explains:

> And yet at the same time I feel remarkably comfortable having left it
> [Mormonism] and am not sorry to be free of it. *Or at least as free of it as one can
> ever be* of a culture whose *rhythms of speech and ways of thinking one still finds
> oneself to lapse naturally into years later*. I suspect those rhythms are sufficiently
> burned into my brain that they'll stay with me until I die. *But that relation to
> language*, to me, is the best thing about the culture. (Evenson, *Open Curtain*,
> 223, my italics)

It is not enough to merely quote the conclusion of his afterword—the paratextual 'end' of

the work. It must be read precisely *through* the narrative & textual explorations that

preceded it; namely, Rudd's *literal* existence-through the words & *sentence(s)* of his

particular ontology. Indeed, in order to exist in the physical spaces around him, he must

literally form their conceptualization(s) *through* so-many inscribed notes. In the

'narrative' they are (re)presented as little scraps of paper marking the interiorized

conceptual-object(s) &/or effigial-'form(s)' that comprise his physical plane(s) of

existence. Each 'note' is inscribed with the corresponding 'word' for each 'thing' upon

which they are fixed—such that he is *conceptually-Becoming*, is *a Conceptual-Becoming*.

Through-him the *ontopoietic* 'sentences' of the past radically manifest *ontocorporeally*,

& he through-them, in turn, manifests. This, as with <u>Dark Property</u>, is not *aberrant*

whatsoever, but rather the *absolutely-inherent* hyper-reality of *this*-particular ontology-

qua-language. Rudd's existence is through his *sentence*—the particular speciel-language

of his own 'light'—& thus serves as an illuminative example of the ontopoietic &

ontocorporeal shadows & doubles that haunt speciel ontology(s).

CHAPTER FOUR NOTES

[1] When I say it is static, I do not mean this in the sense of its signifying-fluid—of the conceptual matter contained by the form—but rather because of its very existentiality, an existentiality-qua-conceptualization, such that it exists by merit of its *becoming-conceptualized*. I say it is static because of its 'form,' & because it is *becoming-'form(s).'* No amount of significatory-hybridization can reverse its creation. Even its eradication—by Lorcan *duende*, or Artaudian double, or Heraclitean fire—inherently leaves the spectral-trace which, like a black hole, becomes radically unconcealed before us; there is no escape from its interiority, & thus it is stasis, necessarily.

[2] Though both are certainly 'viable' alternative or supplementary readings of the work,

[3] It might be helpful to conceptualize the term alongside Merleau-Ponty's work in The Visible and the Invisible, in the sense of a some-thing that exists outside of consciousness, outside of Language's explicating-&-explicative possibilities, rooting itself instead in a conceptual space that is always-already & forever absent to humans, yet nevertheless perpetually impacting our very speciel existentiality & ontology(s).

[4] In Sartrean terminology this can be thought-of as 'Nothingness.'

[5] One whom finds shelter in manifested fragments of Merleau-Ponty or Celan, in the invisible spaces of the breathturn of a scream.

[6] It should be noted that Jabès roots such a concept in a 'onto-anthropological' reading of the Jews-qua-Kabbalism, constructed through the fragments of theoretical ('imaginary') philosopher-Rabbis. One could easily imagine Jabès scouring through a seemingly endless progression of old Jewish texts, identifying fragmentary threads of these Rabbis' notes, introspections & explorations inscribed into the marginalia(s) of the Tanakh, of the halakha & aggadah.

[7] In his notes, Sanderson speaks directly towards this notion of 'infection' when, following one of Arturo's magickal-rites, he states that "*[f]or hours afterward, wandering through the crowds in the midway, walking in the Admitted encampment, I am swept by the idea, almost believe that having all my limbs amputated will actually free me from the furious scourge of my days*" (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 191).

[8] From the notes of Norval Sanderson:

> *REST HOMES: Theoretically all the Admitted end up at the Arturan rest homes. Administration claims two in existence with plans for twenty more.*
>   *Those who become ineligible for progress are sent there quicker but are pitied for having lost access to P.I.P. Those who complete progress (are reduced to head and torso) go to the rest homes with full honors—living, no doubt, the lives of gold-plated pumpkins: bathed, fed, and wheeled around by servants.* (Dunn, *Geek Love*, 229)

[9] Here Deleuze & Guattari's Nomadology is particularly useful in presenting this connection of rationality, reason & State.

[10] It is perhaps useful to consider this idea in relation to Derrida's conceptualization of *logocentrism* & its *phallo-* & *carno-* derivations.

[11] This concept of the 'state of exception' is explored in depth by both Schmitt (notably in <u>The Concept of the Political</u>) & Agamben (particularly in <u>Homo Sacer</u>), but also explored in such works as Graeber's <u>Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology</u> (albeit distinctly, & specifically as it pertains to democracy). For the auspices of this work, I think the most pertinent to discuss would be Agamben's <u>Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life</u>—an important & compelling examination of power (sovereign power) & 'biopolitics' (specifically). He begins by identifying that the Greeks had no word for 'life' as utilized normatively, but rather conceptualized the term through two distinct terms—*zoe* (the living of animals, men, gods) & *bios* (form or way of living proper to an individual or group). This distinction allows for the subordination and subjugation of biological life (as such) to 'social' living or, rather, State-existentiality. Not only this, but the distinction also illuminates the manner in which Western politics & State-hoods are constructed & reliant upon that which it excludes—namely, the *zoe*'s exclusion from political life. This notion is explored in depth by Agamben, who ultimately presents the concept of 'bare life'—of the natural life that is/has-been excluded from the political realm & in its exclusion, radically (& violently) included & inscribed in(to) by sovereign power (qua- the *sovereign exception*, as well as the 'ban'). This is crucial to his formulations, for it is the sovereign exception that fuels not only the notion of biopolitics, but in fact roots biopolitical content at the very germinating point of (Western) 'politics' itself, & thus concurrently 'refuting' Foucault's theorization of biopolitics marking the entrance into Modernity as such.

He expands the discussion in(to) the Roman juridical figure of 'homo sacer'—the citizen who, through being banned, becomes transformed into an entity that 'can be killed but not sacrificed'—thus (re)rooting him into a space of *exclusionary-inclusion*. The homo sacer is, in the act of banishment, radically incorporated into the very juridical (or other) space from which it was banned. In other words, his exclusion *from* an 'order' simultaneously & inherently functions as a radical-inclusion. In this sense it can thought of as a black hole, whose 'observation' is only possible by means of the radical 'absence' of perceptible space. By banning the individual, they are excluded from Roman rule & protection, & therefore radically included & subject-to the *absence* of those laws; likewise, inclusion in the ban simultaneously serves as an exclusionary practice. Agamben explains, "What defines the status of *homo sacer* is therefore not the originary ambivalence of the sacredness that is assumed to belong to him, but rather both the particular character of the double exclusion into which he is taken and the violence to which he finds himself exposed" (Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 82); or, more specifically, "*homo sacer* presents the originary figure of life taken into the sovereign ban and preserves the memory of the originary exclusion through which the political dimension was first constituted" (Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 83).

Agamben utilizes this concept to illustrate the manner in which sovereign power's first activity is the creation of precisely this figure, such that:

> at the two extreme limits of the order, the sovereign and *homo sacer* present two symmetrical figures that have the same structure and are correlative: the sovereign is the one with respect to whom all men are potentially *homines sacri*, and *homo sacer* is the one with respect to whom all men act as sovereigns. (Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 84).

What is important to highlight, in terms of its relation & relevance to my work, is the conceptual space of possibilities & differentiation dwelling *between* these spheres. It is that nebulous, indeterminate zone identified & illustrated by Agamben as being *the* location, surface & Body in(to) & upon-which politics is itself inscribed—& by extension, or rather in the same-manner-as, ontology & Being/Becoming. Ultimately for Agamben 'bare life' is identified as not merely an exception, but rather (currently) as the norm—as the normative condition in(to) which we are born, & of which the 'concentration camp' becomes the manifest-locality par excellence.

[12] collection of German passages:

Chapter 1. Sie dreht sich um und geht -- It turns around and goes

Chapter 2. Noch bleibt es immer finster über dieser Tiefe für mich—Yet it remains always dark over this Depth for me…

Chapter 3. Er gewinnt seine Wahrheit nur, indem er in der absoluten Zerrissenheit sich selbst findet (Hegel)— "It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself."
Part of the overall passage: "Lacking strength beauty hates the understanding for asking of her what it cannot do but the life of spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. It is this power, not as something positive, which closes its eyes to the negative as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then having done with it, turn away and pass on to something else; on the contrary, spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being."

Chapter 4. (Hegel)…ist es rings um Nacht, hier schießt dann ein blutiger Kopf—it is night on all sides, here suddenly surges up a blood-spattered head

Chapter 5. (Nietzsche) Man büsst es theuer, unsterblich zu sein: man stirbt dafür mehrere Male bei Lebzeiten—One has to pay dearly for immortality: one has to die several times while still alive.

Chapter 6. Jedes Lebewesen, und zumal den Menschen…undrängt und bedrängt und durchdrängt das Chaos…— every living thing, especially men, are inscribed and afflicted and permeated through this Chaos

[13] "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!
The sentence…let's us float over an Abyss…It turns around and goes, yet it remains always dark over this Depth for me…It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself. It is night on all sides, here suddenly surges up a blood-spattered head. One has to pay dearly for immortality: one has to die several times while still alive. Every living thing, especially men, are inscribed and afflicted and permeated through this Chaos."

[14] It should be (re)emphasized & noted that I am drawing a clear distinction from the more traditional conceptualizations of ontology that approach 'Being' in some transcendental way; I prefer to conceptualize ontology as processual—if there is a transcendence in my ideas, it is specifically limited to this structure of perpetual processual differentiation that I locate at our ontological germinating-nexus.

[15] Therefore *not* simply 'negation' as such (a la the Hegelian dialectic).

[16] I find it remarkably similar to Ballard's The Atrocity Exhibition in this sense; that is, the specific speciel expressions of a particular ontological order, such that the physical spaces we traverse, our structures, our architectural universes, are *literally* so-many permutated-expressions of (in a Spinozian-qua-Deleuzean notion) the One—i.e. *this-particular-Different*.

CHAPTER FIVE

Nomadological-Anarchism; or, The War Machine(s) of Outcast(s)

We have traversed the dynamic space(s) of possibilities with(in) the ontopoietic &
the ontocorporeal, as well as those zone(s) of differentiation produced from their
symbiosis as chimera-Body, & whose progeny is speciel ontology(s). In the process, the
'viral' transmission of the 'hot-agent(s)' of 'form(s)' & 'Order(s)' has infected this
processual-exploration, & replicated the shadow(s) & double(s) of a haunting-*duende*—
viruses dwelling with(in) the Body, incising lesions of Language in(to) its Flesh &
Thought. These zone(s) of differentiation between, through & against-which
existentiality manifests, in-turn exists with(in) a 'World' of perception—one which
inherently & necessarily inscribes-&-is-inscribed-by those speciel differentiations
traversing its terrain. As discussed in the previous chapter, this 'World-of-Order' is
littered with 'outcasts' & 'criminals.' It is haunted by these 'ontological terrorists' whose
very-presence *as possibilities* mark & limit the conceptual-'form(s)' of 'normativity.'
Consequently, the ontocorporeal 'Order(s)' of the particular speciel ontology are infected
by *ontoterrorem*, that viral dark-phoenix of consumption & immolation—replicating
ceaselessly & in perpetuity inside of its effigial-Host, until it is left but a series of incised-
lesions saturated & bursting-forth with *duende*. For the auspices of this work, the most
apropos 'Order' of speciel ontology to ultimately (albeit temporarily & dynamically) rest-
upon is that of 'State' & its afore-discussed constitutive elements of 'stasis' & 'form(s).'
As such, the critical text with-which to traverse such ontopoietic & ontocorporeal
(re)conceptualizations of 'State' is Deleuze & Guattari's <u>Nomadology: The War
Machine</u>. Only once we have dwelled in the becoming-haunted space of 'State' can we

fully immerse ourselves with(in) the Body of the Virus, of power, *ontoterrorem* & the

protestational-possibilities from the infection-of-State.

Nomadology: The War Machine is an exhilarating journey through the conceptual

terrain of the war machine, particularly in relation to the State-apparatus. Despite the

length of the following 'passage,' I believe it is critical to (re)present the political

ontopoieis of Deleuze & Guattari through this *ontocorporeal*-glyph of the text. It is

broken down & marked in(to) the following axioms, & consequent propositions &

problems:

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Axiom 1: The war machine is exterior to the State apparatus. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 1)

Proposition 1: This exteriority is first attested to in mythology, epic, drama and games. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 1)

Problem 1: Is there a way warding off the formation of a State apparatus (or its equivalent in a group?) (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 10)

Proposition 2: The exteriority of the war machine is also attested to by ethnology (a tribute to the memory of Pierre Clastres). (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 10)

Proposition 3: The exteriority of the war machine is also attested to by epistemology, which intimates the existence and perpetuation of a "nomad" or "minor science." (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 17)—one that is:

1) a hydraulic model, "rather than constituting a theory of solids that treats fluids as a special case" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 17);

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2) a model of "becoming and heterogeneity, as opposed to the stable, the eternal, the identical, the constant" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 18);

3) a "vortical" model that "operates in an open space throughout which thing-flows are distributed, rather than plotting out a closed space for linear and solid things" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 18); 4) a "problematic" model as opposed to "theorematic" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 19).

> *Problem 2*: Is there a way to extricate thought from the State model? (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 40)

Proposition 4: The exteriority of the war machine is attested to, finally, by noology. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 40)

Axiom 2: The war machine is the invention of the nomads (insofar as it is exterior to the State apparatus and distinct from the military institution). As such, the war machine has three aspects, a spatio-geographic aspect, an arithmetic or algebraic aspect, and an affective aspect. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 49)

Proposition 5: Nomad existence necessarily effectuates the conditions of the war machine in space. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 50)

Proposition 6: Nomad existence necessarily implies the numerical elements of a war machine. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 62)

Proposition 7: Nomad existence has for "affects" the weapons or a war machine. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 75)

> *Problem 3*: How do the nomads invent or find their weapons? (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 90)

Proposition 8: Metallurgy in itself constitutes a flow necessarily confluent with nomadism. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 90)

Axiom 3: The nomad war machine is the form of expression, of which itinerant metallurgy is the correlative form of content.

	Content	Expression
Substance	Holey Space (machinic phylum or matter-flow)	Smooth Space
Form	Itinerant Metallurgy	Nomad War Machine

(Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 109)

Proposition 9: War does not necessarily have the battle as its object, and more importantly, the war machine does not necessarily have war as its object, although war and the battle may be its necessary result (under certain conditions). (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 109-10)

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What is constructed out of this textual-glyph (re)presenting the ontocorporeality of the text—the axioms, propositions & problems posed by Deleuze & Guattari—is a fascinating (re)conceptualization of the State, specifically in relation to science, technology, Thought &, of course, nomads themselves—those radical 'outcast(s)' of-&-for the State. At the onset, Deleuze & Guattari explicitly identify the intimate relationship between the "two heads" of "political sovereignty" or "domination"—the magician-king, & the jurist-priest, i.e. the "despot and the legislator, the binder and the organizer"—two poles that "undoubtedly [...] stand in opposition term by term." This opposition, however, "is only relative; they function as a pair, in alteration, as though they expressed a division of the One or constituted in themselves a sovereign entity" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 1). As a result, "they are the principal elements of a State apparatus that proceeds by a One-Two, distributes binary distinctions and forms a

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milieu of interiority. It is a double articulation that makes the State apparatus into a

stratum" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 2).

This identification is crucial to how their work manifests for a number of reasons,

perhaps primarily due to the specific binary construction of the apparatus—the

hybridized State-'Body' that is simultaneously its specific content *&* symbiote-entity—as

well as the consequent (re)conceptualization of space (literal *&* abstract) in(to) notions of

interiority & exteriority (in relation to the State). Notably, war does not constitute a part

of the State-apparatus—a point explored throughout the text *&*, in a sense, the

(bio)ontopoietic 'thesis' of Nomadology. Rather, Deleuze & Guattari posit that the war

machine "comes from elsewhere"—is "irreducible to the State apparatus," "outside its

sovereignty and prior to its laws" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 2). They then

compare the war machine & the State-apparatus in the context of the 'theory of games' to

'Go'[1] & chess. Chess, they note, is comprised of various pieces each "coded" with "an

internal nature and intrinsic properties," each "like a subject of the statement endowed

with a relative power" which in turn "combine in a subject of enunciation, the chess

player himself or the game's form of interiority" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 3).

Go pieces, on the contrary, are merely "pellets, disks, simple arithmetic units" that "have

only an anonymous, collective, or third person function"—they are "elements of a

nonsubjectified machine assemblage with no intrinsic properties, but only situational

ones" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 3). In short, whereas chess' "functioning is

structural" with(in) their "milieu of interiority," a Go piece "has only a milieu of

exteriority, or extrinsic relations with nebulas or constellations" (Deleuze & Guattari,

Nomadology, 3). This is explored further by Deleuze & Guattari, to include not only the

pieces & consequent game-theory, but in fact also the very nature of war & space in both

of these games—the "semiology" of chess within a "striated" space versus the "pure

strategy" of Go with(in) a "smooth" space (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 4).

This conceptual trope extends throughout their philosophical explorations of the

State & the nomadic war machine, directly informing their own subsequent reading of

what Clastres identifies as the conflict between the "monstrous" State-societies and the

"primitive"[2] counter-States. Traditionally the historico-philosophical exploration of this

relationship has been conceptually limited, centered around the "implication [...] that

primitive people 'don't understand' so complex an apparatus" as the State. On the

contrary, the "prime interest" in Clastres' theories (according to Deleuze & Guattari) is

"his break with this evolutionist postulate" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 10).

Through a series of analyses, it is first argued that "the State is no better accounted for as

a result of war than by a progression of economic or political forces" (Deleuze &

Guattari, *Nomadology*, 14); as a result, Clastres locates the "break: between the

'primitive' counter-State societies and 'monstrous' State-societies whose formation it is

no longer possible to explain" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 14). Consequently, as

Deleuze & Guattari identify, his work revolves around the crucial question of *why* the

State triumphed.

According to them, Clastres maintained that the "the State arose" in a "single

stroke, fully formed," while "the counter-State societies used very specific mechanisms

to ward it off, to prevent it from arising" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 15)—two

propositions which they believe to be "valid." For Clastres, these "primitive" counter-

State's exist in a distinct division with the State, dichotomously creating or allowing for a

"hypostasis" of the primitive—a "self-sufficient entity," entirely *exterior* to the State apparatus. "He made their formal exteriority into a real independence," Deleuze & Guattari argue, and "[i]n so doing, he remained an evolutionist, and posited a state of nature. Only this state of nature was, according to him, a full social reality instead of a pure concept, and the evolution was a sudden mutation instead of a development" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 15).

For Deleuze & Guattari, then, the fundamental flaw is located precisely here—in Clastres' (re)conceptualization of the linkage between the two aforementioned propositions, maintaining that "[w]e will never leave the evolution hypothesis behind by creating a break between the two terms, that is, by endowing bands with self-sufficiency and the State with an emergence all the more miraculous and monstrous" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 15). As they note, the more discoveries made by archeologists, the "more empires they uncover," compelling Deleuze & Guattari to acknowledge that they "are compelled to say that there has always been a State, quite perfect, quite complete;" indeed for them it is "hard to imagine primitive societies that would not have been in contact with imperial States, at the periphery or in poorly controlled areas" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 15). It is this last point that is so crucial, for with(in) this hypothesis is (re)born the inverse—a point "of greater importance" to Deleuze & Guattari —"that the State itself has always been in relation with an outside, and is *inconceivable independent of that relationship*" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, my italics). The conclusion being that "the law of the State is not the law of All or Nothing (State-societies *or* counter-Stare societies), but that of interior and exterior" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 15).

By conceptualizing the establishment of State as dependent-upon these notions of interiority & exteriority—specifically, the declaration of 'power'-over the *inner-space(s)* of determined (& relatively fixed) boundaries—Deleuze & Guattari force us to consequently (re)conceptualize precisely the 'form' of interaction, the space & "boundaries" they themselves have with one-another. Whereas the State-form, "as a form of interiority, has a tendency to reproduce itself," the war machine's 'form' of exteriority "is such that it exists only in its own metamorphoses" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 16-7). Furthermore, they note that:

> It is not in terms of independence, but of coexistence and competition *in a perpetual field of interaction*, that we must conceive of exteriority and interiority, war machines of metamorphosis and State apparatuses of identity, bands and kingdoms, megamachines and empires. The same field circumscribes its interiority in States, but describes its exteriority in what escapes States, or stands against States. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 17)

This is a crucial step in the work, for it (re)roots the 'primal'-interaction *outside* of a specific zone of speciel-ontological existence—i.e. the 'natural' or 'simple' counter-State 'outcast'-Nomad & the 'evolved' or 'complex' State-apparatus. Instead, Deleuze & Guattari (re)turn to the primordial-interaction—to conflict, to the retrograde between zones of differentiation & existentiality—the result being the (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of the ontopoietically-inscribed ontocorporeal-formation of the nomadic war machine, yes, but consequently also the State itself.[3]

There are 3 major subsequent points in Nomadology that are critical to address at this moment. The first is what I concluded the previous paragraph with—this notion of a "nomad" or "minor" science—specifically its existence exterior-to what Deleuze & Guattari refer to as the "royal" or "State sciences." They call these models of science the

compars & *dispars*—the two contrasted & compared in the following way: the "legal or

legalist model employed by royal science" & whose "search for laws consists in

extracting constants, even if those constants are only relations between variables

(equations)," whereas:

> for the *dispars* as an element of nomad science the relevant distinction is material-
> forces rather than matter-form. Here it is not exactly a question of extracting
> constants from variables, but of placing the variables themselves in a state of
> continuous variation. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 32)

In so doing, these two models of science can be (re)conceptualized in relation to Deleuze

& Guattari's reading of chess vs. Go—in the notion of intrinsic signification vs. relational

or situational signification. As a result, both the notion of science itself as well as its

place with(in) relation to the State is fundamentally (re)conceptualized & summoned

forth, as a space to dwell-in & haunt. By identifying this "nomad" science they traverse

not only conceptual space, but also consequently (re)root their work with(in) a literal,

'real' or more ontocorporeal zone of existentiality. In other words, they do not suppose

the possibility of such a model, but rather explicitly identify it as such—the result being a

radical departure from traditional conceptualizations of our material, empirical world—a

following of "the connections between singularities of matter and traits of expression"

(Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 31).

It would require far too much time & space for the confines of my work to

currently explore the total significance of this point in the work, however I would like to

explicitly identify one last element of it before moving on—the tension between the "two

types of science, or scientific procedures" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 36).

Briefly, Deleuze & Guattari describe it as follows: "one consists in 'reproducing,' the

other in 'following.' The first has to do with reproduction, iteration and reiteration; the

other having to do with itineration, is the sum of the itinerant, ambulant sciences"
(Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 36), & thus locates the division at the point of
constancy—or rather, the appearance, presupposition &/or declaration of 'permanency'
or 'constancy,' & the impossibility of such a concept. This becomes increasingly
significant as the "nomad" science links with the war machine, in opposition to the 'royal
science' of the State; as Deleuze & Guattari note:

> what comes out in the rivalry between the two models is that the ambulant or
> nomad sciences do not destine science to take on an autonomous power, or even
> to have an autonomous development [...] In contrast, what is proper to royal
> science, to its theorematic or axiomatic power, is to isolate all operations from the
> conditions of intuition, making them true intrinsic concepts, or "categories."
> (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 38-9).

It becomes clear, then, that as an apparatus that seeks to conserve, preserve & perpetuate
the accumulation of 'power,' the State benefits from '*a*-science' that simultaneously
declares 'Truth,' as well as its own privileged position of supporting & enforcing such a
concept in the first place.

This directly informs the subsequent problem & proposition—that of the position
of Thought with(in) the State apparatus; or rather, the possibility of extricating 'Thought'
from the 'State'—& the position of 'Noology' in relation to the war machine & its
exteriority of & from the State. Noology, "distinct from ideology," is defined by Deleuze
& Guattari as "*precisely the study of images of thought, and their historicity*" (Deleuze &
Guattari, *Nomadology*, 43, my italics). While "thought contents are sometimes criticized
for being too conformist [...] the primary question is that of its form," for "[t]hought as
such is already in conformity with a model that borrows from the State apparatus, and
which defines for it goals and paths, conduits, channels, organs, an entire *organon*"

(Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 40). As a result, Deleuze & Guattari posit, "[t]here is

thus an image of thought spanning all thought, which is the special object of a 'noology,'

and which is like the State-form developed in thought" (Deleuze & Guattari,

Nomadology, 40-1). They identify this form as 'two headed,' as the:

> *imperium* of true thinking (*le penser-vrai*) operating by magical capture, seizure
> or binding, constituting the efficacy of a foundation (*fondation*) (*mythos*) […] [&
> a] republic of free spirits proceeding by pact or contract, constituting a legislative
> and juridical organization, carrying the sanction of a ground (*fondement*) (*logos*).
> (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 41)

In-turn, this corresponds with the 'two poles' of sovereignty previously discussed. These

'two heads,' however, find themselves in constant interference:

> not only because there are many intermediaries and transitions between them, and
> because the first prepares the way for the second and the second uses and retains
> the first, but also because, antithetical and complementary, they are necessary to
> one another. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 41).

It is with(in) this passing, Deleuze & Guattari theorize, that there occurs " 'between'

them an event of an entirely different nature, one that hides outside the image" & which

is not only a metaphor of an "*imperium* of truth and a republic of spirits," but rather the

"necessary condition for the constitution of thought as principle, or as a form of

interiority, as a stratum" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 41). The "between" exists,

then, in inherent conflict with this image, fundamentally undermining the "gravity" &

"interiority" of thought that results from their relationship—an interdependence that, on

the one hand, infuses thought with a "gravity it would never have on its own, a center that

makes everything, including the State, appear to exist on its own efficacy or on its own

sanction" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 41-2), while on the other, allows the State

to also gain "something essential: an entire consensus"—that is, "the fiction of a State

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that is universal by right, of elevating the State to the level of the universality of law [...] as if the sovereign were left alone in the world, spanned the entire ecumenon, and now dealt only with actual or potential subjects" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 41-2). It is clear what results from such a union & symbiotic-exaltation; not only does the "particularity of States" & "possible-perversity" or "imperfection" become "merely an accident of fact," but the "State gives thought a form of interiority, and thought gives that interiority a form of universality" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 42). Because of this conceptualization of Thought & noology—which themselves both inform-&-are-informed-by the aforementioned 'royal science'—the State infuses Thought with 'Absolute' authority & 'reason.' Consequently, this empowers the State as the "sole principle separating rebel subjects, who are consigned to the state of nature, from consenting subjects, who rally to its form of their own accord" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 42)—in short, the State is solidified as the *only* possibility for the formation(s) of speciel ontology(s).

   In opposition to this, however, are "counterthoughts" that "confront," "which are violent in their acts, discontinuous in their appearances, and the existence of which is mobile in history" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 44).[4] As Deleuze & Guattari further explain, "these are the acts of a 'private thinker,' as opposed to the public professor" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 44)—though even the term "private thinker" is "not a satisfactory expression, because it exaggerates interiority, when it is a question of *outside thought*" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 44). This concept of "outside thought" is remarkably profound, specifically the emancipatory possibilities of the war machine with(in) the aforementioned noology. Deleuze & Guattari note that

placing "thought in an immediate relation with the outside, with the forces of the outside, in short to make thought a war machine, is a strange undertaking" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 44), however:

> [t]here is another reason why "private thinker" is not a good expression: although it is true that this counterthought attests to an absolute solitude, it is an extremely populous solitude, like the desert itself, a solitude already interlaced with a people to come, one that invokes and awaits that people, existing only through it, though it is not yet here... (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 44-5).

It is here that Deleuze & Guattari return to the 'form' of Thought, however in this case, the 'form' of the "exteriority of thought—the force that is always external to itself, or the final force, the *n*th power" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 45). This form is "not at all *another image* in opposition to the image inspired by the State apparatus," but rather "a force that destroys both the image *and* its copies, the model *and* its reproductions, every possibility of subordinating thought to a model of the True, the Just or the Right (Cartesian truth, the Kantian just, Hegelian right, etc.)" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 45).

By rooting the war machine first in "nomad" science, & then with(in) the exteriority of Thought, Deleuze & Guattari identify a very particular & specific emancipatory-possibility against the State—existing with(in) a "form of exteriority [that] situates thought in a smooth space that it must occupy without counting, and for which there is no possible method, no conceivable reproduction, but only relays, intermezzos, resurgences" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 45). This exteriority of Thought is further explicated through Deleuze & Guattari's identification of two "pathetic texts, in the sense that in them thought is truly a *pathos* (an *antilogos* and an *antimythos*)" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 46)—Artaud's letters to Jacques Rivière and Kleist's

"On the Gradual Formation of Ideas in Speech." In Artaud, according to Deleuze & Guattari, Thought is explained to operate:

> on the basis of a *central breakdown*, that it lives solely by its own incapacity to take on form, bringing into relief only traits of expression in a material, developing peripherally, in a pure milieu of exteriority, as a function of singularities impossible to universalize, of circumstances impossible to interiorize. (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 46)

Meanwhile, in Kleist what is unconcealed is a notion of a:

> thought grappling with exterior forces instead of being gathered up in an interior form, operating by relays instead of forming an image; an event-thought, a haecceity, instead of a subject-thought, a problem-thought instead of an essence-thought or theorem; a thought that appeals to a people instead of taking itself for a government ministry" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 47).

The result is a conceptualization of *all* Thought as a "becoming, a *double becoming*, rather than the attribute of a *Subject and the representation of a Whole*" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 49, my italics).

This concept manifests directly in(to) the final point of the text that is crucial to explore—namely, the State's perpetual-striation of its *internal & neighboring* space(s) & zone(s) of speciel differentiation(s) of ontology(s), & the consequent interactions this 'form' has with the nomadic war machine. In my estimation, the most significant element of this final section of the text revolves specifically around the position of the nomadic war machine—at this point conceptualized as separate from the State & without '*war*' as the '*objective*'—as an emancipatory action against the power-mongering of the State, counter-to the forced striation of an inherently smooth space now controlled & (re)conceptualized as fixed, constant, knowable.

These nomadic warriors *ontocorporealize* in figures such as Artaud & Kleist, yes, but the conceptual 'form(s)' Deleuze & Guattari construct *also* inherently place *all* thoughts, *all* thinkers in(to) this war machine—in direct conflict with the striated space(s) they are forced to traverse. This is why the State, if not successful in "striating its interior or neighboring space," finds its very own flows "necessarily adopt[ing] the stance of a war machine directed against it, deployed in a hostile or rebellious smooth space (even if other States are able to slip their striations in)" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 61). In response to the 'force' or 'power' of the war machine, the State must appropriate it; thus the question turns-to *how* it will accomplish this—an undertaking paradoxical in nature, with various factors "that make State war" into "total war." These factors, they note, "are closely connected to capitalism" & have to do with the "investment of constant capital in equipment, industry and the war economy, and the investment of variable capital in the population it its physical and mental aspects (both as warmaker and victim of war)" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 117-8). Even with(in) the perpetuity of 'total war,' however, Deleuze & Guattari identify that:

> the very conditions that make the State or World war machine possible, in other words constant capital (resources and equipment) and human variable capital, constantly recreate unexpected possibilities for counterattack, unforseen initiatives determining revolutionary, popular, minority, mutant machine.[5] (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 119-20).

The position of the 'Thinker,' then—of a conceptual *creator* or *unconcealer*—is to perpetually engage in an *(ante)razing* or *(dis)inscription*. In this sense it is to *unconceal* a (re)turn to a conceptual space before-razing, a *reverse-inscription* that "has as its object not war, but the tracing of a creative line of flight, the composition of a smooth space and of the movement of people in that space" (Deleuze & Guattari,

Nomadology, 120). They go on to explain that, "[a]t this other pole, the machine does indeed encounter war, but as its supplementary or synthetic object, now directed against the State and against the worldwide axiomatics expressed by States" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 120). It is in this sense that "*they can make war only on the condition that they simultaneously create something else*, if only new nonorganic social relations" (Deleuze & Guattari, *Nomadology*, 121). As a result, Deleuze & Guattari conceptualize the war machine not as an oppressive functional organ of the State apparatus, but as a distinct concept from-&-against State-war, & from the State's oppressive striation & interiorization of speciel ontology(s) constituted by the smooth space(s) of possibilities.

Discourse & Power; or, Protestational-'Narrative(s)'

> **Protestation**: The action of protesting; that which is protested. 1) A solemn affirmation of a fact, opinion, or resolution; a formal public assertion or asseveration. *to make protestation*, to protest in a solemn or formal manner.
> —Oxford English Dictionary

> "Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere."
> —Michel Foucault (*History of Sexuality I*, 93)

The identification & consequent exploration of 'State' as a 'power-monger' & 'framer' of speciel ontology in-turn shifts the space of introspection to the 'Body' of 'power.' As a result, the question at-hand is predicated upon the structure-of-differentiation & system-of-transmission of-&-for 'power'—such that the question likewise becomes the space for its own answer(s). Even as power lies in waiting, hidden

& concealed there at the very base of the problem, it is manifesting & has already-manifested with(in), amongst & through 'our' ontopoietic & ontocorporeal 'selves.' It is as if it is becoming-retrograde, repeatedly crashing back in(to) itself—always, inevitably & processually back-in(to) these waves of sublimation & subjugation, like tsunamis (re)born from the perpetual seismic shifts of power.

What we have, then, is a condition & structure of power which acts as 'hot-agent(s)' upon & in(to) Bodies—has *agency* over them. Power—as an entity & energy—flows & traverses *discourse*. In the language of Michel Foucault, this is to say that "it is in *discourse* that power and knowledge are joined together" (Foucault, *History Sexuality*, 100), & as such any examination of power (particularly as it pertains to 'form' & protestation), must be conducted through the Body-of-discourse. It is "for this very reason," according to Foucault, that:

> we must conceive discourse as a series of discontinuous segments whose tactical function is neither uniform nor stable. To be more precise, we must not imagine a world of discourse divided between accepted and excluded discourse, or between the dominant discourse and the dominated one; but as a multiplicity of discursive elements that can come into play in various strategies. It is this distribution that we must reconstruct, with the things said and those concealed, the enunciations required and those forbidden, that it comprises; with the variants and different effects—according to who is speaking, his position of power, the institutional context in which he happens to be situated – that it implies, and with the shifts and re-utilizations of identical formulas for contrary objectives that it also includes. (Foucault, *History Sexuality*, 100)

It is precisely with(in) this specific (re)conceptualization of 'discourse' that Foucault (re)presents such a concept as akin to what I have heretofore identified & discussed as 'narrative.' As with Foucault's particular notion of 'discourse,' my work's analysis of 'narrative' inscribes-&-is-inscribed by the ontopoietic & ontocorporeal differentiation(s), expression(s) & possibilities born-from & traversing the terrain of its own 'World(s).'[6]

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Despite what I would maintain is a functional inter-exchange between 'discourse' & 'narrative' with regards to the auspices of my work, for the sake of ontopoietic-cohesion in this particular sub-section I will utilize Foucault's specific term (albeit with this caveat).

As the embodiment of power—& yet paradoxically & simultaneously the 'weapon' of power's own *unstruction*—discourse holds a privileged & unique place in anti-hegemonic resistance & emancipatory action. "Discourses are not," Foucault reminds us:

> once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than silences are. We must take allowance for the complex and unstable process whereby discourse can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and a starting point for an opposing strategy. (Foucault, *History Sexuality*, 100-1)

In other words, *protestation*—& the inhabiting & dwelling with(in) the very same Host of its oppressor. Protestation is the becoming-sacrificial zone(s) of possibility for this-Body—*its-Body*—in order to rupture the static-site(s) & effigial-'form(s)' of power. This is its function & signification. As Foucault notes:

> discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it, renders it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it. In like manner, silence and secrecy are a shelter for power, anchoring its prohibitions; but they also loosen its holds and provide for relatively obscure areas of tolerance. (Foucault, *History Sexuality*, 101)

The dichotomous nature of discourse, then, resides in its capability of functioning *in opposition to* power, even as it seemingly solidifies it. It is the presence of *protestation* with(in) discourse that provides the possibility of emancipatory resistance. But what can be said-of &/or identified-in the structure(s) of differentiation that mark & limit these notions of 'power' & 'protestation'?

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Power is a virus. It is not 'living,' which is to say that it does not & cannot exist outside of the Host—in absentia of some-'living'-thing with(in)-which the virus hijacks the ontopoietic & ontocorporeal material ultimately used to replicate itself. In a vacuum it is *unliving*—neither 'alive' nor 'dead,' but rather simply *is-stasis*—as if literally ceasing differentiation(s) & thus perhaps its very own existentiality-in-'time.' In the 'living' cells of the Body, however, it activates & digs in(to) its Host. It steals the very Body with(in)-which it dwells, ceaselessly haunting & becoming-multiple, differentiating-in-perpetuity until ultimately overcoming the site & radically *inversing* its functionality. The Body is thus a becoming-vessel for the virus, & for its ceaseless self-replication, sedimentation & solidification. That is, until the vessel crashes, dies, bleeds out, & the virus is left, in-isolation with no more substance from-which to feast—until the virus is destroyed by the very same act of inhabitation, domination, overriding-differentiation & *agency* that first give(s) it 'life.' The Host, in this totalizing-consumption, undergoes a horrifying, processual *unstruction*—its own specific functionality, existentiality & speciel ontology becoming-Other for its *unperceptible* spectral-conqueror.

Likewise, protestation is a virus. It cannot, by definition, exist in-isolation—in-absentia of a viral-'form' of usurping. Rather, in a brilliant double-infection, it invades the very 'Body(s)' of the virus. It consumes the virus' interiorized signifying-fluid in an act of *unstruction*, before (re)conceptualizing & (re)presenting this constitutive genetic-datum of the 'virus' in perpetual acts of self-replication. Like power, protestation must also, by its very nature, be (self)immolation & *unstruction*. It is a self-sacrificial Body—& necessarily-so. For power, the Host-Body is discourse; for protestation, power. Thus

we have a multi-layered system. There is discourse, with(in)-which power roots &

virally multiplies itself, perpetually, to the point of self-destruction; & there is power,

which houses protestation & its ravenous, sacrificial differentiation & (self)replication.

In both cases there is the Host—power cannot exist absent of discourse, nor protestation

in absentia of power—& ultimately, there is perpetual self-annihilation.

Power, however, resists its own demise, greedily & voraciously searching out

Host(s)—hijacking them & always-already attempting to solidify (& thus 'immortalize')

the 'order of things' & 'Order(s)' of speciel ontology before the Body is inevitably

internally devoured & begins to become a bleeding-out—before a new vessel is found &

infected, invaded & consumed in(to) its final *unstruction*. Thus is its pattern; thus its

resistance. As protestation is a sacrificial virus, it contains the dark-phoenix with(in) its

differentiating-impetus, & is therefore haunted by so-many shadow(s) & double(s). It is

with(in) & because of this identification of protestation's inevitable self-immolation that

it can embody a different 'form' than merely the '*counter*-to-power.' For in the self-

recognition of its inherent-*sacrificiality* that protestation manifests not as 'counter'-

power, but rather as *anti-power*, & therefore *anti*-hegemony.

If discourse is the Host of power, then with(in) its Body power can

simultaneously take-'form' & replicate itself—& by extension the hegemony of-&-over

particular speciel ontology(s)—thus solidifying & indeed enforcing both subjugation &

oppression. In other words, it is through discourse that power & hegemony become-

existence & possess-agency. As a result, discourse is inherently a becoming-tool of-&-

for the 'hegemon'—wielded as a weapon in order to sediment the status of the 'ruling'

speciel ontology & its corresponding 'form(s). Power wishes only to replicate itself—to

the extent that this replication becomes self-destructive, power searches out other-Bodies

& Hosts with(in)-which to differentiate & therefore 'live.' In this sense, it can be said

that the 'desire' of power is 'immortality;' or, more specifically, the immortality of its

own 'Order(s)' of speciel ontology(s). Discourse, then, must be understood in relation to

its own concurrent & consequent 'lack' of agency, specifically at-&-in the hands of

power. Indeed, the signifying material of the discourse itself is ultimately usurped,

transformed or (re)constructed into a 'hot-agent' of replication, forever searching out new

& more Hosts to infiltrate, hijack & devour. It is with(in) & through this understanding

that the concept of protestation becomes-possibility(s).

If power takes-agency with(in) the ontocorporeal-embodiment of discourse, then

protestation takes-agency through its own infiltration of power with(in) the discourse.

This last shift is crucial. Protestation's reliance on the signifying-datum of power places

it directly & unavoidably with(in) the Body of discourse & finds itself inscribed in(to)

two levels of embodiment. It can be (re)presented in the following ontopoietic-glyph:

Protestation➔*with(in)*➔Power➔*with(in)*➔Discourse

As such, protestation must inherently operate with(in)-relation to power—which is to say

as the *(anti)thesis* to power & all its consequent manifestations—however always-already

with(in) the larger 'primary' or *primordial*-'Body' of discourse. It is through this

relationship, as well as the understanding of the structure of differentiation marking its

own embodiment, that protestation exists. As a result, protestation—as an act, as an

agency—must be *antipower*, albeit with(in) the broader context of discourse. For

emancipatory-protestation & anti-hegemonic action to occur, an analysis of the

ramifications of power's agency over discourse is necessary, particularly with relation to speciel ontology(s) & their 'framing.'

The 'perception(s)' of Power are ontopoietically & ontocorporeally (re)presented as 'invisible' based upon their hijacking(s) of the vessel(s) of discourse—which is to say that power itself exists, in the most primordial way, non-visibly or *unvisibly*. Discourse—itself often presented as 'natural,' becomes power's avatar to society. Let us use as an example 'capitalism' & its (re)conceptualization & consequent (re)presentation as 'natural,' 'inevitable,' 'necessary,' 'eternal,' et. al.—as opposed to its identification as a construct, a development, a condition, a historical moment. The result is, actually, quite horrifying. Under the guise of discourse, a condition of power—one could say power's agency—is cloaked, & as a result proceeds unimpeded & unchallenged with(in) its respective speciel ontology(s).[7] There(in) lies the ultimate success of power; like a virus, it replicates *unvisibly* with(in) the Body until the Host is affected & afflicted. Through its *unvisibility*, however, power avoids symptomatic-identification. Only when the host is a dying bleeding-out *unstructed*-'form' does the virus of power finally present itself to the speciel ontology(s) with(in)-which it dwells. Of course, by that time it is always-already 'too late' for it has already been transmitted, & infecting its next Body—that next discourse—*unvisibly*.

All too often, the 'symptoms' of power's destructive or *unstructive* self-replication(s) are merely attributed to the confines or 'frame(s)' of the discourse itself: "Those ills," one can be heard breathing, "are merely the limits of the discourse." Of course, such a declaration is inherently problematic, for what *fills* the discourse? What, if not the replicating virus of power, constitutes the signifying-fluid of discourse? Thus the

paradox. What is discourse if not the vessel for power's self-replication? More to the

point, how can discourse even differentiate & become possible-expression(s) in absentia

of power? Is discourse itself merely a form of a virus?—some symbiotic entity that

'lives' only when occupied by power? Indeed, it would appear as if discourse were not,

as previously thought, the 'living'-Host invaded by power, but rather is itself an *unliving*

(though not 'dead') virus of sorts—one which requires power in order to activate,

differentiate & exist. What we have, then, is a virus-symbiote; an entity 'living' only

when acting as Host, but capable of *becoming* only when infiltrated by a virus—a

symbiotrophic chimera of power. If discourse is not the 'living'-Host with(in)-which

power resides, but rather an *unliving*-Host that is activated only by power's presence,

then what is its primordial-'form'? Simply, it is the Body(s) of our speciel ontology(s).

The infection of this virus in the Flesh of discourse—the space(s) in(to)-which so-many

lesions are inscribed—marks the Body as a zone of inevitable *unstruction*. This Flesh of

the marked-Body is saturated with pustules oozing the soot-blood heralding the

summoning of *ontoterrorem*.

Let us explore, then, a discourse or 'narrative' of speciel ontology whose

ontopoietic & ontocorporeal breath turns towards the primordial black-pox affliction of

the dark-phoenix—Albert Camus' The Plague. There are essentially three 'normative' &

oft-conceptualized & (re)presented analyses of the work. The first is as a metaphorical

reading of the Nazi Regime's brutality throughout Europe, & France's 'resistance' to such

atrocities. The second is as a philosophical treatment on-&-of 'Absurdism' &

consequently Existentialism, & the third is a critique circling around concepts of 'human'

futility before the powers & forces of nature—of a universe that is beyond, or in absentia

of some abstract 'human' notion of 'reason.' Valid though these may be, they are of course but singular-possible readings of the novel; ones which, despite providing potentially valuable & interesting perspective(s), nevertheless settle in far too narrow of an ontopoietic space to fully 'encapsulate' what the work is enacting—or more aptly, *unconcealing* with regards to speciel ontology, power & protestation.

Rather, I propose an examination in(to) the ontopoietic 'narrative'-Body of <u>The Plague</u>—a dwelling with(in) the 'hot-agent' & virus of power & protestation. When exploring the viral-agent as previously discussed, it can be said to exist in the novel on two fundamental levels: the 'singular,' 'individual' level of 'our' speciel ontocorporeality (the 'human body'), & the corresponding ceaseless & merciless differentiation & replication with(in) the Host until it literally bursts through the Fleshly-confines of the Body; & the outward flow of this soot-blood saturated with 'hot-agents' invades the community at-large, dwelling-upon & haunting-with(in) the constellations & chains of human body(s) of-which 'society' or particular speciel ontology(s) consist. Such is the manner in which power—as the dark-virus of *ontoterrorem*—infects, replicates & transmits itself perpetually unto other Host-Bodies. <u>The Plague</u> identifies this structural 'nature' of power, thus infusing the typically banal concept of the virus as 'bane of society' (& by extension 'human' existentiality itself), with the far more radical & dynamic (re)conceptualization of the 'plague of power' as perhaps *the* dominant &/or definitive particular speciel ontology. In other words, a movement away from the misappropriation of virus as 'foe' to 'human,' & rather in(to) & towards the (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of its marking of the brokerage of power as *endemic* to said speciel ontology(s).

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It is entirely possible that the novel does not begin, truly & in earnest, until the 116th page. While it is undoubtedly true that in the previous 115 pages there are, *thematically* speaking, many significant events, various crucial interactions & of course the catalyst of the work itself—the 'literal' introduction of the plague itself in(to) the 'story'—the true 'narrative' (as it pertains to my work) begins to burn in the middle of page 116, deep with(in) the text. Tarrou comments on a sermon:

> At the beginning of a pestilence and when it ends, there's always a propensity for rhetoric. In the first case, habits have not yet been lost; in the second, they're returning. It is in the thick of calamity that one gets hardened to the truth—in other words, *to silence*. (Camus, *Plague*, 116, my italics)

This notion of the 'truth' (or Truth) being equated to silence, & the silencing-of bombastic-rhetoric—indeed the very notion of the 'truth' of a particular species' becoming-rooted with(in) an 'order' of silence with regards to the 'narrative(s)' of their speciel ontology(s)—serves as the foundation from-&-through which 'power' functions as an oppressive exertion of force unto others, & eventually thus back in(to) itself. It can, in this sense, be thought of alongside Celan's oft-noted breathturn, & the momentary cessation of 'life' & subjective existence itself, before a (re)turning outward—a (re)birth on some level which in-turn infuses each dynamic moment with an inherent ontocorporeal-phoenixity.

As such, it is with(in) the breathturn(s) that silence functions as a lacuna of sorts—black hole(s) whose existence is & can only become-recorded because of the absence of presupposed & constant perceptive-presence. In other words, such as the black hole is identified due to the *absence* of light with(in) a spectral-zone of space-time—& the breathturn 'visible' only with(in) & through the cessation of one's rhythmic respiratory process—so to does the silence rooted *in absentia* of rhetoric serve as the

'Order' of a speciel ontology. The silence serves as an *unconcealing* of the current

dominant ontological expression(s) of a species, freed from the oppressive concealment

of existence; as a result, the moment of unconcealment is an ontological reading of our

speciel existence—both what it currently 'is' in the actuality of its current 'Order(s),' &

more importantly what it can-&-must *become*. Thus with(in) Tarrou's observation, the

novel's ontopoietic explorations & consequent *unconcealment(s)* begin their

breathturn(s).

Shortly thereafter & responding to his initial commentary, Camus writes, "[t]he

soul of the murderer is blind; and there can be no true goodness nor true love without the

utmost *clearsightedness*" (Camus, *Plague*, 131, my italics), & no 'clearsightedness,' one

can presuppose, without the perpetual attack upon & in(to) the oppressiveness of

concealment. As Tarrou noted, it is *with(in) pestilence itself*—not at its theoretical

beginning, nor its presumed conclusion—that one can become-Witness & listen-to the

absence, to the radical absentia of the 'true' speciel ontology(s) & their ontocorporeal

manifestation(s) as species-in-time & in-space. The plague, therefore, essentially serves

as the unconcealment of these 'true' ontological 'order(s)'-of-things which—both

ironically & tragically—are defined & fueled by the brokerage of power, i.e. the plague

itself. In other words, one could say that (paradoxically) the very thing that serves to

unconceal the 'true' & actual expressions of a 'society' or ontocorporeal-possibility, is

the culmination of a special ontology predicated on *concealment*—on the concealment of

a sound (or organic) ontology. The plague, then—as does power—serves as both

oppressor & concealor, but also as an ultimate force of *unconcealment*; it is perhaps

possible, then, to say that self-destruction is inherent with(in) its ontological structure—

that the brokerage of power, as a force both applied & exerted *outward & unto* other subjects, will *necessarily* self-terminate. As a species, therefore, we must identify this inherently 'suicidal-ontology'—one which *unconceals* its own destructive nature even as it so perpetually *conceals & destroys* that which attempts to 'read' or 'mark' it as such.

Tarrou's conversation with the magistrate, M. Othon further illuminates the 'order(s)-of-things' with(in) speciel ontology predicated on brokering power—an ontology that is more 'true' *with(in)* the pestilence, than before &/or after it;

> Tarrou asked if his work had increased as the result of present conditions [...] "Quite the contrary [...] almost my only work just now is holding inquiries into more serious breaches of the new regulations. *Our ordinary laws have never been so well respected*." "That's because, by contrast, they necessarily appear good ones," Tarrou observed. "What does that matter? *It's not the law that counts, it's the sentence. And that is something we must all accept*." "*That fellow*," said Tarrou when the magistrate was out of hearing, "*is Enemy Number One*" (Camus, *Plague*, 146, my italics).

With(in) the midst of the plague, as Tarrou had previously claimed, the 'true' speciel ontology(s) of a 'people' will be unconcealed. As such, M. Othon's identification of what is 'truly important' at that-time—the *sentence & not the law*—serves as an example of an unconcealed observation. In other words, the speciel ontology of their-particular 'society' expresses itself in so-many specific & particular manifestations: government, art, 'language,' architecture, etc.—literally every speciel expression is itself an ontopoietic expression which can likewise be read vis-à-vis a lens of unconcealment. The magistrate's claim, therefore, illuminates a specific *ontopolitical* speciel-expression; that is, the insignificance of Law in light of the clear-&-present brokerage of power. For M. Othon, the power of the 'State' is embodied by *the sentence*, & supersedes the established 'order' of Law itself.

Let us for a moment suspend the philosophical dilemmas surrounding any established set of 'Laws' that themselves exist with(in) an inherently unequal socioeconomic & biopolitical landscape, & merely focus on the presupposition(s) involved with the concept of 'Law' as it pertains to a theoretically 'democratic'-State—that is, the establishment of equal & just 'rules of conduct' or 'restriction(s) of action(s)' that are based upon the 'will of the people, for the betterment of the people.' This is, after all, what 'Law' in a 'democracy' is supposed to theoretically accomplish. As such, M. Othon's declaration that Law itself is subservient—in fact literally insignificant & *unvisible* in the shadow(s) of 'the Sentence'[8]—unconceals the primary function of the State: *control*. As aforementioned, with(in) the thick of pestilence itself lies the actual truth, i.e. the unconcealment of the dominant primordial-structure(s) of speciel ontology(s):

> Thus, whereas plague by its impartial ministration should have promoted equality among out townsfolk, it now had the opposite effect and, thanks to the habitual conflict of cupidities, exacerbated the sense of injustice rankling in men's hearts. They were assured, of course, of the inerrable equality of death, but nobody wanted that kind of equality. (Camus, *Plague*, 237)

But what is this inequality that so disproportionately affects the subject(s) of power? Nothing less than the overwhelming exertion of force by the State unto & in(to) its subjects—in the most horrifying exactitude & taking form in the death penalty, the "Supreme Penalty" (Camus, *Plague*, 248): murder. Not only control, but the perpetual brokerage of power from the State unto the subject(s)—irregardless of 'what' or 'whom' is specifically filling that 'role.'[9] I am speaking of the State as it exists & functions with regards to speciel ontology(s)—but in terms of its structure, systemically—rather than merely identifying the particular ontological variations of specific 'actors' that comprise

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the 'parts' of the machine. Significant though these 'actors' (that is, their specific

ontopoietic & ontocorporeal manifestations & variants) may in fact be to the *overall*

ontology of our species, they in no way supersede the systemic limitations inherent

with(in) any State apparatus. In fact, they *cannot* supersede the systemic limitations, for

necessarily-with(in) the conceptualization of the State is its 'primary'-status with(in) the

space(s) it occupies—both literally & conceptually.

At it's most elemental, the termination of the subject's life is the full-exertion of

the State's power—from a centralized systemic force, out unto & in(to) the subject(s)

comprising the system-itself. This is the ultimate act of oppression from a centralized,

static power-monger upon a speciel entity. Lest there be any confusion over the systemic

importance of this privileged 'right' of the State, Camus incorporates in(to) the text

another crucial political exploration by Tarrou. Speaking about his life, he discusses the

difficulties he had in dealing with his father's role in the State-apparatus, namely as 'the

Sentencer'—the figure whose job it is to *prosecute* on behalf of the Law & to provide a

systemic-justification for the State's ultimate exertion of power:

> In his red gown he was another man, no longer genial or good-natured; his mouth
> spewed out long, turgid phrases like an endless stream of snakes [Tarrou laments]
> I realized he was clamoring for the prisoner's death, telling the jury that they owed
> it to society to find him guilty; he went so far as to demand that the man should
> have his head cut off. Not exactly in those words, I admit. "He must pay the
> supreme penalty," was the formula. But the difference, really, was slight, and the
> result the same. (Camus, *Plague*, 248)

In an attempt to protest against the *individualized* speciel ontology he had developed until

then, Tarrou decides to leave, proceeding to live in poverty & ultimately becoming "an

agitator, as they say. I didn't want to be *pestiferous*, *that's all.* To my mind the social

order around me was based on the death sentence" (Camus, *Plague*, 250, my italics).

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This is a critical moment. The "social order" surrounding Tarrou is, in actuality, the dominant speciel ontology of which he was a part; a particular speciel possible-ontology *predicated on* the death sentence—not the 'specific sentence' per se, but rather the *concept* of the death sentence, & the presuppositions regarding State power & the consequent brokerage of power in such a systemic action. Tarrou continues, "and by fighting the established order I'd be fighting against murder. That was my view, others had told me so, and I still think that this belief of mine was substantially true" (Camus, *Plague*, 250). What Tarrou is speaking to, of course, is the individual subject(s) ability & attempt to *protest*—an entity's act of protestation, & the extent to which it is possible to do so *anti-systemically*. But before such a theorization can take place, we must first more deeply explore this notion of 'the *sentence*.'

Since the magistrate places *the sentence* & therefore the State above the 'will of the people,' this systemic expression unconceals the primal ontological threat as it pertains to 'our' species 'dominant' expressions; that is, the implementation of power (i.e. the State) over 'power as such' (i.e. power-itself, in absentia of its brokerage between subjects). That power exists may indeed be unavoidable & inescapable (& not necessarily 'unfortunately'), however the manner in which it is navigated, exchanged, consumed, etc. is the definitive expression of our speciel ontology(s). In-turn we are lead to the question of what precisely the noology or *idea* of our species, internally 'is'—& by that I mean the idea of our species, by our species, as it applies to our species. This can be labeled one's ontology, & defined as the lived-expressions of our species[10]:

> "Tell me, Tarrou, are you capable of dying for love?" "I couldn't say, but I hardly think so—as I am now." "You see. But you're capable of dying for an idea; one can see that right away. Well, personally, I've seen enough of people who die for an idea. I don't believe in heroism; I know its easy and I've learned it can be

murderous. What interests me is living and dying for what one loves." Rieux had been watching the journalist attentively. With his eyes still on him he said quietly: "Man isn't an idea, Rambert." Rambert sprang off the bed, his face ablaze with passion. "Man *is* an idea, and a precious small idea, once he turns his back on love. And that's my point; we—mankind—have lost the capacity for love." (Camus, *Plague*, 162-3)

It is impossible, I would argue, to make a definitive reading on Camus' (or perhaps more aptly attributed, Rambert's) usage of the word "love;" there are, however, certain presuppositions at work that can assist in our reading of it. First & foremost, it must be noted that the word's signification itself is nebulous—perhaps necessarily so—as it is purely abstract & conceptual, to say nothing of it's quasi-privileged status as being wholly-subjective (& thus relative). As a result, its signifying fluid must fill the empty spaces surrounding the word, as opposed to occupying pre-defined & interiorized rigid & striated space(s) of signification & ontopoietic existentiality. What I mean by this is that the word's signification is defined by what is in absentia of its contextualization—what is removed, eradicated & erased from the contextual zone(s) in(to) which the word is being thrust; & in this particular case, what is *in-absentia* for Rambert's concept of 'love' is the notion of *heroism*. While it is indeed accurate to note that for many peoples heroism is defined by the willingness of an individual to live (& more importantly to die) for that which is loved, Rambert's conceptualization of 'love' leaves no room for heroism. As such, one must ask what exactly heroism *is* & *means* when contextualized *in-absentia* of 'love.' What is left, then, is nothing less than the *idea* of heroism itself. It is the conceptualization of heroism as the willingness to live & die *not for love*, but for an *idea*—the primacy & primal position of the '*concept of the idea*' over the '*concept of love*.' Thus we are left with an equation pitting 'the idea' versus 'love'—& in(to) the

dark-silence of this lacuna flows the signifying-fluid of *both* concepts since they inform-&-are-informed-by their diferrentiation(s) against, betweeh & through one another.

       If, then, Rambert's 'love' presupposes a distinction between 'ideas' (conceptually) & the 'concept of love' (as a 'form'), the implication is that for Rambert, 'love' is more primal & primordial than any mere 'idea.' It exists with(in) some-place distinctly *other* than the realms of ideas—some-place more ancient & *originary*—where our speciel interaction(s)-with & expression(s)-of 'love' in fact fundamentally inform our consequent 'ideas.' For all intents & purposes we must therefore call this notion of *love* 'our' speciel ontology—i.e. the fundamental way-of-becoming that 'we' (as a species) follow & implement in all facets of our ontopoietic & our ontocorporeal lived-experience(s). What we can call Rambert's concept of 'love,' then—whether or not he is 'aware' of the implications in his claims—is a notion of ontological 'soundness.' It is a profound (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of existence that is predicated upon a 'soundness' with(in), amongst & between ourselves, lest we succumb to the mere 'concepts of ideas'—in the process turning away from the 'soundness' possible in 'love,' & instead enveloping ourselves in the ontological emptiness of heroism. These concepts are echoed by Rieux's explanation that "[h]eroism and sanctity don't really appeal to me, I imagine. What interests me is *being a man*"—a comment which ostensibly refers to the gender-coded word used to connote the concept of the speciel-'form' of the 'human' & not to a particular 'gender'—& whose 'World(s)' & experience there-with(in) is their own 'individual' as well as 'speciel' ontology(s) (dominant & subaltern both).

       Once the plague has infected & afflicted the vast majority of the city—once the mass exertion of power & oppressive force indicative of 'our' dominant & normative

speciel ontology(s) has spread & bled-out of our ontocorporeal-Body(s)—what is left, in silence, is the fully unconcealed evolution of our species, & the cruel beacon of our species' utilization of power:

> The silent city was no more than an assemblage of huge, inert cubes, between which only the mute effigies of great men, carapaced in bronze, with their blank stone or metal faces, conjured up a sorry semblance of what the man had been. In lifeless squares and avenues these tawdry idols lorded it under the lowering sky; stolid monsters that might have personified the rule of immobility imposed on us, or, anyhow, its final aspect, that of a defunct city in which plague, stone, and darkness had effectively silenced every voice. (Camus, *Plague*, 172).

This passage is significant for a number of reasons, not the least of which is its effective identification of a multitude of ontopoietic expressions, all of which unconceal the *unsound* nature of our 'dominant' speciel ontology(s). The city itself, architecturally, is already an ontological expression of our species, namely the obsession with & over 'our' finitude—'our' quest for stasis vis-à-vis 'immortality' & 'permanence.' The "great men" of the past—themselves existing as merely static, muted effigial-'form(s)' of their abstract realities—stand vigil over their subjects. They are not only 'their subjects' in terms of their real power (in life) over the masses of the city, but also architecturally; "carapaced" & imposing sentinels standing watch over their former subjects—constant reminders of the 'order(s)-of-things' & the flow of power with(in) the ontocorporeal-Body(s) of the city (& ostensibly the 'society,' 'civilization' & 'species').

These are effigies not to the dynamism of life & existence, but rather to the preserved hierarchy of force & exerted, oppressive power. They represent, as Camus writes, not only "the rule of immobility" imposed upon the subjects of the city, but also "its final aspect, that of a defunct city in which plague, stone, and darkness had effectively silenced every voice"—not only the ontological structure both abstractly &

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conceptually, but indeed the lived-expressions of such an ontology itself (namely, the city-structure). It is with(in) this passage that the rigidity of the hierarchy is explicitly unconcealed; an order which ceaselessly battles to establish itself as 'permanent,' 'constant'—"stone" & "metal faces" reminding their subjects to be silent, to further conceal the suicidal-relationship with power that marks our species' 'dominant' ontological manifestation(s) & sedimentation(s) in(to) 'form(s).'

As previously noted, however, with(in) this silent concealment there exists a profound *unconcealment*—the (re)conceptualization of our existence forced unto us by the radical manifestation(s) & conclusion(s) of a particular ontology in which power is a force to be exerted *outwardly* upon & in(to) others, with the goal of an inherently oppressive stasis. Thus, in The Plague the characters are forced to (re)conceptualize their existence in the wake of this systemic oppression—leaving them as virtual exiles & 'outcasts' in their own space-time:

> Without memories, without hope, they lived for the moment only. Indeed, the here and now had come to mean everything to them. For there is no denying that the plague had gradually killed off in all of us the faculty not of love only but even of friendship. Naturally enough, since love asks something of the future, and nothing was left us but a series of present moments. (Camus, *Plague*, 182)

This passage unconceals perhaps still more of Rambert's conceptualization of love, as well as my own reading of it as an ontological 'soundness'—of a lived-experience that asks something of the future, & which therefore presupposes some form of ontological dynamism & sound speciel (co)existence. In absentia of the past—& more problematically the future—what is left to a species (ontologically speaking) is a radically-static present; a series of moments, yes, but ones which perpetually fail to root themselves with(in) any context *but-themselves*. They are a series of precise, present

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moments that eradicate dynamic possibilities as they erase the infinite & unrecorded past—the subalterns that serve as the markers or 'frame(s)' of our speciel ontological evolution & its 'narrative(s)' & 'discourse(s).' Without this past—a past that serves to contextualize both 'our' current ontology as well as 'our' speciel evolution—we cannot truly unconceal 'our' current lived-experience with(in) the radical-possibilities of (re)conceptualized & (re)presented spectral-rites, therefore making-static the potentiality of a species.

What is left to read—to unconceal—in this oppressive exertion of power is the 'human'-entity's manner of resistance to the stasis inscribed in(to) its ontopoietic & ontocorporeal possibilities. Despite the radical eradication imposed upon the system in Camus, there is still this aforementioned notion of *protestation*, & it is here, with(in) this concept, that we return to Tarrou & his status as "agitator" *with(in)* the system, as a distinctly *counter-force*. Discussing his role with(in) this 'countering' of State, he acknowledges:

> I joined forces with a group of people I then liked, and indeed have never ceased to like. I spent many years in close co-operation with them, and there's not a country in Europe in whose struggles I haven't played a part. But that's another story. Needless to say, I knew that we, too, on occasion, *passed sentences of death*. But I was *told* that these *few deaths were inevitable* for the *building up of a new world in which murder would cease to be* [...] Have you ever seen a man shot by a firing-squad? No, of course not; *the spectators* are hand-picked and it's like a private party, you need an invitation. The result is that you've gleaned your *ideas* about it from books and pictures. *A post, a blindfolded man, some soldiers in the offing*. But the real thing isn't a bit like that. (Camus, *Plague*, 250, my italics).

Tarrou is essentially discussing the notion of concealment inherent to the dominant speciel ontology(s) to which he is a part; privatizing historical information, ostensibly removing *actual* history from the hands of the people, & in(to) an 'official' State-archive.

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This 'official'-'recording' is an ontopoietic collage of precise & static 'cubes' or glyphs of space-time that, united, form a chimeric-Monolith: 'History.' Such an action & process requires the precise readings of singular, dynamic moments of space-time, & the consequent radical-erasure & annihilation of all those virtually infinite subaltern possibilities. The result is what Tarrou identifies—a history of crucial, critical concepts like a sentence of death that is predicated upon merely the *illusion* of 'total' information. The reality, as he (I maintain) correctly claims, is the profound concealment contained with(in) theoretically 'official' State 'History.' He continues by noting the *actual* history—in this case, as it applies to the death sentence, i.e. power mongering by the counter-force, against the State, in protestation *of* the death sentence itself. Tarrou provides his compatriots with heretofore unknown *actualities* with(in) their collective speciel ontology, ones that are spectral-doubles haunting the shadow(s) of State-'form(s)' of 'History':

> "Do you know that the firing-squad stands only a yard and a half from the condemned man? Do you know that if the victim took two steps forward his chest would touch the rifles? Do you know that, at this short range, the soldiers concentrate their fire on the region of the heart and their bullets make a hole into which you could thrust your fist? No, you didn't know all that; those are the things that are *never spoken of.*" (Camus, *Plague*, 250-1, my italics)

This *other*-history that Tarrou provides functions on two distinct, yet related manners, both crucial; the first, his infusion in(to) the Historical-Archive what had until that moment been the literal subaltern & spectral radical *absences*, & the other revolves around the implications & presuppositions contained there-with(in). In other words, not only the 'framed-form(s)' that construct normative (re)conceptualizations & consequent

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(re)presentations of the past, present *&* future, but also that which is *unconcealed* by such immolation(s) & (re)birth of *actual*-history.

Unconcealed now to Tarrou is the underlying shared 'Order(s)' of a specific & distinctly '*counter*' resistance—indeed, the exertion of any *counter-power* at all—that is indicative of the current 'dominant' speciel ontology. He continues:

> "[a]nd thus I came to understand that I, anyhow, *had had plague through all those long years* in which, paradoxically enough, *I'd believed with all my soul that I was fighting it*. I learned that I had had an indirect hand in the deaths of thousands of people; that I'd *even brought about their death by approving of acts and principles* which could only end that way." (Camus, *Plague*, 251, my italics).

What functions as unconcealment is not the 'idea' underlying their protestation, but rather the *ontopoietic-expressions* their protestation becomes-(re)conceptualized as:

> "When I spoke of these matters they told me not to be so squeamish; I should remember what *great issues were at stake*. And they advanced arguments, often quite impressive ones, to make me swallow what nonetheless I couldn't bring myself to stomach. *I replied that the most eminent of the plague-stricken, the men who wear red robes, also have excellent arguments to justify what they do, and once I admitted the arguments of necessity and force majeure put forward by the less eminent, I couldn't reject those of the eminent* [...] if you gave in once, there was no reason for not continuing to give in. It seems to me that *history has borne me out*; today there's a sort of competition who will kill the most. They're *all mad over murder and they couldn't stop killing men even if they wanted to*" (Camus, *Plague*, 252, my italics—original italics are only for "force majeure").

Ultimately, the protestation envisioned by Tarrou as ontologically 'sound' is perhaps best summated by the following passage: "For many years I've been ashamed, mortally ashamed, of having been, even with the best intentions, even at many removes, a murderer in my turn" (Camus, *Plague*, 252)—the 'counter'-exertion of power recognized & (re)presented as ontologically oppressive, & *necessarily-so*. He continues: "As time went on I merely learned that even those who were better than the rest could not keep

themselves nowadays from killing or letting others kill, because such is the *logic by which they live*" (Camus, *Plague*, 252, my italics)—nothing short of the hyper-logical extensions of the 'Order(s)' of their speciel ontology(s) to monstrous extremes of *ontoterrorem*. "I have realized that *we all have plague, and I have lost my peace. And today I am still trying to find it; still trying to understand all those others and not to be the mortal enemy of anyone*" (Camus, *Plague*, 252, my italics). This speaks directly to the perpetual ontological (re)birth of a species—the inherent dynamism that marks our lived-experiences, & therefore our speciel ontology(s):

> "I know positively—yes, Rieux, I can say I know the *world inside out*, as you may see—that *each of us has the plague within him*; no one, no one on earth is free from it. And I know, too, that we must keep endless watch on ourselves lest in a careless moment we *breathe in somebody's face and fasten the infection on him* [...] The good man, the man who infects hardly anyone, is the man who has the fewest lapses of attention [...] I know I have no place in the world of today; once I'd definitely refused to kill, I doomed myself to an exile that can never end. *I leave it to others to make history* [...] *All I maintain is that on this earth there are pestilences and there are victims, and it's up to us, so far as possible, not to join forces with the pestilences*" (Camus, *Plague*, 252-3, my italics)

Protestation, then, must ultimately be speciel—as it is necessarily contextual both with(in) our individual & speciel 'World(s)'—& must be predicated upon the concept of perpetual, dynamic ontological (re)birth; lest the systemic pestilence of power—of *power mongering*—infect & afflict the subject-Body(s) of our species.

The implications & presuppositions with regards to such a (re)conceptualization of protestation are significant. This is an embodiment of protestation radically-rooted *with(in)* the subject itself—with(in) a (re)conceptualization of speciel ontology(s) predicated on nothing short of *power(less)* unions of Body(s). This 'form' of protestation is inherently dynamic, & predicated upon the exertion of power *internally* upon infection,

& the *sacrificial*-consumption(s)-of the viral 'hot-agent(s)' & their replication(s) *sans transmission & (re)infection* must mark 'our' resistance to both 'State' & power—as well as the particular ontopoietic & ontocorporeal possibilities underlying such an application & (re)conceptualization of power, & indeed our speciel ontology(s) & existentiality. As such, it is fitting that ultimately Tarrou himself is murdered by the plague, devoured by the internal exertion of force—away from those around him, from his 'world' & without transmission—the self-consumptive immolation of the very same power that had previously afflicted & incised him. Lest we forget the inherent dynamism of 'our' lived-experiences—of the space-time of 'our' lives—Rieux reminds us once the plague has left the town, that:

> the tale he had to tell could not be one of a final victory. It could only be the record of what had had to be done, and what assuredly would have to be done again in the *never ending fight* against terror and its relentless onslaughts, despite their personal afflictions, *by all who, while unable to be saints but refusing to bow down to pestilences, strive their utmost to be healers*. And, indeed, as he listened to the cries of joy rising from the town, Rieux remembered that such joy is always imperiled. He knew that those *jubilant crowds did not know but could have learned* from books: that *the plague* bacillus *never dies or disappears for good*; that it can lie dormant for years and years in furniture and linen-chests; that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks, and bookshelves; *and that perhaps the day would come when, for the bane and the enlightening of men, it would rouse up its rats again and send then forth to die in a happy city*. (Camus, *Plague*, 308, my italics).

It is 'our' speciel duty, then, to always confront the oppressive concealment of exerted power, & to consume this plague in a self-sacrificial spectacle & rite in order to *unconceal* the sound & perpetual ontological (re)birth of our species.

As the 'nature,' then, of the power-'discourse' &/or power-'narrative' symbiote is such, it is necessary to attempt an account of its 'origin' before giving-Body to 'form(s)'

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of 'sound' protestation. It is with this in mind that the Body—& by this, now, I mean specifically the 'human'-Body—is (re)introduced in(to) the dynamic. Let us attempt to conceptualize a time pre-'discourse' & pre-'narrative'—which is to essentially say pre-*Language & Thought*. It is a functional impossibility, for to conceptualize of an ontological & epistemological construct *pre-Language* is to fundamentally (re)conceptualize the limitations of 'our' own 'dominant' understanding(s) of Becoming-species. To know one's own limitations in-turn requires knowledge outside-of or beyond those limitations themselves, & as such it is not-possible to conceive of an ontological construct outside of Language—in absentia of 'discourse' & ontopoietic 'narrative(s).' Indeed, even if a feral child were encountered, upon its becoming-infected with the virus-of-Language & taught to 'speak,' (s)he would be inherently & immediately mediating his/her own memories—which is to say the becoming-inscribed memories-of-perception(s) unto, in(to) & with(in) their Body. This is so (consciously & not) since the moment of first sensory experience, through Language itself, thus (re)forming & (re)constructing his/her own speciel ontology itself. Thus it can only safely be said that there *is* experience, there *is* perception & consequent epistemological & ontological construct(s) *pre*-Language—even if we cannot 'understand' it (as such).

As such, the Body is the primordial zone of becoming-agency—pre-society, pre-discourse & 'narrative,' pre-Language. This particular agency, however, is not viral in the manner of power, for it does not seek to replicate itself with(in) the Body to the hyper-logical extent of *unstruction*—it merely wishes to *Become-possibilities*. Upon the first moment of the 'agency' of one Body impeding (as it were) the 'agency' of another Body, there is the introduction of the virus of power. The oppressing-Body is inherently

a becoming-viral-Body. It is at that moment—the 'primordial' moment of lost emancipatory agency—that oppression first exists. If the dynamic is kept to two Bodies—the Viral-Agent & the Host—both will die; there(in) lies the introduction of protestation. The oppressing-Body (Viral-Body), invades the oppressed-Body (Protested-Body), & begins—through oppressive force—to replicate. Correspondingly, the extent to which Language—& therefore discourse & 'narrative'—is absent is the extent to which the virus fails to replicate itself. In other words, absent of Language & ontopoiesis (& by extension both discourse & 'narrative'), the virus 'dies' (as it were) with(in) the two Bodies—the Viral-Body & the Protested-Body—for there is no other potential Host-Body in(to) which to transfer. The power is, in a sense, consumed by the sacrificial Protested-Body, & thus the structure or system itself is essentially sapped of its energy. The first moment of extended viral replication in(to) another Host, however, marks the birth of the power-discourse symbiote—the Viral-symbiote—& the current power system.

To conceptualize protestation as some 'form' of 'social policy,' however, would be a grand error, as such 'form(s)' are nothing more than 'discourse' & 'narrative(s).' As noted by Foucault, 'discourse' (& by extension 'narrative') is nothing more than an *unliving*-Host in(to) which power infiltrates & consequently differentiates & replicates. As such, it is part of this aforementioned concept of the 'Viral-symbiote.' Whereas Foucault identified discourse as the site of both power sedimentation/solidification as well as subversion, I propose a slightly different reading of the dynamic. If discourse & thus 'narrative(s)' exist as the symbiotic-Host of power, then the extent to which they can simultaneously *subvert* or *unstruct* the viral replication is negligible, for it inherently

(re)inscribes & replicates conditions of power, oppression & hegemony by its very ontopoietic ontocorporeality & existentiality. It is here that we (re)turn, again, to protestation. Like power, protestation's viral ontopoietic & ontocorporeal structure requires a Host-Body from which to draw its replicating & signifying material. As discussed, this Host is nothing less than power itself.

It is with(in) power, with(in) the virus host, that protestation occurs & the primordial Protested-Body is (re)born. Discourse & 'narrative'—themselves the ultimate Host(s) of power, & by extension protestation—must then be contested, always, in terms of the power structure now-intrinsic with(in)-it. In other words, protestation—in the *uninfected* sense of its embodiment—must necessarily define itself in *(anti)thesis* to the power inherent with(in) said discourse & 'narrative.' As such, it is an impossibility to operate strictly with(in) such confines & 'frame(s)' while maintaining anti-hegemonic resistance in the 'form(s)' & Body(s) of protestation. It is here where protestation must identify a source of power—a Viral-symbiote—acknowledge its own intrinsically self-sacrificial embodiment & resist the apparently-transparent power structure with(in) the discourse & 'narrative' proper. It is through the embodiment of sacrificial Protested-Body(s) that protestation can infiltrate arbiters-of-affliction, render the power structures visible through its own ceaseless replication & ultimately devour this Viral-symbiote—indeed oppression & hegemony themselves—& thus die, both, with(in) the Viral-Body, now becoming-bled-out.

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Ontoterrorem; or, The Dark-Phoenix Uprises

Let us, then, continue traversing this conceptual terrain & the *ontoterrorem*

dwelling deep in(to) the black holes of violence that mark the charnel-Flesh of the

Body(s) infected by such speciel ontology(s) & possibilities of protestation. There are

three distinct artists through which I will explore the possibilities of this protestational-

ontoterrorem, each of whom (re)conceptualizes & (re)presents Language, Thought & the

Body & its role in the differentiation-of-Becoming of all speciel ontology(s). The first is

Krzysztof Wodiczko, who ontopoietic & ontocorporeal 'form(s)' of expression dwell-

with(in) distinctly protestational 'narrative(s)' &/or discourse(s) of-&-with(in) particular

speciel ontology(s)—in the process, the dark-energy of the work infects & afflicts the

effigial-'form(s)' of power upon-which it feasts. The final two works are more esoteric,

which I find perhaps most-fitting, as they haunt the smooth zone(s) & space(s) of

shadow(s) & double(s)—a dark-phoenix smoldering in the soot of blood & Body. Hakim

Bey's work T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic

Terrorism & the work Bolo'Bolo by the anonymous 'p.m.' can be thought of as

symbiotic-inverses of protestation. 'TAZ' are *ontocorporeally*-manifest *ontopoietic*

expression(s) of protestation; 'bolos,' inversely, are *ontopoietically*-constructed zone(s)

of *ontocorporeal* protestation. Before engaging the latter two, however, we must dwell-

with(in) the *ontoterrorem* bleeding-out from Wodiczko's project.

Let us first deal with Wodiczko's 'projections,' which involve the projection of an

image or images unto an existing architectural structure. The content of these projections

are highly political & subversive to the specific history of (re)presentation of the very

structures upon which these images occupy. In a very real sense, they are (re)inscriptions

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in(to) the surface of (re)presentational constructs & 'form(s).' That these projections

alter the 'skin' of the structure's Body is not necessarily what is crucial. Rather, it is the

content of this ontocorporeal (re)imaging—*how* this Flesh is spectrally-inscribed—in

conjunction with the *manner* in which the surface is altered. As such, it is critical to

examine this work in-specificity in order to isolate & penetrate the virus-of-protestation.

One such projection is on the monument to Landgrave[11] Friedrich II in Kassel,

Germany (1987). The artist statement for the projection begins by identifying how

Wodiczko wishes to "confront" Friedrich II's:

> glorious but also egomaniacal heroic acts—the spreading of ideas of the
> Enlightenment and the popularizing of aristocratic culture, the promotion of art
> and science—with his dubious economic and political acts, which served as the
> monetary source for all of his cultural and artistic projects. (Wodiczko, *Critical
> Vehicles*, 57)

He goes on to note that the monument itself (re)presents Friedrich II as possessing an

"obscene white body too bloated from gluttony to fit [his] heroic Roman armor," & as a

result he "cannot conceal his ravenous hunger for conquest, his imperial appetite for

plundering foreign territories" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 56). Wodiczko then

ontopoietically-intertwines the *Soldatenhandel*—"a trade in soldiers in the eighteenth

century" in which "22,000 peasants were sold to Great Britain for 21,276,778 talers[12] in

order to support that country's war against American independence" (Wodiczko, *Critical

Vehicles*, 56)— with Daimler-Benz's "use of slave labor today by exploiting 'guest

workers' to make military equipment […] and deliver it to South Africa, where it is used

to subjugate blacks" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 56). The connection Wodiczko

establishes, therefore, is rooted with(in) particularly 'dominant' speciel ontology(s) &

their expressions of imperialist-capitalist oppression through (specifically) the mediation of a military-industrial complex.

The projection itself "superimposes onto the large base of the monument an image of a crate containing axles to Unimog S military trucks" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 56), which were one of the military units Daimler-Benz manufactured in Kassel for the South African apartheid State. In addition, the:

> content, the manufacturer, the origin, and the South African, Salvadoran, and Chilean destinations of this shipment were clearly marked on each side of the crate. The statue itself was subjected to similar superimposition. Projected over his Roman armor, a white shirt, tie, and Daimler-Benz identity badge [which, according to Wodiczko] transformed the Landgrave into both warrior and company executive. (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 56).

It is precisely this double-imaging which situates Wodiczko's work directly with(in) the ontopoietic *ontoterrorem* indicative of the shadow(s), double(s) & *duende* of the dark-phoenix. As previously noted, his expressions are not only *complicit* with the historical (re)presentation—or, inversely, (re)presentation of 'History'—contained with(in) the public monument, but is in fact *dependent* upon it for its very corporeality, however ghostly it becomes. Without the surface upon which the projection inscribes itself, the image would project onwards, outward, infinitely until the light particles themselves found a Body unto & in(to) which they become-rest. Thus, the projection is simultaneously its own entity & an extension, or variation, from the original structure itself. The (re)presentation is not only viewed as impossible to 'escape'—there is no such possibility of a-historicity in Wodiczko's projects—but instead a fundamental constitutive element of processual signification & (re)presentation.

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Wodiczko's project is aimed at exposing "a clear example of the way the shameless 'history of victors'[13] perpetuates itself today" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 56). This Benjaminian "history of victors" is not unlike the manner in which the (re)presentation of History & its 'form(s)' of 'Order(s)' are themselves the progeny & ancestors of hegemony. The 'victors' are the constructers of historical (re)presentations & their consequent (re)conceptualizations with(in) each particular speciel ontology, & thus solidifying, legitimizing & propagating their own discourse & power—spewing-forth blood black as opal, saturated with 'hot-agents' ravenously searching for their next Host. By identifying moments in which the public space(s) of the city & architecture become themselves mere (re)presentational effigial-'form(s) involved in the transmission of the hot-virus of power—& then subverting the very Flesh upon & in(to)-which these viral-agents take form—Wodiczko's ontopoietic expressions both acknowledge & root themselves directly in that 'History' & Host of (re)presentation, while simultaneously radically consuming it in a sacrificial-gesture to the Spectacle of Horror.

"There is no finite 'form' of (re)presentation," Wodiczko seems to claim, "only the perpetual dialogue with(in), through & between (re)presentations. As such, we must be conscious of the navigation around & amongst these structures (literally), but also *with(in)* the Body(s) of the 'form(s)' themselves. The transient ontocorporeality of the projection—as opposed to other 'form(s)' of public progressive discourse (i.e. graffiti art)—allows Wodiczko to avoid the very dangers of static-'narrative(s)' & discourses that he himself attacks with such veracity; namely, the rooted, constant, unchanging stasis of (re)presentational-effigies as the potential-Host(s) par excellence with(in) & for power & its viral replication(s) & transmission(s) to dwell-in & haunt. Indeed, Wodiczko warns

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that the "slide projectors must be switched off before the image loses its impact and becomes vulnerable to appropriation by the building as decoration" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 48). By subverting the power discourse that he consciously & unavoidably inhabits, Wodiczko's projections alter the ontopoietic (re)representations of the buildings themselves. These projections must act as "attacks":

> must be unexpected, frontal, and must come with the night, when the building, undisturbed by its daily functions, is asleep and when its body dreams of itself, when the architecture has its nightmares. This will be a symbol-attack, a public psychoanalytic séance, unmasking and revealing the unconscious of the building, its body, the 'medium' of power. (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 47)

Furthermore, Wodiczko identifies the building as an "institutional 'site of the discourse of power,' but, more importantly, it is a metainstitutional *[sic]*, spatial medium for the continuous and simultaneous symbolic reproduction of both the general myth of power and the individual desire for power" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 46). This is because the building (re)conceptualizes & (re)presents not only a-history, but also "embodies and physically represents the concept of the organization of a utopian society in the form of a disciplined-disciplining body, allowing for both the multidirectional flow of power and the controlled circulation of the individual bodies" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 46).

This Deleuzean (re)conceptualization of power, as it pertains to the building-as-Body, forces us to consider the ontopoietic & ontocorporeal implications of any *unstruction* to this perceived cohesiveness. Furthermore, if one were to then apply a phenomenological reading vis-à-vis Merleau-Ponty & the manner in which memory is consciously & *unconsciously* inscribed in(to) the Body, the ontological ramifications of a public ontocorporeal-space that is simultaneously traversed & subverted—dwelled-with(in) & inscribed—are significant. Wodiczko's projections therefore release the

directionalized, controlled-flows of power by creating a quasi-Deleuzean architectural Body-without-Organs—a Body whose dynamic ontocorporeality provides an uneven surface of inscription, a Body that is in-&-of Flux. While the projections do not create a permanent *physical* alteration to the surface—indeed, as Wodiczko notes, such a projection would immediately become appropriated by the building itself—it *does* create a perpetual *conceptual* alteration to the structure's history of (re)presentation & 'form'-as-Host.

In addition to his "projections," Wodiczko has created what he calls "homeless vehicles"[14]—mobile shelters whose "point of departure is the strategy of survival that urban nomads[15] presently utilize" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 82). Beginning first with Wodiczko's "discussions with scavengers[16]," together they collaborated & "developed a proposal for a vehicle to be used both for personal shelter and can and bottle transportation and storage" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 82). Since Wodiczko himself notes that these homeless vehicles are inherently problematic (they were designed using tall, physically strong, male bodies, for example), its 'incomplete' 'nature' of the project (pragmatically speaking) is irrelevant. The significance is rather situated with(in) Wodiczko's ontopoietic theorizations & consequent ontocorporeal expressions of a "homeless vehicle" that provides shelter (&, in some sense, sustenance). This simultaneously transforms the *presence* of the individual with(in) the context of community from a spectral-obstacle to a tangible, ontocorporeal urban-nomad—a 'living' speciel-member that is radically (re)conceptualized & removed from the position of proto-'homo sacer,' & must be identified & differentiated with(in), through & against them as such.

These "homeless vehicles" do not merely transform the individual vis-à-vis the ontopoietic (re)conceptualization & ontocorporeal (re)presentation of their relationship with(in) the 'urban environment,' but also in fact the very structure of the architectural public space & 'World' itself. As Wodiczko notes, they hope that "the vehicle will aid in *making visible* and strengthening the modes of cooperation and interdependence that now exist in the homeless population" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 82-3, my italics).   It is precisely this "making visible" that occurs on both the individual *&* architectural ontocorporeal-level(s). Indeed, the virtual invisibility or *unvisibility* of the homeless figure with(in) the urban space of the 'World(s)' inhabited by the 'dominant' ontology(s) & their consequent speciel-differentiations, allows for the marginalization, oppression & consequent subjugation of their Body(s) as Host(s) for the affliction of power's ceaseless viral-replication(s).

Their status as urban-wraiths creates an atmosphere in which they are passed by, as if static & *unvisible* objects fixed into the city-space; non-human & therefore somehow lesser, insignificant—"immobile barriers to travel" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 81). Referencing a 1987 New York Times article, Wodiczko illustrates the manner in which their physical bodies are made simultaneously *unvisible* & yet paradoxically impediments to the productive, capitalist labor-force. Noting the actions of daily commuters in the Port Authority as described by the NYT article, Wodiczko explains how these individuals:

> block out recognition by "locking their eyes forward" and "striding purposefully" toward the exits. The homeless are seen as identity-free objects that must be *negotiated* rather than *recognized*. The article describes acknowledgement of the presence of the homeless as a sign of inexperience, a trap that only temporary visitors to the city fall into: "They stop and stare, wide eyes open to the unfamiliar, raw suffering." (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 81, my italics)

The distinction between "negotiated" & "recognized" is absolutely crucial. That they are merely negotiated—made into objects, "figures anchored to a grate or bench or asleep in the subway as we rush to work"—belies the fact that "surviving on the streets of New York is actually dominated by the constant necessity for movement, often in response to the actions of authorities" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 81). By forcing unto the homeless an identity-less object-hood, while at the same time reducing them to a spectral-ontocorporeality (or lack thereof), their speciel-*existentiality* itself is threatened.

Wodiczko's "homeless vehicles," however, create a physical-space for the homeless-individual whose function is like an ontopoietic *exo-ontocorporeality*. It is an exterior, symbiotic double-Body demanding recognition & a cognizance of-&-to their presence—as entities, traversing the same 'World(s)' of their speciel-kin *uninfected* & as full-of-possibilities as their "productive" brethren of the 'city.' Of course this notion of production—of value—is always a derivation & symptom of 'State' & thus always-already (re)enforces the 'dominant' discourse(s) & 'narrative(s)' of particular speciel ontology(s) & the hegemonic-viruses there-with(in). Columnist George Will went so far as to argue "that the presence of ragged masses camped out in front of midtown New York office builders was an infringement of the legitimate rights of executives working there" (Critical Vehicles, 80). It is clear that the homeless are viewed as impediments to movement—to progress—both with(in) the economic system (in terms of their utilitarian function), & literally (ontocorporeally) as Body(s) with(in) the speciel-'World(s)' of the architectural city-space.

The first-layer of protestational relevance in the ontopoietic-expression of "homeless vehicle" is extremely clear. In *unconcealing* the bleeding-out Body(s) of these

'urban nomads,' not only does Wodiczko expose the black-pox of power's infection—so-many pustules, each the site of *unvisible* 'narrative(s)' & discourse—but in fact immolates those effigial-'form(s)' with the Fire of the dark-phoenix. The consequent (re)conceptualization of the 'homeless'-Body & its corresponding (re)presentation as literal ontocorporeal-zone(s) of protestation is perhaps the most critical aspect of Wodiczko's project, however, as it pertains to my work.

As with all existential constructs & 'form(s),' the 'homeless' possess such a status with(in) their speciel-'World(s)' through the mutual-&-symbiotic processual differentiation that allows for the possibilities of Becoming. In this sense, 'homeless'-Body(s) are both defined & enforced—infected, afflicted & incised—by the same hegemonic-apparatuses which create the 'World(s)' for homelessness to manifest in the first place, & thus making it a self-perpetuating existentiell-condition. Indeed, as Wodiczko points out, in a grand biopolitical gesture, the city[17] itself can designate the homeless insane were they (the homeless) to assume physical control over their *own* bodies. While city-run shelters are often available (in one room dormitories) for the homeless (as opposed to the transitional housing facilities or welfare hotel rooms available to families with children), these shelters are often:

> dangerous and unfriendly places that impose a dehumanizing, even prisonlike *[sic]*, regimentation of residents. Guards routinely treat clients as inmates, allegedly denying them food for the violation of rules. Some shelter residents are bused from place to place for food, showers, and sleep. Charges of violence by shelter security guards and clients are common. (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 79)[18]

Despite these conditions, the Mayor of New York City in the late 1980s declared that a homeless person who refused placement in a shelter in favor of street-life during the

winter was to be, *by definition*, "suspected of mental illness" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 79). This is a terrifying reality from a biopolitical perspective, & a horrifying hyper-logical manifestation of how viral-transmission can occur at the level of 'narrative' & discourse—of how (re)presentation is a becoming-Host for ideological construct(s) & inscriptions of hegemony. This designation by hegemonic-*breathturn* & utterance makes-possible for the homeless to have their agency taken from them through the affliction of 'hot-agents'—in(to) the ontocorporeal-Body through the oppressive nature of ontopoietic (re)presentational expression(s).

By first rooting himself with(in) the (re)presentation of the infected homeless-Body & then radically (re)conceptualizing the very fabric of their *ontocorporeality*, Wodiczko & the virus of his protestational-ontopoiesis feast upon the Host-Body of power that is ceaselessly & ruthlessly devouring the afflicted. The moment when the individual occupies the exo-ontocorporeality of the "homeless vehicle," there is this double-imaging—the *duende* of protestation unleashes the haunted-becoming(s) of shadow(s) & double(s)—in the process radically immolating the effigial-'form(s)' of the infected-Body of the homeless 'outcast.' This infected-(re)presentation is necessarily the Host for Wodiczko's protestational-virus—for the *ontoterrorem* of his expression(s).

The (re)presentational *doubling* & consequent infection of *ontoterrorem* into the Host-Body(s) of power & affliction, however, are not solely located with(in) the ontocorporeality of the 'homeless.' Wodiczko's *ontoterrorem* makes no distinction between Host(s)—which is to say that the infected-Body(s) & the *afflicting-Body* are both potential becoming-haunted Host(s) for its protestational-immolation(s). Thus the very architectural terrain of the urban-community—the static embodiment of so-many

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expressions of the 'order(s)' of particular speciel ontology(s)— itself is doubled through

shadow(s) cast from the dark-phoenix of *uprising*. Much like his "projections,"

Wodiczko's vehicles evade rootedness, 'permanence' & stasis with(in) the public sphere,

& as such the "homeless vehicles" provide an ever-changing, ever-morphing,

perpetually-*other* exterior-ontocorporeality through which the 'urban community' must

traverse & dwell with(in). Wodiczko's acknowledgement of the 'history of

(re)presentation' of the city-space & its effigial-Body(s) as *'rooted'* & *'permanent'* (as he

did with his "projections") once again requires the infection & consequent affliction of

the oppressed-Body. In identifying the inherent nomadism of the homeless-Body—in

stark contrast to the fixity & stasis of the 'form(s)' of the 'public sphere' that comprise

particular speciel 'World(s)'—Wodiczko's vehicles are protestational-viruses necessarily

dwelling-with(in) a *Plague*. Indeed, the homeless are still forced to occupy & exist

with(in) the hegemonic zone(s) of State-domination, & as such are still subjected to all

the aforementioned 'rules of law' that incestuously & suicidally infect & afflict the

Body(s) dwelling with(in)-&-through these striated space(s). Nevertheless, such

plagued-zone(s) are precisely the Host(s) for the *anti-hegemonic* protestational-virus of

ontoterrorem to 'breathe' & 'live.' Not a counter-hegemony—an emancipatory politics

that places resistance *against* the hegemon in an attempt to overthrow it—but rather an

anti-hegemony that fundamentally avoids the previously explored transmission of power,

& thus internally-consuming its affliction at the ontocorporeal level.

The *ontoterrorem* perpetually-differentiating with(in) Wodiczko's ontopoietic

expression(s) of the 'homeless vehicle' feasts foremost upon the static-'form(s)' &

effigial-Body(s) of the city-'World.' The "visibly purposive movement through the city"

gives the "scavengers" "an identity as actors in the urban space," Wodiczko notes. Furthermore, since they are:

> mobile, they cannot be walked away from or easily dismissed as silent non-persons. Where the immobile figure's status seems provisional and ambiguous, the scavenger stakes a claim to space in the city and indicates his or her membership in the urban community" (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 82).

The "homeless vehicle" serves as the manifestation of these theories of nomadism, mobility & emancipation. As such it is crucial to note that it is precisely the physical immediacy & exo-ontocorporeality of the vehicles that ensures such a possibility of infection & protestation. Wodiczko identifies the manner in which this *ontoterrorem* differentiates its infected-&-oppressed Host(s) by hijacking the 'agency' of power, in the process transforming the afflicted-Body(s) in(to) nomadic sites of *uprising* with(in) the 'order(s)' of their particular speciel ontology(s). He notes that:

> prototype vehicle bears a resemblance to a weapon. In our view, the movement of carts through New York City are acts of resistance, opposing the continuing ruination of an urban community that excludes thousands of people from even the most meager means of life. Through the transformation of the city, which has compelled so many people to survive through collection of its detritus, is an outrage, we must all be forced to recognize the value and legitimacy of their daily work. (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 83)

They exist, therefore, as transient 'architectural-objects' which serve as part of the perpetually changing 'physical landscape' with(in) their particular speciel 'World(s).' As such, the other subjects of this space are infected with *ontoterrorem*, afflicted by the necessity of traversing a dynamic zone of possibilities—a speciel 'World' in-&-of perpetual state(s) of becoming-*other*.

It is critical, then, to identify the protestational-Body(s) of which these becoming-*other* 'World(s)' are comprised-of & traversed-by. Let us dwell, again, in the Deleuzo-

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Guattarian project, this time with regards to the 'socius' & *ontoterrorem*—to the protestational possibilities of this virus, & its eventual power as a *dark-phoenix uprising*.

Deleuze & Guattari write, "the prime function incumbent upon the socius has always been to codify the flows of desire, to inscribe them, to record them, to see that no flow exists that is not properly dammed up, channeled, regulated" (Deleuze & Guattari, *A-O*, 33). More specifically, "the socius as a full body forms a surface where all production is recorded, whereupon the entire process appears to emanate from this recording surface" (Deleuze & Guattari, *A-O*, 10). Furthermore, the internally 'coherent' & (re)active socius body or social machine as an effigial-'form' of speciel-Body is an "organism"—in that each part, each organ, operates "perfectly" or "properly" both as individual entity, but more importantly, as *part* of a unified *whole* qua its 'functionality'—is opposed, essentially, by Artaud's (re)conceptualized & (re)presented "body without organs." That is, the body-as-organism "suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all" (Deleuze & Guattari, *A-O*, 8). The "body without organs" however *unstructs* this directionally-controlled & compartamentalized flow by becomings *(anti)thetical antipower* & thus "nonproductive"—"belonging to the realm of antiproduction"—& consisting of processual *unstruction* through the hyper-differentiation(s) & deterritorialized zone(s) of possibilities in(to) which flows dark-energy. Such are the conditions for the (re)birth of the *dark-phoenix of cruelty*.

Guattari's <u>Soft Subversions</u> positions itself with(in) this protestational-possibility of *ontoterrorem* in fascinating ways. For Guattari, the question of 'revolution'—which, it should be noted, is in reality a question of protestation & thus (in the dark-energy of

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ontoterrorem) *uprising*—must first & foremost be located outside of the social-body. It

must become-rooted with(in) the Body-proper; a molecular instead of macro-political

(re)conceptualization of the Body that makes particular speciel-ontocorporeality(s) & not

the infected-Host(s) of power the zone(s) upon which the protestational gaze of the dark-

phoenix is fixed. To this extent he writes:

> This desire for a fundamental liberation, if it is to be truly revolutionary action,
> requires that we move beyond the limits of our "person," that we overturn the
> motion of the "individual," that we transcend our sedentary selves, our "normal
> social identities," in order to travel the boundary-less territory of the body, in
> order to live in the flux of desires that lies beyond sexuality, beyond the territory
> and the repertories of normality. (Guattari, *Soft Subversion*, 32)

As he explains, desire is not to be understood in the 'normative sense,' but rather as

"everything that exists *before* the opposition between subject and object, *before*

representation and production. It's everything whereby the world and affects constitute

us outside of ourselves, in spite of ourselves. It's everything that overflows from us"

(Guattari, *Soft Subversion*, 46). This is particularly relevant when taken in conjunction

with Guattari's exploratory examination of 'machines;' always rejecting statico-

conceptualizations, he is quick to identify that machines are not merely the mechanistic

technology of our society, but rather (& more profoundly & importantly for the auspices

of *ontoterrorem*) 'figures' or transient-'form(s)' that connect energy & desire in

continuous flows with so-many *other*-machines.[19]

His ontocorporeal (re)conceptualization of schizoanalysis, therefore, is the

ontopoietic term for the (re)presentation of an unconscious outside.[20] He clarifies,

however, that he did not "intend to tie [schizoanalysis] down exclusively to psychoses,"

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but rather "wished to open it to a maximum variety of schizes, like love, childhood, art, etc."—arrangements that function as the 'Body(s)' &:

> sites of both internal transformations and transferences between pre-personal levels […] and the post-personal levels that can be globally assigned to the media-driven world, extending the notion of media to every system of communication, displacement, and exchange. (Guattari, *Soft Subversion*, 107)

This, in-turn, renders the unconscious "transversalist" (Guattari, *Soft Subversion*, 107)—perpetually inter-incising & inscribing itself & *other(s)*. For Guattari, the virus of power that infects & afflicts the speciel-Body(s) traversing State-'World(s)' occurs on the *molecular* level in the form of dwelling & haunting "microfascisms." As such, it is likewise at the viral-level that protestation must occur in the 'Body(s)' infected by the dark-phoenix & afflicted with the emancipatory possibilities of *ontoterrorem*. This quest for & journey in(to) the *ontoterrorem* & *uprising* will finally dwell in the emancipatory possibilities of the 'Temporary Autonomous Zone' & 'bolos.'

Hakim Bey's expression T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Ontological Anarchy, Poetic Terrorism is an exploration in(to) the condition of *plague* (the affliction of power) & the consequent protestational-possibilities that emerge from the application of *ontoterrorem*. The work serves as an incisive & remarkably eclectic assault against the presupposition of 'inherent' or primordial hierarchal power (particularly through the object-figure of the State). The work *ontopoietically* illuminates or *unconceals* the space between-&-with(in)-which the dark-phoenix is summoned & emerges. Bey's ontopoietic embrace & immolation in the Fire of *duende* unfolds frenetically, frantically & often in intellectually-manic effigy—a journey through noology(s), discourse(s) & 'narrative(s)' of stasis whose resultant ontopoietic exultations serve as 'existentiell' ancestors-&-progeny of the *ontostaticity* of State.

It is here, with(in) this notion, that Bey's expression & (re)presentation of 'poetic terrorism' becomes significant. Conceptualized as the ontopoietic space(s) & zone(s) with(in) which the *ontoterrorem* of which Artaud's *Theater* & *Phoenix* of Cruelty haunts, Bey's 'poetic terrorism' is envisioned as a primordial act of protestation against the aforementioned ontopolitical sedimentations of 'form(s)' &/of 'Thought.' It is an ontopoietic creation of protestation whose very existence marks, like black-pox, the presence of *ontoterrorem*—an *ontoterrorem* that fundamentally & 'existentielly' threatens both ontological stasis, & the literal, effigial 'State of Being' whose invocation & force-of-presence signifies the import of the former. This protestation is directly in response to what I named a 'State of Being'—the infection of State *unto & in(to)* 'Being' in such a way as to 'frame' & *petrify* possibilities in(to) effigial-'form(s).' In other words, not only is a/the State-apparatus imposed & inscribed upon & in(to) our speciel ontology(s), but in fact that very ontology is itself subjugated to the stasis-of-Being, & thus necessarily-exclusionary & hostile towards Becoming. This is a significant point, for Bey explores 'poetic terrorism' as essentially systematic albeit dynamic *antipower*— explicitly distinct from & opposed to reactionary-derived acts of counter-power. They are moments of expressive-possibilities manifesting in(to) significant subversions & outright erasures of the illusory objects of stasis & hierarchal subjugation. Opal-pox inscriptions in(to) the Flesh, whose soot-blood marks the zone(s) of black holes from which *no power escapes*; each pustule an ontopoietic expression & avatar of *antipower* protestation—shadow(s) & double(s) of ontological anarchy.

These acts of 'poetic terrorism' & the consequent infection of *ontoterrorem* upon Body(s) afflicted by power, in-turn create what Bey calls a 'Temporary Autonomous

Zone' (T.A.Z.). These are space(s) & zone(s) with(in)-which the 'Order(s)' of speciel

ontology(s) & the 'State of Being' itself are fundamentally devoured in blazing effigies

of *unstruction*—terrorized to the degree of perpetual *anarchistic*-manifestation(s). Each

speciel individual-entity (i.e. 'person') themselves possess the potentiality of the internal-

manifestation of a TAZ—of a self-immolation towards the pre-emptive zone(s) of

perpetually-temporary ontocorporeal-autonomy(s). The space(s), therefore, amongst-

which each TAZ dwells must in-turn correspond with Body(s) in-&-of space(s) that are

achieving-autonomy *in-perpetuity*. It is with(in) this distinct ontopoietic embrace of

ontocorporeal *duende* that Bey's discussion of 'uprising' vs. 'revolution' burns—& their

positions respective to the politico-philosophical implications of time, permanence &

transience. For Bey, these spaces are, in actuality, that which resides *with(in)* our world;

which is to say the *unvisible-incisions* between the illusory objects of normative

'reality'—those black hole-lacunae that are concealed & thus radically-absent from the

perspective(s) of plotted, static points. It is here that Bey's 'pirates' reside, those

historico-philosophical 'outcast(s)' whose existence marked & marks protestation of-&-

to State in a dark-energy akin to the 'nomadic war machine'—those Body(s) whose

ontocorporeal-molecules inherently located, infect & consume the very viral-possibility

of power & 'Order.'

The *antipower* potentiality of both 'Pirates' & what Bey refers to as their 'Pirate

Utopias' is a significant shift—the viral-protestation of *ontoterrorem* transmitted from the

individual ontocorporeal-Body(s), in(to) the assemblage(s) & constellation(s) of their

unique & distinct particular speciel ontology(s). These 'pirate utopias' are the

communities historically inhabited & dwelled-upon by pirates—often islands whose

social formations functioned according to principles of anarchy. For Bey, these pirates &

their 'utopias' represent a direct & explicit protestation to the State-form—one that is

often historically concealed & 'framed'-out of the 'official' State-archive. Further, these

zone(s) of autonomy are (re)conceptualized & (re)presented as Temporary Autonomous

Zone(s) themselves. Accordingly, they are momentary movements; they are transient &

dynamic constellation(s) of individuals & assemblages whose permanence is not only

not-assured, but in fact intrinsically, structurally & primordially composed for precisely

the opposite—for the perpetual *uprising(s)* whose progeny are the expressions of

emancipatory possibilities. This is precisely what the anonymous 'p.m.' conceptualizes,

(re)presents & proposes in the work Bolo'Bolo (published 1984-85).

Whereas these 'Temporary Autonomous Zone(s)' are (re)born from the *molecular*

unstruction of 'microfascisms'—ontocorporeal-manifestation(s) of distinct ontopoietic-

expression(s) of protestation—*bolo'bolo* necessarily require(s) the viral-outbreak of an

ontoterrorem upon & in(to) speciel-'World(s).' As such, they are *ontopoietically*-

constructed zone(s) of *ontocorporeal* protestation. The transmission of protestational-

virus, therefore, jumps-Host(s)—from the infection of singular-Body(s) to the affliction

of *ontoterrorem* upon the 'Order(s) of State.' The author ('p.m.') identifies &

(re)presents this 'dominant' 'Order' &/of 'speciel ontology' as the 'Planetary Work-

Machine.' This act of (re)naming 'the World' in(to) distinctly autonomous-ontopoietic

terrain is an important distinction to mark & incise in(to) the Flesh of this textual-

exploration of *ontoterrorem*. Bolo'Bolo is nothing if not an *ontopoietic* exploration of

this 'Work-Machine,' & the corresponding layers of oppression whose presence marks—

while making-possible—the State. It is an exploration whose primordial dark-energy

haunts & dwells with(in) & upon the perpetuity of *namings* & *(re)naming*—the shadow(s) & double(s) summoned by *ontoterrorem* & released by *duende*.

These ontopoietic-protestation(s) manifest with(in) Language. While Bey's ontocorporeal-protestation is an infection of the 'State of Being' at the molecular level, p.m.'s is the 'macro-political' affliction upon the very 'State of Language' itself. In so doing, p.m. succeeds at incanting an inherent & powerful *uprising* on the ontopoietic 'macro-political' level of Language & Thought. This *uprising* nothing more than its own ontopoietic-expression in order to manifest—an avatar whose presence provides a Host & gives 'life' to *ontoterrorem* with(in) & through its very heralding. In other words, p.m.'s presentation of these namings & their double(s)—the creation of these 'words' & their consequent expression(s)—already succeeds, at the very moment of conception, in providing the Body-of-Language through-which to begin ontocorporeally-based ontopolitical uprisings. It is fitting, then, that not only is at least half of the text ostensibly a conceptual-'dictionary' to the Language of *bolo'bolo*, but in fact each 'word' more politico-philosophical glyph than 'form' of 'definition' as such. These glyphs provide, in a sense, ontocorporeal terrains with(in) & upon which Language, Thought & Body can afflict power through immolation(s) of State & 'Order(s).' Indeed, entries of this 'language'—& consequent *speciel ontology*—in the 'dictionary' of *bolo'bolo* range from a few short paragraphs, to upwards of eight pages. Clearly, then, these 'definitions' exist in-&-as zone(s) of possibility—becoming-*other* differentiation(s) of-&-for *ontoterrorem's* uprisings. In a fitting emphasis of this notion of conceptual-'glyph,' each 'word' indeed has a *literal* corresponding image—a hieroglyph of sorts, whose linguistic-marking transcends not only the division of 'Language(s),' but in fact *aurality* itself. In

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this sense, it is a ontopoietic-possibility of protestation whose presence becomes-inscribed even in *silence*. What's more, in addition to these 'hieroglyphs' many also have supplemental significatory-information in the form of drawings, models, 'blueprints,' maps, end-notes, etc. The result is exhilaratingly-rhizomatic constellation of Language-possibilities of protestation.[21]

Heretofore, this has been a description & exploration of the work's ontopoiesis & Language at work with(in) the 'narrative' from a predominantly structural perspective. What has not taken place, as of yet, is a specific examination & consideration of the ontopolitical content of Bolo'Bolo 'from the perspective of the *ontoterrorem* of its 'narrative'—which is to say specifically 'sentence-by-sentence.' In such a manner, *unconcealed* in the 'linguistic'-expression(s) of the book is a profound (re)conceptualization & (re)presentation of speciel-'ordering(s).' As such, this text could be classified as an occasionally humorous & informal expository-argument concerning the oppression marking the current epoch of 'planetary' evolution with regard to 'our' dominant 'speciel' ontology(s) & sedimentation(s)-in-'form(s).' This analysis by p.m. begins with the 'dawn of civilization' proper around 3,000 years ago, & culminates specifically & particularly in the last 200 years of industrialization. The second half of the text—though previously noted as ontopoietically predicated upon perpetual 'namings,' their shadow(s) & double(s), as well as the conceptual-exploration of these protestational-glyphs—is nevertheless embodied in precisely the aforementioned slightly informal & casual conversational-exposition of *uprising*.

A significant exception, however, is in p.m.'s use of end-notes with(in) the text of 'definitions'—as if spectral-inscriptions upon & in(to) the Flesh of Bolo'Bolo. Here, the

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Language finds itself remarkably 'academic' & formal in tone, with a politico-philosophical rigorousness that is otherwise 'lacking' if not outright-absent throughout. I find this particularly & peculiarly relevant; we are presented with a text that is informally analyzing the current 'system' & discussing a 'form' of relatively specific 'anarchist' protestation to State & its power-mongering. It is conceptually-structured & rooted in the ontopoietic explosion of *ontoterrorem* in(to) the molecules-of-Language. As a result, the accompanying definitions transcend the staticity of signification, while infusing (through infection) countless differentiations of (para)significatory datum in(to) their Body(s)—& all the while this text is peppered with occasional end-notes, whose tone & specific content is markedly academic with a philosophically-driven intellectual engine. The work is, in a very real & literal sense, a moment of protestation whose avatar is Becoming-Language.

The actual political discussion in Bolo'Bolo is structured (fittingly) around p.m.'s conceptual-possibility of a 'bolo'—essentially an autonomous, self-sufficient (or virtually so) collective of around 500 individuals, whose particularities range depending upon those inhabiting, populating & manifesting each bolo. In p.m.'s estimation, the 'Machine' has "three essential functions, three components of the international work force, and three 'deals' [offered to] different fractions of us" (p.m., *bolo*, 10); if any of these essential functions, in turn, were to fail, the 'Machine' would "sooner or later be paralyzed" (p.m., *bolo*, 10). They break down as follows:

A.) Information: planning, design, guidance, management, science, communication, politics, the production of ideas, ideologies, religions, art, etc.; the collective brain and nerve-system of the Machine.

B.) Production: industrial and agricultural production of goods, execution of plans, fragmented work, circulation of energy.

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C.) Reproduction: production and maintenance of A-, B-, and C-workers, making children, education, housework, services, entertainment, sex, recreation, medical care, etc.   (p.m., *bolo*, 10)

Correspondingly, three general worker-types are created with(in) the Machine to perform the tasks, divided by "their wage levels, privileges, education, social status, etc." (p.m., *bolo*, 10). p.m. refers to them as:

A.) Technical-Intellectual Workers in advanced (Western) industrial countries, B.) Industrial Workers in "not yet 'de-industrialized' areas, in 'threshhold' countries, socialist countries," & C.) Fluctuant Workers "oscillating between small agricultural and seasonal jobs, service workers, housewives, the unemployed, criminals, petty hustlers, those without regular income" (p.m., *bolo*, 11).

Despite the potential rigidity of such classifications, p.m. explicitly notes that "all these types of workers are present in all parts of the world, just in different proportions" (p.m., *bolo*, 11) & that "the 'Three Worlds' are present everywhere. In New York City there are neighborhoods that can be considered as part of the Third World" (among other notable examples) (p.m., *bolo*, 12). It is thus possible to:

distinguish three zones with a typically high proportion of the respective type of workers: A-Workers in advanced industrial (Western) countries, in the U.S., Europe, Japan. B-Workers in socialist countries, in the USSR, Poland, Taiwan, etc. C-Workers in the Third World, agricultural or "underdeveloped" areas in Africa, Asia, and South America, and in urban slums everywhere. (p.m., *bolo*, 11-2)

Ultimately, for p.m. the 'Machine' pits the workers amongst one another—each infected Host for viral-power constituting-&-constituted-by a milieu of interiority. This milieu's 'success' is not only in part predicated, but in fact utterly dependent upon the corresponding subjugation of not only other 'type' worker(s), but indeed even internal-to each individual—the transmission of the virus. Of course, p.m.'s identification of the

'Planetary Work Machine' being the 'dominant' 'Order' of speciel ontology removes autonomy as such from the Machine. There is no intrinsic 'form' of ontological 'Order' for 'the Machine'—rather, 'the Machine' is the fundamental & dominant expression of a 'World' infected with(in) *Plague*.

This *Plague*-'World' necessitates its *(anti)thesis*: *ontoterrorem* & its 'hot-agency' infected-in(to) its Host—power. The corresponding protestational-possibilities explored with(in) Bolo'Bolo as *antipower* in its manifestations—as opposed to the very distinct & *(anti)thetical* notion of a 'counter'-power, or merely some reactionary counter-measure that attempts to simply 'reverse' flows of power & subjugation, & thus putrefying transmission & infection. As a result, p.m. envisions acts of "substruction"—essentially the constructive act(s) of subversion; or, the *ontopoiesis of unstruction*. These "substructions" are acts of "poietic terrorism" & manifest with(in) "dysco" knots—so-many acts of "dysinformation," "dysproduction" & "dysruption." Each, in turn, is 'defined' conceptually, as a field of possibilities—transmitting protestational-*ontoterrorem* until the "dream" of bolo'bolo is realized (or rather, actualized).

Bolo'Bolo not only (re)conceptualizes & (re)presents a specific protestational-possibility, but in fact actively 'substructs' its own 'revolutionary' 'narrative,' in the process leaving only the dark-phoenix—*uprising*. This is accomplished notably through p.m.'s weaving of the concept of 'dream' throughout an otherwise ostensibly 'practical' or 'pragmatic' discussion of oppression & subjugation. The text begins with the following passage: "If you dream alone, it's just a dream. If you dream together, it's a reality. (Brasilian *[sic]* folk song)." This concept extends throughout the work. It is incised & woven-in(to) the ontopoietic-Flesh of a species' ontological possibilities—

perhaps no more significantly than in the first 'definition' of the second part of the book—the discussion of 'ibu.' The 'hieroglyph' is a circle, with a single point in the center; the passage begins:

> In fact, there's really only the *ibu*, and nothing else. But the *ibu* is unreliable, paradoxical, perverse. There's only one single *ibu*, but nevertheless it behaves as if there were four billion or so. The *ibu* also knows that it invented the world and reality by itself, yet it still firmly believes that these hallucinations are real. The *ibu* could have dreamed an agreeable, unproblematic reality, but it insisted on imagining a miserable, brutish and contradictory world. (p.m., *bolo*, 60)

The first paragraph in the definition of *ibu* ends with an end-note—exhibiting the tone, type & formality previously noted—& extends for three-to-four pages. When considering the actual contextual-environment from where this passage emerges, it becomes even more significant & fascinating. The first half of the work ends with a short time-line of expected 'bolo' ontopolitical-evolution; events to occur in 1984 & 1985, 'realistic' possibilities of 'substruction' & the emergence of the first bolos, etc. Then, starting with the 1986 passage & through 1987, we enter into a distinctly *other*-space—a new-tone, new-voice in which 'narratively' radical specificity begins to emerge. Distinct 'new' regions formed in the future, specific conflicts between these-particularities, presupposition(s) of specific 'form(s)' of oppression & attempted-infection against bolo. Yet still there remain three distinct moves executed by p.m.—three final transmissions of an *ontoterrorem* of protestational energy with(in) the ontopoietic-molecules of the 'narrative.' The passages read as follows:

1988-2345   *bolo'bolo*

2346   *bolo'bolo* loses its strength as 'the whites' (a kind of cultural epidemic) spreads and replaces all other types of *bolos*. *bolo'bolo* lapses into an age of chaos and contemplation.

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2764   Beginning of Yuvuo. All records on pre-history (up to 2763) have
been lost. Tawhuac puts a new floppy disk into the drive.

(p.m., *bolo*, 59)

In this moment, the very notion of 'Revolution' actively undergoes 'substruction,' as well

as the petrification marked by the transmission & (re)infection of power through its very-

existentiality. p.m. identifies the absurdity of such 'form(s)' of reactionary violence, &

the corresponding 'narrative' *concealment(s)* of possibilities. It is as if p.m.—through

expressions of hyper-real, hyper-logical sedimentation(s) of both 'faux' politico-

historicity & 'narrative' transcendence or 'Truth'—were always-already immolating all-

possible 'form(s)' of 'Revolution' through the affliction of *ontoterrorem*. These effigial-

Host(s) of-&-for power are engulfed in the Fire of the *dark-phoenix*—their spectral-

shadow(s) haunting the double(s) dwelling with(in) such *unvisible* molecules—horrifying

& perpetual ontopoietic & ontocorporeal *uprisings…*

CHAPTER FIVE NOTES

[1] A game whose birth was at least 2,500 years ago in China, where it is currently named 'weiqi.'

[2] Primitivism, for Clastres, lacks the negative connotation so normatively attributed to the term. For Clastres, rather, the 'Primitive' society is one ostensibly & explicitly formed in contrast-to the State—its establishment, its domination, its oppression, its perpetual stratification of hierarchal power, etc.

[3] This is a point further explored in Proposition 3 in the 'form' of the "nomad" or "minor" science Deleuze & Guattari identify.

[4] This is not unlike Arturo's (re)conceptualization of the 'freak' & its relation to nightmares & horror--& the viral-transmission of *ontoterrorem*.

[5] I am reminded of a passage of an obituary Hunter S. Thompson wrote for his friend, Oscar Zeta Acosta— an attorney, writer & 'radical' member of & activist for the Chicano Movement of the 1960's—& perhaps most notably as the ostensible inspiration for the character of 'Dr. Gonzo' in Thompson's perhaps-masterwork Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (1971). In the epitaph (courtesy of: http://www.gonzo.org/hst/oscar/oscar.asp?ID=b) Thompson wrote:

> Oscar Zeta Acosta—despite any claims to the contrary—was a dangerous thug who lived every day of his life as a stalking monument to the notion that a man with a greed for the Truth should expect no mercy and give none…
> […]
> It might even come to pass that he will suddenly appear on my porch in Woody Creek on some moonless night when the peacocks are screeching with lust...Maybe so, and that is one ghost who will always be welcome in this house, even with a head full of acid and a chain of bull maggots around his neck.
>
> Yeah, that's him, folks—my boy, my brother, my partner in too many crimes. Oscar Zeta Acosta. Stand back. He is gone now, but even his memory stirs up winds that will blow heavy cars off the road. He was a monster, a true child of the century - faster than Bo Jackson and crazier than Neal Cassady…When the Brown Buffalo disappeared, we all lost one of those high notes that we will never hear again. Oscar was one of God's own prototypes—a high-powered mutant of some kind who was never even considered for mass production. He was too weird to live and too rare to die…

[6] Indeed, even from a strictly 'biopolitical' perspective the intertwining (if not outright symbiosis) between 'discourse' & 'narrative' is functionally relevant. If we follow the aforementioned link between the ontopoietic import upon ontocorporeality & thus speciel ontology as such, then indeed the specific 'narrative(s)' at-hand can be thought of as Foucaultian 'discourse,' & vice-versa.

[7] This extends to 'counter'-discourses as well. In the case of 'Capitalism,' Ellen Meiksins Wood in The Origin of Capitalism: a longer view identifies how even with(in) 'counter-capitalist' theorizations—such as Marxism—capitalism itself is (re)presented & consequently (re)conceptualized as 'natural.' As an example, Wood maintains that even Marxist readings of economic history present the "roots" or "origins" of capitalism in terms of *impediments*-to its growth, as opposed to viewing them as the first moments of what *was to become* capitalism. Though perhaps subtle, the ramifications are enormous, particularly as they pertain to the possibilities of-&-for speciel ontology(s), & their corresponding 'frame(s).'

[8] State-sanctioned violence & oppression, i.e. the brokerage & exertion of power unto & in(to) so-many subjects

[9] An excellent example of precisely this ontopoietic & ontocorporeal aspect of 'our' dominant speciel ontology(s) is Jean Genet's play The Balcony which is nothing if not a radical exploration of Becoming, its structure & the shadow(s), double(s) & *duende* haunting these 'form(s)-of-Identity.'

[10] Incidentally, this is precisely what Agamben is exploring in The Open.

[11] The definition of 'Landgrave'—"In Germany, a count having jurisdiction over a territory, and having under him several inferior counts; later, the title of certain German princes" (OED Online)

[12] Talers are "any of numerous silver coins issued by various German states from the 15th to the 19th centuries" (Merriam Webster Online)

[13] Here he notes Walter Benjamin for the phrase.

[14] Here are two images of the "homeless vehicle": one folded up, in its mobile position; the other extended, for rest:

[15] This is a term Wodiczko uses in lieu of "the homeless."

[16] "Scavengers" is what the homeless who "spend their days collecting, sorting, and returning cans to supermarkets" using "shopping and postal carts and other wheeled vehicles," are known as (Wodiczko, *Critical Vehicles*, 81).

[17] It should be clear by now that this 'city' functions akin to a particular-'World' of a possible speciel ontology & its 'Order(s).'

[18] Although Wodiczko wrote this particular essay in 1988-89, the particularities of these dominant 'Order(s)' of-&-for certain speciel ontology(s) nevertheless differentiate similarly enough that the terrain-unconcealed by Wodiczko remains critical to explore.

[19] Every-'thing,' in this sense, is a machine—& a human, for example, but a series of machines in ceaseless & permuting connectivity.

[20] It should be noted that this is distinct & unrelated-to the 'psychoanalytic' unconscious.

[21] Akin to what Bey conceptualizes & (re)presents as 'Chaos linguistics'—albeit conceptually, not 'literally' per se—whose primary mode of communication & signification resides in the dynamic & fluid assemblage(s) of so-many kernels of significatory-possibilities.

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The curtain covers the stage from the audience. It is deep black velvet. In the center of this curtain is the image of the Aztec Mask of (Re)birth. When it rises, a man is standing facing the audience. He has a large white beard, wild; uncontrolled ashen hair, & eyes that are black-holes. His suit is black, plain, unadorned & (un)remarkable to the degree that one is left with the sensation of a radical-absence. Upon his head breathes a black top-hat, with a single red line inscribed with(in) its base—a crimson, velvet helix incised into its Flesh. The bow tie of the man is also blood; it moves on its own accord, almost afflicting its Host. His hands are (be)held as white doves. The background is all black behind him. His voice (re)sounds to the degree of weight; it is becoming-matter, breathing with(in) the cells of the Witnesses to this spectacle & turning.

In soundspaces
wordweights
flicker, fizzle & grow.

Who knows this plough
of a fallow,
leadsmoke & fickle?

And who dare question
a plum's
aplumbage?

If dappled dusk's dawn
were to wither, dim & glow…
what Twilight becomes?

You may regale me:
this-pastime, this short-time, a
nomad's merriment.

…Inflowing snowroots,
time floats always inside lack.
Out-there, the word marks….

****

GLOSSARY

differentiation of difference: If there is a 'system of differences,' then the 'system' itself must be possessive of a particular structure—one which examines & makes-possible the manifestation of 'difference' itself. It is this structure that I label 'the differentiation of difference;' or, the manner in which 'difference' itself is involved in a structure of perpetual *differentiations*.

double/shadow: These terms are utilized according to Antonin Artaud's conceptualization of them. For him, all 'things' encountered &/or perceived in life are but effigies; they are not 'things' themselves (in actuality), but rather the 'forms' that obfuscate & conceal true interaction with the world & 'Becoming.' "Every real effigy has a shadow which is its double" (12) Artaud claims in the Preface to The Theater and Its Double, & as such "art must falter and fail from the moment the sculptor believes he has liberated the kind of shadow whose very existence will destroy his repose" (12). Artaud describes a life & "culture without shadows, where, no matter which way it turns, our mind (*espirit*) encounters only emptiness, though space is full" (12). As expressed in the Preface to this work:

> The *shadow*, in Artaud's oeuvre, is *more real* than the 'form' from which it projects against & from. The 'form' is 'normatively' identified as the totality of what 'some'-'thing' is; Artaud, however, inverts this conceptual energy, imbuing the *shadow* with the *possibilities* hidden, in a sense, by the rigidity of a static 'form-in-space.' It is not the object against which light is differentiating that is the totalizing 'datum' of a 'thing' or 'object;' rather, it is the 'form' that is *obfuscating* the *perception* of the possibilities that are manifest-from & suddenly illuminated by the *shadows* dynamically flickering upon a surface.

The shadow, then, is imbued with more true *existential* & *ontological* 'life,' than are the 'forms' of 'things' that merely constitute our *ontic* world & *existentiell* 'life.' Each shadow, in turn, represents a 'double' of the 'thing' or effigy from whence it came. The 'double' is in no way a

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'replica' or literal 'representation,' but rather an *uncanny* & inherently threatening dark-energy whose goal is to immolate the effigy, thus 'releasing' all the possibilities of shadows previously imprisoned by the 'form' itself.

duende: A Spanish concept explored by Federico García Lorca that is coupled in my work with Artaud's double/shadow. In Lorca's essay "Play and Theory of the Duende" he refers to a famous Andalusian singer named Pastora Pavón. Lorca describes a night in a little tavern in Cádiz, wherein Pavón:

> played with her voice of shadow, of beaten tin, her moss-covered voice, braiding it into her hair or soaking it in wine or letting it wander away to the farthest, darkest bramble patches. No use. Nothing. The audience remained silent […] When Pastora Pavón finished singing there was total silence, until a tiny man […] sarcastically murmured "*Viva* Paris!" As if to say: "Here we care nothing about ability, technique, skill. Here we are after something else." As though crazy, torn like a medieval mourner, the "Girl with the Combs" leaped to her feet, tossed off a big glass of burning liquor, and began to sing with a scorched throat: without voice, without breath of color, but with *duende*. She was able to kill the scaffolding of the song and leave way for a furious, enslaving *duende*, friend of sand winds, who made the listeners rip their clothes with the same rhythm as do the blacks of the Antilles when, in the "lucumí" rite, they huddle in heaps before the statue of Santa Bárbara […] The "Girl with the Combs" had to tear her voice because she knew she had an exquisite audience, one which demanded not forms but the marrow of forms […] She had to rob herself of skill and security, send away her muse and become helpless, that her *duende* might come and deign to fight her hand-to-hand. And how she sang! Her voice was no longer playing. It was a jet of blood worthy of her pain and her sincerity [...]. (Lorca, *Duende*, 52-3)

This notion of perceiving & differentiating not against 'form,' but rather the '*marrow of form*' that constitutes 'essence,' becomes-possible only after immolating the rigid technicalities & impositions of 'form' & releases the *duende* from its effigial hosts. The effigy of art, in all its manifestations, must be cast into a flame in order to release the *duende*. It is precisely in this

sense that Lorca's conceptualization of the *duende* mirrors that of Artaud & the double/shadow (essentially as permutations & possibilities of one another).

energy: Specifically, the force that 'opens' the 'differentiation of difference' to becoming-possible.

existentiell: Heidegger utilizes this term to refer to an ontic (physical, 'real,' 'factual') understanding of 'beings in the world,' as opposed to 'existential,' which refers to an ontological understanding.

ontocorporeality (Intro, pg. 2; Ch. 1, pg. 10): This term identifies the structure & system of differentiation/difference between 'Being'/'Becoming' (i.e. the condition of existence/existing), & the corporeal (i.e. the condition of existing-in-the-Body); functionally, the term 'opens' for introspection a conceptual space between existence, & the mediation of the Body in the condition of 'Being'/'Becoming.' In addition, 'ontocorporeality' suggests an inherent union between &/or dependence upon these two constitutive elements of the term; the corporeal/bodily condition of existence impacts & informs the ontological, as ontology simultaneously & ceaselessly effects our conceptualizations of the Body/'our bodies.' The spaces that result from the structures & systems of differentiation between the ontological & the Body—between 'Being'/'Becoming'-in-the-World, & doing so in a distinctly corporeal/physiological fashion— are precisely what 'ontocorporeality' conceptually concerns itself with. This can be thought of through the notion of an ecosystem, in which the flora & fauna germinating from an 'environmental' space are as much a byproduct of that environment, as the environment is a

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result of the flora & fauna inhabiting it; one cannot truly proclaim either/any constitutive element of the ecosystem to exist independently or in absentia of any other, for the acts of differentiation amongst & between them are what makes the entire system possible. This specific concept is explored in many works discussed in this dissertation, explicitly & notably in J.G. Ballard's novels The Atrocity Exhibition & Crash. In those texts, Ballard presents narratives in which the (specifically) 'human' body is mediated against & through the environments that they, collectively, contributed to shaping & building—particularly through 'technology.' The 'Bodies' in Ballard's works, then, find themselves, for example, essentially developing new sexual organs & interactions vis-à-vis car accidents (Crash), or developing curvatures of the spine in line with the angles of stairwells (The Atrocity Exhibition)—all resulting in the reader's contemplation of the 'ontocorporeal' in not only the 'human' condition, but indeed existence itself.

ontopoiesis (Intro, pg. 2; Ch. 1, pgs. 8-9): This term attempts to capture & explore the structure & space between 'Being'/'Becoming' (i.e. the condition of existence/existing), & the acts of creation born from Language (poetry, prose, art, film, et. al.). Furthermore, it explores a structure & space, as opposed to a static 'object;' in other words the term is intended to conjure & signify the spaces resulting from the structure of differentiation between 'Being'/'Becoming' (ontology) & creative literary/Language-acts (poiesis). 'Ontopoiesis,' then, is the conceptual 'space' opened by the structure of differentiation between ontology & poiesis—by the mutual & symbiotic interactions against, through & between these two constitutive elements. It is my contention that neither ontology (the exploration into the condition of 'Being'/'Becoming') nor poiesis can exist in absentia of the other; both mutually inform & are informed by the other, in a ceaseless interplay of differentiation & self-pronouncement. As with the term

'ontocorporeality,' it would be useful to consider 'ontopoiesis' through the concept of the ecosystem, in which the flora & fauna of an environment mutually affect & are effected by one another, in perpetuity. It is this notion that the term 'ontopoiesis' seeks to capture—this zone &/or space within-which possibilities of both 'ontology' & 'poiesis' manifest. Antonin Artaud's work—in particular the manner & method in which his 'Thought' & Language are in perpetual confrontation—is an explicit example of the presence of 'ontopoiesis' that is explored in this dissertation.

ontoterrorem (Intro, pg. 2; Ch. 4, pgs. 10, 15-16): This term conceptualizes an energy of protestation that occurs on the ontological level; specifically, through what could be called an ontological horror/terror in which one is 'terrified' at being witness to an ontological 'order' manifesting to its hyper-logical conclusions. It is an ambivalent energy—& term—much as its own avatars within this work: shadows, doubles & *duende*. These notions—found in the works of Antonin Artaud (shadows & doubles), & Federico García Lorca (*duende*)—are forces of dark-energy. They haunt static 'signs'—as specters fastened to the very objects transfixed by them—dwelling in those spaces until summoned into both an 'existentiell' (ontic) & existential (ontological) confrontation with the very forms from which they usher forth. The term attempts to capture this condition of a dread & terror that threatens the 'Order' of any 'ontology' to an existentiell extent. Etymologically, 'terror' finds its roots in the Latin word *terrorem*, which itself extends to the Proto-Indo-European base 'tre-,' meaning 'to shake;' it can be said, therefore, that at its germinating point, the concept of 'terror' implied not only a conscious 'horror' but also (& perhaps particularly) a *physiological* dread. 'Ontoterrorem,' then, captures within itself (as a

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term) the physiological elements of ontological horror as well, tying together 'ontopoiesis' & 'ontocorporeality' in articulations of protestational resistance occurring on the ontological level.

phoenixity (Ch. 1, pgs. 6-8): of, proceeding from, or possessive of qualities &/or conditions pertaining to, 'the Phoenix.' The term refers to the mythological bird's life-death-rebirth cycle— particularly in the specificity of the rebirth stage, in which the Phoenix is born from/out of the ashes of its previous body's *self*-immolation. This specific quality & condition of existence— inevitable self-immolation, & rebirth germinating from the 'waste'/trace of its own transient form—is what 'phoenixity' attempts to capture as a term. It is not merely 'rebirth,' then, but rather the particularities of this possible system &/or structure of rebirth.

speciel (Ch. 1, pgs. 6, 11, 14, 19): of, proceeding from, or possessive of qualities &/or conditions pertaining to, a species.

speciality (Ch. 1, pg. 1, end-note #4): This neologism specifically pertains to the act &/or process by which we are 'always-already-included-in-a-species' when considering our ontological & corporeal existence. It should be noted emphatically that this concept makes no intended reference or allusion to anthropocentrism, nor is it any way a construct of 'Humanism.'

speciel ontology (Ch. 1, pgs. 20-25): A term referring to the notion of an ontology of, proceeding from, or possessive of qualities &/or conditions pertaining to, a species. Such a conceptualization implies the possibility of not only each 'species' potentially possessive of its own respective 'ontology,' but also that each 'species' can in fact exist through multiple possible

'ontologies.' 'Speciel ontology,' as opposed to 'species ontology,' is used in a similar fashion as 'solar energy' is used in lieu of 'sun energy.'

structure: The aggregate of constitutive elements of an entity in their relationships to each other, notably with regards to Ernesto Laclau's notion of a 'system of differences' that functions as the germinating point of 'identity.' 'Identity' can also be thought of as 'thing-ness'—on both an existentiell & existential level—thus locating 'structure' at the nexus of existentiality itself.

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